

Weekend storm dumps 12+ inches of snow



The Christmas weekend storm, that began the evening of Thursday, December 22, and lasted through Christmas day, closed many businesses on Friday and Saturday. Along with the large amount of snow, winds topped 49 MPH in some areas, making for blizzard conditions. Many people cancelled Christmas plans and hunkered down to ride out the storm. More photos on page 2. Photos courtesy of Bruce Doll, who braved the elements to document the storm with photos.

Child support changes mean families receiving cash assistance may see higher payments

Some Michigan parents who receive cash assistance will see increases in child support paid to them under a policy change enabled by the state's fiscal year 2023 budget.

The budget allows low-income families, that are receiving both cash assistance and child support, to receive an additional \$1.1 million this year. Without the change, the \$1.1 million would be recouped by the

state instead of reaching children.

The change is a continuation of efforts by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to assist families who receive both child support and cash assistance through the Family Independence Program.

Beginning with the signing of the fiscal year 2020 state budget, Whitmer

created a partial child support "pass-through" to allow families to receive additional funds. In 2021, families who received cash assistance and child support got \$2.65 million in child support instead of these funds reimbursing state and federal program costs. This policy continued in 2022.

"We're pleased to place Michigan at the forefront of the movement among states to implement a full pass-

through," said Elizabeth Hertel, director of MDHHS, which houses the state's Office of Child Support. "Putting more money into the accounts of families is especially important right now, with living expenses increasing."

Currently, MDHHS passes through up to \$200 of child support each month to families with two or more children and up to \$100 to families with one child. MDHHS keeps a portion of child support payments above those amounts that would be paid to parents who receive cash assistance. This collected money is paid to the federal and state government to offset Family Independence Program expenses. However, federal law permits states to "pass through" child support directly to families instead of using it to recoup the government expenses.

Sending these dollars to families, rather than keeping it, may increase participation and cooperation with Michigan's Child Support Program because the paying parents know a portion of what they pay will go to the family instead of the government. The parent or caretaker who receives the child support is also more likely to help the program establish and

enforce child support orders instead of bypassing the program through a personal arrangement.

Families receiving cash assistance will get the increased payments only if the parent who owes child support pays it in the month it is due. Court-ordered medical support payments will not be passed through to cash assistance recipients who are Medicaid beneficiaries and will continue to be paid to the state to offset Medicaid expenses.

These changes to child support payments will begin in January 2023. Cash assistance clients, who have received a child support payment in the past six months, will receive a letter notifying them of the change.

Find more details at www.Michigan.gov/ChildSupport by clicking the Child Support Payment Changes FAQ link under Special Topics.



2022

Year in Review

Movie Review

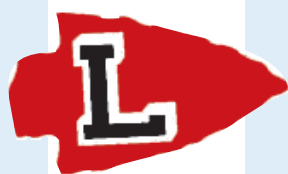


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Lowell Area Schools Sports



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50¢



More winter storm photos

All photos courtesy of Bruce Doll



LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF POSTING OF ORDINANCE ADOPTION

The Lowell Charter Township Board adopted the following amendments to the Township Zoning Ordinances at its meeting on December 19, 2022.

- Ordinance 09-2022Z to amend the Township campground requirements. The amendments provide definitions and general requirements pertaining to the addition of glamor-style and primitive camping facilities according to the State of Michigan guidelines.

The adopted ordinance is available for review at the office of the Township Clerk, 2910 Alden Nash Avenue, SE, Lowell, Michigan, 49331 during normal office hours on Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday or by calling 616-897-7600. The ordinances are also available on the Township Web Site at www.lowelltwp.org.

Monica Burt, Clerk
Lowell Charter Township Board

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Published weekly for \$25 a year for zipcodes beginning with 493 or 495; \$36 a year any other zip code.

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Book Corner

The Personal Librarian

By Marie Benedict and Victoria Murray
Historical Fiction

By Alison Yarger
contributing writer

Never really knowing much about J.P. Morgan - (John Pierpont Morgan, Sr., 1837-1913) I was surprised to learn that he wasn't just a moneyed, boorish curmudgeon. Most everything I'd ever read pointed fingers at him because of his wealth, his renown, and his domination over corporate finance on Wall Street. Over the course of his lengthy career, this massive man with piercing eyes commanded the formation of multinational corporations, including US Steel, International Harvester and General Electric. But it turns out, JP Morgan truly was quite a philanthropist with a bark much worse than his bite.

A collector of first editions of many books,

Morgan amassed hundreds of rare papers, books, paintings, gemstones, photographs and other art objects which were held in the Pierpont Morgan Library. Originally a private archive, in 1924 his son J.P. Morgan, Jr. made the library public for the community to view and experience these rare collections.

So while J.P. Sr. was busy on Wall Street, who looked after his personal collections? Who conducted the business of curating? Bidding on books and papers? Former Princeton librarian, black female Belle daCosta Greene, born Belle Marion Greener. She was the daughter of the first black graduate of Harvard, a well-known advocate for equality. Feigning Portuguese heritage to hide her racial ethnicity, Greene

knew she had to pass as white to be employed by a magnate like Morgan, to maintain her position and with a bit of luck leave a legacy that enriched our country.

This fictionalized story based upon facts in Morgan and Greene's lives, *The Personal Librarian* was an incredible story of perseverance, tolerance, and devotion, not just to the art world, but to Morgan and Greene.

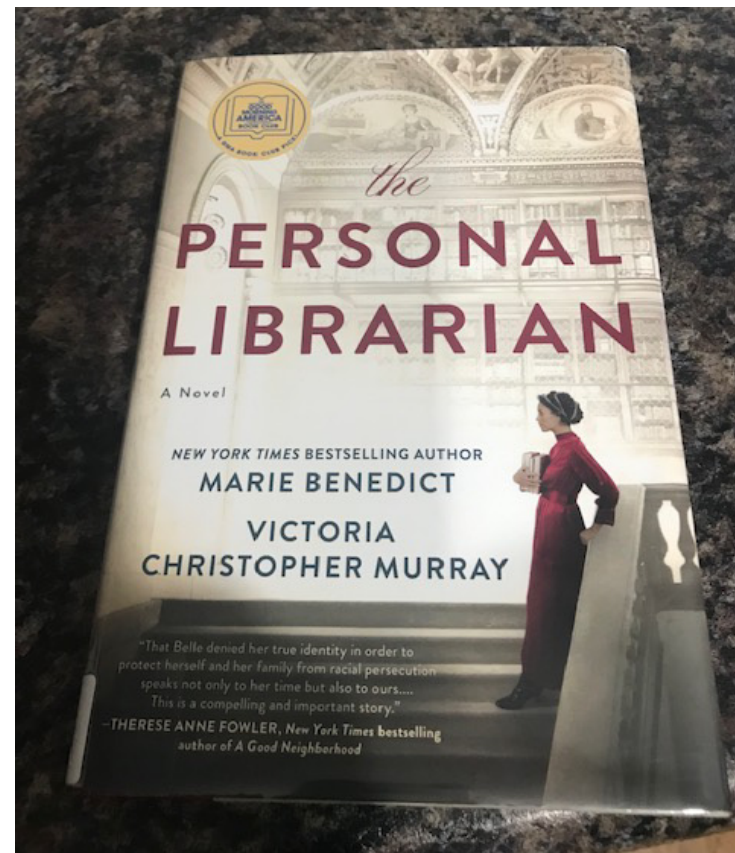
Greene was hired by Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, artwork and books for his newly built library. She eventually became a fixture in New York City society and one of the most powerful people in the art and book world, known for her impeccable taste and shrewd negotiations for critical works.

Constantly battling against the limitations of society in the early 1900s, Greene not only had her "secret" ethnicity working against her, but her gender as well. Rarely was there a female put into such a position of grandiose affluence and authority.

The opulence of this gilded age in New York was described throughout the novel, capturing the complexity, elegance and sophistication of the era.

While the writing itself was marginal, the story and the history of Morgan and Greene overshadowed the insignificance of the text. Many phrases were repetitive, there was an overuse of adjectives which was exasperating, and the constant use of "mama said" by Greene was annoying. The book was morally ambiguous, as I believe both authors were pushing individual agendas. Of course, in any historical fiction narrative the author contrives the exchanges between individuals - and conversations often time appeared preposterous, especially for early 1900s. Again, the story itself made the weak writing style a moot issue for me.

It's interesting to note that Greene, after Morgan's death in 1913, continued as the librarian for his son Jack. In 1924 she was named the first director of the Pierpont Morgan Library, continuing in that position until 1948 when diagnosed with cancer. Belle DaCosta Greene died in 1950 at age 70.



Although many in the circles in which J.P. Morgan circulated believed he had a long-term affair with Greene, nothing was further from the truth. He made it known to Greene that he was not very lucky with women, and respected her too much to have a "personal" relationship with her. "I believe, based upon my past history with women, that if we have an intimate relationship, it will spoil our professional relationship," stated Morgan. Greene never married nor had children; however, she had a lifelong relationship with Bernard Berenson, a Renaissance Italia art expert, beginning in 1909.

Open to visitors still today, the Morgan Library, as it's currently named, is located on Madison Avenue in downtown New York City.

Bottom line is that I learned a piece of history I never knew existed. Not only was I amazed at the business acumen of J.P. Morgan but was unbelievably captivated by the astuteness, confidence, intelligence and savvy of young Greene.

I'd give this book 4 out of 5 stars and it's available at the Marshall District Library.

General enrollment period for Medicare Part B

If you did not apply for Medicare Part B (medical insurance) within three months before or after turning age 65, you have another chance each year during the General Enrollment Period. The period runs from January 1 to March 31 every year.

If you don't enroll in Part B when you're first eligible for it, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B coverage. Your monthly premium will increase 10% for each 12-month period that you were eligible for Part B but did not sign up for it. Your coverage starts the first day of the month after you sign up.

To learn more about Medicare, please visit our Medicare Benefits page at www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare. You may also read our publication at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10043.pdf.


Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it - and share it on social media.

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



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LOWELL AREA COMMUNITY FUND ACCEPTS GRANT PROPOSALS

To be considered, all proposals must be submitted online by January 6, 2023.

Visit www.grfoundation.org/lowell to submit your application.

The Lowell Area Community Fund, a fund of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, awards grants to tax-exempt, nonprofit charitable organizations that have an impact in the Lowell Area. The LACF funds innovative projects or programs that encourage community cooperation.



Sam Mendes departs from darkness in *Empire of Light*

By Bill Lee
contributing writer

Christmas is the best time for going to the movies. Big blockbusters like *Avatar*, *Wakanda Forever* and *Puss in Boots* hope to garner audiences while they are on vacation. Also, human dramas vying for Oscar buzz tend to make their way into theaters now, in the nick of time to be considered for what Steven Spielberg calls *The Golden Man*. His film *The Fabelmans* will no doubt be an Oscar favorite along with star-studded *Babylon*.

Then just released last week is *Empire of Light*, a quiet film without an epic journey or star power.

I would argue that *Empire of Light*, a film by writer-director Sam Mendes, could be in contention for many awards this season. Starring Olivia Colman and Michael Ward and a small role by Colin Firth, *Empire of Light* is a wonderful drama that will stir up many emotions as you watch it. Mendes, known for his dark movies including *1917*, *Skyfall*, *Road to Perdition*,

Revolutionary Road and Best Picture winner *American Beauty*, brings us the story of protagonists Hilary (Colman) and Stephen (Ward) and their spiritual connection, even though they differ in age, race, and background.

The film opens in an old theater, in a coastal town in southern England, at the end of 1980. There is a little background given in Margaret Thatcher's England in the beginning of the movie, but it later plays an important role for both characters. Middle-aged Hilary is the duty manager for The Empire, a beautiful, old movie theater, whose vast rooms seat hundreds of patrons. We see the film through her perspective in most of the story. Mendes shows the loneliness of her mundane and solitary life – working, eating by herself, lying awake each night watching the fan revolve. She tries to find joy by attending a dance hall, dancing with anyone who will partner with her. She has working friendships with her co-workers, all played well by actors

Toby Jones (Norman), Tom Brooke (Neil), and Hannah Onslow (Janine).

Then Stephen, a young, personable, and attractive black man, is hired as an attendant at The Empire, and the dynamic at the theater changes immediately. All of the young women are very interested in Stephen, but for some reason, he is attracted to Hilary. An affair begins. Both characters bring their own baggage to the table: Hilary has a history of mental illness and Stephen experiences daily racial threats from skinheads who live in the town. What do these two see in each other? How does this unlikely couple find such a connection? Answering those questions, and how they help each other through this rough patch in their lives, is the crux of the movie.

Both Colman and Ward offer strong performances in complex roles. Colman, known most recently for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in *The Crown*, is brilliant as Hilary. Colman only needs a facial expression to convince us of Hilary's depth as a character. Hilary is strong in her convictions but has a deeply fragile side as well. She is smart and thoughtful, and in the end, just wants to connect

with someone. Although this is mostly Colman's movie (and she carries it quite well), Michael Ward steals part of the show, especially the latter half, with his dynamic portrayal of Stephen. Ward, 25, a former model and relative newcomer to acting, holds his own in his many scenes with Colman. Ward's tender

of sun and torrential rains, but most of this film takes place in The Empire. This is where the minor characters, a band of misfits who love their work, help give their support for Hilary and Stephen, particularly actors Toby Jones, who plays the projectionist, and Tom Brooke, one of the managers of The Empire. Some could



and genuine performance convinces the audience that Stephen is more than just a pretty face.

Mendes cameras bring us out to the coast of this seaside town, with its mix

see their roles as a bit cliché, for they represent the all-knowing seers who guide Hilary and Stephen toward their destinations, but even so, their words of encouragement are meaningful. And for those who are fans of Colin Firth, who shares the marquee with Colman, Ward and Jones, you might be disappointed to know that his role as a philandering manager of The Empire is quite small, albeit a strong performance.

The piano scores by Trent Reznor (yes, of *Nine Inch Nails*) and Atticus Ross frequent many of the scenes and help express the varied emotions throughout the film. Frankly, the music is quite beautiful.

Overall, Sam Mendes has crafted a wonderful story. It is no tour-de-force but it is a thoughtful story that will compel you to experience a small slice of Hilary and Stephen's life. I wouldn't be surprised if this film won several awards, particularly for acting, original screenplay and music. If you are looking to watch a movie about unique human connections and something a little slower than the norm, then *Empire of Light* would fit that bill. I give it 3 and 1/2 out of five popcorn kernels.



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DECEMBER SCHEDULE

- NaNoWriMo special with Jean Davis, Vera West, and Emma Palova Dec. 7
- Steve Boughton, *Francesco Takes Flight*, Dec. 9
- Carol Nickles, *Thumb Fire Desire*, Dec. 9
- Janet Vormittag, *Cat Women of West Michigan*, Dec. 17
- Ann Dallman, *Cady and the Birchbark Box*, Dec. 17
- Herman Hunter, *The Wizard's Stone*, Dec. 24
- Karen Tintori, *Unto the Daughters*, Dec. 31

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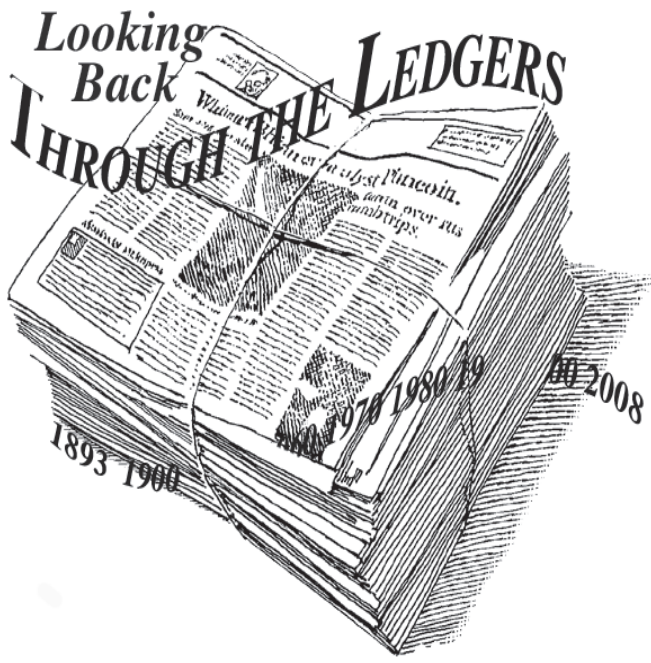
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viewpoint



125 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 30, 1897

The Vergennes Dancing Club, after three seasons of success, has divided into two sections; and on Friday night, New Year's eve, there will be two parties, each ostensibly given by the Vergennes Club, one at Train's Opera House, and one at Music Hall.

To the Klondike next year, Grand Rapids will send four or five different parties. The first starts in about a month for Seattle, where they will build a boat in which to make the trip, carrying their own supplies. They expect to dredge the deeper rivers for gold washings.

The pleasant home of Phil Reutelster and wife was badly burned Monday afternoon, while both of them were down town. Mr. Reutelster carried \$400 insurance on the house and \$300 on contents. Loss not yet adjusted.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger January 4, 1923

Bruce McQueen, who has been with Lowell State Bank for several years, is going into business with his father, E.D. McQueen. They are having their building remodeled into an up-to-date garage with all modern improvements, and will be able to care for all comers. The firm name to be known as The McQueen Motor Co.

Justice Andrews has passed on several intoxication cases in his Lowell court during the past few days.

Gene Carr, recently appointed Night Watch, is making good in this unpleasant task. With Pat Bowes as village marshal, it looks as if the community is to have an efficient police service.

Mrs. Wilkinson has a Christmas cactus that covers a space of two feet square, and has about three hundred blossoms on, and more coming. It is a beauty..

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger January 1, 1948

New higher fishing license fees for 1948: \$1.50 for residents, \$2 for 10-day nonresident permits and \$3 for annual nonresident permits. And to fish for brook, brown or rainbow trout, the fisherman will have to attach a \$1 trout stamp to his fishing license.

Dr. Keats Vining, Jr., will arrive in Lowell New Year's eve to begin the practice of medicine with Dr. B.H. Shepard. He is the son of County Agent K. K. Vining and Mrs. Vining.

Our local Ford dealer, C.H. Runciman Co. Motor Sales and Jay Belen's, general manager, have joined with other Ford dealers in this area in bringing to

radio listeners to the Fred Allen Show, every Sunday evening at 8:30 over NBC network.

Lowell postoffice clerks worked overtime to handle heavy pre-Christmas volume which reached a record peak during the past week. Cancelled letters for the week preceding Christmas totaled 73,470. Better than 30,000 one and one-half cent stamps were sold for this period which was well ahead of last year's total.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger Suburban Life December 28, 1972

Area postmasters asked cooperation today of postal patrons on rural and mounted routes in keeping approaches to mail boxes cleared during the winter months.

Gift wrapping their mobile home like a giant Christmas package won Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Hunter the grand prize in the first annual decorating contest, sponsored by Valley Vista Village, on West Main Street.

With a gymnasium packed full of people, the Girl's Glee Club, under the direction of Paul Balaam, opened the school's annual Christmas concert last Wednesday evening. Adding several Christmas numbers to the program was the Lowell Senior High School band, under the direction of William Mills. Despite the bad roads and terrible weather, the Lowell Senior High School Choir sang to a full house at the Choral Concert.

The Alto Recycling Center volunteers report a successful year. Income from glass and newspapers exceeded expenses, so donations were made to two environmental organizations.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger December 31, 1997

The fifth-grade students of Wendy Ackermann and Karen Latva decided to forego a gift exchange so they they could make toy and food donations to the Human Society. This is the second year in a row that students have made donations to the Humane Society.

The Lowell Middle School eighth-grade drama class will present a modern version of a beloved fairy tale, Snow White & Friends on Thursday, Jan. 8 at 7:30 pm in the middle school cafeteria.

Jim Hodges, the nine-year city council veteran, lost his seat in November city council general elections. Hodges calls his nine years of council-serve a long but incredible journey and he was very honored to have served on the council.

Lowell Area Schools has formed a new safety committee. Superintendent, Bert Blake, said the committee will begin meeting in January and probably will meet for two to three months. There is not one single incident that has lead to a review of the school's safety procedure, but rather just questions that have popped up during the day-to-day operations of the school. The questions centered around such topics as dispensing of medication, bus transportation, and volunteers in the schools.

college news

Trine University Association and offers 37 students were named to the President's List for the Fall 2022 term. To earn President's List honors, students must complete a minimum of 12 hours and have a grade point average of 3.750-4.000.

Joslynn Battle of Lowell; Ella Dougherty and Troy Saylor of Alto

Trine University, an internationally recognized, private, co-educational, residential institution, Trine is a member of the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic

Association and offers 37 intercollegiate sports, 27 of which compete in NCAA Division III. Founded in 1884 and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Trine operates a 450-acre campus in Angola, Indiana, and the College of Health Professions in Fort Wayne, with education centers in Detroit, Michigan, and Phoenix, Arizona, and programs available worldwide through TrineOnline.

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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. We have a 500-word limit.

Letters can be sent to emailed to
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Deadline is noon on Mondays



At Your Local Library

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

Teen Zone

Mondays, 3 - 4 pm. Teen-only fun for you and your friends at the library! Stop by for activities that may include board games, food and more. For teens 11-17.

Toddler Time

Tuesdays, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Nurture your toddler's love of books through music, movement and stories while helping to develop their language, motor and social skills. For ages 0-5.

Storytime

Thursdays, 10:30 - 11:30 am. Nurture your child's love of books and build early literacy skills through stories, rhymes, music and movement. For ages 0-5.

Teen Zone

Thursday, January 5, 3-4 pm. Teen-only fun for you and your friends at the library! Stop by for activities that may include board games, food and more. For ages 11-17.

Mahjongg

Fridays from 1-3 pm. American Mahjongg, a game of skill, strategy and calculation. All skill levels welcome.

Family Yoga

Saturdays (beginning January 7), 10:30 - 11:30 am. Space is limited; first come, first served. Doors open 15 minutes before the program begins. Family yoga is an all-ages activity with a focus on the benefits of mindfulness. Together we will engage in fun poses, learn how to breathe, be creative with yoga activities/games and relax.

Countdown to Happy Noon Year!

Saturday, December 31, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. We're giving kids an exciting way to ring in the new year with a countdown, noisemakers, crafts and fun -- at an hour that won't keep them up way past their bedtimes. For all ages.

Night Owls Book Discussion

Wednesday, January 4, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Join a fun, informal discussion of great books. This month, we'll discuss *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V. E. Schwab. For ages 18+

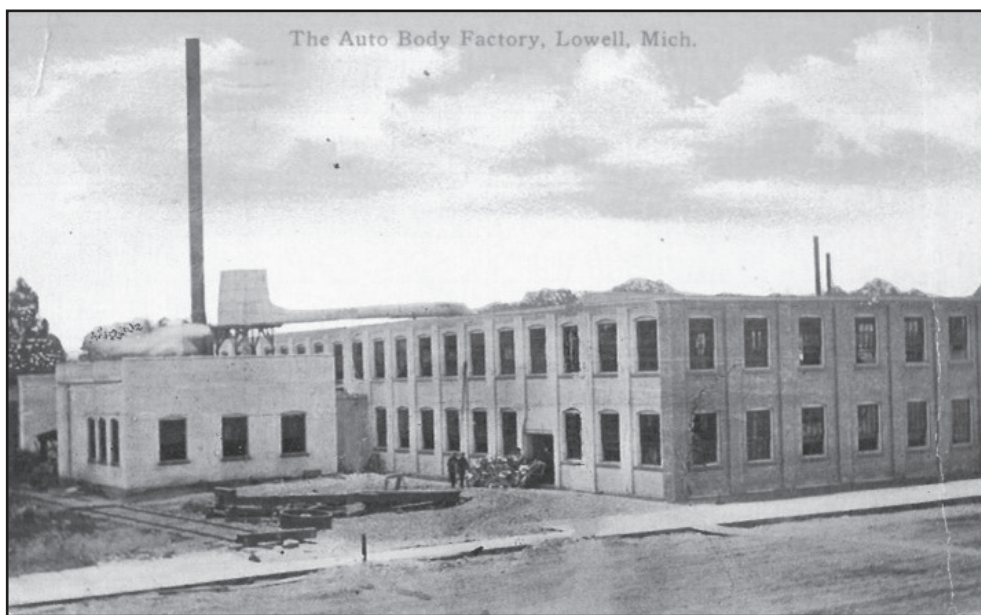
ABCs of Lowell history

Address: 312 E. Main-
MI Hometown
Date Built: 1909
Owners: A. H. Peckham,
H. A. Peckham and
R. J. Flanagan
Builder: A. W. Morgan
1st business: Lowell Auto
Body Company

The Lowell Auto Body Factory was built in 1909, the same year as the new City Hall across the street. It was made of brick on a concrete foundation, two stories high. Also erected was a powerhouse, dry kiln and bending room.

This block, known as The Old Wooden Row, was the first business block in town. It contained 12 wooden buildings.

A fire in 1907 destroyed five of the buildings so the Peckham family, owners of the Lowell Cutter Company, bought the lots and built a factory to manufacture wooden auto bodies for Austin, Dort-Durant and Buick. The Peckhams had previously turned down Henry Ford's offer to purchase their Cutter Factory, to build his automobiles, because they thought Ford was a fly-by-night operator. Lowell Auto Body was the Peckham's bid to move from making cutter bodies into auto manufacturing. This factory was used from 1910-1913



Lowell Auto Body Factory.

to manufacture wooden auto bodies, using the same processes that were used to make wooden cutter (sleigh) bodies in their Cutter Company buildings, that were located on S. Monroe St., extending west to the Flat River. However, by 1911, metal bodies for cars were considered the best; consequently, wooden ones were obsolete.

In 1920, Ypsilanti Reed of Ionia purchased the factory to manufacture woven reed furniture. One item that they made exclusively was the baby buggy. In 1925, Superior Furniture Co. of Grand Rapids bought the factory but went bankrupt in 1935. In 1936, a new Superior

Furniture Company formed and made an elite line of solid cherry-wood furniture that became "famous" around the world. This company was highly

successful and remained in business for 73 years, until 2009. MI Hometown Furnishings opened here in 2017.



Superior Furniture: Making and dovetailing drawers for these dressers.



Dogsleds were made at Superior during WWII for the US Government war effort.

area churches

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DECEMBER 29

Amanda Martin, Donna Baker, Lauren Malone.

JANUARY 2

Rose Nead, Helen Kuiper, Angie Sloan.

DECEMBER 30

Stacy Thomas, Ben Hodges, Kyle Triplett, Joe Hunt, Stacey Craig, Joshua Gee, Maliree Trierweiler, Matthew Trierweiler.

JANUARY 3

Jon Vezino, Audrie Olszewski, Lloyd Callihan, Jane Lalley, Rick Fyan.

JANUARY 4

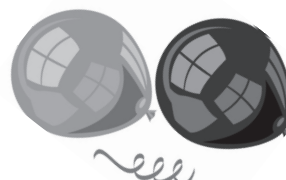
Nicholas Knonenwetter, Ruth Wood, Clayton Brown.

DECEMBER 31

Marcie Page, Bill DeHaan, Charles Boerema.

JANUARY 1

Tory Abel, John Wenger, Alice Hesche, Carolyn Yonker, Amanita Fahrni.



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Celebrate our time together!

Year in Review

JANUARY



WellNow Urgent Care Opens in Lowell

In a town without a hospital, there is always need for immediate health care. Opening its doors on Wednesday, Dec. 15, WellNow Urgent Care of Lowell, located at 11921 Fulton St. in front of Meijer, has started seeing patients for most non-life-threatening injuries and illness.

“As most of us have experienced at some point, injuries and illnesses tend to happen at the most inconvenient times, including over the weekend,” said Annie Keller, Public Relations Manager for WellNow. “Colds and flu, strep throat, allergies, ear infections, sinus infections and more. WellNow also treats minor abrasions, burns, cuts and lacerations, sprains and strains, and our centers are equipped with X-ray technology and on-site stitching capabilities.”

One of the goals of the center is to provide quality walk-in service with shorter wait times and lower costs for patients than the traditional emergency room of a hospital. Most major insurances are accepted and WellNow offers competitive self-pay rates for those without insurance.



times and lower costs for patients than the traditional emergency room of a hospital. Most major insurances are accepted and WellNow offers competitive self-pay rates for those without insurance.

Mike Larkin to leave the restaurant business Jan. 29 after 26 years

Amidst the beer signs for \$2 Labatts Blue, the liquor bottles, a pool table, and a Notre Dame banner prominently displayed on the wall, there is a small sign hung above the bar in Larkins Restaurant. Between the sports photos and other unique paraphernalia displayed on the walls, the sign could easily be missed. The letters are printed in red and black on a white matte background, and it simply reads: “Bar Rules. Rule #1: The bartender is always right. Rule #2: If the bartender is wrong, see Rule #1.”

The sign seems to symbolize the hometown bar atmosphere of Larkins and its owner, Mike Larkin. Like the television show Cheers, a lot of people know each other at Larkins.

“Everybody uses that phrase, ‘where everybody knows your name,’” said Mike Larkin. “That sums up a small-town local bar/restaurant. You go there because you know people.”

Things will be a bit different at Larkins come the beginning of February. After 44 years in the Larkin family, the restaurant is being sold to BGR Investments, the same company that owns Big Boiler Brewing.

“I’m too old to keep doing this,” said Larkin with a laugh. “We’ve been here a long time. I’m 72 and my grandkids are not quite old enough to run it. Can’t be in the bar/restaurant business too long. It gets to you, you know?”



School board recall attempt fails to gather sufficient number of signatures

Lowell Kids 1st, the group attempting to recall three members of the Lowell Area Schools Board of Education, was not successful.

“We stopped counting after 1,000 because it was obvious we weren’t going to have enough signatures to trigger a recall election, due to the board playing dirty with their appeal and only having two weeks to collect,” said Lowell Kids 1st co-founder Stefanie Boone.

Boone revealed more about this in a post on the Lowell Kids 1st Facebook page: “Normally, a recall petition signature drive is allowed 60 days to collect signatures. The board members waited until the last day possible to file an appeal to the petition language, and because we never were awarded a court date (by design), that appeal served to successfully stall our efforts by 40 days. After the 40 days, the 60 days starts over, however because the signatures for these members were due on December 31 and we couldn’t start collecting until December 18 due to the appeal, it left us with just two weeks to collect over 3,000 signatures.”

Boone said the group has not yet decided whether or not to pursue future recalls, but they reserve the option.

Renovations to Lowell Middle School about 33% complete

Lowell Area Schools superintendent Nathan Fowler said that renovations to Lowell Middle School are about a third of the way through. Students in seventh and eighth grade are enjoying new classrooms, and the current focus is on completing the sixth grade classrooms.



“It’s going to continue to unfold, but I’d say we’re about a third of the way through,” Fowler said. “Moving into the new space is a big deal and it feels pretty good, but we still have a long way to go. I would say we’ve just kind of wrapped up the first phase and we’re on the second phase. There are probably four phases. It’s a big project! I would say it will be completed by the end of 2023, by the end of that calendar year. We’re hoping that construction will be wrapped up partway through the 2023-24 school year.”

Lowell Area Fire Department welcomes new Chief

When Lowell Fire Chief, Shannon Witherell, hears a colleague call out “Chief!” at the fire station these days, there’s a good chance it is not for him. That’s because for the first time in at least three decades, the Lowell Fire Department has a dog, a golden retriever puppy on duty, and of course, his name is Chief.



For the last few weeks, Chief the Fire Dog has been all the rage in the Lowell area. He not only has his own Instagram account that has blown up, but also had a feature story on local television last week that has seen over 40,000 online views.

“I brought him to work to see how he was going to adjust that first week and announced to the staff that we were going to have this little guy hanging around here and it’s taken off like wildfire,” said Witherell. “A day doesn’t go by where he doesn’t get three, four, half a dozen visitors a day.”

Tess Chapman active in barrel racing at 78

Tess Chapman was 78 years young on Tuesday, Jan. 4, and her favorite equine companion ‘Rebel’ is 32.

Chapman has owned Rebel since he was two years old. No one would have guessed 30 years ago that the slender, awkward, pokey little gelding would have turned out to be the champion he is today. She made the decision back then to purchase the horse with advice from her husband that he just “saw something great” in the little gelding. At the time, no one would have dreamed they would still be running at the top of their competition 30 years later.

Fast forward and Chapman and Rebel still enjoy the thrill of competition and winning to this day. The duo is still young at heart and are both tough as nails when it comes to barrel racing! Chapman and Rebel have been competing at numerous arenas in the lower Michigan area over the years.

Celebrate our time together!

Year in Review

FEBRUARY



Dorla West retires from Keiser's after more than 40 years

Dorla West has been a fixture in the dining room at Keiser's Kitchen, 700 E. Main, since she was first hired in 1979.

"I am retiring because I turned 78 on Monday and I thought it was time," West said. "42 and a half years... It was a fun run! The customers and the people I work with, they're just so wonderful. They're my family. They were also my biggest challenge!"

West said she was "feeling great" on her last day, and had yet to make any definitive plans for what to do during her retirement. She would only reveal that she intends to stay healthy and active until the age of 139.

"I love being busy. I'm always busy," West said.



Lowellian Cynthia Hagedorn provides creative outlet with Care on Canvas

Care on Canvas is a program that provides painting opportunities for people in West Michigan who are dealing with injuries, cancer and other challenging circumstances. Cynthia Hagedorn, an educator and artist who lives in Lowell, founded the program about five years ago.

"I've worked with people in all kinds of situations," Hagedorn said. "I work with kids, adults, people in various circumstances, and they all create something to be proud of. At Mary Free Bed, I've painted with quadriplegics who don't have arms or legs; they paint with a brush in their mouth. I work with kids at Helen Devos Children's Hospital and Make A Wish Foundation, and with various other people in the community. A woman who had breast cancer, a woman who had lost a child, a family that had lost a child - I worked amongst this group of people; they came into my studio and painted with me, we painted side-by-side."

The program has been so successful, one success story was recently featured in People Magazine.

"I laugh at that, because they cut my head off," Hagedorn said. "Mary Free Bed sent it out, and I recognized Laney [Purdue, age 11, of Gaylord], the young woman that I painted with. I looked at it and I was like, 'Oh my gosh, there it is!'"

We were photographed together, but they cut my head off. It just sort of made me laugh, I'm in this national publication and they cut my head off!



LHS spring musical The Wizard of Oz

There truly is no place like home, and for some Lowell High School students, that home happens to be the Lowell Performing Arts Center. In the past 11 weeks, over 70 students—part of the Lowell High School Theater Department—have been hard at work on this year's All School Musical production of the classic Wizard of Oz.

As usual, the crew is hard at work creating all the behind the scenes magic that we know and love. Many of the set pieces, so far, have been finished and look amazing! In addition, 101 costumes are being made from scratch by lead costume designer, senior Jordyn Vriesman, and the costume department. So much is being done behind the stage, and the theater department would genuinely be nowhere without the beloved Crew.

The cast is waiting in anticipation to open the LPAC doors to everyone. The shows are on March 4, 5, 11, and 12 at 7 pm, and on March 6 at 2 pm. As usual, tickets can be bought for \$15.00 on www.showtix4u.com/events/lpac, live stream and in-person options are available. Tickets are on a first come, first serve basis and seating is limited, so buy them while you can!

Bruce Doll named Person of the Year by Chamber of Commerce

Each year the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce announces a Person of the Year who has contributed to the community in significant ways. The recipient needs to meet certain criteria as spelled out by the chamber: "Over time, the candidate has freely donated considerable time to the community, school district, church or humanity. This is over and above the demands of their regular profession."



The recipient also positively promotes the community, possesses new and innovative ideas that benefit the community and also makes the community a better place because of their efforts. The chamber itself does not choose the recipient; the last five winners of the award make that decision. The winner this year is Bruce Doll.

"I'm very humbled," said Bruce Doll of his award. "If you look at the past list, it's amazing to be included in that group of people. I have a passion for what I do, with whatever I do."

Doll and other businesses in town will be honored for their contributions at a banquet sponsored by the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, Feb. 24, beginning at 6:30 pm with awards beginning at 7:30 pm.

Pink Arrow Pride donates \$106,000 to families, organizations and scholarships

Pink Arrow Pride announced the results of their year of fundraising on Tuesday, Feb. 8.

Through events, t-shirt sales, donations, and sponsorships, Pink Arrow raised a total of \$106,000 in 2021.

From the \$106,000 total raised this year, \$45,000 will be donated to Gilda's Club of Lowell, \$43,000 to Lowell Community Wellness Pink Arrow Family Support and \$3,000 will benefit the Dr. Donald Gerard Scholarship and the Kathy Talus Scholarship. A total of 70 people in the Lowell Area Schools district were served with a monetary gift in 2021, and many more have taken advantage of the many services at Gilda's Club of Lowell.



Wrestlers down nationally ranked east side Teams

Lowell wrestling turned some heads on Friday night when they upended a pair of powerhouses in Dundee. The Red Arrows, minus senior Ramsy Mutschler, turned in a 2-0 night, beating No. 44 nationally, Dundee 36-28 and No. 18 Davison 36-30.

The win over Davison was every bit as dramatic as you would have expected, outside of the final match, which produced an extremely rare void from the Cardinals. The 3:30 weigh-ins provided some information on who would be in and out, and each team that night had rosters missing a few wrestlers, Lowell with their depth would not have any issues as far as empath weight classes.

Celebrate our time together! Year in Review MARCH



Wrestling extends record championship streak to nine

Nine state championships in a row. That's the remarkable task that Lowell wrestlers have accomplished over the last decade.

"It gets more and more special. I think about these kids and remember coaching them when they were just knee-high," Lowell wrestling head coach R.J. Boudro said after the finals.

It all started on Friday in the quarterfinal matchup. Bloomfield Brother Rice's reward for earning their first trip to the team state finals since 1988? A matchup with the No. 1 ranked, eight-time defending state champions.

Boudro spoke and thanked the fans, team moms, and all of those who helped make things possible. Senior Carter Blough also bravely volunteered to speak to the hundreds of people that had surrounded the team. In the bleachers of one of the practice rinks at Wings Event Center, staged for a wrestling practice area.

For Coach Boudro, he has won eight state championships in his eight-year tenure as head coach, and was part of the staff for the first of Lowell's nine straight titles, which happened in 2014. He is always humble and grateful to be a part of the program. "It never gets old," Boudro said of winning state championships.



Lowell Middle School Odyssey of the Mind team advances to world finals

After a two year break, teams from across the state gathered at Thornapple Kellogg Schools in Middleville on Saturday, March 12, for the Michigan Odyssey of the Mind State Finals Competition.



The Lowell Middle School team worked for several months, putting together a solution to the "reOMvention" technical problem. In this problem, teams had to present a performance that included an original threat to the environment that self-replicated until the team created a reOMvention technical device that removed the threat. The team's creative solution earned them a second-place finish at the regional competition in February, then another second place finish at the tough state finals competition on Saturday, March 12. At the state finals competition, the top three teams, in their respective problem and division, advance to World Finals at Iowa State University in May. Since starting the program in Lowell sixteen years ago, this is the eighth time Lowell will be represented at the world competition.

Alpha Family Center changes name to Alpha Care Center

Alpha Family Center of Lowell and Lake Odessa will officially be changing its name to Alpha Care Center. The official announcement will be at the seventh annual Ladies' Luncheon, Thursday, March 17.

The name change was to really emphasize the CARE we have for every individual we serve, to bring clarity to what we do, and to remove any barriers that may exist by having the name 'family' in the title. The Alpha team has been very strategic in finding just the right name to change to. We kept 'Alpha,' as we felt the communities we serve in have grown to love and appreciate that name. For those that may not know why we have the name 'Alpha' it means 'beginning', and we desire to walk alongside of individuals and families in the beginning stages of life. The mission at the Alpha Care Center will stay the same as it has always been; "Alpha Care Center is an outreach ministry of local churches sharing the love of Christ through affirming and promoting the value of life and strengthening the family unit."

\$100,000 Powerball prize winner in Lowell

Christina Newman, of Lowell, matched the four white balls and the Powerball in the March 19 drawing, to win a \$50,000 prize. Thanks to the Power Play, the prize was multiplied to \$100,000. She bought her winning ticket at the Marathon gas station, located at 2001 West Main Street in Lowell.

"I usually play Powerball every week," said Newman. "My husband took the ticket to the store to check it and a slip printed out saying we must file a claim. The employee thought something was wrong with the machine, since it would not validate, so my husband brought the ticket back home and I looked up the numbers online. When I saw we'd won \$100,000, we were shocked. It was hard to wrap our heads around!"

With her winnings, she plans to take a trip to Hawaii with her husband and then save the remainder.



Gilda's LaughFest returned to Lowell last Friday with two shows

Gilda's LaughFest, the annual series of comedy shows that benefit Gilda's Club of Grand Rapids, returned to Lowell this year with two concerts on Friday, March 18.

"This is our first step forward after a good two years, because it was March of 2020 when we came to the screeching halt in the second weekend of LaughFest," said Gilda's Club of Grand Rapids president, Wendy Wigger. "To be able to come back out, engage the community and give people another reason to laugh and to smile is just so meaningful and such a connection to Gilda's Club and our emotional health message."



First up at LowellArts at 7 pm was "Drums for All with Josh Dunigan," an interactive percussion jam session with full audience participation.

The second show, at 7:30 pm in the Old Theater, was by the River City Improv group, who turned benign audience suggestions into hilarious comedic situations.

Englehardt youth librarian Chris Straw retires

Chris Straw, youth librarian at the Englehardt Library, retired on Monday, Feb. 28. Straw was hired in December 2010 as a "youth parapro," which Straw said was more of a title change than a change in her responsibilities. During her career at the Lowell library, Straw has led family storytime, community outreach storytime, monthly writing activities and bulletin boards, and has maintained the "KDLville" play area.

"I have worked with Lynda Austin [another youth librarian] maintaining, enhancing and creating a fun play space in KDLville," Straw said. "We also do spring programs, called LEAP, for our first graders in Lowell. I have also worked on the Summer Wonder Work Group for 10 years, planning and creating a fun summer reading program for all ages. The more I've worked here, the more I realize that everyone can have a bad day and take it out on the staff behind the desk. We try to be kind, empathetic and inclusive. I have learned many skills to help me do my best."

Straw said that she will miss Lowell's young readers more than anything, and suggested that they "read, read and read some more."

Celebrate our time together! Year in Review MARCH/APRIL



Lowell school board treasurer Blough not running for reelection

Gary Blough, the Lowell Area Schools board of education treasurer since 2010, has decided not to run for reelection this November.

Blough was born and raised in Lowell, has been a farmer most of his life and worked as a rural mail carrier for more than 30 years.

"It was May of 2010 when I was first elected, and I am surprised how fast it went," Blough said. "I retired [from the US Postal Service] in 2009, and that was when I decided to run for the board. I had more free time at that point, and I felt like I should do some community service, so I decided to run for the school board."

For various reasons, Blough said he decided after the last school board election that this would be his final term.

He pointed to the Middle School renovations and the addition of a new facility as the board accomplishments he was most proud of during his tenure.

Blough said the recent unsuccessful recall was misdirected against the local board because most of the decisions, those involved in the recall were upset about, are made in Lansing or Washington DC.



Cold day brings large crowds to Lowell Expo

It was freezing cold outside on Saturday, March 26, so it was the perfect time to check out the 2022 Lowell Expo, held at Lowell High School this year after a two year COVID break.

"We are having a great time at the Expo," said Kurt Lardie, manager of the Alto and Englehardt Branches of the Kent District Library. "There are a lot of great people and a lot of new people who are not familiar with what the library offers, all of the new things that are beyond books, all of our e-resources. Everybody thinks the library is just books! So it's going great. Expo is always a great time."

"It's awesome. I'm so glad to be back in the gym after three years," said Lori Spoelstra of the travel agency Adventures by Lori. "It's been wonderful seeing our clients face-to-face and meeting all of our new clients. It's been very well attended and I think it's been really good. I think people are ready to come out and get involved in the community again."

"There's a pretty good turnout," said Evert Bek of Arctic Heating and Cooling. "Last year it was busy and the year before there wasn't any Expo, so considering the circumstances it's pretty good. There is a steady flow."

Morgan Rouse and Anna Kircheis, some of this year's Kent County Youth Fair royalty, greeted passerby at their booth, which included a life-sized, mooing, plastic cow.

The Lowell Area Fire Department's attention was split between the Expo, their pancake breakfast and watching out for emergencies.

"It's going well, the turnout is very nice," said Erik Kelly of the Lowell Area Fire Department. "We started off with our pancake breakfast at the station, we have a crew up here doing this, and we have our tender here and our medic unit for people to look at."



New Junction Bar & Grill now open

With a new name and an old favorite dish, Junction Bar, old Larkin's in downtown Lowell, won't disappoint. Most of the changes to the bar elude the eye, as they have happened behind the scenes, like the major renovations of the kitchen, new equipment and floors.

The booths have been removed and a new pool table took main stage in the adjacent room to the main bar area. There's also a new juke box and the keno machine stayed.

"We're up-to-date on electrical, gas lines," said Sarah Schultz, operating partner of Big Boiler and Junction. "We have relaunched the new full-menu."

The new full-menu brought back an old-time favorite - savory chicken gizzards with dipping sauces. "We put our own twist on it," said Schultz. "They're fantastic, and we have chicken fritters. We still have wet burritos."



Karaoke is every Friday, from 8 pm until 1 am, with Jenny and Brian. Bands are planned for Saturdays. The Ryne Experience is scheduled for May 7, from 8 until 11 pm.

If the bar is busy, it will stay open past the regular hours. Junction will also partake in the fall chili cook-off along with other restaurants.

Happy New Year
2023

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Year in Review

APRIL



Longtime LHS PA announcer to retire

Anthony “Tony” Stencel, affectionately known as the “Voice of the Lowell Red Arrows,” has made his final announcement at Lowell High School, as he announced his retirement from public-address announcing last week.

A Farmington Hills native, living in the Lowell area since 1972, Stencel’s years in the press box can be characterized by a full house. The press box was always a welcome place for Stencel’s family and friends, who would often help him with his duties.

“I had plenty of help, my son-in-law Shad Propst, married to my daughter Trisha. My sons Tim and Aaron after they graduated. The last few years I was joined by my grandson Nathan Propst. For JV and freshman games, parents of the players helped too. They all served as spotters, telling me who did what during the plays,” Stencel added.



Stencel looks back on his time at LHS with fond memories. One of those includes the many Pink Arrow games he announced. “It was wonderful to see what Noel Dean did to bring our

community together, bringing awareness of cancer through a football game,” Stencel said of Pink Arrow.

Those games always brought emotion, from the honoree ceremony to the fireworks at the end. Tony was always ready to call whatever was happening, with his support team at his back.

Torched Glass Art Studio opens in Lowell

Glass artist Anthony Lawrence gave himself a life-changing birthday present. In January of 2016, he took an intro course to glass blowing from Stephen Wheeler of Sacred Expressions in East Town.

“I fell in love with it and dedicated my whole life to it,” he said, standing by the display of glass blown pipes in his store, Torched, on Main Street in Lowell. The main production facility, owned by Joshua Trudgeon, is located in Holland.

For Lawrence, who wanted to be closer to home, opening a shop in Lowell was like a homecoming. He grew up in Lowell, graduated from Lowell High School in 2009, and worked as an inserter for the Buyers Guide.



He likes the proximity of Lowell to the Disc Golf course in Fallasburg.

He believes that everybody is an artist, but it takes time to find the right media. Once he saw the first glass rod melt, Lawrence knew glass blowing was his medium.

The studio also sells disc golf equipment and repairs glass. There will be discounts on April 20 at all locations in Lowell, Holland, Davison and Fremont.

Downtown electric vehicle charging stations upgraded

Lowell Light & Power was in the forefront of technology in 2017, when Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations were installed. With growth in the EV community and advances in technology, it was time to proceed with a second generation of chargers.

Working together for the community, in alignment with Downtown Development Authority’s mission to serve downtown, the City of Lowell, the DDA, LL&P and Flat River Electric collaborated to upgrade the two electric vehicle charging stations in downtown Lowell; making downtown Lowell a destination to EV drivers.

With a charging station on both sides of the Flat River, EV drivers can easily enjoy the walkability of Lowell’s downtown area. “These chargers put Lowell on the map for EV drivers. This will play a major role in attracting people from outside of our community to come visit Lowell. They can charge their vehicle while they eat and shop in our great downtown area,” said city manager, Mike Burns.

Ripple’s Craft Food and Drink with intention pay homage to Yucatan

Nestled on the west bank of the Flat River in downtown Lowell, the new Ripple restaurant pays homage to the food and culture of the Yucatan, with staple dishes such as “cochinita pibil.”

“We’re not an authentic Mexican restaurant,” said owner, Matt Parrott, of Cannon Township.

And the colorful logo which depicts the sun, water, sand, and land, with the tagline “Craft Food and Drink, made respectfully, with intention and purpose” reflects Ripple’s mission to bring the relaxing atmosphere from the Yucatan to Lowell.

The relaxing atmosphere of the new restaurant in town consists of spacious seating with large windows facing the river, Main Street, and Riverside, that can seat 96 with a total room for 154. A beautiful painting by artist Kristina Hutton graces one of the walls, giving the restaurant a tropical feeling. A large red sign on the back wall is a souvenir from the old Springgrove Variety that occupied the prime location before. Extensive renovation work went into the building, including new large windows, a new stage for bands, and a new lobby area. Ripple sits right next to Main Street Inn which provides convenient accommodations downtown.



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Celebrate our time together! Year in Review MAY



13th Annual Food Fight begins

From May 1 through June 1, the nonprofit is encouraging the Greater Lowell community to give from the heart in this friendly but fierce competition to see who can raise the most resources.

The 13th annual campaign divides the greater Lowell community into two teams – north and south, with M-21 splitting the teams. Each dollar and food item that is donated to FROM counts as a point for that team.

“It’s always a joy to see our community come together to help our neighbors in need,” Arianne Hall, Development Director said. “After 12 years, the teams are tied with six wins each. It’ll be fun to watch how it unfolds this year.”

For the last Food Fight campaign, \$127,455.00 was raised and 11,071 food items were donated.

This year there is a \$34,750 match challenge, thanks to generous matching sponsors available to all financial donations, until the match challenge is met, or June 1. Funds raised through this campaign will help the mission of FROM and raise a significant portion of their annual fund.

The community can get involved in the campaign by donating funds directly to the nonprofit, holding a Facebook fundraiser on the FROM Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fromlowell) or collecting in-kind donations of food. For the most up-to-date list of food needs, email Development Director, Arianne Hall, at arianneh@fromlowell.org or call at 616-897-8260.

Culver’s opens on Memorial Day

Culver’s will be opening in Lowell on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30. The restaurant will have 55 employees, when fully hired; at this point, they have 28 employees.

The restaurant will seat 98 guests.

“We’re famous for our butter burger and frozen custard,” said owner, Steve Stephan, who owns three other locations.

It has a double drive-through. It also offers seasonal items year-round.

“Lowell has that town and country-feel that mirrors our Midwest values,” Stephan said. “We’re looking for a smooth opening day and we ask for grace for the community.”

Right now, Culver’s is focusing on team building and training.

“We want to be a part of delivering an awesome experience,” he said. “We look forward to both, opening the doors and saying welcome to delicious.”



Liam Lopez-Wagner – he was born for this

Class, our vocabulary word for today is “lepidopterist” – that is someone who studies butterflies and moths. To the best of my knowledge, Liam Lopez-Wagner is the very first lepidopterist to cross my path. If the seven-year-old Liam has his way, we could be meeting many more in the future.

The skeptical among you might be wondering, “How can a young man of seven earn the label ‘lepidopterist’?” Rightly so, that is a logical question. Will and Betsy, his parents, can testify that Liam took an active interest in these delicate winged creatures before he hit his second birthday.

When the family returned to California, where they lived before moving to Lowell, Liam began to learn about the western monarch there and found out that the population was in danger and declining because their habitat was being destroyed. He decided then that he wanted to help.

Fast forward five years, and one can easily see, Liam has taken his vow to help butterflies very seriously. He has a website: www.amigosformonarchs.org, where you can go to learn how to help his winged friends. You can find him and his amigos on Facebook, as well. April 22nd marked his fourth year of giving away milkweed seed kits to help others put monarch gardens on their property to feed his friends as they travel. Liam is now offering a FREE seed kit on his website. His efforts caught the attention of Scholastic News magazine, which featured him as the cover story of their May/June edition. He recently spoke at Bushnell Elementary and has started receiving letters from school kids who read the story in Scholastic News.

When asked if he was the only seven-year-old lepidopterist, Liam responded, “I don’t know. I hope not! I want other kids to be one too.”



Chimera’s 20th anniversary celebration

It was a very windy day on Sunday for the free concert at the Showboat, to celebrate Chimera Design’s 20th Anniversary, but it did not stop over 200 people in attendance to see musicians Sandra Effert, Ryne Clarke with Jeremy Kargl, and Patty PerShayla and the Mayhaps.

Each musician played around seven songs each. Effert ended her beautiful set with her popular song, “Haunted”, with PerShayla singing in the background. Clarke, and bandmate Kargl, played songs from Clarke’s many albums, and also, the Lowell resident did not disappoint, as he played his electric kazoo quite a few times. Patty PerShayla and the Mayhaps played some up-tempo rockin’ songs and then a few bluesy tunes too. A fan favorite was “The Jack,” a cover of an AC/DC song.

Concert organizer, Cliff Yankovich, introduced the bands and added some humor to the afternoon. He also had a raffle and gave away merchandise from Chimera, and Lowell Bucks, to many winners in the audience. Overall, it was a fantastic afternoon filled with incredible music from three outstanding musicians. Thanks Cliff!

**Happy New Year,
Best Wishes
& Thank You!**

*We’re filled with hope for the coming year,
and we can’t think of anywhere we’d rather
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Celebrate our time together! Year in Review JUNE



King Milling corner building receives a major facelift, improves the downtown look

Close to a year in the making, the major remodel of the 1880s King Milling corner building on Main Street is nearing completion, expected in mid-July.

Part of the remodel was connecting the building on Main Street to the old office building on the second floor. The lower level will now serve as a training center, the upper level as a lunchroom. The offices will be in the corner, remodeled building.

The corner building was completely remodeled, rebuilt, and regutted with heating in the sidewalk in front of the building, approved by the city council.



The remodel of the building had to comply with the Lowell Historic District standards. The historic district is bounded on the North and South by the rear lot lines of properties abutting both the North and the South sides of Main Street, extending from Hudson

Street on the West to Washington Street on the East, excluding the dams and city parking lot on the East river bank. On the North side, the East boundary extends one-half block beyond Washington Street to include the property at 413 East Main Street. The district consists of 54 commercial buildings and three bridges, located on East and West Main Street in the city of Lowell. Most of the commercial brick buildings were constructed between 1865 and 1900.

Lowell Pride 2022 – Authentically You

Saturday, June 4th on the Riverwalk, began with beautiful cool temperatures, an almost-summer quiet morning with an empty lawn and sidewalk. The only sounds were chirping birds and ducks arguing over a patch of water. But all of that was about to change in a celebratory explosion of color and sound: Lowell Pride 2022 – Authentically You was preparing for launch. The Riverwalk was wall-to-wall people a short time later.

This is the second annual Pride event in Lowell, and if you ask anyone on the Lowell



Pride Board of Directors, they will confirm that large-scale events like this do not happen without the power of volunteers. Board Member and Lowell resident, Erin Foltz, knows this first hand. She took charge of volunteer coordination, signing in and passing out t-shirts to the more than ninety people from Lowell and surrounding communities who volunteered.

Class of 2022 graduation

Nobody wants an indoor graduation. Yes, it is always an option that is available each year in the event of inclement weather, and of course, nobody will outright say it, but really nobody at Lowell wants an indoor graduation.

This is mostly due to the limit on the number of attendees for each graduate, due to the limited space in the gymnasium. So when the weather forecast, hawked closely by Lowell administration, turned for the better, all parties involved were relieved. Still, the chance for rain always lingered on Thursday night at Bob Perry Field, as both sets of bleachers were full of parents, friends, and relatives.

At the end of the day, the rain stayed away, no sound issues happened, not even the dreaded tripping and falling on the stage occurred. No, it was a normal Lowell High School graduation, filled with the usual camaraderie, tradition, and some of the general hijinks that are a part of each ceremony.

This year's class had 37 members graduate Summa Cum Laude, with GPAs over a 3.95, and a class size of nearly 300.

For 144 years now, classes have graduated from Lowell High School. Pomp and Circumstance has been used at graduations since the early 1900's and its ring, across Bob Perry Field in the outdoor ceremony, was loud as the next group of Lowell High School graduates began their next chapters.

New fairgrounds on track for 2023 opening

The new fairgrounds project on Cascade Road, known as the Grand Agricultural Center of West Michigan, located on the grounds of the former 140-acre Deer Run Golf Course, is on track for the 2023 opening.

The tree clearing has been completed; dirt removal, prep. work, and major underground work will start at the end of June. The construction management company is Wolverine. The utility work is scheduled to start in the fall. By next spring several buildings will be up.

The changes at the new fair will include, starting earlier by one week because of the onset of school activities in August. Next year's start date for the fair has been set for July 31st. The earlier start date will allow older exhibitors from all over the county to participate in both the fair and various school activities, such as the marching band.

Traditional Saint Patrick's Parish Festival set for last weekend in June

The Saint Patrick's Festival is back to its traditional format after a two-year hiatus due to Covid, with a date set for the last weekend in June.

The festival kicks off with Johnny's Run 5K race at 7 pm on Friday, June 24.

The mainstays of the parish festival are back at full speed. The Euchre tournament, Johnny's Run 5K race (3.1 miles), and live music by The Adams Family on Friday. Saturday activities start with a Mass at 4 pm, followed by the Festival Auction Registration

and Silent Auction at 5:30 pm. Live music by Topsy & The Kickstands from 7:30 pm to midnight and Vegas tent. Food and beer tents, on both days, open at 5 pm and run until midnight on Friday until 11:30 pm.

Sunday boasts its famous chicken dinners, starting from noon to 5 pm. Annual antique car, truck and tractor show runs from 9 am to 5 pm. The quilt exhibit runs from noon to 4 pm. Live music is provided by Stan Mroz Polka Band. There will be a cash raffle.

The money raised is always first benchmarked for tuition assistance in our pre-K through 8th-grade Catholic school. Any money raised beyond that need is used to help maintain the campus facilities, according to Cavera.



Hope, gratitude, joy... Wishing everyone a year of pleasures and progress!
Thank you for being such wonderful neighbors and friends.

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Celebrate our time together! Year in Review JULY



Beautiful weather for Riverwalk Festival 2022

You couldn't have asked for better weather for this year's Riverwalk Festival, held last Thursday night through Saturday.

There were many events to be enjoyed by the whole family! Including: the Riverwalk Cruise-in and Rumble, Kidz Zone, the Friends of the Englehardt Library's used book sale, food booths, kayak, SUP and canoe race, Ducky Derby, Flea on the Flat River and so much more!



The Insiders: Tom Petty Tribute Band kicked everything off with their performance Thursday night, at the Sizzlin' Summer Concert, to a packed crowd. The Sea Cruisers brought the best music from the 50s, 60s and 70s to the stage on Friday night.

Saturday was jam-packed fun all day, with the fireworks finale to end Riverwalk 2022.

Winners of the Duck raffle were: \$1000 - Anonymous; \$100 winners: Robin Littlefield, Taylor Milstead, Ed Webb, Steph Perez and Rose Hollinshead. *Photo courtesy of Bruce Doll.*

Lowell Ledger reporter pens *The Lost Town*

Lowell author and reporter, Emma Palova, completed *The Lost Town*, a third book in the *Shifting Sands* series, on the last day of June. The historical fiction novel is set in Singapore, MI, a ghost town on the shores of Lake Michigan during the pioneer era of the 1830s.

Palova captured the spirit of the once-thriving lumbering town in its main characters - beautiful Miss Ida, her boss lumber baron John Bosch, Singapore founder Oshea Wilder and supporting characters, Sir Artemas Wallace and housemaid Mrs. Fisch. Miss Ida was torn between her hometown of Chicago and her new home, Singapore, and between two men. Who will win her heart?

The story unravels as the greedy New York investors set their eyes on the undeveloped land at the Oxbow bend in the Kalamazoo River surrounded by sand dunes with much-coveted white pines.

New Flag drop

Saturday, July 23, installation of the new, used flag drop was put into position at the Lowell Veterans Center, at 3116 Alden Nash Ave SE. The flag drop was presented to the Lowell Veterans Center in March by Joel and Amanda Lynch of Lynch Metal Fabrication, Alto. Pictured are Ken Adamy, U.S. Navy retired (Vietnam service) and member of both VFW Post 8303 and Legion Post 152; and David Maltman, U.S. Navy retired (Iraq service) and a member of VFW Post 8303.



H A P P Y N E W Y E A R

There's no time like the present to share our gratitude and best wishes with everyone who has made our year so wonderful... **Thank You and Happy New Year!**



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Celebrate our time together! Year in Review JULY



The River of Time Pageant 2022

Sponsored by the Lowell Area Historical Museum and presented by Alto Active Achievers & Friends, The River of Time Pageant is set for July 23 at 1 pm on the banks of Flat River on Lowell Fairgrounds. Bleacher seating will be available or bring a chair.

Its main purpose is to teach the early history of Lowell that begins in Wabwindego's Odawa village.

Local resident, Helen Stoller wrote the script in 1992, which was the year of the first performance. It was performed again in 1993 and every five years since. Museum educator, Luanne Kaeb, puts the production on.



Brown's Bee Service rescues and relocates honey bee colonies

Kyle Brown started his rescue and relocation of bee colonies service when he had health issues in 2017 in Portland. "I figure they're going to keep making honey whether I am sick or not," he said.

But he dabbled in beekeeping before when he was stationed in Kansas. "It was a lot of trial and error," he said. An atypical day is when Brown doesn't get stung. "When you're not stung, it's a day when you're not working," he said.

Brown, a self-taught beekeeper, focuses on a commercial beekeeping business and products such as raw honey, queen bees, and beeswax.

"I can handle most calls within 24 hours," he said. His service radius is within 45 minutes of Ionia County. So, when should people call Brown's Bee Service? "When they see a swarm that's easy to remove," he said, "on a tree or on a car." Brown advises not to wait because the colony moves, depending on the strength of the queen.

"If you notice them coming in and out of the window sill or siding, call right away," he said. "It's a lot harder to get them out of your walls." Swarm removals out in the open are free; however, when they're in the walls, Brown charges a \$550 cut-out removal fee.

Other than high gas prices, the challenges of cut-out removals from walls, include cutting the siding, and then it needs to be repaired. "When they do go away, they go into your walls and you have a bigger problem," he said. It takes three to seven hours, depending on the size of the hive, to remove out of a building.



Hope the spirit of the season stays with you all year!

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Celebrate our time together! Year in Review JULY



St. Mary and St. Anthony welcome new priest

Fr. Michael Goodwin is the new priest at St. Mary and St. Anthony churches in Lowell and Saranac, as of July 1, 2022. He replaces Fr. Aaron Ferris, who has gone on to be a chaplain. Before coming to Lowell, Goodwin served as the associate priest at St. Paul the Apostle parish in Grand Rapids.



Goodwin calls himself a convert, since he became a Catholic on Easter Sunday in 2011, after attending a mass at an army base. "I've never attended a Catholic mass before and I was drawn into the encounters with Christ that you can have during mass," he said. "It has changed the whole course of my life."

Goodwin grew up as a protestant evangelical christian on the east coast of Long Island in

the state of New York, where he lived until the end of high school. He attended a christian college at Cedarville University and received a B.A. in education.

His interests and hobbies are: travel, walks, sharing meals together, ultimate frisbee, water activities, books, mini-golf, baseball, football, ice cream, and movies.

Bushido-Ryu Karate in Lowell fends off bullies of all ages

Fight, flee or freeze. That is the response we have been conditioned to use. However, there are other methods to react, in case of fear or facing a bully, and Bushido-Ryu Karate is one of them.

Bushido is the code of honor and morals, developed and followed by the Samurai of Japan, and by Sensei Milton, the instructor at Milton Bushido-Ryu, now open in Lowell inside the strip mall by Speedway.

Bushido-Ryu has its roots in Okinawan Martial Arts, along with the disciplines of Bushido.

Owner, Sam Milton, is a certified self-defense instructor, who holds a 6th degree Black Belt and has been studying martial arts for 40 years. He opened the "Dojo" in Lowell on July 11, with his first class.

Having a daughter and a granddaughter who were bullied in school, Milton decided it was time to take action.

"I felt like it was time," he said. "My youngest daughter, Alyssa, was bullied in school and my granddaughter, Anabell, was also bullied."

The karate business is still Milton's sidekick, apart from his day job, working for an insurance company.



Warmest Thoughts & Best Wishes

Hope the coming year brings a wave of happiness and good fortune your way!

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Year in Review

AUGUST



Lowell city shoots down CopperRock proposal for tall building on line shack property

Listening to intensive public input, the Lowell City Council has voted down the proposal for a four-story building by CopperRock Construction on a 3:2 vote.

In a meeting that lasted close to two hours, the public, at large, spoke out against the modified downscaled proposal to construct a four-story building, a combination of 12 one-bedroom units, commercial on the lower level and a rooftop deck. "The rooftop deck will be a part of the first level," said project manager, Matt Hall. "It will be really cool. It will have a historic look to it and it's a great project for the community."

Topping all the public concerns was the issue of parking, already tight in the city, on the west side of the river. The city calculated that there are 147 parking spaces within 400 feet of the proposed building, with the majority in the municipal lot closest to the building.

Family history in the attic leads to friendship

When Kyle Kooyers and Caitlin Hopkins purchased a house in Lowell at 1019 East Main Street in 2020, they were not aware of an historical bonus that came with the house. For his part, Tom Doyle was unaware that a nice glimpse into his family history had been waiting 75 years to be discovered in the home Kyle and Caitlin moved into.

Tom's grandfather, Thomas Merenis (Renis) Doyle, lived in the home for fifteen years from, 1930 to 1945. His father, Earl, and his uncle Tom, spent time growing up there. One more key element in creating this story was Don Lehman, who has lived next door to the house on Main Street. Don was the thread that connected Kyle, Caitlin, and Tom Doyle.



The icing on the cake of this story goes beyond the fun part of some family artifacts being restored to present-day members of the family. We heard from both sides how the experience has spurred them on to learn more about, not only family history, but Lowell history, as well. Tom Doyle reported that he is now connected with a distant cousin in Arkansas, Kathryn Jackson, who is 93 years old. Tom thinks that the group photo found in the attic might have been taken in Arkansas. He also related that he has been taking advantage of the Lowell Ledger archives to search for more family history. Caitlin and Kyle spent many evenings, during the summer of 2020, reading editions of the Ledger from 1890 to the 1920s. They reported that the Doyle name showed up very often and helped them understand the significant role the family played, and continues to play, in the Lowell area.

Kent County Youth Fair 2022



This year's Kent County Youth Fair will provide wholesome entertainment for everyone; from a new carnival with new rides for all ages, to live music every day with a community talent show on Monday. The talent show is open to anyone.

The fair will take place at the old fairgrounds, located at 225 S. Hudson St. in downtown Lowell, with free admission but a \$10 parking fee from Aug. 8 to Aug. 13. Mason Rail Time Adventures has teamed up with Wade Shows to provide the carnival midway rides.

"We have lots of new stuff this year," said board president, Bill Zasko.

There will be livestock/equestrian exhibitions every day. Wednesday is Reading of Rides Day for kids under 12, who can fill out a form showing that they have read five books, and they will receive free rides that day.

Fallasburg Village Celebration is a hit

From the beautifully rendered acapella version of our national anthem, sung by Lowell resident Deborah Weiser at noon, to when the last note from the Easy Idle String Band faded eight hours later, the first-ever Fallasburg Village Celebration was a hit. There was plenty to do and see in the historic village on Saturday, July 30.

The event was planned and carried out by the Fallasburg Historical Society's Board of Directors, a small army of volunteers, and an impressive number of generous sponsors. Everything was done with the Society's motto, to "Preserve and promote the unique history of Fallasburg Village by bringing its past to life for present and future generations" in mind.

The event needed to last all day because there was so much to experience. The scope



of it took full advantage of the entire village, from one end to the other. According to reports, the hottest thing going (in every sense of the word) was the working forge demonstration put on by Frank Leasure of Tuckertown Forge, with help from Kurt Lardie, who has a day job as a regional director of the Kent District Library.

For visitors seeking respite from the heat, such could be

found within the walls of the well-shaded schoolhouse. Lowell's resident lepidopterist, Liam, with the help of his parents, Will and Betsy Lopez-Wagner, had his Amigos for Monarchs information booth set up there.

Photo Courtesy of Bruce Doll.



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Year in Review

AUGUST



The Marin family opening outfitters store

Luke and Rachel Marin have been thinking about opening a business for a while and even had come up with a name when their second son, Finnian, was born. When Luke's mother passed last year (and his father over twenty years ago), it became a time of reflection for the Marin family. "While grieving her, we realized you never really have as much time as you think you have to make your dreams come true," said Rachel Marin. "If we want this, we have to go for it and do it now... so we need to jump or we're going to be saying this forever."



Opening at 98 East Main Street, sometime this August, will be the new Fish and Finn Outfitters and Consignment store. The outfitting store will offer new and consigned outdoor equipment for hunters, fishers, hikers, campers, kayakers and more. Luke and Rachel Marin, owners of the new store, are excited to be following their passion for the outdoors, and Luke has extensive experience as an outdoor guide. Trained in Wyoming, Luke was a hunting guide in Texas for many years.

Mostly, the store will sell new and consigned goods for all the outdoor sports, but eventually, they plan on carrying consigned youth athletic gear for sports like soccer, baseball, lacrosse, football, and other sports. They plan to open their doors sometime in mid-August.

Lo/MI Studios want Lowell dancing

Julia Schaefer and her team at Lo/MI (pronounced "low my") studios are bringing lots of dancing energy to Main Street in Lowell. Schaefer is the owner/director of Lo/MI Studios and she has handpicked some very talented people to help her teach pretty much every form of dance one can imagine – from ballet to hip-hop, ballroom to jazz and contemporary. LO/MI wants everyone and anyone, from one year olds to old geezers like me, with an interest in dance, to consider themselves invited to come and learn.

Schaefer and her crew are convinced that dance has benefits for people of every age, interest and ability. The classes they offer cover the age spectrum completely – there is even a Seniors Only class for those over 60.

"We provide a safe and welcoming space for all people to move freely and expand into their own greatness," Schaefer said. "We strive to help each individual make continuous gains toward their maximum potential as dancers and as humans."

Katie Brim wins four gold medals

Katie did, yes she did. Hopefully, you read our coverage of Katie Brim when she was on her way to Canada to compete in the UCI 2022 Para Cycling World Cup, held in Quebec City, Canada, August 4-7, followed by the 2022 Road World Champions August 11-14 in Baie Comeau, Canada.



commanding leads. She mentioned that she hit a top speed of 39.8 mph on one of the courses. That is not just victory; that is domination.

Not only did Kate tear up the Canadian roadways on her wrong-sized, too heavy, borrowed, hand-powered bicycle, but she made such an impression on the folks in charge of Team USA in Colorado Springs, that they have made an offer to her that would allow her to set-up a residency in Colorado Springs for at least a year and allow her to live and train there. The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Center in Colorado Springs is the training center for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee and the Olympic & Paralympic Training Center programs. They have room for 500 athletes on their campus.

Katie surely did – she came home with four gold medals from the four races she competed in. She won the Time Trial and Road Race for the World Cup and did the same in the Road World Champions, four days later. In the time trials, the racers compete alone and the road races pit them against each other. Not only did she win all four, but she finished 10 minutes and 39 seconds ahead of second place in Quebec City, and 11 minutes and 9 seconds ahead in Baie Comeau. Fun fact about Katie, she enjoys pedaling her bike uphill more than any other aspect of the race. Small wonder she took such com-

Pink Arrow Community Day Readies for Year 15

If you arrived at Pink Arrow Community Day last Thursday at Impact Church, you might have been wondering, "what shade of pink will the shirts be this year?" Of course, there are only so many shades of pink you can make shirts out of, and after 14 years, it seemed time for a change. So this year's black shirts with pink lettering might have come as a surprise, but a welcome one.

The shirts, which say "Pink Arrow 15 Years and Fighting", were the main draw for a busy Pink Arrow Community Day, which also



featured plenty of other activities. LHS sports teams were part of the volunteers that helped sell shirts. Area food vendors had ice cream there, a large cow-themed bounce house, and a blood drive were also a part of the festivities.

Pink Arrow is celebrating 15 years this year; Pink Arrow XV will take place on September 1st. Community Day, which went from 1-7, last Thursday, was hailed a tremendous success by organizers, with nearly \$25,000 in shirt sales alone.

Lowell Historical Museum Summer Fest – celebrating a Main Street treasure

All three decks of the Lowell Showboat were engaged for the Summer Fest, held by the Lowell Historical Museum (LHM), Friday, August 19. The weather was warm, but it was fun to be able to transition between the air-conditioned comfort of the new Showboat and the outdoor decks that offer great views of the Flat River and Lowell.



Summer Fest started six years ago and the major draw for the event, outside of the financial support for the museum, is food and drink. Executive Director, Lisa Plank, and her crew, made full use of the big boat by placing food at several places on the lower two decks. Attendees could start with drinks, served

in souvenir glasses, just inside the entrance. Drinks were provided by New Union and Big Boiler, along with a selection of Michigan wines. Once a beverage was obtained, it was fun to make the rounds of a wide variety of food, donated by Ripple, Heidi's Farmstand and Bakery, The Cheese Lady, BC Pizza, Big Boiler, and Miss Ps Catering.

"Most small-town museums do not have the history, the community involvement or the resources, to offer people all that we do," Plank stated. "The Lowell Historical Museum is a real treasure."

NazCafe serves community dinners on the third Monday of each month

Taking Christ's word seriously to serve others, Lowell Church of the Nazarene serves community dinners on the third Monday of each month, from 6 pm to 8 pm at the fellowship hall, located at 201. N. Washington Street.

Pastor Trevor Workman found out that over 26 percent of Lowell demographics are at, or below, the poverty level, and the board decided to take action.

"We started a process of how our church can help the community, based on what is God calling us to do," he said. "Jesus teaches us to feed the hungry."

There is no criteria; anyone can come - whether they can't afford to make a meal, don't feel like cooking, or are just plain lonely. "If you're hungry, we're going to feed you," Workman said. "We're not going to turn anyone away."

The congregation donates as much food as they can, and it also gives monetary donations. "Anything that is not donated, we go out and buy it," Workman said.

This year, the church also started a community garden on the east side of the property. A table with produce is set up in front of it, where anyone can take any produce they need. "We use our own produce," he said. "Our goal is to have healthy meals."

Celebrate our time together! Year in Review SEPTEMBER



Betsy Davidson embodies the true spirit of Lowell

Betsy left us on Monday, September 5. We mourn her passing, along with everyone who was lucky enough to have known her. Hopefully upon reading this story, those who did not know her will gain some insight into her character and recognize what she did for all of us in the Lowell community.



After collecting comments, stories, impressions, and anecdotes about a true gem in Lowell, it might be easy to assume that Betsy Davidson was more than human and just visited us from somewhere in the DC or Marvel universe of super heroes. However, we have checked all the records and have come to the conclusion that Betsy was indeed a member of the family of humans. She just happened to be a shining example of many of the best parts of what makes us human beings.

Consider some of what helps the Community of Lowell really shine and you will no doubt include a list of non-profit organizations that are powered by volunteers who give of their time, talents, finances and other resources to benefit the greater good. Some of those organizations that come to mind might include the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, Lowell Rotary Club, our Historical Museum,

Relay for Life, the Lowell Community Fund and LARA – the Lowell Area Recreational Authority that has been working to connect hiking and biking trails in and around Lowell for over two decades. As someone told us, “If you look around our community, you will see traces of Betsy just about everywhere you go.”

We would like to use Betsy’s own words to close: “Thank you for all you did for us.”

Fallasburg Arts Festival – 54 years of art in the park

Most of us slow down a bit once we pass the half century mark, but if the reports from the artists we spoke to are any indication, the annual Festival in Fallasburg Park is going full steam ahead. The weather was a cooperative partner this year and the crowds took full advantage to come out and enjoy fine arts and crafts, along with a wide variety of food and music. There were 99 artist booths, ten places to eat and ten bands performing at the 54th Festival.



The Fallasburg Festival is all about music, art, and – oh yeah, FOOD. One of the most popular food booths is the chicken dinners cooked-up by the Lowell Fire Department. Lt. Chuck Johnson took a

minute away from prepping the grills to explain that they prepare for Fallasburg by getting 800 pounds of charcoal, which they use to grill-up 800 birds. Chuck and his crew are only one-of-ten of the food booths you can find at Fallasburg. There are lots of picnic tables set-up in front of the stage, so you can get the best of everything at once- Music for your ears and food for your belly, all while being surrounded by a huge variety of visual arts. We can only hope the Fallasburg Arts Festival continues for another 54 years.

Pink Arrow XV goes off without a hitch

Outside of a little midday heat, the 15th annual Pink Arrow event at Lowell High School was as close to perfect as could be.

There were four events that took place over the course of the day. Both schools that participated (Middleville Thornapple Kellogg in football and soccer, and Grand Rapids Catholic Central in volleyball) wore pink socks to join in on the spirit of the event. One of the



first events was a volleyball scrimmage against Grand Rapids Catholic Central. That scrimmage took place on the outdoor court at the stadium, as it has in past years.

Up the hill, at the LHS Athletics North Campus, was the soccer stadium where varsity soccer lost 6-3 to Middleville TK.

In the nightcap, the varsity football game against Middleville Thornapple Kellogg, Lowell won 49-6 in convincing fashion.

Organizers of the event projected that 5,000 Pink Arrow t-shirts were sold thus far, nearly going through their entire inventory. Over two millions dollars has been raised over 15 years, it was announced at the game.

Joyology aims to weed out the stigma of marijuana

At Joyology, it’s not about getting high but helping people in pain. “We’re erasing the stigma of marijuana,” said Kasey Monnin, acting general manager for Lowell and district manager for Western Michigan.

The cannabis dispensary, located at 2399 W. Main St., had a soft opening on June 20th, and it has been two years in the works. Lowell is the third location, after Quincy and Reading, now known as Weeding. “We had two years to activate our license,” she said. “Everybody has been nice in Lowell.”

Currently, the dispensary employs 12, with a total of up to 30 employees planned, when the store goes to deliveries as well. Most employees are full-time, with a minimum requirement of 25 hours for part-time employees.

The corporation offers medical benefits with a focus on mental health assistance. “We don’t want people to struggle on their own,” she said. “I don’t want anyone to feel like it’s a stigma.”

Betten Baker opens new Buick GMC dealership

The three-acre parcel of land, just west of the train tracks at 749 West Main Street, is the site of the brand new, multi-million dollar Betten Baker Buick/GMC car dealership and service center. The 16,600 square-foot facility is looking great as it is surrounded by a brand new black-top lot that is getting filled with new vehicles.

Everything is new and bright and the building is full of lots of natural light from all of the windows. The fifteen-bay service area takes up the southern side of the complex and is very impressive.

Charlie Jeffrey was quick to praise the people of Lowell, as well as the City government. “We are grateful to the community. Wittenbach had a great name and reputation and people in the Lowell area have been very accepting of us and we all appreciate that very much,” Jeffrey stated. “Lots of small towns can make expansions and changes difficult, but the people at the City (of Lowell) have been very cooperative.”

It seems like every time you turn around, some improvement or something new is being added to Main Street in Lowell. Betten Baker has certainly done their share.





Live the Life You Want

With Melissa Spino, MA, LPC, CDMS
Life Transitions Therapy, LLC

New Year's resolutions – time for a change

This is the time of year when many start reflecting on their life. Some notice areas they want to improve and make a New Year's resolution. My question is why do we keep doing something that has a failure rate as high as 80%? Especially when failing often results in feelings of guilt, sadness, disappointment, self-loathing, harmful self-talk, feeling worthless and so many more negative emotions. Something that is meant to empower and bring positive changes turns negative. Yet, year after year, this cycle continues. Some do succeed with their resolutions but most don't. This year, let's work to change the cycle.

Changing the cycle

If you haven't seen them already, soon you will start noticing articles on new ways to succeed at your

New Year's resolutions. Personally, I stopped making them years ago. Why? Besides the negative emotions often felt when you don't fully succeed, I prefer not to wait to make changes. There are many reasons resolutions fail, such as not being fully planned out, being unrealistic, not addressing root causes, etc. This year, consider working on goals/changes right away instead of delaying them. Below are some suggestions that may help.

Set realistic goals

Really look at the things you want to change. Are they realistic? Below are some common resolution examples and how you can change the focus of the goal to something that is more manageable and realistic.

- Goal: Losing weight. Many want to get down to a weight they haven't been

since they were a teen or in their early 20s. Maybe it's possible, maybe it isn't. I think a more realistic resolution is to eat healthier. So, an alternate goal could be "cut out 20% of the processed/junk food eaten and replace it with healthy fruits and vegetables."

- Goal: Exercise 30 minutes daily. This may seem reasonable but if you work long hours, have children to attend to, a busy social calendar, etc., this goal may be setting you up to fail. Instead, make it more manageable, such as "increase my active time each week by 10 minutes". You can do this until you reach a level of activity that fits in with your lifestyle and makes you feel healthier and energized. This goal is easier to fit into a busy life because you can easily add in things like parking the car further away to get in more walking, going for a short walk during work breaks, etc.

For goals to succeed, they need to be realistic and attainable. Otherwise, what's the point?

Find the root cause

After you have a realistic goal or short list of goals that focus on positive,

reachable changes, now comes the challenging part; understanding the root cause of the issues you want to change. If you skip this step, you will most likely end up back where you started. You need to figure out if what you want to change is a habit/learned behavior, an emotional reaction, self-sabotage, or possibly a fear reaction? Have you subconsciously developed a negative association with exercise or eating? Without understanding why you do what you do, you're setting yourself up for failure. It's crucial that you understand your mindset, beliefs, habits, fears and any benefit (positive or negative) that you are getting from continuing with the behavior. I believe most people struggle and/or fail at reaching their goals because they skip this step completely or don't explore deep enough.

For example, let's say you go from one unhealthy relationship to the next. You just don't understand why you keep ending up in similar relationships or picking the same type of partner. Maybe it's a learned relationship norm from childhood. It could also be a trauma response or a fear of abandonment issue that is still unresolved from childhood. It could also be a fear of intimacy or of being vulnerable? So, the unconscious benefit of going from one unhealthy relationship to another could be that it keeps your relationships at a surface level so you feel less vulnerable, less exposed, and emotionally "safe."

You see where I'm going with this. You can work hard to reach your resolutions but without

knowing the root cause, it's a "bandaid fix". This type of fix often leads to goal failure because you are trying to change symptoms without knowing or dealing with the root cause. So, the change doesn't stick. It's a temporary solution to an issue but the underlying cause isn't resolved. I feel this is the reason most goals fail.

Create a plan

Once you've found the true root cause and figured out any "hidden benefits" for behaviors you want to change, you can move forward and create a plan.

- The plan needs to include ways for you to deal with the emotions, habits, fears, and previously hidden benefits that led you to the behavior. Just knowing the "why" of a behavior is not enough because these past barriers will most likely resurface again. So, you need a plan and tools to work through them.

- Don't try and make too many changes at once or you are setting yourself up for failure. Keep the list manageable. One-two resolutions is better but three is okay if they are similar.

- Once you have a plan, don't put off the changes you want to make. If you find yourself procrastinating, then you have more work to do on the root cause because something is holding you back.

Alternative goals

If you feel stuck or like you are just going through the motions of life, you may want to try the below suggestions, as they may help you start to move forward.

Practice gratitude

This is my go-to attitude adjuster. Practicing gratitude is powerful and one of the fastest ways to change a negative attitude to one of peacefulness. It can even help improve feelings of sadness. If you feel yourself getting bogged down in negative emotions, try running through a mental gratitude list. It doesn't work if you just think or say the words without really feeling the meaning behind them. You really have to feel them. At the top of my list is "I woke up this morning". I focus on what a wonderful gift it is to have more time and specifics as to why I'm grateful for it. You can keep a mental or written list of all the things for which you are grateful and use it when you're in a negative mindset. Studies show that gratitude-practice has lasting, positive effects on the brain and our mental health.

Change negative self-talk

Work to change negative messages like "I'm so stupid! I can't do anything right" to "I've got this. I can and will figure this out." Change your inner voice to one that is nicer, supportive, and motivating. Keep switching negative messages to healthier more supportive ones. Eventuality, the negative self-talk will shift to healthier messages. I just recently wrote an article about this topic, which you can also reference.

I hope you find this information helpful but it is not intended to diagnose or treat. I hope everyone stays safe, healthy and has a wonderful New Year!

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Red Arrow

- BASKETBALL

SPORTS

Lady Arrows coast past Jenison to set up east side showdown

By Justin Scott
Sports reporter

6-0 and one more game from a perfect 2022 portion of the season for the Lowell varsity girls basketball team. That last game, though, will prove to be difficult, as Lowell heads to the Roundball Classic this Friday, where they face hosts Westfield Prep; a team who went 21-2 last year out of Redford and returns a large core of their squad from last year.

Lowell achieved their 6-0 record after moving past Jenison last week, 79-49, in a home contest. The Red Arrows were led by Piper Risdon, who scored

32 points. Braxcynn Baker (26), Taryn Jackson (7), Lexi Howell (6), RJ Wagamon (3), Gracyn Hamilton (3), and Hope Rummelt (2), closed out the scoring in the victory.

Risdon got the scoring going immediately, on a steal and layup, to make it 2-0. Both teams went back and forth throughout the opening quarter, but a driving layup by Risdon gave LHS a five-point cushion. Lowell stretched the lead to double digits late in the second quarter on a Baker corner three-pointer. Back-to-back threes by Baker and Howell closed off a 9-0 run and left the Red

Arrows up 16, heading into halftime.

The score was 30-27 Lowell with 4:00 left in the second quarter. With 5:00 left in the third quarter, it was 53-27. A 23-0 run that put the game out of reach, with Lowell playing out the win in the late stages and moving to 6-0 on the season.

Lowell's game in Redford tips off around 2:30 on Friday, the 30th. Lowell moves into conference play starting the new year, where they will face Northview, Greenville, and FHN, before a marquee matchup against East Grand Rapids.



Aubreigh Oswald goes for a block against Jenison.

- SOCCER

Emily Ake commits to Cornerstone for soccer

By Justin Scott
Sports reporter

Another Red Arrow has committed to play sports and continue their

education at the next level. Lowell girls soccer player, Emily Ake, has committed to Cornerstone University in

Grand Rapids to play soccer.

"What sold me about Cornerstone was the friendly, faith-based atmosphere and the ability to venture out, do everything I wanted to in college, but still be close to home," Ake said of the commitment. The LHS senior, who plans to study communications in college, is glad to have committed before the girls soccer season in spring. The stress of figuring out colleges is one of, if not the biggest, decisions a high school senior has to make.

The Cornerstone Eagles play in the Wolverine Hoosier Athletic Conference in the NAIA. Aquinas, Lawrence Tech, and Siena Heights, where Lowell graduate Isabel Remar just

concluded a stellar college soccer campaign, are among the Michigan schools that Cornerstone competes with.

Ake plays midfielder for the LHS girls team and served as a captain last year. Highlights include a goal against FHN last season in the Red Arrows first win over the Huskies in five years. She has been a key cog and goal scorer in the Red Arrow varsity team since 2021, playing her entire high school career on the varsity team. The 2020 season, her freshman year, was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ake's club coach at Midwest United FC also is a coach at Cornerstone, and was able to help Ake during the recruitment process.

She went on several general college visits, and would go on to practice with the team to get a feel of the atmosphere.

"Emily is one of the most determined and competitive players I have ever coached. She wears a chip on her shoulder and is always working to improve her game. She is a natural leader and is always positively encouraging her teammates. She will accomplish incredible things at Cornerstone as a player and a student," Lowell varsity girls soccer head coach, Joe Woodruff, told Fieldlevel.com, a website used to help coaches and athletes in the recruitment process.

"So far, Lowell High

School has best prepared me for college through the stellar academic and leadership opportunities, as well as a strong and supportive athletic environment, with coaches who not only believed in my potential, but encouraged and nourished it. I couldn't have done it without them," Ake concluded to the Ledger.

Once the offer came in, it was an easy decision for Ake, who committed within the week. Looking toward her senior season, Ake is excited to get back on the field with her teammates. The girls season kicks off in March.



LHS senior, Emily Ake, is on her way to Cornerstone next year. (Courtesy Photo)

Boys basketball, 3-2

Lowell dropped to 0-2 against the OK Red, this short season, as the Red Arrow varsity boys basketball team fell to Jenison last week, to close out the 2022 calendar year at 3-2.

In a home game for Jenison, they got the better of Lowell by a score of 55-47, in a close game, where Lowell led 26-25 at halftime. The Wildcats would ultimately pull away in the second half. Jenison had eight blocks

to Lowell's zero, which gave them an advantage in the paint, despite being outrebounded 30-28. The Wildcats also shot 43 percent from the field to Lowell's 35 percent.

The Red Arrows head to Wayland Union, on January 3 for a non-conference matchup before starting OK White conference play, with games against Northview, Greenville, and Forest Hills Northern.

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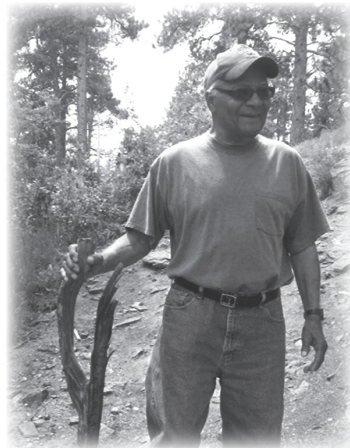
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obituaries

JAMES

Doyle James, age 94 of Lowell Township, passed away at home on December 7, 2022. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Geri James; children, Kimberly James of Detroit, David James and Jeremy James of Lowell, Dante James of Dayton, OH, Rosalind Harris of Denver, CO, Muriel James of Grand Rapids, Robin James of Columbus, OH, Joe Lewis and Dorothe Rhodes Lee of Grand Rapids; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren including, Jeremy W. and Genesis James of Lowell, Stephen Chennault of Detroit, Taylor Rottman of Hudsonville, and Makayla McCloskey of San Antonio, TX; and not to be forgotten his cat, Boots, who was his faithful companion his last few months. Doyle retired from GM Diesel in 1990 after 40 years of service. He worked in skilled trades as a millwright. He was very active in the UAW Local 167, serving as a B shift committee man and other positions. Always a firm believer in workers rights and civil rights, Doyle served as president of the Grand Rapids Chapter of the



A. Philip Randolph Institute from 1985-1990. After he retired, he was a long-time volunteer at Gods Kitchen and occasionally helped driving for Meals on Wheels. He organized two golf outings as fundraisers for Gods Kitchen. Doyle loved sports, especially baseball and had a ticket package to the White Caps for many years. He loved taking friends and family to the ballpark. Doyle coached many little league teams including Thornapple Valley Baseball League and his beloved McInerney team for the Southwest Little League. He also umpired for different youth organizations, and coached football for numerous youth teams. Later, he coached softball and volunteered for the Special Olympics including helping at the state games in Mount Pleasant. Doyle was a friend to everyone he met and was generous with his time, always ready to help in any way that he could. A life well lived. Many thanks to Faith Hospice for their loving care, especially Rita, Karis, Sarah, and Chaplain Mike. Memorial contributions may be made to Special Olympics, 1133 19th St. NW, 12th Floor, Washington, DC 20036-3604, or Gods Kitchen, 303 Division Ave. South, Grand Rapids, MI 49506, or Faith Hospice, 2100 Raybrook St. SE #300, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Cremation has taken place and a memorial/celebration is planned in the spring.

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NOONON

David Jack Noonon, Sr., born January 10, 1945, left this earthly life on December 15, 2022, following eighteen days in the hospital with pneumonia. Dave graduated from Lansing Everett High School in 1964, marrying his high school sweetheart, Judy Paine Noonon the following year. In 1974 he began his studies at Reformed Bible College (now Kuiper College), graduating in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in Religious Education. Dave served as a youth pastor, an outreach pastor, assistant pastor and, from 2006 until 2013, he served as Senior Pastor at New Horizons Ministry Center Assembly of God in Grand Rapids, MI. He was also instrumental in developing the curriculum for the Michigan District Assembly of God School of Ministry, and for many years served as assistant director for the school. As such, he impacted the lives of many pastors, missionaries, and lay workers. Dave was the fourth son (Raymond Gibson Jr., Roger Gibson, and Ronald Kitchen) born



to Amye and Raymond Gibson. He was adopted at age two by Alma and Rolla Noonon, gaining another brother, Robert F. Noonon. He was preceded in death by his parents, three of his brothers: Ray, Roger and Ron; and three granddaughters: Jennifer, Katherine, and Emily Roberson. He is survived by his wife Judy of 57 years, three children: Ann Marie Scott, Amy Jo Noonon (Andrew Wallace), David J. Noonon II, brother: Robert Noonon, and eight much-loved grandchildren: Kristina (Erik) Self, Alexis (Sam) Long, Adam Scott, Madison and Jordan Wallace, Erica, Jack David, and Elena Noonon. If you know anything about Dave, you know he was passionate about building and driving Street Rods, Hot Rods, vintage, and custom cars. This hobby began while he was still in high school. He had vast mechanical and auto knowledge that he enjoyed passing on. All three of his children agree that some of their best memories of Dad involved hanging out with him in the garage and going out "to coffee," times spent listening to him playing the piano, saxophone, and guitar. They also remember those, often eventful, street rod test drives. A private family service was held on Monday, December 19, 2022. A Celebration of Life service will be held at 2 pm on January 14, 2023, with visiting and lunch to follow at Christian Life Center, 3050 Alden Nash, SE, Lowell, MI. Pastor Robert W. Holmes officiating. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make a donation to Flat River Outreach Ministries, 11535 Fulton St. E, Lowell, MI 49331, or to a charity of your choice.

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Social Security benefits increase in 2023

Approximately 70 million Americans will see an 8.7% increase in their Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments in 2023. On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month starting in January.

Federal benefit rates increase when the cost-of-living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). The CPI-W rises

when inflation increases, leading to a higher cost-of-living. This change means prices for goods and services, on average, are higher. The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) helps to offset these costs.

We will mail COLA notices throughout the month of December to retirement, survivors, and disability beneficiaries, SSI recipients, and representative payees. But if you want to know your new benefit amount sooner, you can securely

obtain your Social Security COLA notice online using the Message Center in your personal my Social Security account. You can access this information in early December, prior to receiving the mailed notice. Benefit amounts will not be available before December. Since you will receive the COLA notice online or in the mail, you don't need to contact us to get your new benefit amount.

If you prefer to access your COLA notice online and not receive the mailed notice, you can log in to your personal my Social Security account to opt out by changing your Preferences in the Message Center. You can update your preferences to opt out of the mailed COLA notice, and any other notices that are available online. Did you know you can receive a text or email alert when there is a new message waiting for you? That way, you always know when we have something important

for you – like your COLA notice. If you don't have an account yet, you must create one by November 15, 2022 to receive the 2023 COLA notice online.

"Medicare premiums are going down and Social Security benefits are going up in 2023, which will give seniors more peace of mind and breathing room. This year's substantial Social Security cost-of-living adjustment is the first time in over a decade that Medicare premiums are not rising and shows that we can provide more support to older Americans who count on the benefits they have earned," Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi said.

Be among the first to know! Sign up for or log in to your personal my Social Security account today. Choose email or text under "Message Center Preferences" to receive courtesy notifications.

You can find more information about the 2023 COLA at www.ssa.gov/cola.

LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF POSTING OF ORDINANCE ADOPTION

The Lowell Charter Township Board adopted the following amendments to the Township Ordinances at its meeting on December 19, 2022.

- Ordinance 08-2022 to amend the Township regulatory ordinances to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the Township Residents by preventing damage, clutter, and any obstruction on Township owned property.

The adopted ordinance is available for review at the office of the Township Clerk, 2910 Alden Nash Avenue, SE, Lowell, Michigan, 49331 during normal office hours on Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday or by calling 616-897-7600. The ordinances are also available on the Township Web Site at www.lowelltwp.org.

Monica Burt, Clerk
Lowell Charter Township Board



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ATTN LOWELL WIDOWS - We have started widows coffee time Monday mornings at 9:30 at Keisers, west side. Questions call Jenn at 616-490-9970.

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H I C I J C C A U S O H W T D P R R U K
I Y E R U N F V D N P R E S E N T S F R

FUN PAGE

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

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!

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

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

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

Puzzle solutions on page 23

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

COOKIES DECEMBER EVE

JESUS LIST MIDNIGHT ORNAMENT PRESENTS REINDEER ROAST

SHOPPING STORES TINSEL VACATION WREATH YULETIDE

CAROLS CELEBRATION CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS

EVERGREEN FAMILY GATHERING HOLIDAY

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in New York on December 27, 1995. I made my childhood acting debut in a short film. I was nominated for an Academy Award in 2017 for my first leading role.

Answer: *Timothée Chalamet*

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to Christmas.

L H L Y O

--	--	--	--	--

Answer: *Holly*

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

- Product or ___ (abbr.)
- Zodiac sign
- S. China seaport
- Former OSS
- Early English printer
- Aphid genus
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Aussies
- Dissuades
- Make law
- Drench
- Soak in a liquid
- Male child
- It cools your home
- Small constellation
- To call (archaic)
- Explores beneath the Earth
- Commercial
- W. hemisphere
- You can find it in a can
- "Land of the free"
- 36 inches
- Footwear
- Challenges
- They hold things together
- Of I

CLUES DOWN

- Partner to flow
- Not connected by kinship
- Worries
- Garlic mayonnaise
- A way to take by force
- Legendary English rockers
- Your consciousness of your own identity
- Fencing swords
- Silly
- Actor DiCaprio
- Encircles with a belt
- Mails a message
- Longing
- Former CIA
- Folk singer DiFranco
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Large-scale
- School environment
- Remove
- Male parents
- Large rodent
- Weighed down
- Held tightly
- ___ route: going there
- Explains again
- Exclamation of surprise
- Courteously
- Lying down
- Judge
- Forcefully took
- Loosely compacted sediment
- High mountain
- Portable conical tents
- Cereal grass
- Dining utensil
- Thoughtful
- Helps you walk
- Indicates near
- Midway between northeast and east
- Local area network

Celebrate our time together!

Year in Review

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER



Hundreds enjoy the Lowell Harvest Celebration

The annual Lowell Harvest Celebration took place on Saturday, with many activities for local residents. Starting with The FFA pancake breakfast and The Harvest Hustle 5K in the morning, and ending around 4 pm, with the Autumn Marketplace on Main, the dry but windy day provided families with much to do.

Downtown Lowell was bustling throughout the day with many activities. The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce and Main Street merchants held an outdoor sidewalk sale all day, while many local restaurants competed in a "Best Chili" competition. Participants tasted chili from Big Boiler Brewing, Grillin' Guys, Junction Bar and Grill, Keiser's Kitchen, Lowell Moose Lodge #809, Main Street BBQ, Miss P's Catering, Mudpenny, Rio Plano Taqueria, Ripple and Sneakers. Taking the top chili spot was Junction Bar and Grill, cooked up by Mark Todd and Evert Bek.



Also, as families walked Riverwalk Plaza, they were treated to more food and craft vendors, along with Americana music provided by Cheater B's Band.

The wind was a bit of a nuisance throughout the day, as it did not play nicely with the vendor's tents and products but overall, The Harvest Celebration was well-attended and enjoyed by all. *Photo courtesy of Bruce Doll.*

Girls golf breaks 18-hole record

Records are meant to be broken, and last week one fell. An 81 by sophomore, Elle Sluss, helped break open the lowest score in an 18-hole round for an LHS girls golf team in program history, aided by three other scores in the 90's. It came in the gold division of the Kenowa Hills Invitational at Gracewil Country Club in Grand Rapids. Gracewil is a shorter golf course, that in good weather, can represent a prime opportunity for optimal scoring.

Lowell took advantage of that shorter length by posting their best round of the season, and a program best 355 over 18 holes. The scores came from Sluss (81), Rylee Jannenga (90), Sophia Flickinger (92), and Stephanie Spinella (92). Sluss recorded a birdie and eight pars during her round.



Ace In The Lowell opens this week

When you consider the state-wide BuyNearby effort to encourage Michigan residents to support locally-owned businesses, by redirecting at least 10 percent of their out-of-state online purchasing dollars to mom and pop stores, then Patrick and Erin Hendrick have perfectly timed the grand opening of their new sports store, Ace in The Lowell. The doors open this Saturday.

Having five boys – all of whom were or are active in wrestling, football, basketball, soccer, track, baseball and even Tai Chi – was one of the driving forces behind the decision to open a sports store in Lowell. The Hendricks recalled having to drive into Grand Rapids when one of the boys needed something for a sport. They pointed out that there are no stores dedicated to sporting goods from Ada to Ionia.

In addition to offering up new and used gear for organized team sports, the Hendricks will be stocking the store with "yard sports" items like corn hole, ladder ball, badminton, washer toss and home volleyball.

A great day at the Alto Harvest Festival and car show

Slated, ironically, as "The Best Fall Festival in Alto...Honest!?", the Alto Harvest Festival and Car Show on Saturday did not disappoint.

It was a beautiful, sunny day full of fun for both adults and children. There were many games and competitions throughout the day, including pie-eating contests, baking bingo, regular bingo and others. Some great food was provided throughout the day from the Alto Fireman's Pancake Breakfast to the many vendors cooking up lunch and snacks for visitors.



The Kids Zone at the festival provided free access face-painting, a petting zoo, popcorn and water, and the ever-popular bouncy house and slide. The main attraction for most was the car show, which featured close to 200 classic, antique, and muscle cars and trucks. Through it all, live music was played throughout most of the day. If success could be measured by smiles and laughter, then the Alto Harvest Festival met all expectations.

A New Year Is Here!



We hope 2023 is your best year yet. We're so grateful for friends and customers like you.
Happy New Year!

BOWNE TOWNSHIP
 8240 Alden Nash SE • Alto • 868-6846
 www.bownetwp.org
 HOURS: W 9 am - 3 pm • Th. 9 am - 5 pm
 Supervisor - Christian Wenger; Clerk - Karen Hendrick;
 Treasurer - Bonnie Lent-Davis;
 Trustees - David Fuss & Robert Flynn

Celebrate our time together!

Year in Review

OCTOBER



New Litehouse Family YMCA now open at former Impact Church

The new YMCA building, with state-of-the-art equipment, is located on the former site of Impact Church on Hudson Street and was designed to meet the needs of the Lowell community with a focus on wellness, recreation, and social support.

According to the plans, the new facility tripled the square footage of the former facility to more than 17,000 square feet, adding comprehensive health and wellness equipment, including programming for all ages, such as Taekwondo and a yoga studio.

Facility amenities include group exercise studios, a health and wellness center, KidZone and activity center, community rooms, locker rooms, and a welcome area for community gatherings. A nursery is available for children of exercising members.



Lowell School Board meets before midterm vote, parents clash over library issues

The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education met for its regular meeting, Oct. 10, at the Administrative Offices building.

Like many local school boards across the country during the final months before the midterm elections, the LAS Board has been hearing public comments from parents regarding library policies. The main issue is whether the school system is doing enough to make sure inappropriate materials are being kept away from students, and also, what constitutes “inappropriate” for a public school.

Steve Gough, principal of Lowell High School, addressed this issue, by making a presentation regarding the Children’s Internet Protection Act, a federal law enacted by Congress in 2000. The presentation outlined the requirements of CIPA and how Lowell Area Schools are complying. It also told how internet safety relates to the libraries and materials.

CIPA requires the school system to implement internet safety policies that block students from accessing inappropriate materials and provide safety when using email, chat rooms, and other forms of electronic communication. It also prevents hacking by minors online and unauthorized use of personal information.

Gough said LAS is complying with CIPA through an “iBoss” web filter, a program called “Bark for Schools,” which monitors online activities, and by educating students thoroughly regarding online safety.

Gough said there is nothing in the LAS library that meets the definition of “child pornography,” which is defined as “any visual depiction of a minor under 18” ,nude and/or engaging in a sexual act. He said a material selection process is in place that ensures there is nothing in the library that is “harmful to minors” or “obscene.”

Gough said the library material selection process is based on “industry standards” and is done by a highly-qualified, well-trained staff. Parents can request to approve materials their own children access, as well as prohibit certain texts.

“Things That Go Bump in the Night” has a successful run at LowellArts

Playbytes by Playwrights concluded on Sunday, October 30 after five performances, starting on Thursday the 27th. The ten 10-minute, one-act plays were performed at LowellArts and all of the selected plays revolved around this year’s Halloween theme: “Things That Go Bump in the Night.”

Each play had its unique twist on the theme. One of the plays, entitled “Buttdial,” was a funny story about a conversation between a woman and God, who mistakenly calls her. There were a couple of plays where the main characters were having conversations with ghosts or figments of their imaginations. All were fun, well-directed and had great acting from local volunteer actors.

It was another successful program by LowellArts and the next Playbytes won’t be until 2024, so you have plenty of time to write your play!

Lowell Area School Board Candidate Forum held at The Performing Arts Center

A Lowell Area School Board candidate forum was held at the Performing Arts Center on Tuesday, Oct. 20. Six individuals sat in front of a small audience to present their case for election. Candidates tackled questions from moderator, Maryalene LaPonsie, about LGBT representation in the school, handling differences in opinion, misinformation, and school start times.

The board also answered questions regarding misinformation in the age of the internet, the role of the school board in developing curriculum, and what time school should start in regards to AAP recommendations that students need adequate sleep.



Fish & Chicken Express is now open

The iconic Fry Daddy’s, by the tracks, is now Fish & Chicken Express, available on your favorite apps GrubHub, Uber Eats, and Door Dash. Still located at 608 W. Main Street, the new restaurant is ready to serve you and will be a take-out only. The business was purchased in September, by Bashar Jaghama and Joe Aqel.

“We’re going to keep the fish, all fried, adding fried chicken,” Janghama said. The old signature dishes will also stay, like fried okra, cauliflower, and fried green tomatoes.

“We love the small-town atmosphere of Lowell.”

Lowell inventor sells improved backpacks - H.C. Pax

Building on his previous experience, Chris Geisert, Lowell Arrow Alumni of 1993, went back to China and developed more patented products such as the backpack strap system after his successful Posture Pal invention. Now, his patented backstrap system is available through a company he started with his daughter, Haven Geisert.

The backpack was developed by Geisert while visiting many back pack factories near Shanghai and Fujian province. “I had an incredible cushion that addressed many problems with posture so I had to do something special with the backpack that I was developing,” said Geisert.

After altering the shape of the straps through many prototypes, Geisert decided to use four adjustable straps that met in a stabilizing centerpiece.

A person can also wear it like a normal backpack or with the weight on one shoulder and any combination you can imagine. Having the weight transferred to the chest region allows the backpack to be even lighter because the shoulders, chest, hips, and lower back no longer can carry the weight. Instead of just the shoulders and the lower back, now you can use the entire upper body.

The name H.C. Pax was also Havens idea. Pax stands for back “pack” but the x takes the



Celebrate our time together! Year in Review NOVEMBER



Entire city grieves the loss of Lowell's cat

As the twinkling lights from the Showboat reflect across the water, a stroll along the Riverwalk feels like a scene from a Hallmark movie. It's the quintessential Midwest town, filled with nostalgic shops, boutiques, and restaurants, yet the streets of Lowell feel a bit different this fall.

Just like the sunflowers at Ball's Softee Cream or the sound of music echoing from the summer concert series, a regal and stoic orange cat, named Dewey, was synonymous with Lowell. He traversed the city like a great explorer, always on his next adventure, yet was living proof that all who wander are not lost. The blue tracker on his collar prevented his owners from excess worry, and neighbors, visitors and shop owners, alike, treated a visit from Dewey much like seeing an old friend.



Dewey the cat will not soon be forgotten; he was the subject of countless conversations and provided perfect strangers a point of commonality to connect over. A walkway paver engraved with his name, even adorns the Riverwalk. Dewey certainly added to the sense of community, and although many are grieving the loss of a familiar face, he will long be remembered as Lowell's Cat.

Shabby Chicnanigans opens next to Curtis Cleaners

Located next to Curtis Cleaners, Shabby Chicnanigans brings the fashionable shabby look to Lowell, just in time for holiday shopping.

From upcycled furniture and hand-painted signs to the brand-new line of Celeste Mogador hand-embroidered pins, the well-lit shop entices with warmth and a friendly atmosphere. The attractive pins boast beautiful eyes and lips brooches.

After the closing of the Flat River Cottage in October, Chicnanigans' owner, Michelle Emaus, moved to 1410 W. Main - Suite B and opened on Oct. 7. "My hope is that people are aware that I am here," Emaus said. "I am thrilled to have found this location."

"The focus is on what Lowell doesn't have," said Emaus referring to greeting cards and souvenirs.

The store is open Monday through Saturday, from 11 am to 5 pm.



Lowell Education Foundation approves over \$27,000 in grants for Lowell Area Schools

Lowell Education Foundation (LEF) assists teachers across the Lowell Area Schools (LAS) district who seek creative and innovative ideas to help their students be successful. This past October, LEF met to review \$55,000 worth of grant requests from LAS teachers and support staff. The Foundation granted over \$27,000 worth of the requests, thanks, in part, to the generosity of LEF donors.

Grants approved in October included: Ninja Wall Challenge Course for Alto Elementary, Makey Makey-An Invention Kit for Everyone, and Make-It, Take-It Math Workshops that will help with Math interventions at all LAS elementary schools.

The money distributed this year is the largest amount in the Foundation's history, granted to enhance innovative learning for students in the district. "Reviewing grant requests is never an easy task and this year was no exception. The work our district teachers are doing to encourage learning is evident in each request. We're proud to help teachers enhance the learning experience for all students," says Shelly MacNaughton, LEF Chair.

LAS Gough and Beachler receive awards

Lowell High School principal, Steve Gough, has been awarded a Service Award for School Administrators by the Michigan Association for Media in Education for making a unique and sustained contribution toward furthering the role of the school library and its development in a school program. He not only supports and encourages reading during the school day, but he participates daily. He has become an expert on collection development and challenged materials policies, and strives to promote access to library materials.

Michigan Association for Media in Education (MAME), has announced that the 2022 Roger Ashley Freedom to Read Award was presented to Christine Beachler.

The MAME Roger Ashley Freedom to Read Award recognizes an individual or group who demonstrate exemplary support for our First Amendment rights: the right to read and listen, and the right to express ideas without governmental interference.



Milo's Kids Consignment fills Main Street storefront next to dam

At Milo's Kids Consignment & Boutique, environment takes priority, as reflected in the neatly organized second-hand children's clothing on racks and display walls throughout the store, located in downtown Lowell by the dam.

"We were waiting for the right space to come along. We jumped on it when it became available," Tori Runstrom said.



Together, with Cat Visokay, the owners wanted to stick around Lowell, having opened Wear Forward Women's Consignment two years ago. "We're both moms," she said. "We wanted to add a kids' consignment. We thought it was something that the Lowell community needed."

"My hopes and expectations are that we keep growing here so we can open up for seven days a week in January," Runstrom said. The store is open Tuesday through Saturday.

City Council member, Yankovich, recuses himself from line shack vote

On Nov. 7, during City Council's latest meeting, City Council member, Cliff Yankovich recused himself from a vote on the Line Shack building. The resolution would have authorized the sale of the property at 115 Riverside Drive to Main Street Development of Lowell, LLC for a total of \$150,000.

Yankovich cited conflict of interest concerns with the owner of Main Street Development of Lowell, LLC. "Greg made a point of bringing up that he had hired someone with [Paycheck Protection Program] money, and he had spread PPP money to businesses in Lowell and I received both of those things. And since he was using that as an argument to support this case, I don't know how I could possibly vote for this."

City Attorney, Jessica Wood, expressed her doubt that there was any conflict of interest. She stated that to pass, this resolution would require all four yes votes. Ultimately, Yankovich decided to abstain from the vote. An alternate resolution was presented to accept a bid at \$130,000 and passed with four yes votes. Council member, Yankovich, voted no on this motion, due to concerns regarding construction completion time of the buyer.

Czarnecki provided an update on Gee Drive construction. At the time of the City Council meeting, construction was scheduled to be completed by the end of the day, Wednesday, Nov. 9th. City Manager, Michael Burns, updated City Council on the BLDI soil sampling, regarding the front street property. The toxic materials in the soil never made it into the ground water or the Grand River.

Celebrate our time together!

Year in Review

DECEMBER



Crowds gather for the Annual Santa Parade

The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce's annual night-time Santa Parade was well attended on Saturday, December 3. The weather was winter-like, spectators lined the streets, and this year's entries exceeded all expectations. *Photo courtesy of Ryan Heffron.*



A Nite of Christmas Cheer - a memorable night for all

Last Friday, the Lowell Chamber of Commerce and the Lowell Downtown District Authority sponsored "A Nite of Christmas Cheer" on Riverwalk Plaza and the Showboat. Temperatures in the low 30s did not discourage hundreds of local families from attending the festivities. Those in attendance were able to meet two live reindeer and warm themselves by the firepits, hot cocoa and cookies, roasted chestnuts and hotdogs were all available.

The two main features of the night were horse and carriage rides and visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus on The Showboat. Both of those lines were very long but people waited patiently for the unique opportunities.

Overall, the streets were bustling and the local restaurants were packed with people enjoying food, spirits and live music. Christmas lights and decorations glowed throughout the Riverwalk and on Main Street, making the evening a memorable one for all.



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Boys basketball scores 92 in win

Remember in January, 2000, when your friends would tell you about the "Game of the Century" or "Hey, this is the first time I've seen you this century". Well, yeah man, the century is three days old.

Well, the century is 22 years old now, so when you say the first time this century, it actually means something now.

So, that Lowell boys basketball scored the most points they have this century, is pretty impressive. Now points scored in high school, things are different. If the game is a blowout, the backups are in early, and teams aren't scoring 100 like they used to. Also of note, there's no shot clock in Michigan high school basketball, which again makes 100 point games even rarer.

Fast forward to Tuesday night's game, Lowell and Cedar Springs have been going through some down years win-wise. When Lowell found themselves on the plus side of a 92-58 scoreline, in their season debut in front of a well-attended student section? Yeah, that had the Lowell players feeling good, as well. The 92 points was the most scored by a Lowell team since a 102-44 win over Belding in the 1986-1987 season.

Echo Salon located in revamped space at 505 W. Main St.

Owner, Melissa Looman, and husband, Adam Looman purchased Echo Salon in Grand Rapids in 2017, which was founded in 1999. In October, they decided to expand after finding Jultara for sale in Lowell. Julie Heimer, the previous owner, is still working as an independent contractor at the new-rebranded Echo Salon Lowell. "It's a joy to revamp the space while getting to know the guests and culture here," Looman said. She also drives through Lowell several times a month to visit with parents in Ionia. "We have done many dinners and activities in this thriving community, including the many festivals that are so fun," she said. "It seems to be growing as well, which means there is more hair to be done."

Looman's hope is that Echo Salon Lowell can grow into a busy, exemplary salon with some of the best stylists in the area creating beauty and loving their work, while guests are refreshed, rested, and taken care of. "More than that, I hope to join and help to elevate the culture of hairdressing in Lowell and beyond, leaving our industry a better place than we found it," she said.

Echo Salon is located at 505 W. Main St. Suite, C, Lowell and can be reached at 616-742-9980.



Lowell resident climbs to help orphanages and see the top of the world

Lowell resident, Shane Chidester, has decided to live his life by experiencing stuff, rather than just existing. In Chidester's case, stuff means climbing the highest peaks to see the top of the world, and helping kids in orphanages, while having fun.

Chidester started climbing six years ago, when his friend, Marc Milburn, was having a tough time and needed to get away. They conquered Kilimanjaro, the highest free-standing mountain in Africa, at 19,341 ft. above sea level, and dropped off supplies and soccer balls at an orphanage.

This trip was on the famous Inca Trail donning the fascinating Dead Women's Pass, which is the highest point of the classic trail at 13,800 ft. on its route to Machu Picchu. "Its name is Dead Women's Pass because of a rock formation," he said. The rock formation, seen from the bottom of the valley, resembles the form of a women's supine body.

The most recent trip to Peru was to practice climbing Aconcagua in January. Aconcagua is a mountain in the Principal Cordillera of the Andes Mountain range, in Mendoza Province, Argentina. It is the highest mountain in the Americas. Chidester will be taking the Lowell flag there, as well. "I am glad that I can do this," he said. "This will be the hardest I have tried yet." The mountain is 22,841 ft tall and the hike will involve four load-carry days. Chidester has also climbed Mt. Rainier in Washington State.

Chidester starts training about a year before a planned hike by practicing on actual stairs to push his body and heart rate up. However, he doesn't recommend running because runners struggle with high altitudes.

He plans on taking his nephew, Connor Rapson, 14, to climb Kilimanjaro in 2024.

