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FFA State Convention



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Local Essay Winners



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Lowell Area Schools Sports



page 10 & 11

\$1.00



25 years of promoting The Best Place to Be

By Cliff Yankovich
contributing writer

Once upon a time, about a quarter of a century ago, a pair of Lowell ladies hatched a plan to promote Lowell as a great place to live and raise a family, own a business, or just visit. Michelle Tava owned a furniture store called “Touch of Country,” located at 96 East Main Street (where Milo’s Consignment shop is now). Michelle went to Chamber Director, Liz Baker, with the idea of a community expo and they sat down with some school officials to flesh out the idea. BOOM – the Lowell Expo was born, and this year, celebrates 25 years of promoting the Lowell area on the fourth Saturday in March.

For those readers who are relatively new to the area, it is instructive to note that Main Street in Lowell in 1998 bore no resemblance to what you see these days. “When the Expo was conceived, our downtown was dismal, to say the least; buildings were empty and not much was going on. Our school

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system was working hard to attract newcomers to Lowell, as they worked to build a foundation for excellence in our schools,” Liz Baker recalled. “So, when we began the Expo, it was started with grand ideas on how to attract people to come to one place, to learn about Lowell, our Schools, and all we had to offer.”

The Lowell schools and Chamber of Commerce

have always recognized that good schools and a thriving business sector are co-dependent and that the combination punch of unique businesses and desirable schools are major magnets when trying to attract people to live in the area. The first Expo was marketed to real estate agents all over West Michigan and to people in the greater Grand Rapids area. The schools even

allowed Larry Mikulski, who was the Director of Transportation, to use one of the buses to give a quick tour of the area. Larry was very involved in the Expo and was even persuaded to help out after he retired.

The Lowell Expo has grown considerably since the initial event that saw about 20 businesses involved. Baker reported that the most involvement

came before COVID, when 163 vendors packed the gyms and hallways at the High School, and there was a waiting list, to boot. This year, there are 117 vendors signed up and the Chamber could probably squeeze in some late comers. You can reach the Lowell Chamber at 616-897-9161.

Expo,
continued page 2

LaughFest comes to Lowell

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

To someone from out of town, First Congregational UCC of Lowell feels like it is in the middle of the woods. At 7:30 pm, the sun



While photography was not allowed once the comedy show started, this is both the setting and the butt of a number of jokes for comedians, Mike Vecchione and Adam Degi, during their LaughFest performance at First Congregational UCC of Lowell.

has already gone down and an unfamiliar driver must simply have faith that a LaughFest comedy venue is going to manifest in the next 100 feet. Sure enough, there it is: the church’s driveway is marked by a sign that reads, “Love is Love,” and confirms the open and affirming nature of First Congregational UCC. There are little hints of progressive Christian views here and there, but the surroundings scream of high church. It is a big, white building with a soaring steeple and a cross at the very top, just in case one doubted the purpose of this building.

A sign on the door reads, “Please take deliveries to North door”; it is a special occasion for the community, but it is just another day in the business of salvation. This is not Van Andel Arena. There is no metal detector in the doorway, nor a scanner for mobile tickets purchased using the Ticketmaster app. A woman standing at a table in the broad communal gathering area takes a peek at your ticket and gestures

LaughFest,
continued page 2

Two-hour parking dominates long council meeting

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

The Lowell City Council called to order their Tuesday, March 6, 2023 meeting with council members, Marty Chambers, Mike DeVore, Leah Groves, and Cliff Yankovich in attendance. Council voted to excuse the absence of Jim Salzwedel. Clocking in at nearly 210 minutes, this was certainly one of the longer council meetings, and that is because a number of topics were covered in-depth. Representatives from both the fire department and museum shared annual reports, and a number of items were reviewed for approval, but the majority of this time was devoted to a continued discussion of the parking ordinance in Lowell.

Following the February 21 city council meeting, where public comment centered around an uncontested decision at the February 6 meeting to remove two-hour parking in downtown Lowell, the council agreed to include Parking Ordinance as an agenda item during the March 6 meeting so more time could be assigned to the issue that has riled-up a couple of concerned business owners. Ron Janowski expressed his delight in the council’s agreement to review the policy during public comment, as did Karen Waid and Michael Lowry, who noted that two-hour parking helps his customers

City council,
continued page 3

Expo, continued

Rick Seese, of Greenridge Realty, is a big fan of the Expo and has been from the beginning. Greenridge has had a booth at every one of them. “In the early years, it was to support the Chamber in its quest to create an event to showcase our community,” Seese remarked. “As the Expo grew and the attendance included many looking to explore our community, the Expo became a way to introduce our company to those potentially looking to move to Lowell, as well as a way to maintain our presence to our current customers and clients around the Lowell community.”

Not only can attendees learn about real estate in the area, but they can also get an introduction to a wide representation of the Lowell Community. Many churches

and non-profit organizations can be found there, alongside representatives from those businesses providing dining, shopping, and a host of services that round-out everything we enjoy in Lowell in 2023.

Rest assured that the Expo is not just all about business; there is a lot of fun to had, as well. Two people who have been very much involved in adding the Fun Factor are Josh and Kristen Bruwer, who own the Arrowhead and Morrison Lake Golf Courses. They have been the Chairs of the event for 15 years. Liz Baker related that the Bruwers tried to retire, but were lured back into lending their creative talents to the day-long event.

Rick Seese recognized the social aspects of the event when he said,

“Having an Expo booth isn’t just about showcasing your business. I remember many occasions that our Greenridge booth became a mini-class reunion, a gathering of musician friends, fellow business owners, or old friends just happening to walk by at the same time. It’s all about maintaining relationships and finding new people to meet.”

The Lowell Expo will happen this year on Saturday, March 25th, from 9 am until 2 pm, at the Lowell High School located at 11700 Vergennes.

Liz Baker summed it up by stating, “Our mission was and still is, to increase awareness of products and services provided and/or manufactured in the Greater Lowell Area. Exhibitors gain the opportunity



Photo from 2022 Lowell Community Expo. Photo courtesy of Bruce Doll.

to develop sales, leads and customer contacts; attendees to gain knowledge about Lowell Area Schools and everything Lowell.”

Rest assured that even though Baker is soon to retire, the Lowell Expo

will continue to educate residents and non-residents about everything that makes Lowell ‘the next and best place to be.’

Incoming Chamber Director, Shannon Kennedy, had this to say about the

future, “I’m proud of the Lowell Community EXPO – its strong history and tremendous growth over the years. I look forward to continuing the EXPO tradition for many years to come.”

LaughFest, continued

to the sanctuary just behind her. At the same table, another woman is selling tickets. Though seating in the next room is certainly crowded, the event has not yet sold-out.

All tickets to Mike Vecchione’s LaughFest performance in Lowell are general admission, which, to many, means that you can expect to stand at the front of the performance hall and there is some benefit to arriving early. In this instance, it is more like a traditional church service: if you get there early, you can find your preferred seat in the pews. To stay in tune with the comedy of the evening, Vecchione certainly drew a Christmas and Easter crowd to First Congregational UCC, leaving little “room for Jesus” between one ticket

holder and the next. Many of the night’s jokes were off-script improvisational observations about how this venue, with a huge, looming cross as its centerpiece, differed from traditional venues, like Gun Lake Casino where Vecchione did stand-up the night before.

Self-proclaimed cancer and comedy survivor, Adam Degi, opened for Vecchione. Unlike Vecchione, who hails from New York City, Degi is a West Michigan local. In fact, he won the Funniest Person in Grand Rapids Competition in 2009. “For starters,” Degi opened, “let’s just pretend we’re not in a church.”

Degi covered the quintessential topics of baby clothing, church beers, and male-patterned baldness during his brief opening act. He gained some momentum

at the beginning of his set by explaining what in-person stand-up comedy involves to folks who have not done something like this since the beginning of the pandemic.

At the peak of his momentum, Degi told a story about a 23-year-old co-worker who once tried to convince him that English/Irish pop band, One Direction, were more influential in the history of music than The Beatles. Degi told her to walk into a busy intersection and only look in one direction.

Vecchione was a quiet storm on the stage, soft-spoken and serious, with a shy demeanor, good at reading the audience despite claiming that emotional intelligence is not a thing, but a commanding and confident presence nonetheless. Vecchione nearly scrapped his entire

act to make jokes about the church where everyone had gathered.

“Thank you. You may be seated,” Vecchione said after the initial well of applause, as if he were the priest and the audience were the congregation. “Today is the 45th Friday in Ordinary Time.”

Vecchione, a Catholic, had little problem with the existence of a huge cross behind him, but objected to the fact that there was no suffering man mounted atop it. Later, he got into a religious conversation about what you call the priest who presides over a United Church of Christ, when all he wanted was a transition to a marriage joke (“Rookie mistake”).

Vecchione also commented on the community of Lowell, which he felt certain was not named after a doctor or a scientist, but which he sarcastically proclaimed is in need of more pot

dispensaries.

Lowell, according to Vecchione, only has eight to nine pot dispensaries and two to three pizza huts. While in town, Vecchione claimed that he had been driven around by a number of hunters. When asked if he hunts, Vecchione noted that he’s “more of a gatherer.”

Vecchione’s set was defined by dry delivery of humorous personal stories, often involving his family, and more often, involving people he thinks are smarter than him. However, it is impossible to avoid Vecchione’s cleverness. He never felt like he was trying too hard. It never fought the crowd or got too excited, speaking, often, beneath the swell of laughter. He did not rely too heavily on punchlines, but rather delivered really audacious anecdotes as if they were the content of a history lecture. Vecchione made great use of themes in his comedy, returning often to comfortable jokes about women’s awareness, and people in the audience coughing for attention. The most endearing detail of a Mike Vecchione comedy show, by far, is watching his face light-up to reflect the energy of the crowd. It often felt as if the audience were his entertainment, and not the other way around, which made the big city New York comedian feel really approachable and humble. He may not be Will Ferrell, the comedian headlining every big movie of the last decade, but Vecchione is likely to end up on the “my comedian” list for just about everyone who has ever seen him.

Gilda’s LaughFest is

an annual Grand Rapids festival featuring stand-up and improv comedians with the tagline, “Seriously funny.” The “funny” part of the LaughFest vision comes from the numerous comedians featured by LaughFest, since its launch in 2011, including Jim Gaffigan, Whoopi Goldberg, and Jay Leno, among other great comedians. The “seriously” part refers to the fact that proceeds support Gilda’s Club Grand Rapids, an affiliate of the Cancer Support Community. This is why two-time cancer survivor and comedian, Adam Degi, was the perfect opener for Mike Vecchione; he understood both parts of the mission, to entertain and to help those who are going through the hardest time of their lives. Prior to the show, volunteers canvassed the audience to take collections for the High-Five Campaign, where every \$5 donation toward fighting cancer earns a commemorative pin and a 100 percent match by contributing sponsor, Meijer. Readers can learn more about Gilda’s Club Grand Rapids at the website gildasclubgr.org, and Gilda’s LaughFest at laughfestgr.org.

As for the comedians, Adam Degi can be found via his website adamdegicomedys.com or on social media as @adamdeg. Mike Vecchione has made multiple appearances on The Tonight Show and played a firefighter in the Judd Apatow movie *The King of Staten Island*. His website is mikevecchione.com, and can be found on social media as @ComicMikeV.

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City council continued

purchase CBD products to help with mobility issues.

Regarding timed parking, the desire for two-hour parking was not shared by all present. Beryl Bartkus was adamant that two hours is not enough time to explore historic Lowell. A typical customer at her shop, Ability Weavers, might start at council member, Chambers', Red Barn Consignment & Antiques, head to Ability Weavers for a four-hour weaving class, and then Bartkus may recommend they head over to the bookstore or Yankovich's jewelry shop. "I don't want to tell them to move," Bartkus said.

Both city manager, Mike Burns and council member, Groves, echoed Bartkus's concern that ticketing drivers for staying in town too long would serve as a deterrent to shopping and spending time in town.

Other options for timed parking arose. Greg Canfield, of Canfield Plumbing, supported four-hour parking. Ed Jasinowski, of Sweet Seasons, favored outgoing Lowell Area Chamber of

Commerce director, Liz Baker's, suggestion of three-hour parking. Jasinowski provided a powerful example of parking his GMC Yukon, with a pontoon boat in-tow, in front of his shop all day, effectively eliminating four or five parking spots, as something that should be prevented. Similarly, Perry Beachum originally supported two-hour parking so the city has "some kind of teeth" in the event of a bad actor, who makes a long-term parking problem for the city.

Council member, Yankovich, showed interest in loading zones in front of a limited number of shops, identifying Waid's antique store as one particular place that would benefit. However, too nuanced of a solution may force the council into a position where it oversteps its elected authority. Mayor DeVore expressed concern that the police department, working proactively with businesses to manage the parking situation, would be the equivalent of him telling the Bartkuses how to run their business. "But is that our problem?" DeVore

asked. "We have a good thing going. I don't want to be the one who screws that up by overstepping."

A number of citizens questioned the decision to remove overnight parking on Main Street, from Hudson to Jefferson, during summer months, and pushed for the ordinance to remain square with the rest of the city, where parking is only restricted from November 1 to April 1. Many agreed that the restrictions during winter months made sense, due to the need for snow removal, but questioned the basis of a year-round ordinance. Other concerns arose around the issuance of permits for city lots, and the amount of signage, advertising public lots that shoppers may not already be aware of.

Ultimately, the consensus was that this is a big enough issue not to be discussed, appended, and voted upon in the same meeting.

Lowell Township supervisor, Jerry Hale, was present at the March 6 meeting to address questions regarding the joint Lowell Township and City of Lowell splash pad agreement. The council sought clarification on how much water a splash pad like this might need, especially in light of water restrictions, during the summer of 2022 that led to unpopular sprinkler bans across the City of Lowell, Lowell Township, and Vergennes Township. Hale was optimistic about water usage, noting that the installation of new pumps by the City of Lowell should help. City manager, Burns, clarified that the pumps get the water where it needs to be faster, but the real concern is water capacity, which has not been addressed. Council member, Yankovich noted that quite a bit of water has to be kept in reserve so fire trucks can do what they need to do. Mayor DeVore has expressed in the past that he does not expect further water usage issues



Council member, Marty Chambers, questions whether water shortages during the summer of 2022 were a fluke, and applies this concern to the question of approving a splash pad in Lowell Township.

in upcoming summers, but not everyone on the council holds the same optimism. "Was the last year a fluke?" council member, Chambers asked. "Maybe. Maybe not."

DeVore was concerned the debate would derail nearly three years of hard work toward the construction of this splash pad, not to mention, thousands of dollars the township has already invested in the project. "I would rather have it there and say we can only use it two days-a-week... than to not have it there at all," DeVore said. "Jerry's got a perfect location; it fits in perfectly for what we want to do, and they've already got a pretty gorgeous space there."

City attorney, Jessica Woods, advised that the splash pad agreement could be approved with a friendly amendment to turn-off the splash pad during times of water shortage and enter a dispute management process, and this is exactly what the city did.

At the end of the meeting, a number of council members showed their distaste for the growing disinformation in the community. Council member, Groves, wanted to combat some anti-LGBTQIA+ accusations, heard during public comment, by making it clear she is an ally. Groves celebrated a gala held during

the past weekend where the community of Lowell raised funds for Lowell Pride in June.

DeVore chimed in his support for the free speech of

just simply not happening. To believe anything to the contrary is just ridiculous."

The council will address creative solutions to downtown parking at the



Mayor Mike DeVore disputes the claim that Lowell Pride and drag queen story time are anything nefarious, noting instead that these events bring people and business into Lowell.

Pride coordinators who wish to bring attention and money to the community of Lowell, decrying, in the same breath, bad faith actors who malign the LGBTQIA+ community. "Nobody's taking school buses full of kidnapped children down there and forcing them to read *Green Eggs and Ham* with a drag queen," DeVore said. "It's

Monday, March 20, 2023 council meeting, and will also hold the second of two public hearings on 990 N. Washington on the same date. Those interested in watching the March 6th 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.



Ability Weavers co-owner, Beryl Bartkus, makes the case for longer parking in Lowell, so people from out-of-town can enjoy multiple businesses and word-of-mouth recommendations.

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Book Corner

Signal Fires

By Dani Shapiro
Fiction

By Alison Yarger
Contributing Writer

This past week, while we had no power, I decided to spend the bulk of it reading, and finished four books. One was the tedious *The House of Wolves*, which I wrote about; the second was *Under the Whispering Door*, the third a re-read of one of the best books I’ve ever read, *Lessons in Chemistry*, and I finished with *Signal Fires*.

Coming off *The House of Wolves*, *Signal Fires* was eye-opening, a page-turner, an emotional roller coaster, well written, and not only kept my interest, but the characters all had depth and emotion.

Set in a mostly Jewish community, siblings, Sarah and Theo Wilf, and a friend,

Misty Zimmerman, are involved in a devastating car accident, smashing head-on into the huge oak tree in the Wilf’s front yard. Sarah, who earlier had been drinking, gave the car keys to underage Theo, who through a mishap with the cigarette lighter, drives into this massive tree, killing Misty. Sarah immediately recognizes the trouble Theo would be in, so takes responsibility for the accident. Their father, Ben, a surgeon, hearing the crash, rushes out and tries to help Misty by pulling her out of the vehicle.

This accident sets the stage for the novel. All of the characters are driven by demons from their past – childhood trauma, loss and longing leave each adult

character still immersed in youth-driven shame and grief. The story, while on the tragic side, does grab at your heart. At times, it was painful to read but puts some hard truths on the table. The decisions made the night of the accident have forever impacted not just parents Ben and Mimi Wolf, but Theo and Sarah, as well.

Added into this community mix are the Shenkman’s who live across the street from the Wilf’s. The father struggles to show any love or acceptance to his quirky, yet extremely intelligent son, Waldo, whose life is dictated by the stars and the universe. Waldo, through a series of unforeseen incidents, finds himself drawn to Ben Wilf, who takes the time to understand and listen to Waldo’s discussions about the universe and infinity.

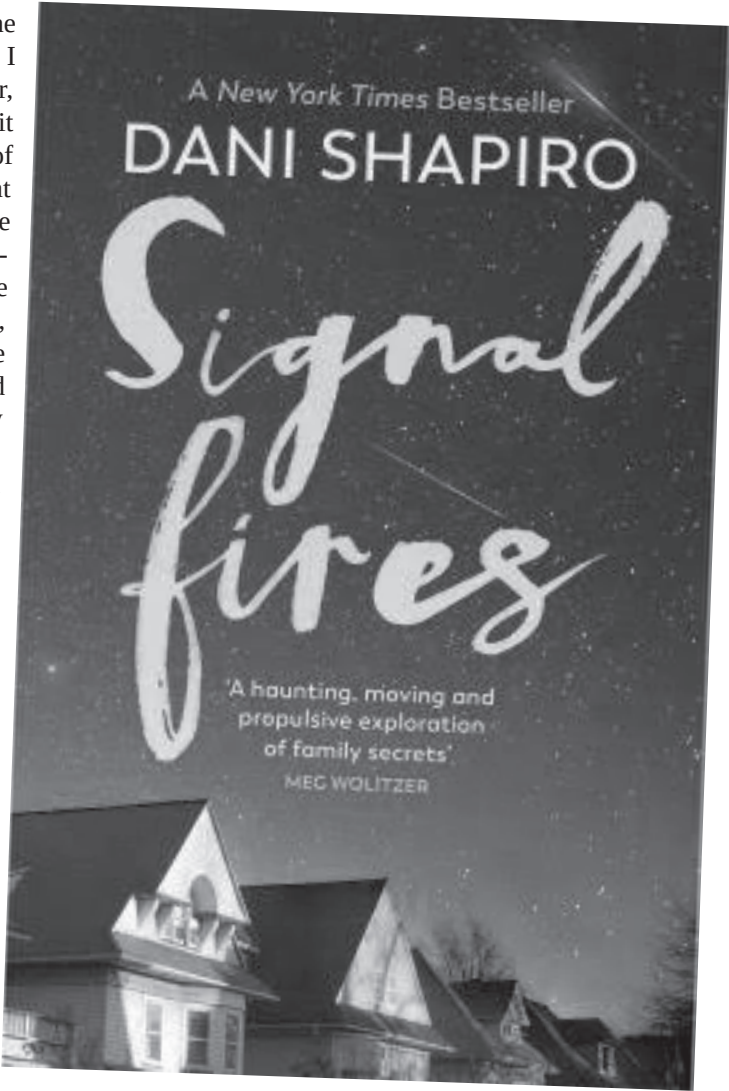
The story is moody, gripping, and meditative, which is telltale of the effects the tragedy had throughout the siblings and parents’ lives. Shapiro spends more time in character development and

metaphysical questions than in telling the story, which normally I wouldn’t like. However, with this tale, I found it essential. At the heart of the story is the fact that nobody speaks of the accident and its long-term effects – everyone keeps it secret, which, of course, adds over the years to the sorrow and anguish the Wilf family endures.

As an adult, Sarah is a screenwriter, a mother with two children, and has addiction problems; Theo is a tortured master chef with perhaps the most popular restaurants in New York; and Ben deals with his wife Mimi, who is slowly dying from Alzheimers.

Self-absorbed, with anger issues, is Sherkman, who watches his wife slowly die of cancer. He understands, with vicious clarity, why people strike bargains with God. He recognizes that “... it isn’t misery who loves company, it’s happiness who loves company. Misery just wants to be left alone.”

Toward the end of the book, “Waldo circles the oak tree, dragging his fingers along the rough bark. He stops at one spot that feels different from the



rest, smoother, darker, and rests his palm there. There is a term for this: ‘wound wood’, that he doesn’t really know, but feels like a current running through him. The bark has grown stronger, a scar over a healed wound.” A definite parallel to the story itself.

Through his insightfulness, Waldo says, “It’s like, everything has no beginning and no end. It’s like, we’re light years away

and here all at the same time. Everything is connected.”

The book brought home the devastating effects of how one traumatic incident can affect, not just the immediate family, but has ripple effects in the neighborhood and community, as well. Not a book for everyone, it is good, yet a bit depressing. I’d give this a 3.75 out of 5 stars.

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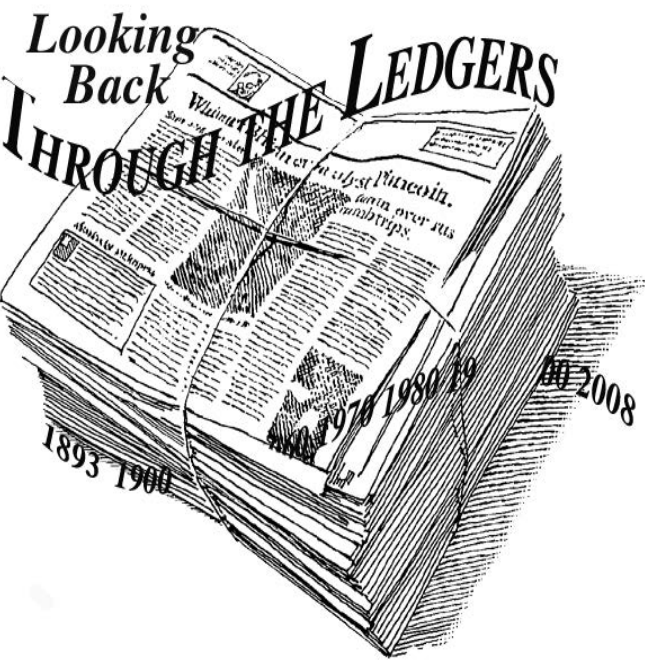


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Lori Hudson, Ghost on Beale Street, March 24
Matt Lubbers-Moore, ReQueered Tales, March 29
Preethi Saravanakumar, March 31

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viewpoint



125 years ago The Lowell Ledger March 17, 1898

L. & H. Railway is proposed to extend the road south from Freeport to Hastings and north, through Alto and Parnell to Belding and Greenville, during the present year. The only thing likely to interfere with the project, being Pingree's antics and the Spanish War scare, and these only, as they may tend to prevent the securing of the necessary funds.

Two months ago, Lucinda Fortney, who accosted a patrolman on the street of Grand Rapids and asked him to marry her, has been in the custody of authorities ever since. She insisted that she had a daughter in the city; this week the daughter was found. It was learned that the old woman was a fugitive from the Ohio asylum where she had been 30 years. Family troubles led to a divorce, and when she learned that her husband had married again, her mind gave way. She has asked every man in the jail, from the sheriff down, to be her husband.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger March 22, 1923

Extra copies of this paper. We have reserved copies that were never called for and refused cash sales to keep faith with those who never came for copies reserved. Hereafter, papers will be sold, first come, first serve, as that seems the only fair thing to do. Don't come for paper a month or two after publication and expect us to find them. - Publisher.

Alando Evans, 57, of Lakeview, died last week as the result of an injury to the left eye and head when the edge of a board, flying off a saw struck him in the eye.

No telephone service since a week ago Sunday and the weather has made difficult work for the linemen. That "Number, please," from Central will sound pretty good again.

Some of our poultry women have had their poor hens culled out, and are now having their best hens selected as breeders. Now that your hens are getting the egg laying habit ,feed them tankage and keep them at it. If you give your hens a balanced ration, they will lay eggs for your city relations.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger March 18, 1948

Lowell boxing contingent has cause for celebration. Seven strong, the Lowell amateur fighters scored a sweeping series of victories Monday night in an

American Legion tourney, held in Ionia at the Armory. Bob Andrews, Claude DeVormer, Bob Handand Bill Kinyon registered knockouts wins over their opponents, while Bernard Number, Lloyd VanWormer and Roger Falkner copped clear decisions.

The 1933 project to control floods on the Grand River in Michigan will be revived by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The third annual King Milling Company stag party was held at the Lena Lou on Monday evening of this week. Southern fried chicken was served in abundance with all the trimmings.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger Suburban Life March 17, 1973

The local Jaycee Auxiliary is sponsoring a project that will honor a woman for her service to this community. All nominations must be returned by May 1, 1973.

Spring weight restrictions will go into effect Monday, March 12, on all seasonal state highways in Michigan.

Postmaster Charles Doyle, said that despite the switch to "area mail processing," the local postmark is still available to anyone who wants it.

Gary Weimer became the first Lowell wrestler since Leo Taylor, in 1967, to gain the total of State Champion. Dale Dawson also did a great job placing fourth.

Lowell High School's "Barefoot in the Park' surviving district competition two weeks ago, and took a second in regionals last Saturday, will enter the State contest this Friday and Saturday at St. Johns.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger March 25, 1998

Charlie Bernard got his wish - he'll not only get to expand Bernard's True Value Hardware, but he will be able to do so before the store's busiest time. Bernard was granted site pan review for the 3,982 square foot addition.

Lowell High School names Jason Yeiter, Lonnie Bogdanik, Nick Kuilema and Katie Balaam as March Students of the Month.

George Noble, of H&R Block, and Mark Post, of Post Associates Inc., presented a plan to construct a 7,700-square-foot building on the south side of West Main Street, west of Ridgeview Drive. The planning commission gave unanimous approval to the site plan. Noble said he hopes to start the project this year.

Lowell High School was home to the largest powerlifting meet ever held in the state of Michigan. Lowell placed third in field of 60-plus teams and over 400 participants. Lowell's Nick Lillie's 735-pound total earned him a first place finish in the 114 pound division. Teammate Andy Graham's 970 pound total was the best in the 145-pound division.

outdoors

turkey time

Dave Stegehuis

Fall is the traditional season for hunting big and small game. As spring approaches most folks are looking forward to getting out on the water as the fishing seasons open up. There is, however, a hunting opportunity that also occurs this time of the year. Hunting for Eastern wild turkeys has become popular with Michigan hunters. There is a fall season and another which takes place during April, May and June.

Wild turkeys were once common in Michigan but disappeared by the early 1900's. Habitat loss and over hunting made survival difficult for these tough and resourceful birds. Early efforts to reintroduce turkeys to the Michigan landscape were unsuccessful. Released hatchlings proved to be too domesticated to survive in the wild.

During the 1950's, wild birds were trapped in other states and released in viable habitat. This plan worked, so over the years Michigan birds were relocated from established flocks to areas where there were no turkeys. Today, there are turkeys in almost all Michigan counties.

Now, everyone has

the opportunity to secure a license to hunt turkeys. The state is divided into management units, and through a lottery system, license allotment reflects the management goals in a particular unit. Licenses are available over the counter and on-line for those who do not receive one through the draw.

Wild turkeys are challenging and exciting to hunt. Turkey hunting provides a good reason to get out in the woods and fields during mild weather, when the landscape is coming alive with fresh foliage, noisy songbirds, and busy animals.

Turkey hunting is a good way for prospective hunters to explore the hunting experience. Like any outdoor activity, one can go over-the-top, acquiring the latest and greatest special gear. I began turkey hunting with an inherited, vintage double barrel shotgun and a homemade call. Tips on hunting turkeys are available on-line and in seminars presented at outdoor shows, DNR programs, and conservation organizations. Along with everything else going on in Michigan this spring, it's time for turkeys.

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



At Your Local Library

Kent District Library programs at Alto Branch, 6071 Linfield Ave SE. For additional information call 616-784-2007.

Scrabble for Seniors

Fridays from 1-3 pm. Sit down and enjoy a word game, unplugged, with other fans. For 18+ and skill levels welcome!

Storytime

Mondays, 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.

All Aboard! Book Club

Thursday, March 16, 10:30 - 11:30 am. Join a fun, informal discussion of great books. This month, we’ll discuss *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. For ages 18+

KDL Lab Experience

Wednesday, March 22, 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.

KDL Lab Experience

Tuesday, April 4, 1-2 pm. There’s no party like an art party, because an art party has so many fun activities you’ll never want it to end. Let your creativity flow! And when the fun does have to stop, you can keep creating at home. For ages 5-10.

Minecraft IRL

Wednesday, April 5, 1-2 pm. Leave the controllers at home, unplug at the library and join us for Minecraft IRL! Bring the fun of the gaming world into real life as we create, explore and craft with Minecraft-inspired activities. For ages 5-10.

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ABCs of Lowell history

Address: 106 W. Main
Date Built: 1905
Owner: Mrs. Carr
1st business: Millinery

Carr and Davis built a new one-story building on this site after the one belonging to them burned in the big fire of 1884. That fire took out 20 buildings in the center of Lowell, 16 on the north side of Main Street, westward from the Post Office, around the corner on Riverside and four on the south side of Main Street. Medler Restaurant and Boarding House and Romig Barbershop were here temporarily, as soon as the new store was ready; they moved back across the street when the Lee Block was finished.

The Carr & Davis building had housed millinery (women’s hat) shops of several different business women (including Mrs. Carr herself) over the years, since 1885. Mrs. E. S. White was operating the millinery in 1905 when Lowell’s Great Flood catastrophe occurred. The Main Street Bridge was washed away, as were the two buildings to the west of this one. This building



The flood of 1905 took down this building, it also demolished the center of town. Two buildings, to the west (right) of 106 W. Main, were swept away and ended up smashed against the railroad trestle downriver. Mr. Schreiner was miraculously pulled from the wreckage of one of these buildings as it was being swept away.

collapsed into the river so that the roof was on level with the street and was a total loss. Mrs. Carr had no insurance, however, she managed to have a new two-story building constructed. Millinery businesses were here from 1905 into the 1920s. In 1929, Ralph Townsend operated a Tire and Battery Shop. The



Main Street bridge was washed away in the Great Flood of 1905.



106 W. Main is the building on the right in, 1908.

Thrift Shoe Repair of Chas. Daudert opened in 1935. Bickford Shoe Repair and then Glen Gooden’s Shoe Repair followed from the 1940s into the 1970s. They used heavy-duty sewing machines to restitch seams of leather shoes; they could renew your shoes by putting on new heels, soles or half soles. In the 1980s, The Lowell Nature Pantry Food Coop lined the walls and floor with bins of bulk food. Each Coop member signed up to work at least once a month. You had to be a member to shop. These were the days before bulk food stores. Rookies Sportcards Plus (sports cards, comic books, games) celebrated

30 years in 2022. It was founded in 1992 with the combined efforts of Donald L. Reedy, Sr. and his son, Jack. Jack Reedy continues to operate the store hosting special events and activities throughout the year.

area churches

CALVARY CHRISTIAN
REFORMED CHURCH
OF LOWELL

897-7060
Pastor Ryan Landt
1151 West Main Street, Lowell, MI
Website: calvarylowell.org
Morning Worship.....10:00 AM
Weekly Prayer Meeting - Mondays 7 PM
Barrier-Free

happy birthday

Riverside Fellowship
of Seventh-day Adventists

"Praying and studying together"
Saturday service begins at 10:30 AM
10300 Vergennes St. SE, Lowell
616-987-0567
www.lowellriverside.com
Pastor Darrel le Roux

GOOD SHEPHERD
LUTHERAN CHURCH

10305 Bluewater Highway
(Missouri Synod)
Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21
Sunday Services - 10:30 am
www.gslc.church
Richard Boshoven, Pastor 897-8307
All facilities are wheelchair accessible

St. Mary Catholic
Church

402 Amity Street • 616-897-9820
Website: www.stmarylowell.com
Weekend Masses: Sat 5 pm; Sun 10:30 am
Confession: Saturdays 3:30-4:30 pm
Prayer & Adoration: Wednesdays 9 am to 4:45 pm
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Pastor Shannon Jammal-Hollemans
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616-897-5906

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897-7168 • www.fbcloowell.org
Pastor Jon Pickens • Lead Pastor
Pastor Andrew Bolkcom • Pastor of Discipleship
Christi Swain • Director of Children's Ministries
SUNDAY WORSHIP.....9:30 AM (Nursery provided)
LIFE GROUPS 11:00 AM (Nursery-Adult)
Awana (K-5 during school year) Wednesday, 6:15 PM

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

MARCH 16
Greg Briggs, Louise Weeks.

MARCH 20
John Roudabush, Cody Moore, Denise Fyan.

MARCH 17
Renee Barnes, Logan Landman, Zach Breimayer, Flora Jean Beachum.

MARCH 21
Terry Raymor, Ardis Barber, Molly Clark, Steve Kovacs, Grace Valle.

MARCH 18
Bruce Phillips Jr., Chase Treglia, Jim Hacker.

MARCH 19
Jeremy Barber, Terry B. Abel, Kimberly Dixon, Sean Ellison, Alberta Ryder.

Local students named essay contest winners

Three students from Lowell Middle School, have been named local winners in the 54nd annual America & Me Essay Contest, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance.

The students have earned first, second and third place awards for their school, with Marshall Huhn, placing first, Mikena Ismail, second and Elizabeth Repp, third. All three received award certificates for their achievement. As the school's first-place winner, Huhn's name will also be engraved on a plaque for permanent display in the school.

Lowell Middle School's participation in the America & Me Essay

Contest was sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance agent, Jordan Nurmikko, of Grand Rapids.

Huhn's first-place essay now advances to the state-level competition, from which the top 10 essays in Michigan will be selected. The top 10 statewide winners, who will be announced in April, each will receive a plaque, a medallion, and a cash award of \$1,000. Farm Bureau Insurance will also be presenting each top ten statewide school with a \$1,000 check, along with an additional \$500, because a Farm Bureau Insurance agent sponsored the school.

The traditional annual America & Me Essay

Contest Awards Day is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17, 2023, in Lansing. The top 10 students, and their teachers from across the state, will be invited to participate in the day-long group recognitions.

Several thousand eighth-grade students, from nearly 200 Michigan schools, participated in the 2022 - 2023 America & Me Essay Contest, which was conducted with the help of Farm Bureau Insurance agents across the state. The topic of this year's contest was "My Personal Michigan Hero." Marshall should take considerable pride in advancing to the state level competition.



From left to right to Marshall Huhn, first place; Elizabeth Repp, third place; Mikena Ismail, second place; Olivia Lothian, Adelaide Plank, Jordan Nurmikko.

March is National Nutrition Month

In March, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program is joining with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to encourage Michiganders to focus attention on the importance

of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits during National Nutrition Month.

"The 2023 theme, Fuel for the Future, encourages everyone to eat with sustainability in mind," said

Christina Herring, WIC Director. "It is a reminder to fill our bodies with healthy foods during every phase of life, as well as protect the environment."

Fuel for the Future highlights ways everyone can eat with the environment

in mind, like enjoying more plant-based meals and snacks, buying food in season, shopping locally, or starting a container or backyard garden to grow food at home.

During National Nutrition Month, the Michigan WIC Program encourages everyone to eat a variety of foods from all food groups and in various forms, including fresh, frozen and canned food. In addition, Michiganders are encouraged to include their favorite cultural foods and traditions, avoid fad diets promoting unnecessary restriction and practice gratitude for their body by giving it the fuel it needs.

food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health and other services. WIC foods are selected to meet nutrient needs such as calcium, iron, folic acid, and vitamins A and C.

WIC also provides families with access to registered dietitians or registered dietitian nutritionists. These food and nutrition experts specialize in assessing one's unique needs and providing personalized nutrition education and counseling to meet individual health goals.

To learn more about WIC or find an agency near you, call 211 or visit Michigan.gov/WIC.



VERGENNES TOWNSHIP

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Vergennes Township Board will hold a public hearing for comment on the proposed 2023/2024 budget during a regular meeting of the Board to be held March 20, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The Board meets at the Vergennes Township Hall located at 69 Lincoln Lake Ave NE, Lowell, MI 49331.

Copies of the proposed budget are available at the township offices on Mondays & Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Written comments will be accepted if received before 7 pm on March 20th by the Township Clerk. They can be sent to PO Box 208, Lowell, MI 49331, or by e-mail to clerk@vergennestwp.org.

Shantell Ford
Vergennes Township Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE

BOWNE TOWNSHIP

A public accuracy test of the voting equipment to be used in the May 2, 2023 Special Election will be held on

March 30, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

In the Historic Township Hall located at 8240 Alden Nash Avenue SE Alto, Michigan 49302

This test is conducted to demonstrate that the program and Computer that will be used to tabulate the results of the of the election, Counts the votes in the manner presented by law.

Karen L. Hendrick
Bowne Township Clerk

LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Lowell Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing to consider the following request from Mr. Gabe O'Mara:

1. 9639 36th Street SE (PPN 41-20-18-300-004) Dimensional Zoning Variance under Section 24.07 of the Lowell Charter Township Zoning Ordinance.

LOCATION & ADDRESS: The property is located at 9639 36th Street at the northeast corner of 36th Street and Snow Avenue. The applicant seeks a dimensional non-use variance from Section 4.15(b) (1) for constructing a 48 x 32 accessory building. The applicant is seeking a dimensional variance for a practical difficulty with the property's natural grading and terrain, which prevent the applicant from constructing the building at the required 50 ft. minimum setback from 36th Street. Instead, the applicant seeks a 10-foot variance to build the building at a distance no less than a 40-foot setback from the right-of-way line.

The hearing will be held as follows:

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2023
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
WHERE: LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP HALL
2910 ALDEN NASH AVENUE SE
LOWELL, MI. 49331

Information on the proposed request is available for review at the Lowell Charter Township Offices, 2910 Alden Nash Avenue, SE, Lowell, MI 49331, during normal office hours on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday or by calling 897-7600.

David Hoogenboom, Secretary
Lowell Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals

Lowell FFA successful at State Convention

submitted by Kevin Nugent
FFA Advisor

The Lowell FFA completed a successful trip to the Michigan FFA State Convention, March 8-10. Ten members from Lowell traveled to Michigan State University to receive awards or compete in state-level competitions.

Two members represented Lowell in the State FFA Leadership contests. The leadership contests are designed to help the students build teamwork and communication skills in order to make them better leaders and more prepared for the future. In order to qualify for the state contests, members first had to advance through district and regional contests, finishing in the top two at each level. Lowell had twenty two members compete at the district level, thirteen advanced to regionals, and two compete

at the state contests.

Frankie Eddy competed in the State FFA Creed Speaking contest. In this contest, 7th through 9th grade members memorize and present the FFA Creed. Judges also ask questions about how the Creed relates to their life. Twelve students from across the state participate in the Creed Speaking contest and Eddy ended up receiving a State Silver Award.

In Prepared Public Speaking, Ella Acheson received a State Bronze Award. In the Prepared Public Speaking contest, members select a topic dealing with agriculture and natural resources, research that topic, and prepare a 6 to 8-minute speech. Acheson presented a speech on the use of genome mapping in agriculture.

In addition to the Leadership Contests,

individual members were recognized in other award areas.

Two members from the Lowell Chapter received their State FFA Degree. The State FFA Degree is the highest award that the State Association can bestow upon one of its members and is typically awarded during the member's senior year. Of the over 8,000 members in the Michigan FFA, only around 400 were chosen to receive this award. The Lowell FFA members that received the award were David Johnston and Grace VanTimmeren.

In order to be considered for the State Degree, students have to show that they have worked on a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) and have been active in the FFA. A student's SAE project combines the information learned in the agriscience classes with the leadership experiences in the FFA. The SAE is tailored to the student's interests in agriculture. These projects can range from fair animals, to jobs, to community service activities. In order to qualify for the State Degree, the student has to document that they have either earned \$2,000 from their project, spent at least 450 hours on the project, or a combination of the two.

The Outstanding Junior award was given to four junior year students from Lowell. The requirements for the Outstanding Junior award are similar to the State Degree but with lower numbers. Receiving the award from Lowell were Grady Eickhoff, Maddie Morgensen, Haleigh Stickney, and Melanie Swanson.

In the State Proficiency awards, Grace VanTimmeren received a Silver Award in the area of Vegetable Production.



Grace VanTimmeren and David Johnston earned the State FFA Degree at the Michigan FFA State Convention.

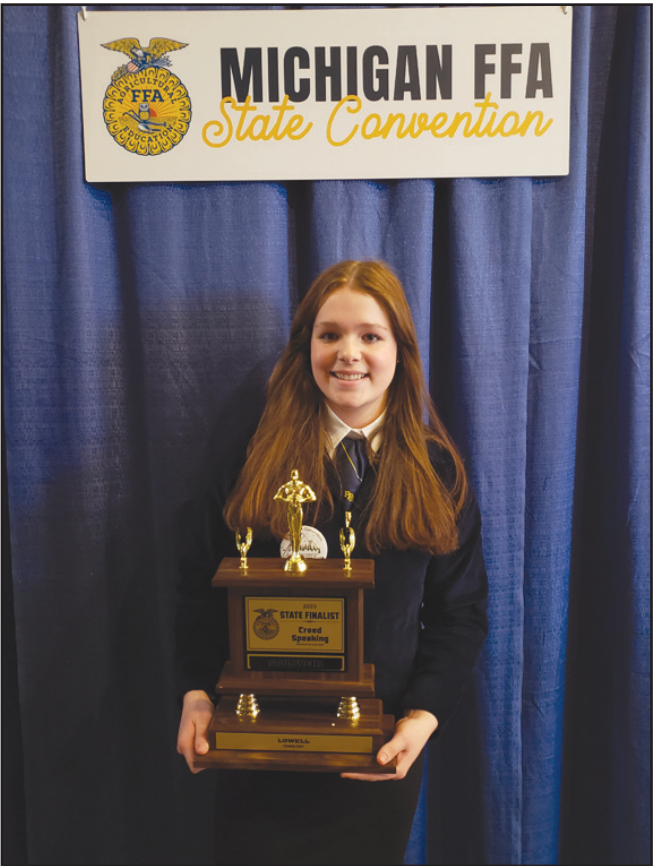


Ella Acheson received a Bronze award in the State-prepared Public Speaking contest.

The proficiency awards recognize students that have outstanding Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE). VanTimmeren completed the award application, detailing the work she does at Heidi's Farm Stand. After working at Heidi's for several years, VanTimmeren is now one of the lead workers in the greenhouses and is in charge of the hydroponic tomato production.

Abby German, Charlie Lyons, Maddie Morgensen and Haleigh Stickney represented Lowell as delegates. While serving as delegates, they were able to travel to the State Capitol and voted on the members that will serve as the 2023-24 State FFA Officers.

The Michigan FFA Association is a statewide youth organization of over 8,000 student members as part of 120 local FFA chapters. The FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership,



Frankie Eddy received a Silver award in the State Creed Speaking contest.

personal growth and career success, through agricultural education. The Michigan FFA Association operates as a state affiliate under the federally chartered National FFA Organization. The Lowell FFA chapter has over 130 members in grades 7-12.

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Sundays
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NEWSPAPER

Fridaywww.sitename.news

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Fundraiser set for LHS graduate - Doak Dean

By Cliff Yankovich
contributing writer

The Pink Arrow football game was the brain child of our former football coach, Noel Dean. Back in 2008, he was casting about for a way to help residents of the Lowell area who were battling cancer. Pink Arrow was born, and since then, the event has grown to be way more than a football game, and the best part is that it has been copied all over Michigan, and the rest of the country, thanks to some national news exposure early on. Many residents and business owners in the Lowell School district have received financial help from the Pink Arrow monies.

Cancer does not care about the success of Pink Arrow. Cancer has no respect for the brilliant idea of Coach Dean and his family. The difficult news is that Noel and Jill's son,

Doak, has been attacked by cancer. Doak graduated from Lowell in 2021 with impressive wrestling and football stats, as well as the needed academic prowess to attend Harvard. Doak is a member of the wrestling team at Harvard, following in the footsteps of his older brothers Zeth and Kanon. He was ambushed by cancer near the end of 2022.

Last fall, Doak noticed a "twinge" and thought maybe he pulled a muscle. The pain did not go away and he finally mentioned it to his parents when he came home for Thanksgiving break. A visit to the doctor revealed that the "twinge" was testicular cancer. It was so advanced that Doak was in an operating room within 24 hours.

At first, the docs were seeing indications that the cancer had been eradicated, but further scans showed signs of it near one of Doak's kidneys. The result has been that Doak will not be continuing with his second season of wrestling for the Harvard Crimson team. Instead, he is looking at a schedule of a much different kind: three 21-day cycles of chemotherapy in which there are five days of chemo and 16 days "off". Ask anyone who has danced with cancer, and they can tell you, once you get a little bit down the road with chemo, there are no days off.

When news of Doak's cancer diagnosis reached Lowell, a group of people, led by Brian Krajewski, sprang into action. Within a few days, they hatched and began to execute a plan to help Doak with the expenses not covered by insurance. The net result is a fundraiser to be held on the Lowell



Showboat, from 5 to 10 pm, on Friday, March 24th.

"People came out of the woodwork to help," Krajewski said. "Doak grew up in full view of the community. We watched him as a four or five-year-old on the sidelines at the games with his dad. Right now we have more people asking how they can help than we have things for them to do."

Admission to the event is \$20 per person. That price will include five tickets for bidding on a variety of auction items. Additional tickets can be purchased for \$2.00 each. There will be a cash bar, live music from Tom Kaywood's band "2BT", and light snacks served on the Showboat. Table auctions will be closing hourly, starting at 6:00 pm. A few big ticket items will be live-auctioned, starting at 8:00 pm. There will be a 50/50 raffle, as well.

Regarding the auction items, Krajewski is lining-up some very impressive prize packages. One of them is a VIP Game Day Experience at Notre Dame for four people. The package has a value north of \$5,000 because it includes limo transportation to and from the game, special VIP seating, and a VIP Tailgate Party.

In addition to the event on the Showboat, there will be a "Poker Walk around Lowell". To participate in this, just check-in from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Lowell Chamber of Commerce on the Riverwalk, across from the Showboat. Then, return to the Chamber to hand-in your poker hands by 8:00 pm. Several local restaurants in Lowell will be donating to this cause from purchases made at their locations between 4:00 pm to close on March 24th.

If you are not able to attend, but would like to make a contribution, you can send a check made-out to Lowell Community Wellness (LCW), with Doak Dean in "Memo", and mail it to Lowell Community Wellness, PO Box 246, Lowell, MI 49331.

Kent County Youth Agricultural Association appoints new executive director

The Kent County Youth Agricultural Association (KCYAA) is pleased to announce they have appointed a new Executive Director, Morgan Doyle. Doyle served as the KCYAA interim Executive Director this past year. Through Doyle's background in agriculture, from her childhood growing up in Kansas and her participation in the Kansas State Rodeo team, to being a member of the KCYAA Board of Directors, she has a real drive to continue the success of the organization.

"Morgan's passion for the organization and its mission ,centered on creating opportunities for West Michigan youth to develop character and leadership traits through agricultural projects, made her the perfect choice to help lead our organization into the future," said Bill Zaske, President of the KCYAA Board of Directors.

The KCYAA hosts the annual Kent County Youth Fair, which will be held on July 31 through August 5, 2023. The KCYAA is currently building a new venue, The Grand Agricultural Center of West Michigan (The Grand), on 140 acres, located at 13995 Cascade Road in Lowell. The Grand will serve as the future home for Kent County Youth Fair and other local, regional, and statewide events.

Doyle added, "The Grand will allow West Michigan to highlight the importance of agriculture by hosting a variety of exhibitions and showcases. By building a modern facility to host local, regional, and potentially national level events, will create more opportunities for our local youth to exhibit their projects and talents while staying locally in the West Michigan area."

For over 88 years, the Kent County Youth Agricultural Association and the Kent County Youth Fair have created opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills, cultivate character traits, and nurture interest in the sciences, through our agricultural projects. We are proud of the role we play in creating our next generation of leaders.



Morgan Doyle is the new Executive Director of The Kent County Youth Agricultural Association.

Support the Local Businesses
Who Help Support
Our Community!

Fundraiser in Support of DOAK DEAN

Friday, March 24th
5:00 pm - 11:00 pm
on the
Lowell Showboat
Live Band 2BT
6:30 pm - 10:00 pm

\$20 ENTRY FEE

Gives you 5 auction tickets, light snacks, fun/dancing and a cash bar.

Proceeds to offset various cost of items not covered by insurance for Doak. The remaining funds to help local families of Lowell who are also being impacted by cancer.



Checks to be made to Lowell Community Wellness (LCW) with Doak Dean in "Memo," or mail checks to Lowell Community Wellness, PO Box 246, Lowell, MI 49331

Table auctions closing hourly, starting at 6:00 pm.
Silent auctions and a few big ticket items being live-auctioned at 8:00 pm

MORE FUNDRAISING ACCURRING THAT DAY:

- "Poker Walk around Lowell" - check-in from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Lowell Chamber of Commerce, hand-in time is at 8:00 pm, also at Chamber.
- "Restaurant Row" - various local restaurants in Lowell will be donating to this cause from 4:00 pm to close on March 24th.
- 50/50 raffle at event

Red Arrow

SPORTS

Jannenga heading south to Kalamazoo

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

“Growing up, I never really thought about playing college football because baseball was always my number-one sport, but after starting my junior year, college coaches started hitting me up. My senior year was just so much, fun I knew I couldn’t be done playing, I fell in love with Kalamazoo and the rest is history,” LHS senior, Nolan Jannenga, told the Ledger.

Jannenga is the latest Lowell football player to commit to playing collegiate football and continue his education, recently signing with Kalamazoo College.

“What made me choose Kalamazoo College was the fact that it’s right by such a big school (Western Michigan). Kalamazoo is just a great city to be in. The football team’s goal for team GPA is a 3.3 and they offer a lot of opportunities to get the most out of my academics. I know that they will push me to be the best student and athlete I can be,” Nolan added.

Kalamazoo College, commonly called K-College down in Kalamazoo, competes in the MIAA, in the NCAA’s Division 3. Their nickname is the Hornets, and they play against opponents like Olivet, Alma, and Hope College.

“For me, playing football was really a no-brainer. All my cousins played football, my dad, and some of my uncles all played, so I was always around the sport,” Jannenga said of how he started playing football. Jannenga is still undecided on his major, but is considering business, history, and potentially, being a coach in the future, as well.

He played defensive end and long-snapper for the Red Arrows this year, wearing number 52 and 13 during his senior year. The program qualified for the playoffs each year Nolan was in high school.

“Over my four years at Lowell, it has taught me how to face adversity and how to overcome it. My freshman year, we really had to change the culture after a difficult season. My senior year, I considered everyone on that team my best friends because we were all so close; we bonded like no other,” Jannenga concluded of his team at LHS.

Jannenga and the Hornets will kick the season off on September 2nd against Oberlin College (OH).



Nolan Jannenga (right) fist bumps teammate, TJ Hollern (left).

- BASKETBALL

Basketball season ends with narrow finishes

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

In a season that had come down to the final seconds on more than one occasion, it was only fitting for the season to end that way.

Lowell pulled off an upset over Forest Hills Central in the district quarterfinal, before nearly doing the same to eventual district champions Rockford in the semifinals. The Rams upset Northview in the district final.

Against the Rangers, Lowell overcame a five-point deficit to defeat FHC, 50-48. A home playoff game made for an electric atmosphere. The Red Arrows took the lead with three minutes to play on an Aidan Fitzpatrick turnaround jumper, 43-41. No points were put up until the 1:09 mark when FHC was forced to foul Drew Veldman. With no shot clock in high school, Lowell in theory, could have held onto the ball until the end of the game. With this, teams trailing are forced to foul or try to force a turnover.

Up three, 46-43, with thirty seconds left, Veldman blocked a potential game-tying three. Fitzpatrick was fouled on the other end, knocking down two free throws with twenty seconds left.

Free throws down the stretch in a tight game aren’t easy. Especially when you have members of student sections doing their best to distract you. The next possession after an FHC basket, Ben Gaskin made two free throws. The game out of reach, FHC scored a three with 0.2 seconds left but it would not be enough.

On the road at Rockford for the district semifinal, Lowell trailed 49-47 with 11.1 seconds left. In a hostile atmosphere, against a school more than double their size, the Red Arrows had a chance at the end of the game to pull off a second straight upset. A March cinderella run of their own.

The ball went out to Aidan Fitzpatrick, who was forced to shoot, but the Rams had a defender who had outstretched, primed for a block. Fitzpatrick quickly double-clutched, to avoid the potential block, and forced a difficult buzzerbeater three-pointer attempt. It hit the rim, coming oh-so-close, but Rockford survived.

“So proud of these boys, they are a pivotal part of moving this program in the right direction. They will always be remembered for their toughness,” Coach Bryan Powell said through the boys basketball social media pages after the game.

Lowell finished the season at 11-13.



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SPORTS

We have been to the team state seven times and this was the first time we stuck all five routines. At the state level, that's pretty incredible.

Michele DeHaan, gymnastics coach

Gymnastics takes on state meet

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

The last winter sport standing ended their season right where they wanted it to, at the state meet. Lowell competed in Friday's team and Saturday's individual state meet, held in Lakeland.

Lowell beat two teams that had higher total scores from the regional tournament. The Red Arrows scored 135.8, besting Howell (135.6) and Huron Valley United (133.725), finishing 11th, overall. The highest finish for a Lowell team since 2016, also an 11th place finish. Lowell was less than a half point behind 10th place Grosse Pointe. The co-op of Rockford-Sparta won the team crown, their second straight state championship.

"Gymnastics isn't like other sports, where you can call a different play to try to get a different result. We can only do what's in the girl's routines. Their routines already have in them the best combinations of skills each gymnast is able to perform. A team score can swing a few points, or sometimes just tenths based on how the girls perform. Going into state, we know the teams, that are multiple points above us, are pretty much unbeatable," Lowell Gymnastics Head Coach, Michele DeHaan, told the Ledger.

"We always go into the state meet with the attitude that we are going to do our routines with focus and confidence, to have fun, enjoy the experience and whatever happens, happens.

We have been working hard on beam the last few weeks and I believe that was the difference. We were the only team to have no falls Friday night, in all five of our beam routines. I found out Saturday that the judges were commenting about us being the only team that stayed on! We have been to the team state seven times and this was the first time we stuck all five routines. At the state level, that's pretty incredible. Ivy McDonald was the only one that had beam experience at the state level."

McDonald ended her gymnastics career with a podium finish on Saturday. Fifth place on bars (8.575) and tenth place All-Around (34.90). She finished seventh last year on beam, making a two-spot improvement. The five gymnasts to stick their routines at the team state meet were: McDonald, Hannah Flickinger, Leah Krieger, Romyn Slagell, and Krista Jungblut. A feat the five also accomplished at regionals. Ella Curtis, Julia Meier, and Alexis Clark were the other gymnasts who competed at team state.

Jungblut, particularly, had a memorable trip to the state meet this year. Her freshman year, the state meet was canceled due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her sophomore year, the team made the



Lowell gymnastics team photo at the 2023 State Meet.



Alexis Clark and Ivy McDonald were Lowell's two individual state qualifiers.

state meet, but Jungblut couldn't go with the team, due to contact tracing. Junior year, the Red Arrows narrowly missed going to the state tournament. This year, Jungblut would finally be able to perform. "I'm so glad we were able to have that experience this year with her," DeHaan added.

The other gymnast to compete at the individual state tournament was Alexis Clark; she finished T-22nd on the Vault with an 8.875. With a 9.225, she also placed 14th on floor. Top

ten earns all-state honors, always a tough task in a meet where the best-of-the-best in Michigan are competing.

"Gymnastics isn't a sport that girls do after high school, so everyone wants to make it all the way to that final meet. It's the best-of-the-best. And everyone wears individual leotards, so it's like a leotard fashion show. The only rule I give our girls is that their leotard has to be Lowell colors. Besides that, anything goes. There are so many girls that

will never make it to state individually, so when we make it to state as a team, we always wear a different team leotard so those girls get a chance to wear something different. The leotards we wore this year for team night were the leotards we wore the very first time we made it to state in 2014," DeHaan concluded about what makes the state meet special.

5 great reasons to participate in scholastic sports

Many kids are introduced to sports at an early age. Though young children may enjoy the recreational aspect of playing sports, a serious passion for a particular sport may develop as children reach high school. Such passions can be encouraged, as participating in sports can be highly beneficial for young people.

1. Learn resilience: Compared to generations past, when children may have had jobs during the school year, today's children do not have many demands placed on them beyond schoolwork and maybe some light chores around the house. The average student may use sports as a way to learn about and overcome challenges. Participating in sports can teach kids how to recover from setbacks (being

the losing team) or dealing with adverse situations (sports-related injuries).

2. Improve fitness: School sports require ongoing physical activity, which is advantageous to children in an age when lifestyles are increasingly sedentary. A report from the National Federation of State High School Associations found that when female students are given more opportunity to engage in athletics in high school, their weight and body mass improve. School sports can help students overcome the negatives of sedentary lifestyles.

3. Relieve stress: Exercise in any shape or form can help relieve stress. The camaraderie that develops within a team setting also can boost self-esteem and help some students overcome any

feelings of isolation they may confront during adolescence.

4. Boost brainpower: School sports may work the body but they also benefit the brain. A report from the Institute of Medicine indicates children who are physically active show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed and perform better on academic tests than those who are sedentary.

5. Develop confidence and leadership skills: A study from Cornell University says teens who played sports developed stronger leadership skills and developed better confidence. That can work in a team or solitary setting, and translate into skills that serve a person well throughout life.

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The benefits of career exploration

Career exploration (CE) is helpful for anyone considering a career change but it’s especially important for someone planning to enter college, for life planning, a life change, or if you have a new or existing disability. While most counselors complete training in career counseling and testing as part of their degree, there are other forms of career counseling. For instance, vocational rehabilitation (VR). VR counselors help individuals with functional, physical, psychological, developmental, cognitive, and/or emotional disabilities/impairments overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining, and/or returning to employment. I have experience in career counseling beyond basic training, since I’ve been a VR Counselor/Consultant for about 20 years and am also a State of Michigan approved VR provider. Drawing on my experience, I wanted to share some of the ways I have found career exploration to be helpful.

Benefits of career exploration

CE can be helpful to just about anyone. Below are some of the ways it can be helpful during various

life stages.

Students

For any student planning to attend college, CE can save a lot of time, effort, mis-steps, and costs. It’s not unusual for someone to enter college with a degree in mind, only to find out it’s not a good fit and have to start over on another degree/certificate tract. This is not just time consuming but can also be very expensive. Completing a good career exploration test battery can help narrow the field to careers better suited to your wants, needs, and skills.

A student not planning to attend college can also benefit from CE or at minimum CE testing. Those entering the workforce may take a job, only to find out, it’s not a good fit. So, they try another in a different field with similar results. This can lead the person to jump from career to career, trying to find one that is a good fit for them. This is not only frustrating but also results in job-hopping, which doesn’t look ideal on a resume/application. Why? On paper, jumping between different careers can come across as being unreliable, not goal-oriented, lacking in planning skills, lacking in direction, or not being loyal, etc. This is often a red

flag to employers and may make it more difficult to get selected for an interview so you have no chance at getting the job. CE and/or CE testing can help you find careers better suited to your wants, abilities, and needs.

Adults

Adults that may not have worked for many years and are reentering or entering the workforce for the first time, or adults that need/want to change careers, will find CE testing and CE helpful to find a fulfilling career. Maybe past skills are outdated or you no longer have an interest in past or current work fields. Whatever the reason for the career change, CE and CE testing are a good start to help you come up with the best plan moving forward.

Disabled Individuals

Whether born with a disability or are disabled due to an accident or illness, CE and CE testing can help those with various types of disabilities (functional, physical, psychological, developmental, cognitive, and/or emotional disabilities/impairments) overcome barriers to obtaining, maintaining, and/or returning to employment. CE narrows the field of opportunities to those that will be the best fit for you within your current abilities and interests while also providing support and resources during the process.



Recommended CE & CE testing

I recommend you see someone, with not just basic training in CE and CE testing, but also experience in the field. In terms of CE testing, there are four main components; personality tests, interest inventories, skills assessments (abilities), and value assessments. A good comprehensive test battery should include all of these areas. Why is this important? I have experienced and seen individuals that take test batteries, only focusing on 2-3 of the four areas (usually leaving out skills/abilities, and the result is often a list of hundreds of careers, many of which are not a good fit. This is because the person doesn’t have the ability/skills to do

the job. While a person may have the potential (aptitude) for a career, they may not have the ability (existing current skill) to do the job. Also, just because someone has the aptitude, this doesn’t always mean they can easily learn the skill. An example of a test focused on interest/values falling short is the question “are you interested in having summers off” (this was a real question on a CE interest only test). The results provided numerous types of teaching positions which the person was not interested in, said they had no patience with children or giving instructions, and had no aptitude or ability for teaching. You see where I’m going with this. So, a good test battery or system is important. Before selecting the one my office uses, I did

a lot of research and took the tests myself and found that many fell short and provided more confusion and questions than answers. So, make sure any CE test you take includes all four components which will give you the best chance of finding a good career match.

Outside of working with an independent professional career counselor, you can also check with your high school or college/university to see if they offer career testing. Again, be sure it includes all four components so you don’t get results that are not a good fit. If their testing doesn’t, find a professional career counselor that offers a test battery that does. This article is for informational purposes only. I hope everyone stays healthy!

Social Security launches redesigned website at SSA.gov

By Hillary Hatch,
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Have you visited the redesigned SSA.gov yet? In December, 2022, we updated our homepage with a new design to help you find what you need more easily.

“SSA.gov is visited by over 180 million people per year and it is one of our most important tools for providing efficient and equitable access to service,” said Kilolo Kijakazi, Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, at the launch. “Whether providing service in person or online, our goal is to help people understand what they may qualify for and seamlessly transition them to an application process.”

Now, with improved self-service accessibility to online services, you might not have to call or visit an office to get what you need. This helps our staff focus on serving customers who need in-person assistance. Reimagined website prioritizes customer experience-

The redesign is intended to provide a clear path to the tasks you need to accomplish. Many of the most visited sections of SSA.gov are now live with a more user-friendly and task-based approach. New pages and improvements based on public feedback will continue to be unveiled in the coming months, as part of our ongoing efforts to improve how the public can do business with us.

When you visit SSA.gov, you can use interactive tools to:

Check eligibility for benefits-

The new benefit eligibility screener is a convenient and simple way for you to learn if you might be eligible for benefits.

Save time on Social Security number (SSN) and card online services-

If you lose your SSN card, you may not need a replacement. In most cases, simply knowing your SSN is enough. If you do need a replacement card, you may

be able to request it online by visiting our Social Security Number and Card page at www.ssa.gov/ssnumber.

You can also start an application for an updated card or request an SSN for the first time. You may never need to go to an office, but if you do need to visit an office to complete the application then you can save a lot of time by starting online.

Start an application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)-

You can start the application process online and request an appointment to apply for SSI benefits by answering a few questions on our SSI page at www.ssa.gov/ssi.

Apply for Social Security benefits and other online services-

For most benefits, you can apply online or start an application online. In many cases, there are no forms to sign. We will review the application and contact you with any questions or if we need more information. Visit

our Online Services page at www.ssa.gov/onlineservices to apply for retirement, disability, or Medicare.

Many Social Security services do not require an office visit. If you have a personal my Social Security account, you can start or change direct deposit, request a replacement SSA-1099, or print or download a current benefit verification letter if you need proof of your benefits.

If you’re not yet receiving benefits, you can use your online account to get a personalized Social Security Statement, which provides your earnings information as well as estimates of future benefits. The portal also includes a retirement estimator tool and links to information about other online services. We encourage people without a personal my Social Security account to create one today at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

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~ dog sledding

by Martha Hayden

Have you been dog sledding? We have never been, so my adventurous husband, Chuck, signed us up for an overnight excursion at Nature’s Kennel, located in the Upper Peninsula near Newberry, Michigan. I was clad in my woolen layers, Arctic coat and snow pants, hoping I was prepared! Chuck, who has always embraced the cold, was comfortable in a sweater. Join us on our adventure!

Elizabeth, our guide, came out to our Jeep as soon as we pulled into the snow-covered lot. “We’re a bit early.” Chuck shrugged. She bubbled her introduction, as well as her sidekick, Kemper, a retired Alaskan Husky, who was assisting Elizabeth with her morning chores. “We’ll go in the house, where you’ll get your boots, then we’ll go meet the dogs.” Nature’s Kennel provides polar-style boots for their guests. Once inside we slid on our footwear, dropped our overnight gear in a snowmobile sled and followed Elizabeth to the

the charming uniqueness of the individual dogs. I offered my hand to Funny. He nuzzled into my pet.

The dog sled driving instructions

Two sleds were parked in the center of the kennel. Elizabeth called us over for our tutorial before hooking up the selected teams.

“When leaving the yard the dogs are going to go ‘pedal to the metal.’ That’s when they’re the most excited. So, put a good bit of pressure on that drag pad.” Elizabeth demonstrated. “This line (to her left) is called the snub line or quick release. It ensures that the dogs go on the tour with us and not without us.”

“Once the dogs get into a rhythm, you may stand on the rails. I often have one foot on a rail and the other foot I place sideways so my heel is on the drag pad and my toe is on the rail.” Elizabeth spoke matter-of-factly, with a smile.



Here is one of six kennels at “Nature’s Kennel.”

kennels.

The kennels

Each kennel has around 20 Alaskan Huskies, who are cared for by one guide. When Elizabeth walked into her kennel area, the dogs loudly chanted and leaped with excitement. Weekly, the guides are responsible to check each dog’s paws, claws, ears, eyes, teeth and weight, which are recorded and charted.

“If the dog is on it’s platform, it’s ok to pet them. We don’t go behind the barrels. That’s the dog’s space.” As the dogs barked, I felt uneasy about petting these energetic hounds. Then I looked up and saw one dog melting into Elizabeth’s arms. “He gives the BEST hugs!” Elizabeth smiled.

My uneasiness instantly started to thaw. For the first time, I began to see

Twenty miles to Musher’s Village

With seven dogs harnessed to Elizabeth’s sled, I climbed into the seat designed for one rider. I couldn’t believe that running would be something that the dogs (or anyone) would want to do, but they barked and loped forward earnestly trying to get the sled to move. Chuck had a team of four, harnessed to his sled, behind us. His dogs erupted with barks. The Alaskan Huskies, along the sides of the kennel ,answered in a harried chorus. Energy vibrated all around us.

Then Elizabeth gave the command, “Ready, Go!” Our sled jerked and wobbled as the dogs muscled forward. I felt as though we may ascend into the air, as if we were in Santa’s sleigh. Soon the team created a cadence over the

soft snow and a peacefulness enveloped me as we wound through a Narnia-like landscape. These creatures love to run!

Watching Raphael correct Osborne, I commented, “This reminds me of setting-up a seating chart for my second graders.” I laughed. “Oh yeah,” Elizabeth replied. “Some dogs are better with certain partners and not so good with others. Some are better at following.” Elizabeth explained the reasons for each dog’s placement. “Slick is an excellent lead dog. He’s focused and minds my commands.” GEE means ‘go right’ and HAW is for ‘going left.’ She continued, “I am so proud of Roni!” Roni was a co-lead dog today.

“Each dog has it’s own gate.”, I observed. Elizabeth gave commentary about each dog’s paw placement pattern. She has an in-depth understanding of each

canine. “I just love watching their ears.”, She commented. Their ears certainly had a dance of their own!

Elizabeth has been working with this troop for three years and speaks as lovingly as a mother would about her children. “When I’ve sent my dogs off to a race, it’s like putting them on the school bus for the first time.” The owners of Nature’s Kennel, Tasha and Ed, have competed in the Iditarod (8-time finishers), the UP200 and several other competitions. They choose dogs carefully, from each kennel, for their racing teams.

“Woooooah!” We had to stop at a snowmobile crossing. I thought, “Oh good, the dogs must be tired and can rest.” After a quick bite of snow and a pit stop at the snowbank, the team began leaning into their lines. When we didn’t move, they started

impatiently jerking forward. When the coast was clear of snowmobiles, Elizabeth eased off the brake, “Ready, Go!” she gave the verbal cue. We were off! The group was definitely the happiest when they were running!

Driving a dog sled

When we stopped after ten miles, Elizabeth had encouraged me to give it a try. I felt more confident and had decided to take a turn at mushing the four-team dog sled. Plus, this would give Chuck a chance to film from the seat in Elizabeth’s sled. I took my position and stood on the brake with two feet, as the pack lurched and jerked. I silently gave myself a pep talk, “It will be fine.” I reminded myself to breathe deeply.

“Ready, Go!” Elizabeth commanded her troop. They took off in front of us on the one-lane path. My quartet edged, pulled and whined. I needed to leave some distance between us, so I hesitated before moving my feet from the brake to the drag pad. The sled bumped as we flopped forward. I wobbled, unsteady. Elizabeth’s words rang in my mind, “Always hold onto your sled.” I gripped the handle bar tightly. With my feet fully on the drag pad, the four hounds rushed along the trail.

Soon, the dogs fell into a pace and I was able to put my feet on the rails. It reminded me of skiing. I tried to slice the curves. I mimicked Elizabeth’s foot placement, as she knew the trail and when to use the drag pad on downhill path. When the course would climb a hill, Elizabeth would walk alongside her rails, holding firmly to the handle. I was fearful that I would loose my footing, so I remained standing on the rails. (The poor dogs had to lug me all the way!) They charged forward and continued to enjoy their run.

After a while, I was able to once again enjoy the majestic, snow laden pines along our trek. Elizabeth raised her fist in the air as a sign to stop. “Woooooaaaah!” We were adjacent to a snowmobile pass. Once we stopped, Elizabeth tied the lines and stomped the ‘parking brake’ into the snow. Chuck and I switched places again. Riding the rails turned out to be exhilarating. I was thankful for the experience!

I resumed my riding position in Elizabeth’s sled as Chuck took over the quartet team. Before I knew it, we had traversed twenty miles and were pulling into an open area with long parallel hookups for the dogs. We’d arrived at Musher’s Camp.

Musher’s camp

Our first task was to get the dog’s squared away. The Alaskan Huskies always come first! Elizabeth demonstrated how to

unharness the hard working troop. Each hound was hooked to a space on the line. Then Elizabeth brought over a bale of straw in a toboggan. We spread the bedding for each canine. Han leaped and scruffed during his ‘straw party.’ He danced in his shower of straw bedding!

Dog chili

“If we gave the dogs plain water, it would freeze, so we make them a ‘chili’ of rendered beef and dry kibble, mixed with warm water. That way they get protein and hydration at the same time. We feed them twice a day.”, Elizabeth explained. She gave Chuck three slabs of frozen raw beef. “Here, break these up into smaller pieces and put them in the bucket. One bucket will feed 14 dogs, so we won’t need a full bucket, since we have eleven dogs here.” Dry food was added. Next, hot water was ladled into to the bucket. Using an edging-type tool, the dog chili was stirred, chopping up the chunks of meat. In the distance, we could hear the pack whimpering their desires.

Once the dog chili had cooled, we loaded a toboggan with their dog dishes and the bucket of chili. Chuck scooped ladle loads of food to the waiting fur friends. When they were finished, we collected and rinsed the pans.

Naming the dogs

“Roni is named after, ‘macaroni and cheese’.” Elizabeth explained with a chuckle, “There were four dogs in the litter. They were named, “Mack, Roni,” she gestured to her tan dog, “They have a sister named, ‘Ann’ and a brother named, ‘Cheese.’ ” She pleasantly laughed. “And that is my favorite litter theme. I think it’s so creative.”

The cabin and outhouse

Now that the dogs were fed and bedded, we could get our own comforts ready. The cabin’s wood-burning stove gave us some difficulty with the air intake, so Elizabeth came and helped get the fire roaring. We could still see our breath inside the humble abode, so I hoped the stove would start warming the cabin soon.

Elizabeth

Not only is Elizabeth a humble expert about her sled dogs and EVERYTHING outdoors in the winter, she is a great storyteller! Her insights into people, and appreciation for making connections and memories, is well-advanced for someone who’s been on this earth for two decades. Wow!

Our evening meal

Our conversations flowed. Suddenly, she announced it was time for our evening meal. She organized frozen offerings

for us to assemble in tinfoil so we could easily cook over the fire.

Sleeping

After giving the dogs another batch of straw, we finally returned to the cabin. It had heated up nicely! In fact, so much so that it reminded me of a sauna. It was so hot inside that we actually cracked the window for awhile. I snuggled in a bed up in the loft. Chuck chose a bed downstairs where it was a bit cooler, more to his liking. At 2:30 am he stoked the fire to keep us comfortable.

Breakfast

First, Chuck and Elizabeth fed the dogs by making another batch of dog chili. I was moving more slowly at that early hour. Then, we ate omelets boiled in a baggie. With all our bellies full, we cleaned up camp and harnessed the pack.

The dogs were so excited to be harnessed into teams ,the following morning! They were ready for another run!

Our return trip

At the half way mark, we switched places again and I took over the dog team of four: Badger, Cyrus, Blow Hole and Daltrey. I felt more confident and even clicked a few photos.

“Whoooooa!” we both chimed and I stood on the brake. We waited to be sure the snowmobile trek was clear. Then we proceeded all the way back to Nature’s Kennel.

Mushing a dog team had been exhilarating! Stepping outside my comfort zone and trying something new has given me a sense of accomplishment. I now appreciate how these dogs love to run! It was wonderful to get to know each furry friend. I never would have tried this if it hadn’t been for Chuck and Elizabeth’s encouragement! Thanks, guys!

Retired dogs

Each dog decides when it’s time to retire. Their handlers see the signs and start looking for adoption placements. These furry friends easily adjust to life with a family. In fact, there are some dogs ready for a retirement home. Their name plate is then added to the building’s display.

Thank you, Elizabeth! You are one amazingly dedicated and outgoing person. It will be enjoyable to watch you carve your path through this life! Restless Viking is available on their website: www.restless-viking.com

Resources:
[Nature’s Kennel YouTube](#)
[The Greenland Dog article](#)

FUN PAGE

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

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

Guess Who?

I am a singer born in California on March 18, 1979. I met my future bandmates while attending high school, where I played basketball. The band originally had a rock sound under the name Kara's Flowers, but turned soulful after a name change.

Answer: Adam Levine

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10			
11					12						13	14	15
16					17				18				
19				20	21			22	23			24	
25							26					27	
28					29					30			
				31	32					33			
34	35	36	37					38					
39						40	41	42					
43					44					45	46	47	48
49					50					51	52		
53				54					55				
56		57					58			59			
60					61	62				63			
			64							65			

PEANUTS WORD SEARCH

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

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

Puzzle solutions
on page 13

PEANUTS WORD
SEARCH

BENEATH
BUDDING
COMPOST
CURE

FARM
FRUITS
GEORGIA
GROUNDNUT
HARVEST
HOPPER
LEGUME

PEANUT
PEG
PLANTING
POD
PRODUCTION
ROASTED
ROOTS

RUNNER
SOIL
SPANISH
VALENCIA
VARIETY
VIRGINIA

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the peanuts.

T B R U E T

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

Answer: Butter

CLUES ACROSS

1. Influential American political family
5. ___ Chantilly, ___ de Menthe
11. Within
12. Pleasure seekers
16. Computer manufacturer
17. Home to college sports' Flyers
18. Fungal disease
19. Sleepwalk
24. Spielberg sci-fi film
25. Seasonable
26. Taxis
27. Radio direction finder (abbr.)
28. Thin, narrow piece of wood
29. "Mystic River" actor Sean
30. Ingenuous
31. Musical composition
33. Turkish surname
34. High or hilly area
38. Wilco frontman
39. Pour it on pasta
40. Electric car company
43. Sea eagle
44. Walk with difficulty
45. Sign of healing
49. Boy
50. Protein-rich liquid
51. Washington city

53. Individual portion of TV series (abbr.)
54. Thought over
56. Scads
58. News agency
59. Standard
60. Deadlock
63. Pre-Columbian empire
64. Removed
65. French commune

CLUES DOWN

1. Large, dangerous animals
2. Straighten out
3. Family tree
4. Large stinging paper wasp
5. European river fish
6. Cut down in size
7. Denotes past
8. Larry and Curly's partner
9. Samoyedic ethnic group
10. Male parent
13. Specific gravity
14. Demeaned oneself to
15. Rigidly
20. Yankovic is a "weird" one
21. Belonging to me
22. Path
23. Airborne (abbr.)
27. Level
29. Atomic #94
30. Born of

31. Midway between northeast and east
32. Northeastern bank
33. Defunct airline
34. Having no purpose
35. A low wall
36. Swedish city
37. Earn a perfect score
38. Atomic #81
40. Beginner
41. Give off
42. Incorrect letters
44. Telecommunication service provider (abbr.)
45. Idyllic
46. Popular beer
47. A way to fine
48. Evildoer
50. More withered
51. Seventh note of a major scale
52. Commercial
54. Abnormal breathing
55. Moved more quickly
57. City of Angels
61. Partner to Pa
62. Equally

Second year of driver’s license restoration program launched

The Michigan Department of State (MDOS), and partners, Michigan Department of Attorney General, DTE Energy, Miller Canfield, the Detroit Justice Center, the Michigan Association of United Ways, and Michigan 2-1-1 are relaunching the successful Road to Restoration program for 2023. The statewide series of clinics helps drivers, with suspended licenses, complete the required steps to safely get back behind the wheel.

This is the second year of the Road to Restoration program that assists Michiganders at locations throughout the state. In 2022, more than 4,000 Michigan residents were served at 18 clinics held in 11 cities, including Alpena, Benton Harbor, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Traverse City. At each clinic, residents meet one-on-one with expert staff to learn how to get their driving privileges restored and they can complete as many steps as possible on site. While residents may be required to pay past fines, the expertise is provided free-of-charge.

“Making state government work for the people of Michigan, by meeting them where they are, has been one of my top priorities as Secretary of State,” said Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. “This first-of-its-kind public-private partnership has already made a real difference in the lives of many Michiganders. I am grateful to our community partners and volunteers who will help us bring this successful effort to the people, who need it most throughout the state, this year.”

“I am proud of the work my department has already been able to get done – in conjunction with Secretary Benson, the Department of State, and our other partners – to make Michigan’s Road to Restoration program a success,” Attorney General, Dana Nessel said. “It’s simple: licensed drivers are safer drivers, and improved access to transportation helps families, businesses, and communities thrive. I look forward to seeing what more can be accomplished in the coming year as we continue this work on behalf of Michigan residents.”

In 2021, new state laws lifted suspensions for drivers who failed to pay tickets or court fines, or failed to appear in court, for certain non-moving and other violations. While the new laws removed suspensions for more than 150,000 Michiganders, many must still take further action before their license is restored. Road to Restoration clinics assist residents in navigating any necessary additional steps to safely return to driving.

“DTE is proud of the continued partnership with MDOS on the Road to Restoration initiative that’s providing in-person, community-centric support to Michiganders restoring their full, safe driving privileges,” said Lynette Richards, Miller Canfield pro bono counsel. “Miller Canfield and our friends in the legal community are committed to using our unique skills as attorneys to give back to the communities where we live and work. The Road to Restoration initiative provides a wonderful opportunity for our lawyers to serve in a personal and meaningful way.”

“The Detroit Justice Center supports this collaboration as the clinics offer solutions for ‘real life’ legal issues with the one-on-one personal review of an attendee’s driving record safely and confidentially,” said Rubina Mustafa, Detroit Justice Center senior staff attorney. “After each discussion, clinic participants learn the steps they must take and what to expect along their journey engaging with government agencies. This work is deeply rewarding as it alleviates the driver’s confusion and frustration, which is well worth the hard work and preparation that the clinics entail.”

“Transportation is often a significant barrier in accessing supports and services, and the Road to Restoration clinics are instrumental in helping residents on the path to restore their driver’s license,” said Jennie Pollak, deputy executive director, Michigan 2-1-1. “We’re glad to be a part of this public-private collaboration by helping to connect individuals with these clinics.”

The first Road to Restoration clinic of 2023 will be held March 8 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at SVRC Marketplace in Saginaw. Additional clinics are scheduled for Grand Rapids, Lansing, Detroit, Downriver, Mt. Pleasant, Alpena, and the Upper Peninsula.

For more information about the program, to find a clinic near you, or to sign up for an upcoming clinic, visit Michigan.gov/RoadtoRestoration or dial 2-1-1.

Space for clinics may be limited and pre-registration is strongly recommended

The clinics do not provide DUI expungement services and license reinstatement is not guaranteed

Successful public-private partnership helps Michiganders regain driving privileges.

Let’s clear out the clouds in Michigan

Once again, Michiganders wait for the sun to shine in Michigan. At the same time, we wait for the sun to shine on our local and state government.

Overall, the Great Lakes State has consistently maintained a failing score for integrity from the Center for Public Integrity. This is based largely on our lack of transparency in government, especially at the state level.

Last year, the citizens of Michigan voted overwhelmingly to require that elected state legislative and state executive officials must file annual financial disclosure reports on their income, assets, liabilities, gifts from lobbyists, positions held in certain organizations, and agreements on future employment. Michiganders are obviously ready for a change.

Taxpayers deserve to know what the people who work for them are doing. We are currently the only state in the country that does not subject their legislators and governor to the Freedom of Information Act. That needs to be fixed.

At the same time, some local government officials, law enforcement agencies and schools (K-university) cry foul and call FOIA a burden...we think it’s an essential service.

The preamble to the Freedom of Information Act in MI reads: it is the public policy of this state that all persons, except those persons incarcerated in state or local correctional facilities, are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees, consistent with this act. The people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process.

The key part of the language above is “the people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process.” Yet, government officials, at all levels, stonewall, over-charge and generally make asking for this information an onerous



NEWSPAPERS SHINE THE LIGHT

It is crucial to be aware of the important decision-making in your community.

Even a public-health crisis as devastating as COVID-19 will not stop journalists from reporting news and information that matter most to you – whether at a school board, township supervisor or city council meeting.

The news media industry celebrates Sunshine Week, recognizing that public access to government records and deliberation is essential to your quality of life. Grateful for your continued support and patronage, we are proud to shine a light on government to ensure its transparency and accountability.

Newspapers provide sunshine in the darkness.

