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Lazy Dog
Maple Products



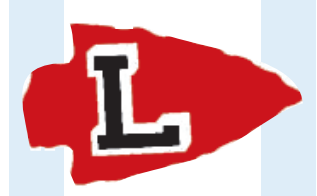
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Movie Review



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Lowell Area
Schools Sports



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Wrestlers pass regional test with flying colors

by Justin Scott
sports reporter

Greenville came into Wednesday's dual as the sixth ranked team in division two. A team full of talented wrestlers that would beat many of the teams that would qualify for the division two team state final. A dual, between number one and number six, two conference foes, and storied programs. It had all the makings of a classic dual until it didn't. Lowell defeated Greenville in the regional championship match by a lopsided score of 69-3, showcasing the gap, between challenger and defending champion, was simply too big for the Yellow Jackets to overcome.

Ari McFarland got things going for the Red Arrows with a pin at 215. Juan Acosta and Jarrett Smith added wins, before Greenville got on the board, to make it 13-3 Lowell. From there, Lowell's stacked lineup took over on a fall from Landon Musgrave, quick technical



Lowell wrestling after winning the Regional Championship.

fall from Jackson Blum, Trevor Boone decision, and six straight, six-point victories, to close out the match. Those six point wins came from Carson Crace, Casey Engle, Jack Meier, Tacho Gonzales, Landon Miller, CJ Poole, and Owen Segoski.

Earlier in the night, Lowell topped another conference opponent, Forest Hills Central, 66-6 in the regional semifinal. "I'm excited for the whole thing on Friday; Kalamazoo is a special place and it's a great opportunity for our guys," Coach R.J. Boudro said of the upcoming team state final.

While Lowell's regional didn't end up being close, there were many others around the state that were incredibly tight. Two results, in particular, stood out with

Wrestling,
continued page 16

Library issues bring Lowell community to Board of Education Meeting

By Michelle Smith
contributing writer

The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education met for its regular meeting, Feb. 13, at the administrative offices building. There was a larger-than-usual audience of approximately 70 people in attendance.

Jessica Curtis was sworn in as an appointed Board member to replace Dan Stephens, who resigned in January. Curtis's term expires in 2024.

Student representative, Emma Sage, reported on student body activities, which included a "Be Nice Week." The purpose of the event was to promote kindness, and to foster and prioritize inclusion and anti-bullying.

Elementary math coordinator, Carmen Tawney, reported that Bushnell Elementary first

graders are being tracked for performance through a hands-on math intervention program. Students were at the meeting and demonstrated games with Board members that help improve math skills.

Tawney said the goal of the program is to improve math skills and give a great start for the youngest students.

"It's getting those youngest kids to use manipulatives to learn, to touch, to feel, to experience math as best they can," she said.

Tawney said the current program is seeing growth in all the Lowell Area elementary schools with an 84 percent targeted growth rate since the Covid shutdowns. Much of the growth is attributed to "make it, take it" workshops, where teachers are given materials for their classrooms.

Sonia Hodge, LAS Chief Financial Officer, presented the 2022-23 budget amendment. She presented budget challenges and changes, including Covid-related funds that will be ending completely by 2025.

She reported a decrease in birth rates in Michigan and Kent County, which she said explains the decrease in enrollment for Lowell Area Schools. In a presentation slide showing Foundation Allowance Changes, Hodge said the fluctuations in funding makes planning difficult.

"You can see that year-to-year we're kind of on the edge of our seats for

School Board,
continued page 3

Two Lowell Odyssey of the Mind Teams advance to state finals

submitted by Lori Lothian

The Region 1 and 4 Odyssey of the Mind Tournament was held recently at Forest Hills Central High School, as over 60 teams gathered to show off their creativity. Lowell Area Schools sent three teams to the competition. The top teams in each problem and division qualified for the state finals competition, to be held on March 18th at Thornapple Kellogg Schools.

In the "Pirates and the Treasure" problem, teams were asked to present a performance where they embarked on an adventure to overcome a sea monster and reclaim a treasure, then return it to the queen's kingdom. Teams were tasked to build a ride-on "ship" using a creative propulsion system that would transport team members on a course and perform different functions. Two Lowell teams accepted the challenge and advanced to the state competition. The elementary team of Tristan Catanach, Oliver Manning, Owen Basel, Easton Dressander, Justin Clouse, Malachi Dixon and Walker Knorr placed second, out of five teams, in their division and advanced to the state finals tournament. The Lowell High School team of Olivia Lothian, Jackson Pelletier, Ayla Charon and Dalton Charon also competed in the "Pirates and the Treasure" problem and brought home first place medals, advancing them to the state finals competition.

Also, competing at the

Odyssey,
continued page 3

DDA discusses Summer Concert funding

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

On Thursday, February 9, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of the City of Lowell met to make plans for the 2023 Showboat Sizzling Summer Concert series, which runs every Thursday night at 7 pm from June 15 through August 24.

Planning for these concerts begins early, with applications considered a year in advance. For example, applications received now would be considered for the 2024 season.

“This is my last time doing this,” said LowellArts Executive Director, Lorain Smalligan, who has worked with the organization for 24 years. Smalligan is retiring from this position on March 1, leaving leadership of LowellArts in the hands of Janet Teunis.

Typically, the city budgets \$20,000 for the summer concert series.

Smalligan and former Lowell Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Liz Baker, wrote to city manager, Mike Burns, to request only \$12,000, with the option to come back for more if needed. This number was based on the fact that the city ended up only needing to pay \$11,059 for the entire 2022 season.

Like Smalligan, Baker, too, retires this year after many long years of service. The new Chamber head, Shannon Kennedy, was in attendance at the DDA meeting. She reported that she’s four weeks into the job and she appreciates the opportunity to engage with “what Liz has built here.”

Smalligan and company seek out sponsors to co-fund the event, thus, reducing how much of the earmarked money they need to use. “Last year was a record year for us for sponsorships,” she said.

In response to the funds

request from Smalligan and Baker, city manager, Burns, recommended that the Lowell DDA approve the full \$20,000 investment in the Sizzlin’ Summer Concert series.

Smalligan spoke about one particular place where she would like the funds to be put to use. Lowell high school has a rock orchestra, named Fusion, that wishes to play at the summer concert series, and though they do not have to be paid, Smalligan requested a \$650 stipend for the group, to help with instrument and other fees.

Mayor, Mike DeVore, who also serves on the DDA, was a strong proponent of allotting the additional funds to the high school group. “I would like the school orchestra to get more than \$650,” he said. “If there’s leftover money, I’d like to see it go to them.”

When asked how they advertise for the event, Smalligan explained that it’s, traditionally, a social media campaign. They could put up a billboard visible

from the highway, but that would be very expensive. Smalligan was less worried about getting the word out than she was about getting bodies to the event. Proposed road construction this coming summer threatens to complicate transportation to and from events.

Public Works Director, Dan Czarnecki, elaborated on the planned road work for the summer. “That’s going to be a mess,” he said. Monroe Street, all the way North to Fremont, is getting replaced, including the back parking lot adjacent to Lowell City offices and the Lowell Police Department. Dates for construction are difficult to estimate, because the project requires federal approval from Washington DC before a pass through the state. Czarnecki guessed that construction would start, at the earliest, this coming May.

At a previous city council meeting, Czarnecki expressed the importance of never cutting down so much as a tree in front of someone’s house without



LowellArts Executive Director, Lorain Smalligan, discusses funding request for 2023 Showboat Sizzling Summer Concert series.

telling them about it ahead of time, and he believes this ought to be true, whether or not the tree even belongs to them. In accordance with this tried and true process, Czarnecki wishes to hold public meetings with neighbors and businesses who will be impacted by this road work.

Road work or no, the DDA voted unanimously to approve funding as requested for the 2023 Showboat Sizzling Summer Concert series.

The DDA holds monthly meetings on the first Thursday, following the first city council of the month. The next meeting is Thursday, March 9, 2023. Meetings are open to the public. Those interested in watching the February 9th meeting can find it on the City of Lowell YouTube channel, @cityoflowell. The agenda can be found at the City of Lowell home page, lowellmi.gov.



Incoming Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Shannon Kennedy, is excited to work with the Downtown Development Authority this year.



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By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

The Lowell Planning Commission assembled for its monthly meeting on Monday, February 13, at 7:00 pm. While together, they discussed the annual report from Grand Rapids Gravel Company and the proposed new Master Plan, but they spent most of their time discussing 504 and 512 E. Main Street.

The City of Lowell, in association with Flat River Outreach Ministries

(FROM), intends to transform the properties at 504 and 512 E. Main Street into affordable housing. FROM Executive Director, Wendie Preiss, was present for the meeting. “People are asking for housing,” Preiss said, “but we don’t have room.”

Preiss recounted the story of a woman she’d interacted with, who attempted to secure housing through FROM for her family, following some hard times. Because FROM did

not have any open spots for the family, they are now separated.

“She’s living in one spot and her two children are living in another,” Preiss explained. “No relative could accommodate all of them.”

FROM currently lodges ten households at 504 E. Main Street. Eight of those ten include people working local service jobs. Some have taken up permanent residence, some only need the assistance until they can get back on their feet, and for some, the future is unclear. Preiss noted that

about 30 percent of the people housed at this facility move on and find something else, opening spots for others in need. FROM housing does not require micromanagement through a rehabilitation plan, though families are privy to other FROM resources. Rather, qualification for housing is based on income levels. “People often get in here who couldn’t get in elsewhere,” Preiss noted. FROM is more lenient

Planning,
continued page 7

the lowell ledger

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FROM Director, Wendy Preiss, explains the need for more affordable housing in Lowell.

Odyssey, continued

regional competition in “The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!” was the elementary team of Landry Vance, Ellie Burton, Taryn Freyling, Drew Tatge, Hadassah Smith, Ruth Gingerich and Brenik Charon. This team was tasked to create a humorous performance about a dramatic character who overreacts to common events. This problem was sponsored by Arm & Hammer baking soda and the team had to incorporate its use into their solution.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international program that fosters creative thinking and problem-solving skills among kindergarten through college level students around the world. Teams work to solve any one of a number of long-term problems, from building mechanical devices and balsa wood structures to creating a unique interpretation of a literary classic. New teams will be forming in the fall for interested students.

School Board, continued

what our funding is going to look like for the next year. Our expenses are pretty steady. We know that we’re educating students, but we’re not sure how much money we’re going to have to fund that,” Hodge said.

The Board voted to adopt the amendment to the budget and will vote on the final budget in June.

Dustin Cichocki, Director of Human Resources, reported that through a safety and security grant, LAS was able to purchase tourniquet training kits and CPR training.

Dan VanderMeulen, Director of Curriculum, said the district is switching to a different K-5 math curriculum. “Reveal Math” will be replacing the current curriculum “Everyday Math.” He said the teachers heading the pilot group using the new curriculum gave a “strong push” to make this change.

During the public comments portion of the meeting, eight people spoke. Several people supported the current media center staff members and LAS library policies, specifically the book, *All Boys Aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson.

A LAS committee recently voted 6-1 to allow this book to remain in the library and be available for high school seniors only. The media center has a system in place that allows parents to restrict their own children from whatever content they choose.

Heather Gray called the book a “thoughtfully written memoir,” which she’s encouraged her high school senior to read, in order to gain different life perspectives and to “gain empathy towards others.”

Sarah Ellis expressed support for LAS media specialist, Christine Beachler, and encouraged “kindness, community, and compassion.” Leah Groves thanked the Board for keeping the education of all LAS students in the forefront of their agenda “regardless of their backgrounds.”

Several commenters, including student, Saige Brandt, said parents shouldn’t dictate what

other people’s children can read, and that the current library policy regarding what should be available in the resource center should stand.

Parker Liu said he led a book club composed of Lowell community members that read the Johnson book. He said it was the conclusion of the club that this book should remain in the LAS library. Liu said that while he acknowledges that some of the themes may not be appropriate for younger students, the stories and themes presented in the book reflect perspectives of racial and social minorities that some LAS students may relate to. Liu said he is concerned that the library challenge process will get bogged down and lose its effectiveness.

Stefanie Boone disagreed that the book by Johnson is appropriate material to be in a school library. Boone argued that many high school seniors who have access to the book are still minors and that the committee that investigated the book was biased toward keeping it.

Boone read an excerpt from the book that was sexually explicit. She asked the board what educational value this book has and challenged their definition of pornography. “Where in Lowell district policy does it state that it is the job of Lowell schools to educate students regarding struggles with identity, sexual orientation, or processing feelings, and where does it say it may include explicit sexual content?” Boone said.

Boone said the Board policy states that controversial issues are only allowed when it is related to the instructional goals in a course of study, if it does not indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view, or as long as it is conducted in the spirit of scholarly inquiry. “This book does not follow your Board policy, and tonight, I am formally asking the Board to override the decision of the committee,” Boone said.

Superintendent Nate Fowler responded to Boone’s comments. “We formed our committee based on Board policy. I disagree with the assertion that the committee was biased. It was thoughtful, deliberate conversation. Not just about the excerpt that we heard, but the work of literature, as a whole, and the value of that in the library.”

college news

Albion College announces students who were named to the Dean’s List or who were named new Albion College Fellows at the end of the Fall 2022 semester.

Chase Potter and Megan Chipman, both of Saranac, were named to the Dean’s List. Potter is majoring in biochemistry, Chipman is majoring in English. William Neeley of Lowell was also named to the Dean’s List. Neeley is majoring in combined engineering/physics.



The division 1 “The Most Dramatic Problem Ever!” elementary team.



The division 1 “Pirates and the Treasure” vehicle team with their second place medals.

Northern Michigan University announces the Dean’s List for the Fall 2022 semester. The following students qualified with a grade point average of 4.00.

Julia Bouma, Ethan Hale, Olivia Maynard, Meghan Meyer, Lena Ostergren, of Ada. Margaret Walker, of Belding. Hanna DeVries, Jackson Fowler, Marlie Fowler, Emma Schmidt, of Lowell

The following students qualified with a grade point average of 3.50-3.99.

Kilee Boone, Lexi Erbenbraut, Jay Gootjes, Max Harris, Amanda Lemmeyer, Eric Mooney, of Ada. Tommie Rice, of Belding. Brielle Arnett, Kiana Fahrni, Soren Hanson, Claire Jorgensen, Olivia Rose, of Lowell





The Lowell Rotary Club

is accepting grant applications from local non-profit organizations seeking financial assistance with projects. Grant eligibility requirements and the grant application can be found at our website www.lowellrotary.org

if you have any questions email us at info@lowellrotary.org.

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From the desk of

Michael T. Burns
City Manager
City of Lowell



I want to thank Jon Jacobs for allowing me to write this article. He offered me to submit articles informing people of what is happening in Lowell and I will try to do this as I am able.

The first item I will discuss is roads. If you live in the City of Lowell, they are horrible. However, they are getting better and I will explain in a minute.

If you go into any community in Michigan that doesn't have a dedicated road millage or dedicated income tax, we are not different. This is a statewide issue, that unfortunately, nobody wants to fully address. In the current fiscal year, we are projected to receive \$530,075. By law, 75 percent of these funds are to go toward major streets; this includes 6.89 miles of road in the City (i.e. Bowes, Monroe, Gee, Foreman). The remaining 25 percent is to go to the local streets or 13.39 miles of road in this city. Understand, these funds are to be used to the cover wages and benefits of employees who plow our roads, manage our storm drains and fill potholes. It also covers all of the material costs to maintain the roads (i.e., salt, sand, pothole patch etc.). Philosophically, the remainder of the funds is used to repave roads. For us, we have somewhere between \$200,000 to \$250,000 left to pave roads. This is about the equivalent of paving one street.

The good news is, in the past few years, we have seen a significant increase in gas tax funds, as the Michigan Legislature has made changes to Public Act 51 funding. I

believe when I came here in 2016, we were receiving about \$350,000 from gas tax. It doesn't entirely solve the problem but this does help. In the future, there are questions with the increase in electric vehicles and how they will equate to the road funding. If you don't know, they don't pay for road taxes, currently, and an electric vehicle is much heavier than your normal sedan or truck. This is a serious issue the legislature and Governor are looking at.

The next question you have is, we all pay a lot in property taxes and where is that going? I recognize we pay a lot in property taxes. I pay them in the city, too. However, this past year, the property taxes we were scheduled to receive was \$1,959,623 or 49.7 percent of all revenue the general fund operates on. I won't get into the weeds on this, however, roughly 32 percent of our budget goes to the Police and Fire Departments. The remainder goes to fund the parks, public works, city hall functions, city hall and other facility maintenance, the library, elections, the cemetery, the museum (even though a millage covers most of these costs). I will explain the marijuana funds in a minute, but without these, we can subsidize about \$150,000 in general funds to the local streets. Also, of the total approximate general fund capture of \$3.9 million, 47 percent is utilized just on personnel costs for the City. What I am saying is, money goes into a lot of places people probably don't see, but if they didn't go there, the residents definitely would notice funds, and I am not sure they would like that. I should also mention, that our water and wastewater funds are funded through utility billing and we don't use general fund dollars for anything pertaining to water and sewer.

So, if you followed me so far, we have about \$350,000 to \$400,000 to pave streets. This is probably two streets, depending on where in the city. In some locations this might not fix one street in full.

Balancing a budget is a challenge for staff and the City Council, and I believe we are very responsible with how we spend funds and provide services for this city. The one thing you should know is the City Council has built-up approximately \$600,000 in additional rainy-day funds,

since I have been employed here, which was the fall of 2016. We are required to have a minimum of 15 percent of the current year's general-fund revenue for emergencies and to cover municipal costs from the end of June, when the fiscal year ends, to our first collection of taxes in August. We have approximately a 35 percent fund balance currently. This should address any emergencies we have. We also have tried not to build up anymore fund balance but address the two biggest issues in the City, which is the unfunded pension liability and roads, when we have excess funds at the end of each fiscal year. We have taken approximate \$250,000 of these funds to address local streets since 2021.

The next question I hear is, what is being done with all of the marijuana money? The Marijuana Excise Tax funds go directly to the local street fund. In 2021, the city received approximately \$28,000, and in 2022, the city received approximately \$282,000. This fiscal year, I budgeted \$200,000 in funds, however, I expect the payment to be somewhere in the \$300,000 to \$350,000 range when we receive our payment in March. Every dollar received has been transferred to the Local Street Fund.

Here is the good news, since the summer of 2020, the city has paved 18 streets. We have fully repaved Amity, Gee, Jane Ellen, Roberta Jane, Faith and Church. We have paved segments of Elizabeth,

Howard, Hillside Court, Suffolk, Riverside, Foreman, Broadway, Valley Vista, West, Heffron, and Elizabeth Dean. This summer, Grindle and Shepard Drive will be paved.

This leads me to Monroe and Washington. Monroe and Washington have major water and sewer issues, which need to be addressed before we can repave the street. These projects are being financed through loans from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program. These projects have to go through many steps before we can even bid the projects. They changed mandates on us last year, which didn't allow us to start the project. Monroe should be out for bid very shortly and we anticipate work being completed on Monroe this spring, summer and fall. I also expect there will be a remaining portion of Monroe being worked on next year. We are working diligently to complete the work for Washington in 2024. The city is also looking at repaving all of the cross streets between Lafayette to Jefferson, from Front St. to Fremont St. (won't need to repave Fremont). We also plan to repave Lafayette. The funding models I have presented to the City Council make me believe we will be able to do this. However, our timeline is solely on how quickly all of our requirements are approved by the Federal Government.

In the Summer of 2025, we are planning to complete Riverside. In 2026, we plan to complete Jackson, North and James. In 2027, we plan to complete Beech and Hunt. In 2028, we plan to complete Birchwood Ct. In 2029, we plan to address Carol Lynne and Elizabeth Dean.

These projects have been submitted to the State of Michigan as part of the Street Asset Management Program, which allows us to move our revenue around in a manner to meet our needs and not the 75 percent/25 percent allocation I mentioned.

The City Council has also put in some very conservative funding models to ensure we can complete these streets in the plan.

I should also mention the Downtown Development Authority has been a partner in paving roads within the DDA District. In the past few years, they have funded work on Valley Vista, Broadway and Riverside. I am working on their budget for the upcoming two years and am looking at them possibly addressing Ottawa and Chatham, as both are in the DDA District.

The other question I receive is, why does one street gain preference over another. Please understand, in somebody's eye, we are wrong no matter where we start. We are trying to get to projects as equally as we can throughout the city. We started in the Valley Vista area because we receive a lot of complaints that Valley Vista does not receive attention. So, we are trying to address this the best we can. In the last two years, most of our projects were west of the river. The next two years, we will be east of the river. We intend to address projects, as equally as we can throughout sectors of the city, until we complete all of the streets. This will take many years to complete.

Another question I receive is what about grants? Well, when it comes to road funding, there are almost no grants for local streets. However, we received a Community Development Block Grant for Amity in 2020 for 50 percent of the costs and we will also seek this for Riverside Drive in 2025. We can only receive state and federal funding for our major roads. The only roads in the city road network which are federal aid eligible are Monroe, Bowes, Foreman and Gee. The city receives \$375,000 every two years to address one of these federal aid roads through the State of Michigan Small Urban Program. We must provide a 20 percent match to receive these funds. We fielded a lot of questions when we repaved Gee Drive because it wasn't that bad. Well, part of a good road maintenance plan is to conduct maintenance on roads. It usually starts with crack sealing, but as more travel occurs on those roads, greater treatments are needed. In this case, the road needed to be milled and re-asphalted. That said, we had access to the funds, and we had the 20 percent available, so we took care of the street. Foreman (west of Beech) will get this treatment in 2024, and with these funds, we are looking at Bowes Road in 2026 and 2028.

What I will say regarding the Marijuana funds is the following: The city acquires a lot of criticism about the number of facilities we have. Trust me, I hear it. The money we receive allows us to complete streets we would otherwise not be able to do. Last year, we were able to add Church Street and West Street to be paved. Church was originally scheduled to be paved in 2027. We will be able to add Shepard Drive, which wasn't originally in the plan. We conservatively underbudget the marijuana proceeds, and for the time being are acquiring much more which allows us to do more streets. Frankly, the more marijuana money we receive, the more streets can be paved, without having to ask the taxpayers for revenues to do so or make cuts in service to address this.

From the desk, continued, page 12

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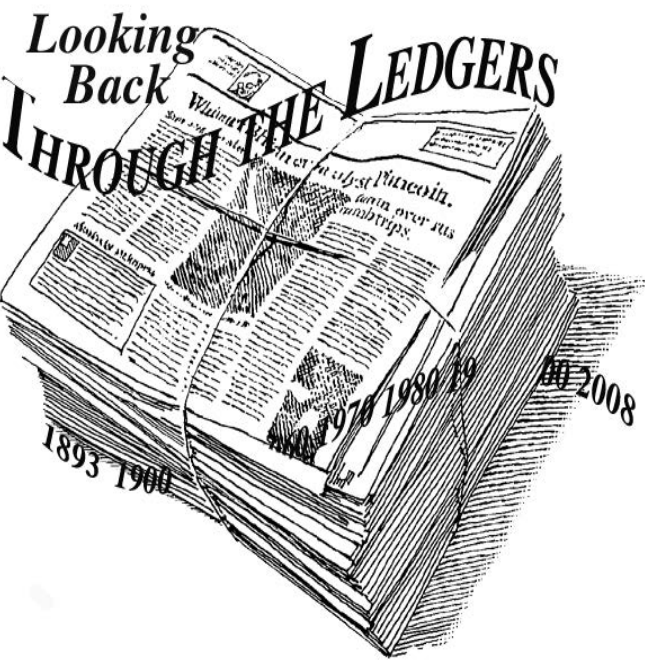
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125 years ago
The Lowell Ledger
February 24, 1898

A few days ago, there arrived in this village a gentleman familiarly known among his old friends as Uncle Bill, or Klondike Bill, as it was in Alaska, where he had just recently accumulated a fortune in the gold fields; he had with him his newly married niece, Fannie, and husband John. Uncle Bill purchased a farm here for his niece and her new husband as a wedding gift. News around Michigan: Physicians have examined David Seeley, the old man under arrest at Kalamazoo for having so many wives, and pronounce him perfectly sane. Dr. G.A. Munch will be at Lowell, Tuesday, March 15. The doctor is well-known as a specialist and need no recommendation. Read the ad, Pay when cured.

100 years ago
The Lowell Ledger
February 22, 1923

An all-day fruit meeting for growers and farmers interested in fruit and fertilization will be held at Lowell Congregational church on Friday, March 9. The High school boys journeyed to Rockford last Friday to pay their fast playing quint. The second team boys won from their opponents in a fast, but rough game by a score of 5-3. (Post from Fallasburg section) Not a car passed through here from last Monday morning until Saturday night, roads were in such a shape from the recent snow. Charles Porritt and Dave East had a spill Saturday evening. Cutter tipped over in the snow drift. Horse went on, leaving Charley and Dave to pick themselves up out of the snow and also Guy Smith's groceries. The flu, the roads and indifference kept most of the Bowne Center folks from attending church at West Lowell Sunday.

75 years ago
The Lowell Ledger
February 26, 1948

The panel discussion on "School Problems" put on the by the Parent-Teachers Association last Wednesday, proved to be very stimulating and informative to a gathering of one hundred twenty-five interested citizens. It was explained that the facilities of the school were totally inadequate for grade and high school pupils. Two plans considered: addition to the existing buildings would be about \$300,000 and the costs of an entirely new unit for the high school would be about \$425,000. Lowell, who couldn't seem to stay int eh win column after a string of three victories dropped their game with

Lee here on Friday night, to a tune of 37-34. Dave Clark, chief of Lowell fire department, has submitted to the State Fire Marshall, his report for 1947. Total loss in buildings, \$25,000; contents in dwellings \$3,400; contents \$15,800; total \$44,300. There was no loss of life during the year 1947 due to fire fighting.

50 years ago
Lowell Ledger Suburban Life
February 22, 1973

At the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce's annual dinner-meeting of the Chamber and Lowell Showboat Corporation, last Thursday, awards were handed out to various businesses in Lowell. Dick McCaul of McCaul's Texaco Station, on East Main Street, received the Chamber's annual award for the Most Improved Exterior. Wayne Dowling of the Lowell Automotive Store, accepted the award for the Most Improved Business Establishment through Relocation. Lowell wrestlers laid claim to the 1972-73 Tri-River Champs title, last Wednesday, as they completed their unbeaten season of conference play with a decisive 42-8 victory over Coopersville. Tom Kempker, 13, competed for the state honors in the Elk's Club's "National Hoop-Shoot Basketball Contest," in Detroit, during half-time of the Detroit Pistons-Cleveland Cavaliers Basketball game at Cobo Hall. He placed fourth. The scoreboard read triple figures Friday night, when the Lowell Red Arrow's boys basketball team walked off the floor with a whopping 100 to 81 win over the Hawks of Cedar Springs.

25 years ago
The Lowell Ledger
March 4, 1998

Beginning July 1, Lowell Cable Television subscribers will have six additional stations to consider when viewing. The additions will cost subscribers nothing. The basic cable rate will remain at \$19.95. Lowell and surrounding communities have incurred numerous break-ins over the last couple of weeks. They made off with as much as \$2,000 in one instance. Red Arrow grapplers' regional victory over Greenville advanced them to the state tournament, where they will face Birmingham Seaholm (27-2) Friday night in Battle Creek. The Red Arrows send seven wrestlers to the individual state tournament. Those moving on are: Dan Rottier, Bill Stouffer, Brett West, Brad Lyons, David Lucky, Caleb O'Boyle and Mike Arnswald.

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the lowell

ledger

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to the editor

Letter writer opinions are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this publication.

To The Editor:

Let me start by stating my appreciation to Lowell Area Schools for their transparency by streaming the February Board of Education meeting.

I was so proud of the numerous individuals who stood up to state their opposition to banning a particular book in our high school library. The board policy limiting access to the library book in question is reasonable, while being respectful of the rights of parents. Ironically, the effort to ban any book will undoubtedly make it the most popular book in the school library, given the notoriety the book receives. As I understand it, this book is not required reading and even if it were, if parents objected, the student would not be required to read it.

School districts consist of a population of various backgrounds, beliefs and experiences. Despite these differences, I am sure all parents love their children and want the best for them. However, it is impossible for a school district to satisfy everyone all of the time. That's why we have elected community members to serve on the Board of Education and school staff to serve in loco parentis...a long- established legal doctrine that empowers organizations, like a board of education, to perform some of the functions or responsibilities of a parent. Our school leaders and staff have always been sensitive and reflective of the values of the community.

In closing, I would just implore the community to be wary of "the slippery slope." The first time a book is banned, it becomes easier to ban the second book, then the third book, etc.

Tom Stahr
Fort Myers, FL

Letters, continued
page 12



We love to hear from you!



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

The requirements are:

- All letters must be signed by the writer, with address and phone number provided for verification. All that will be printed is the writer's name and community of residence. We do not publish anonymous letters, and names will be withheld at the editor's discretion for compelling reasons only.
- Letters that contain statements that are libelous or slanderous will not be published.
- All letters are subject to editing for style, grammar and sense.
- Letters that serve as testimonials for or criticisms of businesses will not be accepted.
- Letters serving the function of "cards of thanks" will not be accepted unless there is a compelling public interest, which will be determined by the editor.
- Letters that include attacks of a personal nature will not be published or will be edited heavily.
- "Crossfire" letters between the same two people on one issue will be limited to one for each writer.
- In an effort to keep opinions varied, there is a limit of one letter per person per month.
- We prefer letters to be printed legibly or typed, double-spaced. We have a 500-word limit.

Letters can be sent to emailed to
ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com
Deadline is noon on Mondays



Exterior view of the Kent District Library at Englehardt Branch, 200 N. Monroe St.

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

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
Thursdays, 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, 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.

Teen Zone D&D
Monday, February 27, 6-7 pm. Join a group of adventurers on a Dungeons and Dragons quest to retrieve the treasure and rescue the damsel from a nest of bandits! New and experienced players are welcome for this 5th edition adventure. For ages 11-17.

Night Owls Book Discussion
Wednesday, March 1, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Join a fun, informal discussion of great books. This month, we’ll discuss Beartown by Fredrik Backman. For ages 18+

KDL Lab Experience
Wednesday, March 8, 4-5 pm. Drop in and allow children to think creatively, tinker, explore and collaborate while engaging in a variety of hands-on activities based on STEM concepts. For ages 5-10

At Your Local Library

ABCs of Lowell history

Address: 206 E. Main
Date Built: 1873
Builder:
Sylvester Brower
1st business: Enos & Bradfield carriages

In 1873, Enos & Bradfield, carriage dealers, were the first owners of this building. They sold buggies, carriages, harnesses, whips, horse blankets, and horses. They made a specialty of Ovid (Michigan) and Lansing buggies but carried other standard buggies and goods. R. J. Enos and S. C. Bradfield had formed their business partnership in 1867 and continued it in Lowell until 1900. The business then continued in Grand Rapids until Mr. Bradfield passed in 1911. By 1885, Enos and Bradfield had moved to a location “on the bridge” and this location became the furniture store of Coons & MacNaughton, with Albert Oliver, Jeweler. In 1894, J. B. Yeiter opened his furniture store and was soon joined by E. Wadsworth, so it became Yeiter & Wadsworth, furniture and undertaking, 1894-1896. They then moved to the Kopf building at 212 E. Main.

In 1910, the Sanborn map lists this location as “Provisions” and in 1918 as a “Ware house.”

The Nazarene church used this building in 1923. Other occupants included the Star Garage (1929) and the People’s Service Garage, operated by R. W. Covell, in the early 1930s. He had a garage door in the rear so he could sell and service Willys Overlands, Willys Knights and Whippets. Next, M. D. Hoyt Co. sold



Bob Chrouch operated two businesses here. His Radio Service Co. (1941-1981), in the front of the store, sold and repaired radios and TVs. Chrouch Communications (1950-1981), in the back of the store, was the largest of the two. This business owned 4 service vans to service Two-Way Communications in a large area of southern Michigan.

appliances like refrigerators, electric ranges, and Philco radios, 1939-1941.

R. G. Chrouch purchased the building in 1941 and installed a new front. He operated Chrouch Radio Service, which sold and repaired radios and TVs, for over 40 years, into the early 1980s. One of his ads for this business reads, “If It Has a Tube We Service It.” Racks of popular 45rpms (records) were available for sale here. Every week they had a stack of handouts, listing the top records of the week as compiled by local radio stations, such as WGRD and WLAV.

His second business, called Chrouch Communications, was begun in 1950. It became the biggest of the two but was the least well-known because it dealt with public

Two-Way Communications for industry, police and fire departments, and road commissions servicing an area as far away as Lansing, Muskegon, Alma, and Kalamazoo, etc. Although Chrouch Communications, Inc. no longer works from this location, it continues today as a Motorola

dealer and installs Two-Way Radios, and E-9-1-1 Systems, etc.

Other businesses in this building were: The Greyhound Bus Depot; Carole’s Critters, 1980s; J & J Variety and Pix Properties, 1990s; Salon 206, 1997-2014; and Edward Jones, since 2015.



Enos and Bradfield sold carriages like this one, which belonged to the Newton Warners.

area churches

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www.lowellriverside.com
Pastor Darrel le Roux

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Barrier-Free

St. Mary Catholic Church

402 Amity Street • 616-897-9820
Website: www.stmarylowell.com
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Confession: Saturdays 3:30-4:30 pm
Prayer & Adoration: Wednesdays 9 am to 4:45 pm
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Pastor Andrew Bolkcom • Pastor of Discipleship
Christi Swain • Director of Children's Ministries
SUNDAY WORSHIP....9:30 AM (Nursery provided)
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Contemporary Service: 10:30 am
Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

happy birthday



FEBRUARY 23

Joe Ellis, Heather Essich, Sharon Miles.

FEBRUARY 24

Cliff Mulder, Tarah Essich, Lizzy Decker.

FEBRUARY 25

Mike Nearing.

FEBRUARY 26

Jeremy Goff, Barry Vezino, Bob Ford, Nancy Porter, Leslie Rash.

FEBRUARY 27

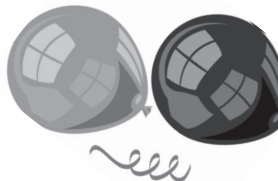
Joshua Soyka, Justin Soyka.

FEBRUARY 28

Mark V. Ritzema, Connie Roth, Scott Denton, Claresa Guastavino, Skylar Brown, Sarah Hoag, Ed Lamberson.

MARCH 1

Barak Brown, Jill Callihan, Laura Christiansen.



Planning, continued

regarding criminal offense and background check requirements, so long as occupants of FROM housing do not have any violent offenses.

Preiss was joined by Jan van der Woerd, Vice President of real estate development and management for nonprofit housing corporation ICCF Community Homes. He noted that many are denied housing because of evictions found during the background check, which were the cause of their need for housing in the first place, and children are often looped up in this vicious cycle. Statistically, most of these people are recently divorced and fall into the category of single

in a historic neighborhood of mostly one- and two-story buildings. The city council is also entertaining public comment during their February 21 and March 20 meetings, regarding whether or not the property at 990 N. Washington is a viable site for affordable housing. However, debate, to date, has centered around an originalist argument that the site was earmarked as an addition to nearby Scout Park as far back as 2007, and affordable housing would threaten natural beauty and resources.

A feasibility study in 2020 suggested that if FROM built 36 units of affordable housing, they would be filled within four

foot above the base flood elevation of 635.35 feet, or, in other words, just over the head of 5'4", FROM director, Preiss. Most of the houses in the area, some over 100 years old, were built before these constraints were put in place, so the affordable housing will stand out, but it is worth noting that there have been two 100-year floods in the past 15 years in this area.

Council member, Marty Chambers, who also sits on the Planning Commission, was less concerned with the appearance of a slightly taller one-story building than he was with how five feet of fill on a property will affect the way water comes into town. "I would hope you would have that conversation with the neighbors," Chambers said.

Two neighbors, Eric and Beryl Bartkus, who own Ability Weavers just down the street at 215 W. Main Street, showed immediate support. "I think this is absolutely fantastic," Eric said. "Elevating it five feet – it might take some getting used to. I don't think that would cause my building more flooding."

The Bartkuses did, however, object to an absence of American Disabilities Act (ADA) handicap accessibility. Because of the required grade of construction,

this project is not required to include ADA units. "It would be a serpentine mess of concrete," van der Woerd said.

Beryl pushed back, citing handicapped individuals under her employ who would love the opportunity to shorten their commute to work. All considerations for ADA accessibility resulted in a terminal issue: the destruction of all site green space, due to 110-150 feet of sidewalk at a five percent incline, the cost prohibitive addition of a \$200,000+ elevator, or the dangers of adding an expensive five foot lift that could be destroyed in a flood.

"We're not done exploring this," van der Woerd said. There are also hopes of creating ADA accessible living spaces at another site, where the floodplain does not factor into construction.

The project also faces parking complications. Traditionally, an 18-unit project like this would require 36 spaces, but the submitted plan only includes 26. This may not be a problem, considering the fact that not all tenants have cars, and the spots are for one-bedroom units, often occupied by one adult of driving age. The team noted that adjacent public lots and striped spaces on Main Street can take care of further demand, but council member Chambers noted a



Local business owner, Eric Bartkus, pleads for American Disabilities Act (ADA) handicap accessibility at proposed affordable housing site.

recently passed ordinance that prohibits long-term and overnight parking and may affect some of these spots. Also discussed was the possibility of leasing spots at nearby privately-owned lots. Following discussion, the Planning Commission voted to approve the submitted site plan.

The City of Lowell Planning Commission meets

the second Monday of every month at 7pm, which means that the next public meeting will be Monday, March 13, 2023. Those interested in watching the February 13th meeting can find it on the City of Lowell YouTube channel, @cityoflowell. The agenda can be found at the City of Lowell home page, lowellmi.gov.



Jan van der Woerd 01: ICCF representative, Jan van der Woerd, asks the Planning Commission to approve the current draft of an affordable housing plan.

moms or divorced dads who lost the home. "I applaud how Lowell has attempted to allow growth," van der Woerd said. He spoke to a diversity of local options for low-income families, including existing trailer communities.

In the past, FROM and ICCF pitched a multi-story building with an elevator and a parking structure underneath, but it did not pan out. Though it added enough tenant density to meet the needs of low-income households, it would have stuck out like a sore thumb

months. "We tried before. It didn't go through," Preiss said. "We're looking for your help, for your partnership. It might be an opportunity where the whole community can rally behind this."

The plan is to construct two, multi-family residences with frontage on Main Street and one, two-family residence with frontage on Kent Street. The primary obstacle to construction is floodplain ordinances. Since the property is within the 100-year floodplain, any building must be one



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2023 BOARD OF REVIEW NOTICE
LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP
2910 Alden Nash Ave SE,
Lowell, MI 49331

2023 BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING SCHEDULE

The Lowell Township Board of Review for 2023 will be held at the Lowell Township Hall, 2910 Alden Nash Ave SE, on the following dates:

Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 9 a.m. =
Organizational Meeting

Monday, March 13, 2023, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon & 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
&
Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The Board of Review will meet as many days as deemed necessary to hear questions, protests, and to equalize the 2023 assessments. **By board resolution, residents are allowed to protest by letter, provided protest letter is received prior to March 13, 2023**

The tentative ratios and the estimated multipliers for each class of real property and personal property for 2023 are as follows:

The tentative ratios and the estimated multipliers for each class of real property and personal property for 2023 are as follows:

Agricultural	49.02	1.0199
Commercial	46.83	1.1013
Residential	45.55	1.0976
Industrial	45.91	1.0890
Personal	50.00	1.0000

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The Township will provide necessary reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings upon 2 days notice.
Contact: Supervisor Jerry Hale, 2910 Alden Nash Ave SE. 616-897-7600

Board of Review Members, Sandra Graham, Nancie Mathews & James Foerch and Alternate Jennette Stevenson
Jerry Hale, Township Supervisor, Secretary of Board of Review.

LowellArts Artist of the Month: Serita’s Black Rose

by Bill Lee
Contributing writer

Last week famous composer, Burt Bacharach, died causing many in the music community to mourn such a talented and well-loved musician. Two of those musicians were right here in Grand Rapids, the wife and husband combo of Serita Crowley and Jon Hayes, members of the duo band Serita’s Black Rose. Many of the songs they perform are folk and soul hits from the 1960s and 1970s, an era Jon categories as “the greatest music ever written.” One of their favorite songs on their set list is *What the World Needs Now*, written by Bacharach and famously performed by Dionne Warwick. “The way the world is today -- from the food we eat, to the

air we breathe, to the music we listen to... we need love, love, sweet love is what the world needs right now,” said Serita Crowley. It is soulful music like this that is at the core of Serita’s Black Rose, LowellArts Artist of the Month. Crowley and Hayes have been performing everything from Jim Croce, America, Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder to their own original songs that touch many genres like blues, funk, folk, and rock and roll. They were excited to hear about being selected as Artist of the Month. “We played for a concert series at LowellArts and we also did the Showboat a few years ago,” said Jon Hayes. “It’s a really nice treat to play at a place that people go and

they listen with intent. Those are the gigs that I would hope most musicians desire most of all, verses, playing at the breweries and the restaurants.” Serita’s Black Rose takes pride in always giving their best during performances, whether they are opening for Kansas or Smoky Robinson, as they did separately at Meier Gardens outdoor venue, or playing for a small crowd in Lowell or even in a church. If you are coming to see them, you are guaranteed to see a quality show full of songs from different time periods and genres that highlight Jon Hayes’ guitar jams and Serita Crowley’s unique voice and vision of music. “I try to make people feel the music and give them



Photo courtesy of Rob Wilkinson.



Photo courtesy of Tim Motley.

something worth coming out to see and experience and enjoy instead of the same mentality and just making the money,” said Crowley. “I’ve gone to a lot of shows where they [performers] just sort of sit there and go through the motions, to hurry up and get a paycheck and go home. And it’s like, no, if people are coming to see you, you give them what they need because there was a time where we couldn’t get that, so I try to make everything as enjoyable as I can.” Hayes is a gifted musician in his own right, playing guitar alongside his wife, but he knows that Serita’s fabulous voice and natural charisma are what people are coming to see. “It’s Serita’s personality

and ability to connect, and she sings from the heart, and she’s not up there going through the motions,” said Hayes. “She is very raw and real, and it strikes a chord in people. She is so inviting in getting people to interact with her – from people our age to little kids. She makes them feel comfortable.” Serita has never taken singing lessons. Her passion for music and singing comes from her parents. Her mother brought her to church and tent revivals – “all that good gravy” she says - where she learned to sing gospel music, while her dad loved the blues. She would sing in the choir at church, and then one day, had a solo and surprised everyone with her powerful voice. They didn’t know she could sing like that. “I told them, nobody ever asked me,” said Crowley. “I don’t know what happened but I got filled with the holy spirit. It just came out like a volcano. And so, whenever I do anything, I just don’t want to be up there doing a song. I like to pay homage to that artist. I like to pay homage to them because those songs mean a great deal to me.” It has taken them twenty years, but Serita’s Black Rose has built a pretty large Michigan fan base. Although they do some networking and marketing on social media, they admit that they acquire most of their new fans the old-fashion way, word of mouth. One devout fan even drove 200 miles across the state just to see one of their concerts. “We’ve played a lot of different places ,from the lakeshore to Mackinac Island, and towns in between,” said Hayes. “Over the years we’ve developed a pretty large Michigan fan-base. People in real life know who we are but our social media doesn’t

necessarily reflect what our actual fan-base is.” Now, they have reached a time in their careers where they are hoping to reach a larger audience outside of Michigan. Although the pandemic pushed the timeline of some of their projects back a little, Serita’s Black Rose, which at times has also included other musicians besides Crowley and Hayes, has recently been hard at work writing and crafting new music they hope to release sometime in June. They did not want to give away too much but shared that their new material will be based in a different kind of blues, something that will complement their style as musicians, which is uplifting, spiritual, and unique. To make his point, Jon Hayes shared a quote that he loves from the famous bluesman, Buddy Guy, who said, “I’d pay anything to make sure this music does what it’s always meant to do. Let people know they ain’t alone. See we all got the blues. That’s the human condition; but those blues don’t mean we have to grieve; those blues will warm your heart. When the groove gets to your gut, those blues, brother, turn sad to glad.” Creatively, it is an exciting time for Serita Crowley and Jon Hayes, and they are hoping to continue to share their passion for music with others for many years to come. They will be touring the state of Michigan, starting this week and lasting throughout the entirety of 2023, and will be performing in Lowell at the Showboat for the Sizzlin’ Summer Concert Series on July 27. To find out more about Serita’s Black Rose, visit their website at www.seritasblackrose.com



Live the Life You Want

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

Avoid these criticisms to improve your relationship

It’s not outside of the norm to sometimes be critical or judgmental of your partner. However, if criticism is happening more often than you provide praise and support, this is a red flag. If you communicate in a way that is unhealthy you may need to make some changes in order to stay together. **Destructive types of criticism** There are many destructive/unhealthy types of criticism and communication, so I only listed a few below. If you work to remove these from your mindset and communication, you should start to experience a

healthier, more peaceful, and happier relationship. **Personal attacks.** This is abusive type of communication, attacking your partners character, choices, intelligence, who they are, lifestyle, etc. Name calling falls in this category. This is unhealthy communication and is not seen in healthy relationships. Work to change this communication by focusing on actions, not character or personality. **Disrespect.** If you disrespect your partner they most likely won’t be with you for long. This is often seen in the form of blame. For example: “You don’t do enough around the

house” or “You are always so lazy” or similar statements. Communication that starts with the word “you” is a problem, as it is critical, unhealthy, and typically starts an argument. Then nothing gets resolved. Change your communication to something similar to: “I feel overwhelmed and really need your help with the household chores.” That is a better discussion opener. **Not listening to understand.** If your partner is speaking, but instead of listening, you are coming up with your next statement to prove you are right, this is unhealthy and judgmental communication. If you are not willing to hear your partners thoughts and ideas, and really listen to try and understand their point of view, you are setting the relationship up for failure. Neither of you are always right. Maybe you are both right. This “only one right way” mindset is not healthy for anyone. Let the small stuff go and work to understand your partners point

of view on the bigger issues, and work at a compromise, if you can’t agree. **Using “but” statements.** These tend to be hidden criticisms. Statements such as “you look really nice but...” or “You did a good job but...” If this is happening regularly, it’s being overly critical and not supporting your partner. Regularly communicating this way is just unhealthy and will most likely end your relationship. These types of communication say one thing to your partner...that you don’t care. If you don’t care, then why are you in the relationship? If you do care, then change the unhealthy, and in many cases abusive types of communication, to healthier supportive ones. Communicate and act as if you care. I hope you find this info helpful. This article is not intended to provide advice, diagnose, or treat in any way. It is for informational purposes only.

Lazy Dog maple products tap first batch of 2023

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

As the temperatures hover in the low 20s at night and in the 40s during the day the sap in maple trees begins to flow. And it's maple syrup time in Michigan. Whether you're driving on dirt roads, like 4 Mile Road in Vergennes Township or Alden Nash south toward Hastings, you can see the taps on large trees with buckets.

Dan Stephens tapped his first maples on Sunday, Feb. 12. "It's the earliest we've ever tapped," he

Since then, the family has expanded the operation, doubling the number of tapped trees over the last three years to a total of 175 trees on the family-owned 10 acres and on adjacent farms.

Last year, the production reached 50 gallons of maple syrup, and Stephens is hoping for 75 gallons this year. The first batch of golden maple syrup, 2023, flowed into the bucket from the evaporator this Saturday, witnessed by all the family members and visitors standing around the

tea, put it in your oatmeal, or on ice cream, and use it to make a vinaigrette, as a meat glaze, or as mixers in cocktails. "They are good for you," said Kim. "They're 100 percent organic, antioxidants and have health benefits." Kim has her own catering business called Kim's Gourmet Treats.

Lazy Dog expanded into flavor-infused maple syrups two years ago, starting first with bourbon, in 2021. By storing some leftover late-season syrup in a local distiller's bourbon barrel, the first batch of bourbon-aged maple syrup was produced. "We were astounded that the syrup had taken on even the subtle notes of the bourbon's complex flavor, while maintaining the naturally bold and delicious maple," said Stephens.

The family's mixologist, Jake, experimented with other flavors, such as blueberry and espresso, which is excellent for topping ice cream. The cinnamon-infused maple syrup is good to add to oatmeal and coffee. Ginger is good on meat glazes, pancakes, and waffles.

The maples are tapped only once a year, and Lazy Dog will be making syrup until the buds open on the maple trees, according to Stephen. The right temperature that separates the water from the maple syrup is between 66F and 68F on the Brick scale to achieve the right density which measures auger density. "It's a delicate balance," said Stephens. "Our finished temperature was 221.5 degrees on Saturday." If you go above 68F, you make maple syrup cream; if you go below you make maple sugar. The early-season maple syrup is light caramel color, while the late-season maple syrup is dark brown.

Sugar maples render more syrup on less sap; for example, 33 gallons of sugar maple sap will make one gallon of maple syrup, while 40 gallons of regular maple sap make one gallon of maple syrup.

"We're a family operation," Stephens said. "And we want to keep it that way. We take pride in the quality and craftsmanship of our products." The operation was named after the family dog, Jagger, who just was just 'lazily' staring out the window.

Lazy Dog maple



Lazy Dog maple products is a family operation north of Fallasburg Park. Pictured are Dan, Kim, Zach, Luke, Jake, Kourtney, Rachel, Nate, Kylee, Matthew and Kelsey Stephens.



Maple syrup flows.

said. "This has been a crazy winter." With the recent temperature roller coaster from freezing cold to the 50s, it has been hard to gauge anything. Tapping a tree can be a little tricky, because if you tap a tree too early, it starts to heal in about four weeks, so you could see a reduced flow when the hole heals, according to Stephens.

Stephens runs a family maple sugar operation, north of Fallasburg Park. He started making maple syrup in 2019 with a turkey fryer and spent many long evenings before the first bottle of Lazy Dog maple syrup saw the light of the world.

shack. "We love this time of the year," Stephens said. "The whole family gets together."

Indeed, all seven children and their partners gathered at the shack. Dan and his wife, Kim, enjoy having the whole family together during this time of the year.

Son, Jake, who is the mixologist, has been coming up with different flavors for the last two years, to change how people view maple syrup. It's no longer something sweet to pour on your waffles or pancakes; with a range of flavors, the use is endless. You can add infused maple syrups into your coffee or

products are available at Showboat Spirits & Fine Wines, Muskegon indoors farmer's market, at special events, and at upcoming Farmer's Markets. The advantage of Farmer's Markets is that people can sample different flavors. "We have been very well received," said Stephens. "People are surprised by different flavors. We would like to expand with more flavors as we get into more markets."

For more info go to [www. https://www.lazydogmp.com/](http://www.lazydogmp.com/)



Collecting the sap.



Jake, the mixologist.

NEWSPAPER

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- SWIM AND DIVE

SPORTS

Vikings plan for plenty of PR's at OK Red Championship

By Brett Bremer
contributing writer

Todd DeJong pulled a small red box of Choceur chocolates out of his bag last Monday night at Rockford High School.

He was only going to have to hand out two of them, to members of his Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian varsity boys' swimming and diving team, after a tough 166-102 OK Red Conference loss to the host Rams, but that's okay. He's planning on passing out a bunch more the weekend of Feb. 24-25, when Grand Haven hosts the OK Red Conference Championship Meet.

"Every race, I give out these little chocolate bars," said DeJong, the first-year head coach of the



Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian's Micah Patterson competes in the 100-yard breaststroke during his team's OK Red Conference dual at Rockford, Monday, Feb. 13. (Photo by Brett Bremer)

CLS boys' program. "It is nothing great. They don't get ribbons. They don't get medals. There are three different flavors. I tell them, you drop your time and you get one of these. They fight for them."

Austin Tufts earned one by dropping his time to 1 minute 3.59 seconds in the 100-yard freestyle, in a performance that earned him the runner-up points in the race. Teammate, Ruben Baker, followed up with a season-best time of 7:33.44 in the 500-yard freestyle, which put him in fourth place in that race and dropped his previous best by

more than 10 seconds.

"We're doing great," DeJong said. "We are doing great. Our times are dropping. This is the one meet where our times did not drop. That's okay, because we're coming to conference the 24th through the 25th, and this is the time we're going to taper. We're going to take all that hard work, we have pushed them hard, and now we can taper and take it into that conference meet."

"I told them from the beginning, we're not going to win meets guys. We're just going to go against the clock and then, when we taper, we're going to watch ourselves really hit it hard. This is not our year. This is the first year that I am

him the first week of practice that he had them doing twice the work they've done in recent seasons. The Viking coach said he's really been pushing them lately.

"When you're doing your sets, you're not going to get much rest. You're doing, say 20 100's," DeJong said, describing a tough practice session. "You're going to have to do them in such a way that maybe you have five seconds and then you're on the next one, you're on the next one, you're on the next one. You're not going to have a chance to get the body to relax and rest, you're just kind of beating it down so that when you do relax with the taper, then you can go strong."

DeJong is looking forward to growing the program in the years to come, and all the Vikings have their sights set on the day that the Caledonia Schools pool, currently under construction, is ready for racing.

"The best thing about this, these guys enjoy each other," DeJong said. "They like being with each other. They push each other. They're just great sportsmen, and for a team that loses as much as they do, it doesn't bother them. They know how to look at the other aspects of it and really get a lot out of it. Every bit of it. They're a team that's wonderful. I couldn't ask for a better team. Some people would love a winning team. I will, but it's going to be a few years. This is the beginning."

coaching. It's a young team. Some of the kids on this team, they have never swam before. We're just trying to make a bigger team. We're trying to build it and make it more."

The Vikings were 0-7 in their OK Red Conference duals this season, with teams, like Rockford, often keeping the scores respectable, limiting their depth a bit by having guys capable of scoring swim exhibition races throughout a dual.

The Vikings weren't at their peak Monday, and they weren't planning to be. DeJong said the guys told

They have started the beginning of what is going to become a great, great team."

Rockford already has a great team, and the Rams had their greatest diving performance, ever, on Monday evening. Julian Cardenas broke the Rockford High School pool and school records for a 6-dive competition by putting up a score of 373.55.

Cardenas capped off his performance with reverse dive, with 1.5 somersaults and 2.5 twists that earned an 8.0, an 8.0 and a 7.0, from the three judges, and scored him 69.00 points – and it wasn't even his highest scoring dive of the competition.

"He's on tonight," one of his teammates whispered over to another on the bench, after his first dive of the evening.

The CLS team doesn't have a diver to compete in the OK Red this winter.

Corbin Herrington won two individual events for the Rams, taking the 200-yard freestyle in 1:55.72 and the 500-yard freestyle in 5:11.72.

Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian's Anders Foerch was the runner-up in the 500-yard freestyle with a time of 6:06.19.

Rockford had the top three scoring performances, at least, in each of the first six events of the night, before Tuft got the runner-up points in the 100-yard freestyle.

In that opening slate of



Caledonia/Lowell/South Christian's Sam Lusaka completes the turn in the freestyle leg of the 200-yard individual medley, Monday, Feb. 13, during his team's OK Red Conference dual at Rockford High School. (Photo by Brett Bremer)

races, Sam Jones led CLS in the 200-yard freestyle with a fifth place time of 2:20.44. Connor Cammet led the way in the 200-yard individual medley with a fourth place time of in 2:42.31, Foerch had a fourth place time of 27.63 seconds in the 50-yard freestyle and Ethan Vanderveen was fifth in the 100-yard butterfly in 1:12.71.

Vanderveen had a runner-up time of 1:17.01 in the 100-yard backstroke and Cammet was the runner-up in the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 1:18.37.

The CLS team of Josh Behm, Foerch, Jones and Gabe Verlin placed second in the 200-yard freestyle relay with a time of 1:46.28 and the team of Coen Crocker, Sam Lusaya, Corey Sandman and Baker had a winning time of 5:06.61 in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

The senior Cammet and junior Luke DeJager, who

just might be the team's most talented swimmer but was unable to compete Monday, are the two Viking captains that coach DeJong is thankful for this winter.

The Rockford team of Jake Herrington, Andrew Lepech, Ben Seymour and Will Cheney won the 200-yard medley relay to start the night Monday in 1:43.03. Cheney added a victorious time of 2:10.59 in the 200-yard individual medley. Seymour won the 100-yard freestyle in 50.87 seconds. Jake Herrington added a winning time of 1:00.45 in the 100-yard backstroke.

The Rams also had Nate Gerhard win the 50-yard freestyle in 26.18, Jake Hopkins win the 100-yard butterfly in 59.72, Slavic Yuguy win the 100-yard breaststroke in 1:11.13 and the team of Lepech, Cheney, Hayden Hindman and Logan Stevens win the 200-yard freestyle relay in 1:34.32.

- GIRLS BASKETBALL

by Justin Scott
sports reporter

After starting the season 10-0, girls basketball fans were in dreamland. How many could this team win in a row? The undoubtedly talented Red Arrows had surprised many in the state with marquee wins over perennial power programs before OK White play began and the reality of life in such a difficult conference took hold.

The Red Arrows were crushing opposition such as FHC, Northview, Greenville, and FHN. The top part of the conference,

with Lowell, Byron Center, EGR, and Grand Rapids Christian, proved to be a bit tougher. Lowell dropped one to each of them before bouncing back last week for a win over the Pioneers.

Lowell led 32-31 after halftime, in the game held at EGR. With 5:11 left and trailing by two, EGR went to the free throw line where they could have taken a lead, but after missing both free throws, Lowell went to the other end and scored on a Braxcynn Baker basket.

After a defensive stop, Baker hit a three to put Lowell up six, and the Red

Arrows didn't look back, outscoring the Pioneers by 13 in the remaining few minutes, to close off an impressive win 65-51.

Braxcynn Baker scored 31 points with 7 rebounds; Piper Risdon had 7 points and 14 big rebounds; Lexi Howell added 10 points, and McKenzie Munson finished with 7 points and 7 rebounds.

After the win over EGR, Lowell hosted Grand Rapids Christian on Friday, in the game of the week from ESPN 96.1, called by Bret Bakita and Drew Neitzel. In the battle of

ranked teams, the Eagles completed the season sweep with a 67-60 win.

The Red Arrows are 15-5 on the season and face FHC and Byron Center in their last two regular games of the season.

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- WRESTLING

SPORTS

Lowell sends 13 of 14 wrestlers to individual state

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

For many programs, just sending one wrestler to state is an incredible accomplishment. An entire season of hard work, difficult practices, and self-improvement to have a chance to compete among the state’s best. For Lowell, they’ll be sending an impressive 13 wrestlers to the state competition, held at Ford Field.

“It was a really good day,” head coach, R.J. Boudro, said about Saturday. “It was the toughest region in division two and one of the toughest in the state.”

Lowell’s thirteen qualifiers were Juan Acosta, Jarrett Smith, Mason Saylor, Logan Dawson,

Carter Cichocki, CJ Poole, Maddox Simcoe, Jackson Blum, Trevor Boone, Carson Crace, Tacho Gonzales, Owen Segorski, and Landon Miller.

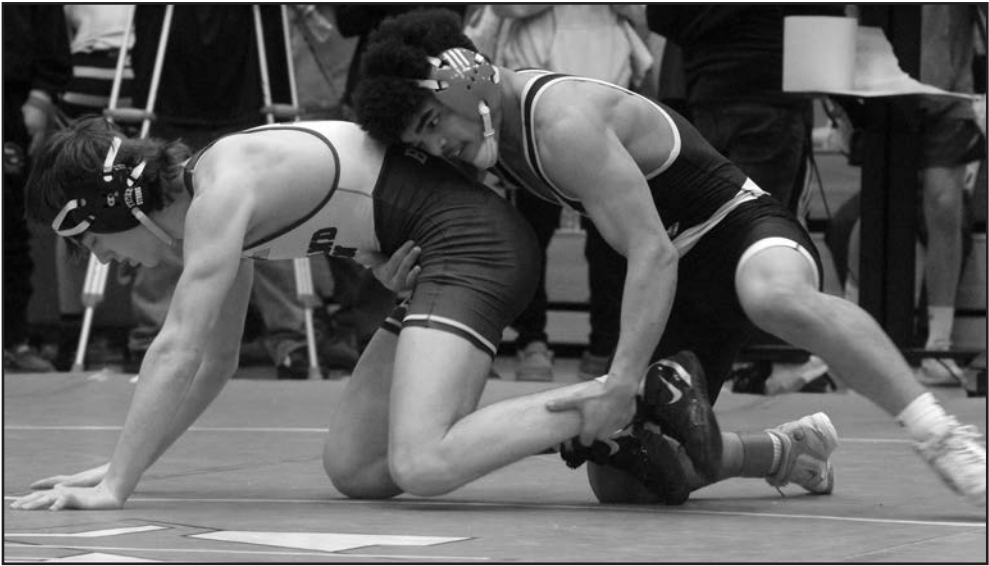
Jared Boone, who finished third in the state last year, was unable to make it out of the regional.

“Since the Gary Rivers, Jared separated his ribs from his sternum. It’s a taxing injury because there’s not much you can do except rest it,” Boudro said of Boone’s injury problems the last four weeks. “He was giving up a ton of weight too, he’s a great teammate and bumped up to 165 just to help out the team in what is a loaded weight class.”

Lowell went four for five in the consolation

semis, referred to as the blood round. The part of the bracket where winning means a spot at the state tournament, and losing means your individual season is over. Emotions run high in the blood round of regionals, more than anywhere else in wrestling. Winners celebrate by hugging their coaches, fans jubilant in the stands. For losers, plenty of tears can be shed, visits to the hallways to let out frustration. This is especially true for a school like Otsego, who had one lone regional qualifier. He fought his way through the bloodround to advance, but many others saw their seasons come to an end.

Allendale advanced ten, from the regional to states,



CJ Poole, during an intense regional final match, in a match between two top-ten ranked wrestlers in the state.



A latecomer to the starting lineup, Mason Saylor was one of 13 Lowell wrestlers to move onto Individual States

the second most of any team at the regional and going ten for thirteen.

Plainwell and Greenville coaches were named regional coaches of the year, whose teams had tremendous seasons. The former, advancing to their first ever team state final in program history and a potential semifinal opponent for Lowell.

Crace, Simcoe, Segorski, Cichocki, Blum, and Smith all won regional championships. Dawson and Trevor Boone placed 2nd. Miller, Gonzales, Acosta, and Saylor finished 3rd, with Lowell going 5-0 in third place matches.

Blum and Dawson met in the finals of 120-pound weight class. Jarrett Smith

and Mason Saylor, along with Maddox Simcoe and Landon Miller, competed against each other in earlier rounds, which meant Saylor and Miller had to get through blood round matches to advance to the state tournament.

Notably, Owen Segorski’s matchup in the regional final was against the #2 ranked wrestler in the state, Tee Ward of Fremont. A 10-1 victory for Segorski.

On a very good day for Lowell, if you thought the home fans would be complacent, you were wrong. The Lowell fanbase was into every match, particularly the blood round and placement matches. Landon Miller scored a quick move that led to a pin and got the Lowell fans on their feet. In CJ Poole’s championship match against #5 Lane Button of Wayland Union, Poole had some early stalling calls, having to finish the match with that in the back of his mind. He

ended up hanging on for the win, but the Lowell fanbase got into this match almost more than any other.

Carter Cichocki also scored a victory in the finals over the #3 ranked wrestler in the state.

On the girls side, which took place the following day, Lowell went one for one, as Veronica Tapia battled her way to the regional championship match and placed second. It will be the second consecutive year the program has male and female representation at Ford Field.

“She’s our only girl out of 52; for her to come up each and every day, and be the only girl, has to be tough, but you wouldn’t know it. Her attitude is great, she’s wrestled well, and has an opportunity to place highly in two weeks. She’s quietly and confidently blazing a way for girls wrestling here in Lowell” Boudro concluded.

Previewing the team state finals

by Justin Scott
sports reporter

Lowell will be going for their 10th straight wrestling team state championship, this weekend at Wings West, in Kalamazoo. Three matches separate Lowell from this incredible feat. Let’s take a look at the Red Arrows path to history.

Friday - #1 Lowell vs. #8 Bloomfield Brother Rice

All-time history: Lowell leads series 8-0.

Last matchup: Lowell def. Brother Rice 68-9 (2022 quarterfinal)

Brother Rice has three ranked wrestlers in Michigan Grappler’s most recent rankings, with ranked wrestlers being top 16 in the division in their weight class. The Warriors had nine regional qualifiers and five state qualifiers out of a weaker regional in Division 2. Rice joining Detroit

Catholic Central and first time state qualifier, Warren De La Salle, is an exciting story for the Catholic High School League.

“We saw Warren Woods Tower at the Yale Tournament, and that’s who Brother Rice beat in the regional final. Brother Rice has some really good individuals who our guys are excited to wrestle.”

Matchup to watch: Brother Rice’s top wrestler is #3 ranked Rico Saenz at 126; you could see Saenz against Lowell’s top-ranked Jackson Blum (120) or Logan Dawson. Both would be very exciting matches.

Saturday (if win on Friday) - #1 Lowell vs. #4 Gaylord OR #5 Fowlerville

All-time history: Lowell leads series with Gaylord 8-1, Lowell leads series with Fowlerville 10-4

Last matchup: Lowell def. Gaylord 50-6 (2022 Semifinal), Lowell def. Fowlerville 79-0 (2022)

Fowlerville had an unconventional win to advance to team states, winning on a last match injury, void when Jackson Northwest was in control of the final match. Gaylord upset state-ranked Bay City John Glenn, so both schools come into the finals after very different regional wins.

Gaylord is the better team, with seven state-ranked wrestlers, compared to Fowlerville’s four. They also have more recent history at the state tournament, being a mainstay in the field the last few years, so Gaylord is most likely to advance. Numbers favor Lowell here, who has 14 state-ranked wrestlers. In addition to the 14 ranked wrestlers, Lowell

has plenty of options to fill in the lineup, including Easton Lyons, Casey Engle, Braddock King, and Ari McFarland, who have all seen plenty of time in the first team lineup this year.

Saturday (if win in Semifinal) - #1 Lowell vs. #2 Goodrich, #3 Plainwell, #6 Stevensville Lakeshore, or #7 Monroe Jefferson

If Plainwell does indeed turn their first state final appearance into a state final appearance, Lowell fans will have an idea of how the match is likely to go. Lowell beat the Trojans 55-18 earlier this season at the Gary Rivers Tournament. Of course, previous results are no sure guarantee to be replicated.

While upsets happen,

Wrestling Preview, continued page 15

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We are pleased to announce the addition of Rob Stehley to our Young Chevy/GMC sales team. Rob comes to us from the Lowell area and has many years of experience in automotive sales. See him for your next vehicle purchase!

obituaries

HOMOLKA

Beverly (Bev) Homolka of Lowell, passed away peacefully at the age of 92, on February 17, 2023. Bev was preceded in death by her husband, Milton (Milt); and son-in-law, Tony Brewer. She is survived by and will be missed by her loving children, Gay (Bob) Pfaller, Joy Homolka, Scott (Sue) Homolka, Mark (Ha) Homolka, Lynn Brewer; 5 grandchildren, Jeff (Sandi) Pfaller, Brian (Mandy) Pfaller, Tony and Lauren Homolka, Mariana (Henrique) Morais; and 8 great-grandchildren, Miles, Mayse, Ruby, Raelyn, Aubryn, Noah, Maya, and Julia. Bev was the only child of Anthony and Josephine Loizzi, born in Chicago on March 30, 1930 (“Three Thirty Three” as she would say).



She graduated from Austin High School at 16 years old, then attended DePaul University, graduating 3 years later with a Physical Education Degree. She taught Phys Ed at an all-girl’s school in Chicago and worked for the Chicago Parks and Rec Department. Bev married the love of her life, Milton Homolka, on June 19, 1954. They honeymooned in San Diego, CA and ended up spending 3 years there before moving to Michigan to raise their family. Bev was a loving and devoted wife to Milt as well as an extraordinarily wonderful mom to her 5 children, twins Gay and Joy, Scott, twins Mark and Lynn, born within the span of 5 years. Her grand and great-grandchildren gave her great joy and happiness. Bev never felt the need to obtain her driver’s license, which meant walking or riding her bicycle to get around town. Almost everyone in Lowell and on Main Street knew “Mrs. Homolka”. Bev always had a kind word, was genuinely interested, and would always make time for a conversation with everyone she met. She was an accomplished bowler, loved teaching the sport, and was active in several leagues into her 80’s. She lost Milt, the love of her life, to Multiple Myeloma after 47 years of marriage, in January of 2001. She and Milt loved their bicycles, taking the family to their Wisconsin cottage for the summer, and traveling around the U.S. on bus tours. The family will have a private service with interment at Oakwood Cemetery in Lowell. The family extends a heartfelt thank you to the dedicated staff at Green Acres in Lowell which she affectionately called “home” for over 11 years and to Emmanuel Hospice for the compassionate care shown to the family and our mom. Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of one’s choice.

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NEWELL

Esther Newell of Lowell, passed away at the age of 90 on February 19, 2023. She was preceded in death by the love of her life, her husband, Clyde Newell; parents, Cornelius and Gertrude Meeuwsen; and siblings, Kenneth Meeuwsen, Russell Meeuwsen, Robert Meeuwsen, Wayne Meeuwsen, and Bea Hoeskstra. She is survived by her sister, Ruth Wood; several grandchildren; many great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.



Esther held the role of Class Secretary and graduated from Lowell High School in 1950. The early part of her career was spent at Newell Manufacturing followed by decades as an accounting manager at Foremost Insurance. Esther was a member of the Lowell Church of the Nazarene her entire adult life. She held the position of Treasurer for years and regularly volunteered to put on funeral luncheons and events at the church. She was an avid knitter and loved to make baby blankets for newborns. She enjoyed gardening, bird watching, cooking, and canning. Esther taught several family members the joys of cooking and the tradition of canning. Funeral services will be held at 12 PM, Friday, February 24, 2023 at the Lowell Church of Nazarene, 201 N. Washington St., Lowell, MI 49331, with visitation one hour prior. Pastor Jim Geldhof officiating. Interment Oakwood Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the Lowell Church of the Nazarene.

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From the desk, continued

I also get asked, what will happen when not all the marijuana facilities make it. In my opinion, the free market isn’t going to sustain all of the facilities, not only in Lowell, but statewide. However, marijuana sales will continue to increase, and have done so, since adult-use marijuana really came into the picture in 2019 and 2020. I believe this past year, the State had over \$2.1 billion in sales. The excise tax is 10 percent of all sales and local governments get 15 percent of those proceeds and are paid per facility. From what I see, once the free market sets itself the City will receive roughly the same amount in the future whether we have nine retailers or five. This is why we have been very conservative in our funding models for future road projects.

I hope I was able to clearly explain the situation, and plan, going forward. Thank you for reading, and if you have questions, please feel free to reach me at 616-897-8457.

Thank You

I would like to thank some individuals and businesses in Lowell.

On Sunday, February 12, a planned Veteran’s Potluck was scheduled at 2pm at the Lowell Veteran’s Center. However, a clogged drain was discovered the previous night. A call was made to Greg Canfield, who sent an employee and equipment to unplug the drain at no charge. Twenty-three vets and friends attended.

On February 14, Valentines Day, I received a call from the Lowell NAPA store to donate a case of paper goods to the Veteran’s Center. On February 15th, Wednesday, the Lowell Moose Lodge 809 was scheduled to have a board meeting and requested the American Legion Post 152 Commander, Richard Thomas, and members of the VFW Post 8303. Attendees were USMC Iraq Vet, Joel Fruel, Army Vietnam Vet, Jon VanderWilp and myself. The Veterans Center will receive \$2,000.

Respectfully,
Herman Weststrate, Jr.
VFW Flat River Post 8303 Commander

to the editor

Letter writer opinions are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this publication.

Dear Editor,

I read, with interest, Mr. Yankovich’s article on tolls for road usage. It seems to me that he, and most government officials, think problems can be solved by raising taxes. It is my personal belief that our government has a bit of a problem handling the distribution of those taxes. A case in point is right here in Lowell. As I bounce along Riverside Drive and bounce along Gee Drive (I call it Ripple Avenue), I wonder why one is not repaired, while the other was repaired ahead of need. Priorities seem to be on what official benefits the most. If you want to know how many different taxes we pay, take a look at this State of Michigan report: https://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/PDF/Revenue_Forecast/Source_and_Distribution_Sep2022.pdf

Please tell me we need more taxes.

Michael E. Johnson
Lowell

Are Americans financially educated on retirement savings?

Financial education helps people learn about savings, credit, and loans. It also helps prepare people for life changes and weather the unexpected. Financial knowledge is essential when planning for retirement.

So, how prepared are adults in the United States for their retirement? The National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) conducts polls on key issues, like retirement savings, that affect a person’s financial past, present, and future.

Here’s what we have learned over the past year:

In a financial well-being poll, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, 85 percent of respondents confirmed that some aspect of their personal finances was causing them stress. For 31 percent of respondents, that concern was “having enough saved for retirement.”

In that same poll, 70 percent said they made financial adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of that group, 27 percent increased contributions to their emergency savings, retirement savings, or other savings or investments. In comparison, 21 percent tapped into emergency savings—or borrowed against retirement savings.

In a poll about financial education mandates, 80 percent of adults said they wish they were required to complete a semester- or year-long course focused on personal finance education during high school. Also, 88 percent think their state should require a semester- or year-long course for high school graduation.

In that same poll, 84 percent of those approaching retirement age said “spending and budgeting” should be taught in schools.

Lifetime financial education can be a helpful tool in preparing for retirement. This includes understanding Social Security retirement benefits and making the most of retirement income. You can learn more on our Retirement page at www.ssa.gov/retirement.

A personal my Social Security account should be a part of your financial plan. With a secure my Social Security account, you can verify your earnings history, get personalized retirement benefit estimates, and more. If you don’t have an account, you can easily create one at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

To learn more about NEFE’s mission, visit their website at www.nefe.org. Please share this information with friends and family.



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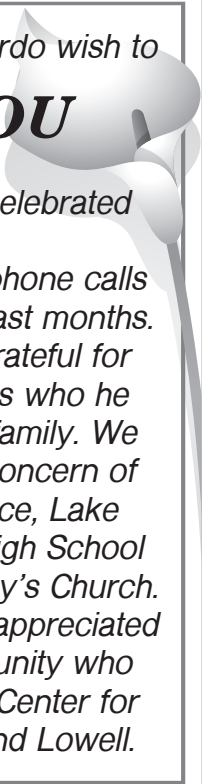
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The Families of Sam Lombardo wish to

THANK YOU

for being with us as we celebrated Sam’s Life.

Thank you for the cards, phone calls and many visits over the past months. Sam and his family are grateful for his friends and employees who he considered his extended family. We appreciate the care and concern of Western Michigan Hospice, Lake Funeral Home, Saranac High School and his family at St. Anthony’s Church. Sam valued all of you and appreciated the support of our community who supported Sam’s Service Center for many years in Saranac and Lowell.



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ATTN LOWELL WIDOWS - We have a widows luncheon on the last Friday of each month. Starts promptly at 1 pm. All are welcome. Questions on location, call Elaine 616-856-8022 or Jenn at 616-490-9970.

NEED AN AL-ANON MEETING? - Al-Anon is a fellowship of families and friends of alcoholics. Join us Sunday-Saturday at 10:30 AM and 7 PM on Zoom. Come learn the Steps, Traditions & Concepts of living and coping, in Serenity, with alcoholism. There are no dues or fees for Al-Anon. For Zoom meeting ID & Password, please call Joy at 616-901-7779.

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PUBLIC NOTICE VERGENNES TOWNSHIP 2023 BOARD OF REVIEW NOTICE TO: TAXPAYERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF VERGENNES TOWNSHIP

The Vergennes Township Board of Review will meet on
Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. for the
Organizational Meeting
No taxpayer appeals will be heard at this meeting.

Public hearings will be held at 69 Lincoln Lake Ave NE Lowell, MI 49331:
MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023, from 1:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023, from 1:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

The Board will meet for the purpose of reviewing the Assessment Roll and hearing objections thereto.

Appointments are required to appear before the BOR. Appeals may also be made by letter if you are unable to be present during meeting hours. Letter appeals must be received no later than March 14, 2023.

All BOR meetings and hearings are held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 297 of 1976, as amended, MCL 41.72a (2) and (4), and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Persons wishing to file for a Disabled Veterans Exemption or Poverty Exemption should have all required forms submitted to the Board of Review in advance of the meeting dates noted above.

The tentative ratios and factors for Vergennes Township for tax year 2023 are:

	Ratio	Factor
Agricultural	48.27%	1.03584
Commercial	51.60%	0.96899
Industrial	47.75%	1.04712
Residential	44.21%	1.13096
Personal Property	50.00	1.00000

All ratios are expected to be 50% and all multipliers are expected to be 1.00000 after 2023 assessment adjustments are made.

Cory Burns
Township Assessor

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GRATTAN TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting 7 p.m.
Synopsis of Minutes
February 13, 2023

Motions Approved

- Budget Amendments for the Sewer Fund, General Fund and Fire Operating Fund
- Sewer Account Credit
- Ordinance Amendments 2023-001 Rezoning property from A-1 to A-2, 12151 and 12355 Jenks.
- PDR Application for 4825 Lincoln Lake Ave.
- Resolution 2023-002 Designation of Banking Facilities
- Fire Department Respiratory Protection Program
- Salary Resolutions for the Township Board.
- PA116 Application for 7600 Ashley Ave.
- The elimination of the Cable Committee



Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

In *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania*, Paul Rudd plays charming antihero Scott Lang, who, under the guise of super shrinking (and occasionally super enlarging!), Avenger Ant-Man is now a full-on superhero, no anti- prefix anymore; that’s right, he’s joined the establishment. Luckily, he’s joined by daughter Cassie, played by Kathryn Newton of

Pokemon, Detective Pikachu fame, and she’s got some street cred. She’s been in jail almost as many times as her reformed thief of a father, and *Quantumania* suggests that she’s the likely heir of both the Ant-Man power set and the Ant-Man film franchise.

Following a science project gone wrong, Scott, Cassie, and family find themselves transported to the Quantum Realm, where

they confront Marvel Comics heavy-hitter Kang, the Conqueror. Since his introduction during the first season of the Disney+ series, *Loki*, Kang has been touted as the main villain of the current phase(s) of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). Played by the ineffable Jonathan Majors, one can only hope that the villain will be around for a number of years and even more films. Majors, who has not slowed down since his critically-acclaimed depiction of Mont Allen, in *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*, delivers a time-jaded Kang with the presence of Darth Vader and the complexity of Hamlet.

In the eight years since the first Ant-Man film, Scott Lang has developed a veritable ant family around him. In *Quantumania*, it feels like DC Comics’ Flash family; a number of characters with a similar power set, gathering for a barbecue, or in this case, an enlarged pizza that uses priceless Pym particles to save \$8 on simply ordering a larger pie. The newest member, Michelle Pfeiffer’s, Janet van Dyne, carries the first half of the film. Having been lost in the Quantum Realm for 30 years, she’s all-too-familiar with what lies beneath our reality. Pfeiffer’s gravitas on screen is topped only by that of Majors, who takes the baton and carries the second half of the film. Ant-obsessed Hank Pym (Michael Douglas) finally gets to join the action, as well, pleading his case for why Ant-Man should be the butt of more superhero jokes than Aquaman. Also, Hope van Dyne / Wasp (Evangeline Lilly) was present. She still hasn’t experienced any significant character development and lives, almost entirely, for the sake of other people. She does a lot of charity work and hits hard in battle, though, so she’s got that

going for her.

The film struggles to find its center, which is not unexpected. *Ant-Man* and *Ant-Man and the Wasp* were stand-alone comedies that provided relief from the weight of Avengers drama in the MCU, and now *Quantumania* is the centerpiece of the combined universe’s future. Following what many have described as a lackluster, water treading four years of films and series after *Avengers: Endgame*, that’s a whole lot of weight to place on the back of a single ant. Luckily for Marvel, ants can carry 10-50 times their body weight. Writer, Jeff Loveness, and director, Peyton Reed, do a good job balancing comedy, drama, epic teasers, and geeky science into a relatively cohesive film.

It’s hard not to imagine that the viewing public could have gotten a better *Ant-Man* experience over the years, however. In 2003, five years prior to Tony Stark’s realization that there was a much bigger superhero world out there, Edgar Wright (*Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz*) and Joe Cornish (*Attack the Block*) wrote a treatment for an *Ant-Man* film for Artisan Entertainment. This was long before Marvel Studios regained the rights to the vast majority of Marvel Comics properties. Kevin Feige and Avi Arad of Marvel Studios later included Wright’s *Ant-Man* in the Phase One list of MCU titles alongside *Iron Man*, *Thor*, and *Captain America*. A passion project of Wright’s, it would have been easily the funniest superhero film of all time, but, as Wright has said, “I wanted to make a Marvel movie but I don’t think they really wanted to make an Edgar Wright movie.” After a number of back and forths, Wright and Marvel Studios couldn’t agree to a script, leading Wright to quit the project.

It’s interesting that the *Ant-Man* franchise has seen

as much success as it has after centering the series around Scott Lang. Hank Pym, who was part of the original Avengers lineup in *Avengers #1* (1963), would have been the obvious choice. He’s always been depicted as concurrent with Thor, Hulk, Iron Man, and Captain America, and his first appearance in *Tales to Astonish #27* took place seventeen years earlier than Lang’s first appearance in *Avengers #181*. However, it’s easy for Pym to get lost in the sea of science heroes, especially when his literal baby, Ultron, was incorporated into Tony Stark’s background in *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. Lang’s thief, who commits crime to take care of his daughter, is deeply approachable, and, without much departure from the original material, can be used as a lens with which to examine the types of characters we create when we don’t confront worldwide poverty. That said, Marvel’s *Sandman* has had the same gig since *Amazing Spider-Man #4* (comic, 1963) and *Spider-Man 3* (movie, 2007). It’s likely the audacity of a comedy/heist film amid epic, world-changing superhero dramas and the degree to which folks find Paul Rudd likable and fun made the difference.

Those looking for plot holes will find a number of them while watching *Quantumania*. Some are scientific, like including microorganisms as monsters and slugs as mounts. The Quantum Realm itself is smaller than an atom, but even the smallest virus is composed of tens of thousands of atoms. There are also classic comic book plot holes, like unclear power limits. Prior to *Quantumania*, there has been a limit to how large or small Scott Lang can grow, but even after shrinking into the smallest place in existence, Lang is able to shrink even further, relative to other beings. A celebration between giants, Scott and Cassie Lang, near the end of the film is undermined by the fact that they’re only giants relative to a handful of other people around them. Problems like these are easier to sweep under the carpet, but there are a couple of instances where the plot holes derive from mischaracterization that are a bit more problematic. For example, Cassie is depicted as a real hero of the oppressed, confronting police officers who use tear gas against peaceful protesters while clearing out a homeless camp, and yet she abandons the peoples of the Quantum Realm at the first sign of resolution.

In another time, the holes and imbalances

inherent in *Quantumania* might have been enough to sink the ship, but Disney has recently switched to what appears to be a hybrid movie-series model since the beginning of MCU Phase Four. Not only do Disney+ series like *WandaVision*, *Moon Knight*, and *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law* interweave regularly with the films that are released in theaters, but the six episodes of *Hawkeye* feel a lot like they are just one film, and movies like *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* cover brief plot arcs every 20-30 minutes, just like episodes in a series. None have benefitted from this model better than *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, which juggles a number of complex character arcs without sacrificing a single iota of quality. In reference to *Quantumania*, this new model justifies the campy *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*-adjacent first act existing alongside an astonishing tale of Scott Lang(s) as Schrödinger’s cat later in the movie. Films can cover a lot more ground, so long as each short arc is consistent within itself.

It’s unclear who the audience for superhero film reviews truly is anymore. Most within a particular fandom have already cast their vote prior to seeing a movie. *Quantumania* was either good because you love superhero movies, in general, or MCU movies in particular, or it was bad because you’re part of a toxic fandom and exist only to tear others down. As an example, James Gunn recently axed the majority of DC Studios film franchises, leaving actors Henry Cavill and Duane “The Rock” Johnson without a future, but keeping on ritual abuser and criminal, Ezra Miller. Fans have decried Miller’s violence against women for years now and yet most of public discourse now surrounds Gunn’s amazing new direction for the studio and excitement over a Michael Keaton cameo in the trailer for *The Flash*. It is not an issue of “no press is bad press,” but rather one of “no press is press.” It is not impossible to jump on the MCU train at *Quantumania*, but the vast majority of folks are already entrenched one way or another. *Quantumania* is the 31st film of the MCU, but you can get caught up pretty quickly by just watching the first two *Ant-Man* films ...and a couple *Avengers* films ...oh, and the first season of *Loki* on Disney+. If anyone out there is still undecided, here’s some guidance: *Quantumania* is not a perfect film, but it is a perfectly good way to spend two hours on your day off.

PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY OF LOWELL

2023 BOARD OF REVIEW
MEETING SCHEDULE

The City of Lowell Board of Review for 2023 will be held at Lowell City Hall, 301 E Main St SE, on the following dates:

Organizational Meeting: March 7th, 9:00 am

Appeal Hearings:

Wednesday, March 15th, 3:00 pm to 9:00pm
Thursday, March 16th, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Meetings are by Appointment, to schedule, contact: City Hall @ ph. 616.897.8457

The Board of Review will meet as many more days as deemed necessary to hear questions, protests and to equalize the 2023 assessments

By City Charter, residents are able to protest by letter, provided protest letter is received prior to March 10th 2023

The tentative ratios and the estimated multipliers for each class of real property and personal property for 2023 are as follows:

Commercial.....	44.03.....	1.1360
Residential.....	45.07.....	1.1090
Industrial	42.92.....	1.1650
Personal Property	50.00.....	1.0000

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Notice

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

Contact: Michael Burns –
City Manager,
ph. 616.897.8457



LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE
OF HEARING
STATE OF MICHIGAN

The Probate Court for the
County of Kent

IN THE MATTER OF:
JOHN MILLER,
Guardianship File:
23-212,801-GA

TO ALL INTERESTED
PERSONS including
Kimberly Miller, Shawn
Miller and any other
children and heirs,
whose address(es) is/
are unknown and whose
interest in the matter may
be barred or affected by
the following:

TAKE NOTICE: A hearing
will be held on March 13,
2023, at 1:30 PM at Kent
Co. Probate Court, 180

Ottawa NW, Grand Rapids,
MI 49503, Courtroom 9D
in person and via Zoom
before Judge Avery Rose
(P77757)for the following
purpose: Appointment of a
Guardian.

Dated: February 17, 2023

Adult Protective Services,
DHHS, Petitioner
121 Martin Luther King
Jr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI
49507
(616) 258-1182

VAN ESSEN and
ASSOCIATES PLLC,
Attys for Petitioner by
Amanda Van Essen Wirth
(P75001)
109 E. Main St.
Suite 11
Zeeland, MI 49464
Phone: (616) 633-0196

Red Arrow

- WRESTLING

SPORTS

Boys basketball beats EGR on last second shot

by Justin Scott
sports reporter

Name a better pairing than one-point wins and Lowell boys basketball. Peanut butter and jelly, maybe? The Red Arrows won another thriller this week and a fourth one-point win in just over a month, besting East Grand Rapids by a score of 60-59.

It came after a one-point win over Greenville last month, one-point win over Northview two weeks ago, and days later a one-point win over Forest Hills Northern on a game-winning free throw with no time left.

How did they do it this time? The Red Arrows looked to their quarterback, Jackson Reisbig. Who better to throw a perfect pass, and

just as he did against FHN, Reisbig found his man.

This time it was a wide open Ben Gaskin, off the inbounds pass, with three seconds left down one. Reisbig hit Gaskin, wide open in stride, who laid the ball in, off the glass, to give Lowell a 60-59 lead. The Pioneers took the lead earlier on a put back rebound and basket with 16 seconds left in the game.

“We have an elevator screen play that we run, and one day in practice, we needed a shot just like that. I drew up the play and it worked just like it ended up working against EGR. They clearly weren’t expecting it because I was wide open and Jackson delivered a perfect pass,” Gaskin said of his game-winning basket.

The Pioneers had a second left and a full court to make something happen, but the long ball lobbed in went off Drew Veldman’s fingertips and safely out-of-bounds to give Lowell their fourth one-point win in just over a month.

“We had a lot of close games last year that didn’t go our way, but now in these moments, we’re not overwhelmed, and know what we need to do to come away with the win,” Gaskin added.

Friday, Lowell had a chance to continue their strong play in the conference, taking on Grand Rapids Christian. The Eagles, one of the better teams in the OK White, won the game 58-40. It was senior night for the Red

Arrows, their last home game of the season. This year’s seniors are Drew Veldman, Aidan Fitzpatrick, Dawson Huhn, Dawson Douma, Alex Binns, and Ethan Krieger.

The boys and girls programs also encouraged fans to wear orange, to support the Weaver family from Escanaba, after a semi-truck lost control and killed parents of a trio of Escanaba students. A 50/50 raffle and orange bracelets were sold to raise money for the family. Several schools around the state did something similar, with schools donating to the Go Fund Me page, which has raised over \$200,000.

The Red Arrows are at FHC and Byron Center this week.



Ethan Krieger pictured during senior night. Photo courtesy of LAS Athletic Department.

- COMPETITIVE CHEER

Competitive cheer concludes breakthrough season

by Justin Scott
sports reporter

697.56. That’s the number the Lowell Competitive Cheer team ended the season with. A number can say a lot. Only once in the previous six seasons did that number get passed by the program, and that by less than a quarter of a point.

It’s been seven years since the competitive cheer program all but started over, after a hiatus in 2015-2016, Lowell has since steadily guided the team through continuous improvement, culminating in a season of records here in 2022-2023. This year was the first time tucks were performed by the team in Round Two. The program hit over 700 points for the first time. They also had an LMCCOA scholarship recipient for the first time. Advancing from the district competition, requiring a top-four finish, would be the icing on the cake of a record-breaking

season and the team came oh-so-close.

The Red Arrows placed seventh in the district, with the top four squads moving on to the regional round.

Just two rounds in, Lowell had an opportunity to crack the top four, and sat in fifth place. Just four points away from Northview, who ended up finishing in fourth. FHN, Cedar Springs, and Reeths-Puffer were the other programs who ended up outperforming Lowell in Round Three and pulling away to advance to regionals.

Lowell’s district included FHE, Allendale, Cedar Springs, Fruitport, FHN, Kenowa Hills, Northview, Muskegon, Reeths-Puffer, Sparta, and Spring Lake.

Fruitport and Spring Lake ended up in 5th and 6th, Lowell in 7th, who beat out Kenowa Hills, Sparta, Muskegon, Allendale, and FHE.

- SKI

Byrne brothers advance to state

by Justin Scott
sports reporter

Colton and Cooper Byrne skied their way to state-qualifying scores for the Lowell Red Arrows ski team at regionals last week. Colton took 2nd in GS and 5th in slalom, and Cooper took 6th in GS and 4th in slalom. Both skiers will compete at the Division

2 State Finals next week on Monday, February 27th at Boyne Mountain.

Overall, the team placed 9th in the regional, held at Cannonsburg, beating four other teams. Ramsey Ponchaud added a top fifty run in slalom. He was followed closely by Sophie and Sam Konyndyk.



The Byrne brothers, Colton and Cooper, will ski at the state meet at Boyne Mountain next Monday.

Wrestling preview, continued

you’re likely to see Goodrich and Plainwell battle it out in the semifinal, given they, along with Lowell, are the only ranked teams in the field. In a matchup against Goodrich, the Martians have 10 ranked wrestlers and only one of them is a senior. That’s really exciting news for Goodrich and their future title prospects. In a matchup this weekend, The Martians would need to use a strong run in the higher weights. Goodrich hasn’t won a state championship since 2009, and with three runner-up finishes to Lowell in the past four years, no team would love it more than to dethrone the nine-time defending champions. They’re the team most capable of delivering an upset, but would need

bonus points in their wins, and limiting the damage in what is a difficult run of six top two ranked wrestlers that Lowell has between 106 and 150.

Lowell Ranked Wrestlers

106 #2 Jarrett Smith
106 #15 Mason Saylor
113 #2 Carter Cichocki
120 #1 Jackson Blum
120 #7 Logan Dawson
132 #13 Trevor Boone
138 #1 Owen Segorski
144 #2 CJ Poole
150 #1 Maddox Simcoe
150 #6 Landon Miller
157 #9 Tacho Gonzales
165 #10 Jared Boone
175 #1 Carson Crace
285 #9 Juan Acosta

Goodrich Ranked Wrestlers

106 #10 Dylan Angelo

120 #9 Ethan Garza

132 #3 Brady Orcutt
144 #14 Luke Francis
150 #13 Keegan Switzenburg
157 #14 Jonathan Golec
165 #3 Max Macklem
175 #3 Brady Benson
190 #1 Easton Phipps
285 #1 James Mahon

Looking at the other divisions: The team state finals in wrestling is one of the MHSAA’s most exciting atmospheres, one of the few sports all teams compete at the same time in the finals. Lowell’s dominance in Division 2 is nearly mirrored by other schools in the other divisions. Dundee has won the last five Division 3 titles. Hudson has won four of the last six titles in Division 4,

their streak only broken by Clinton, who bumped up to Division 3. Detroit Catholic Central and Davison have gone back and forth in Division 1 the past six years, but the Shamrocks are one of the best teams in the nation this year.

Quarterfinal matchups and Friday times - all matches at Wings West, Kalamazoo

Division 2 - 6:45 pm

#1 Lowell vs #8 Bloomfield Hills Brother Rice - Mat 2

#4 Gaylord vs #5 Fowlerville - Mat 4

#3 Plainwell vs #6 Stevensville Lakeshore - Mat 3

#2 Goodrich vs #7 Monroe Jefferson - Mat 1

Rio Plano Taqueria offers taco faves, 52 Tequilas in authentic ambiance

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

At Rio Plano Taqueria, whether sitting inside or outside, you will get a full view of the Flat River with the Showboat and Main Street Lowell.

Once seated in the beautifully remodeled building, with uncovered brick walls painted with traditional Mexican skulls, the friendly ambiance surrounds you with an attentive staff.

Whether you pick the delicious Quesabirra or the Camaron taco from the menu, you're in for a gourmet Mexican treat; the Quesabirra taco combines braised beef, chiles, onions, cilantro, and chihuahua cheese. Quesabirra is spicy, tender, and filled with cheese, with an irresistible crunch of the tortilla. The accompanying dipping sauce is full of flavor and spices.

"I think the food is amazing, and the convenience of it, right in downtown Lowell," said chef, Jossy Borey, of Lowell. "We plan to make amazing specials." Specials such as Taco Tuesdays for \$5 are back on Main Street in this Rio Plano Taqueria; the selection of tacos will be based on Chef's choice. "We offer our homemade chips, guacamole, and salsa," said assistant manager/bartender, Rae Mongar. "Brussels and shrimp tacos are favorites.

Our menu will grow with the company."

The difference at Rio Plano Taqueria, where the name stands for Flat River, is in the 52 different kinds of Tequila available, including five Margaritas with Tequila of your choice, served in a pitcher. NA Tequila is also available. Among the flavors are jalapeno, prickly pear, mango strawberry, and guava, just to name a few Margaritas on the drink menu. "We use our own freshly squeezed lime juice," Mongar said, while she was squeezing limes for the day. "We offer six taco options, gf, vegetarian, low-carb tortillas."

The patio, with beautiful views of the Flat River and the Showboat, seats 42 people, and inside seats 68, in a combination of booths, tables, and high tops by the bar. "We want to make it amazing with more people bringing ideas together," Borey said. "In the future, with more staff, we will eventually make our own tortillas."

Mexican sodas Jarritos compliment the authentic feeling of the Taqueria, while the fully-remodeled building, former Serendipity, adds esthetic to downtown. "We're on the river," Borey said. "In the summer, you can listen to concerts. It's the best seat in town."

Borey would like to bring more authentic Mexican flavors to Rio Plano Taqueria, where people feel comfortable coming in. "We open our arms to anyone who comes through the door," she said. "And we have a happy staff," which consists of three bartenders, nine servers, and 10 in the back of the kitchen.



Chef, Jossy Borey, and Manager, Rae Mongar, at Rio Plano Taqueria.



Rae Mongar and Chef, Jossy Borey, on the patio of Rio Plano Taqueria.



Rio Plano Taqueria's Quesobirra taco.

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It took 1.5 years to renovate the 1860s building by Let Us Contractors of Ada. Rio Plano Taqueria located at 101 W. Main St. opened on Feb. 1, 2023.

The seating is on a first-come, first-serve basis with no reservations, no banquets, and no catering at the present time. Carry-out orders are available at <https://rioplanotaqueria.hpos.heartland.us/menu>

The rush hour is around 6 pm on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Rio Plano Taqueria is open seven days a week. Monday, through Thursday, 11-9 pm, Friday and Saturday, 11 -10 pm, and Sunday 11- 8 pm.

There are two renovated apartments above Rio Plano, currently taken. BSJ Co., based in Lowell owns Rio Plano Taqueria, Big Boiler, Junction Bar & Grill, and Hop Hog in Greenville.

Wrestling, continued

schools winning under unfortunate circumstances. Kingsley recorded what they thought was a regional winning pin, to take a 39-38 lead. Only, their wrestler removed his head gear and tossed it back to his coaching staff, a decision that cost the Stags a team point, where they ultimately lost to Gladstone via tiebreaker.

Fowlerville defeated Jackson Northwest, to take one of the eight spots in Division 2. The Gladiators won their first championship in a quarter century, but found it hard to celebrate. That's because the dual went down to the last match, where Jackson Northwest's, Kayden Beach, led 6-2 in the second period, before taking an unintentional knee to the head. Beach was knocked out, unable to continue, and Fowlerville won the match via injury default, which secured the match. Beach would end up being cleared to compete in individual regionals ,where he won a regional title.

Of the ten schools that went into Division 2 postseason team competition ranked, only three made it to team states; Lowell, #2 Goodrich, and #4 Plainwell, who Lowell beat 55-18 earlier this season. The Red Arrows and second-ranked Martians seem destined to meet for the Division 2 state championship for the third consecutive year.

"It shows you anything can happen in wrestling. There were some big upsets that happened, and as the one seed, we try not to focus on that. Our guys are just excited to wrestle and get better each day."

college news

In recognition of outstanding academic achievement, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois, released the college's Dean's List for Fall 2022. Included on the list is Madison Tamminga of Ada.

The Dean's List is Trinity Christian College's highest academic honor. It is recognized for traditional undergraduate students who achieve a semester GPA of 3.5 or better in 12 or more credits with grade points.