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LowellArts director, Lorain Smalligan, retires after 24 years with the organization

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

Lorain Smalligan was hired as the first executive director for the original Lowell Area Arts Council, now LowellArts, in 1999, when King Milling provided the facility on Hudson Street.

The Board of Directors wanted the organization to expand its programming and community outreach. “It helped when I became engaged with chamber and local businesses, Lowell Rotary Club and Lowell Women’s Club,” Smalligan said.

During her tenure, Smalligan enjoyed working on LowellArts programming and events. “This was a way for me to interact with artists and creative people, to expand what LowellArts offers,” she said. This expansion was able to happen when LowellArts moved into its

larger building, where the gallery space serves as a performing arts venue and the larger classroom.

One of the greatest accomplishments for both Smalligan and LowellArts was a successful Capital Campaign to raise \$1.3 million to purchase and move into the organization’s new home on Main Street, in downtown Lowell in 2017. Even though the capital campaign was a challenge, there is strong support for the arts in the greater Lowell community, according to Smalligan. “As with all capital campaigns, it is the volunteers with their people-connection who really help raise the money needed,” she said.

“I love helping small non-profits, schools and



Lorain Smalligan officially retired on February 24th.

Retirement,
continued page 9

Lowell resident brings her storytelling to Grand Rapids

by Bill Lee
contributing writer

Candice Smith has always loved storytelling. In the past, she had worked as a television producer, a reporter for National Public Radio in Grand Rapids, and an international public relations associate at Amway. In 2017, she began working for a tourism company and discovered she was actually quite

good at it, and was even recognized as “Tourism Ambassador of the Year” in Kent County. Then, her company went out of business, abruptly, in the same year. So, being the positive person she is, instead of doing something else, in 2018 Smith decided to start her own company, Tours Around Michigan. “I love tourism and sharing



Candice Smith. (Photo from Tours Around Michigan Website)

with people,” said Smith. “It’s all storytelling. It’s really fun to share things with people and get people excited about things.”

A Lowell resident, who has raised her family in town for over twenty years, Smith works out of her home in Lowell but conducts most of her public and private tours in Grand Rapids. Tours are around 90-minutes long and clients can choose from a unique slate of possible tours, including Downtown Grand Rapids, Art Museums, Churches, Ghost Tours, The Riverfront Area, Brewery, Wine, and Distillery Tours. Her clientele span from those visiting Grand Rapids for the very first time to those who have lived in the area their entire lives. “We have some people from other countries but also local people too who

Tours,
continued page 2

Public comments steer LAS Board of Education meeting

By Michelle Smith
contributing writer

The Lowell Area Schools Board of Education met for its regular meeting, March 13, at the Administrative Offices building. For the second consecutive month, there was a larger-than-usual audience of approximately 70 people in attendance with many public comments.

Main topics of concern from the public were current media center policies regarding mature-themed content, and the accusation of aggressive and “bullying” behavior of LAS staff and administration.

During the public comments regarding the agenda items portion of the meeting, retired teacher, David Kapolka, said books are important so that society keeps accurate

information and records of history. “Banning books because they include stories about people we disagree with, ideas we disagree with, lifestyles we disagree with, is not a path an accepting society should follow,” Kapolka said.

Lowell educator, Clare Vandenberg, supported LAS Media Specialist, Christine Beachler, and the importance of having a variety of topics in the library.

LAS parent, Stefanie Boone, said Christine Beachler is not personally being attacked, but said the issue is whether books with sexually-explicit content should be allowed in LAS libraries, where minor children can access

School Board,
continued page 2

School Board, continued

them. “All I’ve ever tried to do is bring to your attention that we are serving up sexually-explicit content to minors in school, and it’s wrong. Not only is it wrong, morally, but it’s against the law,” Boone said.

“This is not about Christine’s feelings or how people love or show kindness. That is not what this is about. Wrap your minds around that. Let’s get this show on the road and clean up the smut from our schools,” Boone said.

The full Board voted to uphold the approval of having the book *All Boys Aren’t Blue*, by George M. Johnson, in the LAS media center. A LAS committee recently voted 6-1 to allow this book to remain in the library and be available for high school seniors only. There is a system in place that allows parents to

restrict their own children from whatever content they choose.

Board member, Pat Nugent, said the Board has done what it has been asked to do, which is to review the book by Johnson. All Board members are reported to have read the book. Board President, Brian Krajewski, said the Board supports the senior-grade level reading of this book and looks forward to any process improvements regarding the media centers for the 2023-24 school year.

In the public comments, later in the meeting, former Lowell educator, Kim Lum, said parents should look for opportunities to make positive improvements in the school district, and Doug Lee said LAS needs to focus on educating students on core subjects and return to “neutrality.”

Parent, Carey Vanderboon, said school libraries should be geared toward academics and filled with books that help students with research and basic learning. She said books with sexually-explicit content do not promote healthy mental development and may cause trauma to immature minds.

Stephanie Boone presented anonymous letters, said to be written by students accusing High School Principal, Steve Gough, of behaving in an inappropriate manner, March 1, over a staff miscommunication. Boone said the letters also accused other LAS staff members and teachers of “bullying” behavior and urged the Board to investigate. LAS Superintendent, Nate Fowler, said in the 15 years he has worked with

Gough, he has not heard any complaints about him. He said he needs more information regarding the incidents claimed in the anonymous letters.

Fowler said he is concerned about many negative influences students face, and he would like more conversations on how LAS can be more effective. “We are concerned about kids’ access to violence, kids’ access to sexual content, but what can we do, as a society, to help provide safe environments so kids are having healthy conversations as they mature into adulthood,” Fowler said.

Board members, Laurie Kuna, Pat Nugent, and Jennifer Dougherty, commented that they support the Board’s decisions regarding library policies. Nugent also said parents, themselves, need to report any concerns or accusations directly with their children’s teachers,

principal, or Superintendent Fowler. “We need and we want those authentic conversations, because we want to do better. We want to be better. We want to talk with the parents. We want to talk with the students who are involved. We don’t need a self-appointed spokesperson. We need authentic conversations with the people who are involved,” Nugent said.

Nugent said the Board has taken the library issue seriously and thoughtfully, and part of their job is to support parents and their wishes. “Everyone’s entitled to their own opinion. It only makes sense that not everyone is going to agree on the suitability or necessity of certain books,” Nugent said. “What is important is we give families the tools to help children become adults after high school, and we allow them to choose how to do that.”

Other Board agenda items included approval

for the purchase of a new K-5 math curriculum, and a fourth and fifth grade social studies curriculum.

Alto Elementary Principal, Paul Papes, presented the outcomes of surveys done to elementary teachers who served as a pilot group and tested the curriculum *Reveal Math*. Papes said teachers overwhelmingly voted to change from *Everyday Math*. The Board approved the purchase of *Reveal Math* for \$193,000 and *Social Studies Alive* for \$64,000.

Sonia Hodge, chief financial officer, said due to an “excess fund balance” in the foodservice fund, students who qualify for reduced-cost meals will now be able to get free breakfasts and lunches. Hodge said this impacts about 140 students. “Our hope is that by making reduced-price meals free, we will see more students enjoying school meals,” Hodge said.

Tours, continued

didn’t know about some buildings in Grand Rapids even if they grew up here,” said Smith. “It’s fun to get people excited about an area that they grew up in.”

After a couple of years getting established, Tours Around Michigan seemed to be hitting its stride, booking not only locals but groups from other states, as well. Then, of course, the global Covid pandemic hit, halting business for most people but especially those in the travel industry. Smith admits that it wasn’t easy. “Anything related to tourism was hit by Covid, and I had a big year planned in 2020,” said Smith. “I had to pivot. I did use the time to do some deeper work, make some changes; made a new website that just launched in 2021. Also, one of the first steps was that you could

be outside with masks with less than 15 people so tours could do that. If people were itching to do something at that time, we were one of the few options. I restarted outdoor tours in July of 2020, where I could take groups outside. Everyone was required to wear a mask and keep social distance.”

During that time, one of her tours, ironically, started becoming more popular: The Ghost Tours. People seemed to want to do something fun during the difficult time and an outdoor walking ghost tour seemed to fill a void and helped to provide some creepy “live” entertainment for those who were couped up. In a way ,Smith thinks The Ghost Tours may have even saved her business. She would take people to a few haunted buildings in Grand Rapids,

particularly St. Cecilia’s Music Center, a place that embraces their haunted history. “When I’m giving the tour, I’m usually across the street from it, and people have had experiences,” said Smith. “There’s one place, while we are standing there on other side of the street, where sometimes people will be touched. It’s a very specific feeling, a woman’s hand on their left side. There’s one room in that building where people have felt that someone was hovering above their head, or felt pressure pushing down on their head, in one room in St. Cecelia’s.” Recently, to make the ghost tour even more memorable, she has started offering “creepy dolls” for people to carry while they are on the tour. She always strives to make things more fun for her patrons.

She also has worked hard to provide equal access to all of her clients

with physical disabilities and is proud to be known as the first tour company in the US to be endorsed by two disabilities associations. “I’ve always tried to do a little better in that area; it’s really about what you should do,” said Smith. “Why wouldn’t I make sure that people in wheelchairs can do the tour? Or why wouldn’t I work with a sign-language interpreter? With any of my clients, I try to help them connect to what we are sharing, and what they are seeing, and people connect in different ways. Unfortunately, most travel companies don’t look at it the same way. I’m always trying to think of



The Grand Rapids Civic Theatre is part of the Ghost Tour. Photo from Tours Around Michigan Website.

how things could be more accessible.”

In the end, she does her best to provide some historical background and specific stories to every tour she provides, whether it is a walk through downtown Grand Rapids or a Church Tour, where she provides the history of some of the immigrants who founded each church. She loves what

she does and even plans on expanding in the future. Smith plans on bringing in new people to her company, as business grows. Some of her future ventures include E-Bike tours in historic Ada, group tours in Holland, and starting tours in Traverse City. You can find out more about Tours Around Michigan at the website toursaroundmichigan.com

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The biases in the algorithms

By Cliff Yankovich
contributing writer

Everything we do online is dependent on algorithms. Algorithms are the instructions for solving a problem or completing a task. A recipe for your favorite dish is an algorithm. Math problems are a form of algorithm. Pretty much every app on your phone is an algorithm. All Artificial Intelligence (AI) programming is made up of algorithms. People who know how to do so, write algorithms in computer code that “help us” do just about anything online. The reason I put “help us” in quotation marks is because the evidence that many algorithms are doing a lot of harm is becoming overwhelming.

The fact that those responsible for writing algorithms for the AI, that government, business, industry, and all of us use every day were/are and are mainly, heterosexual white males, is becoming more and more evident every day. The codes produced by this cohort have built in biases. Evidence of the biased world view, that is a result of these code writers, is getting more widespread by the hour. At first glance, one might question the suggestion that the gender or race of a programming whiz would have any effect on the algorithms they write.

Before we get to the proof, let me assure you that even though steps are being taken, when it comes to diversifying who is writing the computer codes we are dependent on, straight white guys are still doing the bulk of the work. The biases inherent in the algorithms written for a wide variety of uses are making themselves known. Who wrote the code is causing problems everywhere: job applications, security measures including facial recognition software, medical programs, and the financial sector with an emphasis on loan and mortgage applications.

In an effort to not get too far into the ‘hows and whys’ of coding, perhaps if I used myself as an example, it might help. Were Cliff writing a code that impacted a search of images, for

instance, my bank of images that I might provide to the AI, in order for it to “learn” how to search for, identify, and locate images would likely reflect my interests and tastes. A glance at my stored images will reveal lots of images of things that interest me and the work that I do on a daily basis: motorcycles, drums, large bodies of water, (especially, the Great Lakes), things in Michigan, and lots of jewelry pictures. This is logical for a guy who has been riding motorcycles since 1976, loves Lake Michigan and spending his leisure time in the Mitten, plays the drums as a hobby, and has been in the jewelry business just shy of 25 years. There is nothing inherently “wrong” about my bank of images, but it is a pretty limited world view, if I were writing code for an app that might potentially assist men, women and children living anywhere on the planet, to search for images.

A real life example that has just been shut down was a data-set developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); that place where super brainy people go to school. This data set of 80 Million Tiny Images has been cited in hundreds of academic papers and used to train AI, to teach it how to recognize people and objects for over a decade. When a couple of AI detectives, Abeba Birhane and Vinay Prabhu, did an audit of the images, they found it to be full of offensive labels and racist slurs for images of Black people. Before you start thinking this is another example of woke nonsense, you should know that once people at MIT were alerted to the combination of words and images in their data set, they removed it from further AI training; one website reporting on the removal cited “racist and misogynistic slurs”. Birhane and Prabhu also dove into ImageNet and found lots of pornographic material, including “up-skirt” images of women taken without their consent. ImageNet had 14 million images used to train AI. It seems ImageNet is still

being used and it appears the creators have addressed, or are addressing, the problems.

When you read reports like the ones from Birhane and Prabhu, it becomes easier to understand how sometimes a search for

inherent biases of white males affects the algorithms used to make our lives easier. There have been several books on the subject and investigations into how these biases are having adverse effects for things like job applications, loan

yourself. My intention here is not to make you paranoid, but rather to encourage you to think about ALL of the ways you interact with algorithms in your day-to-day life. Have you gone to a doctor, dentist, hospital or outpatient surgical center?

training can potentially have an adverse effect on our health, education, and financial situations, not to mention tossing the odd pornographic image at us when we were searching for something innocuous. The good news is that the



images, using an innocent word or phrase, can turn up images that are X-rated. Were this ingrained bias cooked into the code, only a matter of unwanted pornographic images showing up on a search, you might think that such things can be avoided by turning on the “safe search” mode or other blocking mechanisms when searching. If only this were true.

Birhane and Prabhu are, by no means, the only people examining how the

and mortgage applications, security systems and facial recognition software, and even medical information. Job application software gave preference to men. Loan application AI was shown to be biased against people of color. Medical AI has been shown to amplify the biases already cooked into our healthcare system.

I do not have the space here to document the biases that have been uncovered. I would encourage you to research the matter

Are your records and data fed into, sorted, and stored by some algorithm at one or all of these locations? Have you applied for any type of education, a job, or a loan of any kind using software?

Is the importance of algorithms and those who create them starting to sink in a little more now? The impact of biased AI

problem is being recognized on a daily basis and efforts are underway to deal with it, up to, and including, the White House, which issued a blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights designed to eliminate the bias and keep a watchful eye on algorithms going forward.



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Book Corner

Remarkably Bright Creatures

by Shelby Van Pelt

by Sierra Hieshetter
contributing writer

Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt is a beautiful story of family, self-discovery, and everyday adventure that centers the perspective of an old, cynical, sarcastic Giant Pacific octopus. Sounds a little strange? Well, it was a little strange at first, but quickly this story evolved past the silly conventions of its story-telling and became more about the wonderful characters, people and octopuses, at the heart of the narrative. Marcellus is an aging Giant Pacific octopus living in captivity in the Sowell Bay Aquarium. He is condescending and judgemental of most of the humans he interacts with, except for Tova, the kind, open-hearted, detail-oriented night janitor of the aquarium. Tova is a

wonderful woman with a tragic past, as her son died twenty-years earlier under mysterious circumstances. Far away from the small-town world of Sowell Bay, Cameron is a young man in the midst of a crisis, and he travels to Sowell Bay in search of answers about his past. The worlds of these characters collide in a charming, heart-warming, and bittersweet way. *Remarkably Bright Creatures* is a story with beautiful characters and a well thought-out world, combined with a wonderful writing style. It was so easy to read; I was so invested in the story and the lives of the characters! It was the perfect marriage of everything I love in a story, and it made for a fantastic read that I won't soon forget. Plot Summary (via Goodreads)

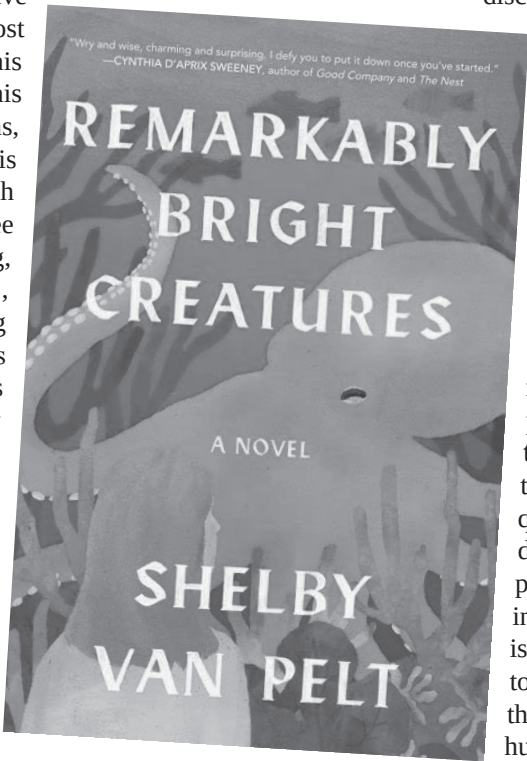
After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors and tidying-up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she's been doing since her eighteen-year-old son, Erik, mysteriously vanished on a boat in Puget Sound over thirty years ago. Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a Giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors-until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova. Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova's son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it's too late. Some days you just need a feel-good book that renews your hope in humanity, and this book is exactly that. It is mostly a story about

character interactions and relationships, with just a sprinkling of intrigue and more fantastical elements to add a little extra flare! I especially loved each, and every one, of the characters, including the octopus! Marcellus the Giant Pacific octopus is one of my favorite characters of the year so far! His attitude is so negative towards most things— his diet, his tank, most of his human interactions, and yet, in his interactions with Tova, you see such a caring, self-sacrificing, reluctantly loving individual. His narration sections were some of my favorite parts of the book because they provided such a fascinating perspective on life and on the story. He truly loves Tova, and his exasperation as he attempts to bring her closure, as she remains oblivious, is the cutest thing ever. Tova was also a wonderful character. Her continual desire to help others, often at the cost of her own livelihood and needs, is heart-warming and a little bittersweet. She is such a relatable character, and I admire her strength in demonstrating the ability to move on with life and find new purpose after a great tragedy. The book balances her grief about her son, her love of her new job, and her search for closure in a

really good way. It's not too heavy, but it also doesn't sweep things under the rug for the sake of telling a new story. One of my favorite parts of the story were her interactions with Ethan, the sweet grocery store clerk, and the development of their relationship was representative of the entire book; a little funny, a little awkward, but mostly heartfelt and adorable. Cameron was one of the most intriguing parts of the book, as we follow him throughout the story, without entirely understanding his involvement in the greater narrative. Cameron was another very endearing character; his life is basically falling apart around him, and he is searching for an anchor to his identity to feel more stable in who he is as a person. When we meet him, his girlfriend has broken up with him,

his friends are all settling down with marriages and kids, and he has no other family ties than a slightly eccentric aunt. Questions about his mother and father lead him on an expansive journey covering multiple states, relationships, jobs, and vehicles. It was really wonderful to witness him coming into himself, discovering his passions, and seeing his story intertwine with that of Tova and Marcellus, made me feel all warm and fuzzy inside! Shelby Van Pelt did a wonderful job weaving the heart of this story into an intriguing, decades-long mystery and the relationships between people in a small town. Without giving too much away, the question of Tova's son's death and Cameron's past, along with the information Marcellus is trying desperately to communicate to the slightly oblivious humans, makes for a story I couldn't put down. I wanted a happy ending for these characters so badly, and I loved following all of their adventures. At the end of the day, it is a story of humanity. Which is ironic because one of the main narrators is an octopus. Normally, I'd include a small section with some of my critiques or things I wish were different in the book, but I really can't think of any! It was just that good. I think there is something for everyone to love in this story, and everyone can benefit from its endearing plot and characters. Its heartfelt message will leave you smiling, long after you finish reading!

Post-Script: As is pretty usual for me and my busy schedule, I listened to this story via audiobook! I would highly recommend it, the narrators were great, and Marcellus had an especially great voice actor that infused a real essence of curmudgeonly, reluctant caring into the performance.



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Betty Passick, The Black Bag of Dr. Wiltze,
Murder on the Prairie, March 17
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 24, 1898

Bicyclists are warned not to ride on the sidewalks of Main and Bridge Streets, or they will be prosecuted.

An Ohio woman wins a wager by crocheting six window curtains, 1-1/2 yards by 4-1/2 yards, in eight months; she wore out two dozen tempered steel needles on the 20 million stitches.

One of our young men stayed out pretty late, last Sunday night, visiting his best girl, and on returning home, he tried to be very still, but as he opened the stair door, down came a lot of tinware onto him.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger March 29, 1923

Publisher, Frank Johnson, notes that he will not be attending public functions and asks to be excused from other vexations; his health allows him to publish the paper and no more.

A record 142 persons visited the library on Saturday, March 17.

Peter Mikula, a Cannonsburg farmer, returned to his home, only to be arrested by Deputy Sheriff's, Mol and Wiest, upon a charge of wife-beating. Fear of neighbors, led by a woman, who took justice into their own hands, after Mrs. Mikula, mother of six children, had complained of her husband's brutality, caused the farmer to flee from his home, the deputies said.

Last week, the boys basket ball team journeyed to Muskegon Heights for their last game of the season, before the tournament, and gave Muskegon Heights a good fight, even though the score at the close of the game, did read 15-20 for the opponents.

Last Wednesday evening, the Lowell girls basket ball team won another victory, when they defeated Coopersville girls on our own floor, by a score of 20-12.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger March 25, 1948

The Flat and Grand Rivers produce the worst flood since 1904 and 1905; 19 feet is the reading. Loaded box cars hold the railroad bridge in place, but 100 feet of track wash out elsewhere, water fills Monroe Street by City Hall and up Avery.

Michigan farmers rank well-above average in the

number having telephone service, says Michigan Ma Bell.

A large number of Lowell people have fallen prey to the chain-letter swindle and this has caused the Lowell postoffice to warn that such letters or cards are a violation of section 601 U.S. Postal Laws and Regulations, which prohibit mailing of such matters.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger Suburban Life March 22, 1973

Attwood will expand its plant size by 75% this spring, says David D. Hunting Jr., President of Attwood and Senior Vice President of parent company, Steelcase, Inc.

The senior high and junior high bands (William Mills and Pat Covey) receive first-division ratings at the district festival. This qualifies each to enter the state finals in band competition.

Lowell Senior High School's production of the Broadway musical hit, *Bye, Bye, Birdie* will be presented this Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Forty people, including a chorus, have been working very hard to make this a fine production.

The Lowell Airport will receive a new apron in front of the Administration Building.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger April 1, 1998

Lowell Light & Power is expected to complete its \$200,000 overhaul of three diesel generating engines by the end of April. The liners had reached their life expectancy of 25 years and LL&P was advised by the manufacturer to overhaul them. The backup engines are used to produce power when necessary.

An armed robber got a whopper of a deal early Thursday morning when he robbed Burger King. The night manager was walking with the night manager from Little Caesar's, both carrying their night's deposit. Both managers handed over their night bags after the robber showing a blue-colored handgun. The assailant took the bags and fled. Police are still looking for the assailant.

The Lowell Community Expo attracted more patrons this year than last year. There was uncertainty as to how many area residents took advantage of the opportunity presented by the Expo.

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Stay healthy and independent with the Senior Nutrition Program

By Hillary Hatch, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Are you eligible for Social Security retirement benefits or already receiving them? Did you know that you can also receive healthy meals and other nutrition services through the National Senior Nutrition Program? Local meal programs in communities across the country are waiting to serve you.

As we age, we have different needs, different ways we take care of our health, and different nutrients we need to get from our food. But we don't always have enough healthy food or the desire to prepare or eat a meal. Whether you need more food, healthier food, someone to share a meal with, or just want to learn about good eating habits, a meal program can help.

Every day, senior nutrition programs serve almost one million meals to people age 60 and older.

With home-delivered and group-meal options, you can get the food you need in a way that works best for you. It can help you avoid missed meals – and save you time and money with less shopping and cooking.

Local programs serve up more than food — they offer opportunities to connect and socialize. We know this improves both your mental and physical health.

The programs can also teach you how to create a healthy-eating plan. You can learn about healthy food recommendations based on your age, unique needs, and preferences.

A senior nutrition program can also connect you with other resources like transportation or homemaker services. This helps you stay connected and engaged in your community.

Nutrition,
continued page 7

We love to hear from you!

THE NEWS
EXTRA!
EXTRA!

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 Englehardt Branch, 200 N. Monroe St. For additional information call 616-784-2007.

Toddler Time

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

Storytime

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

Teen Zone

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

Mahjongg

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

Family Yoga

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

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.

Fantasy Festival

Wednesday, April 5, 1-3 pm. Explore wonderful wizardry for the whole family, making potent potions, flying through the obstacle course, or creating your very own adorable mandrake. For ages 5-10.

Night Owls Book Discussion

Wednesday, April 5, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Join a fun, informal discussion of great books. This month, we’ll discuss *Hamnet* by Maggie O’Farrell. For ages 18+

ABCs of Lowell history

Address: 120 W. Main
Built: 1883
Builder: King, Quick and King Co.
1st business: King, Quick and King Sawmill Office

King, Quick and King Lumber Co. (Francis King, Reuben Quick and son, Frank T. King) built this building, near their shingle and sawmills, in 1883 to be their office. Their sawmill was north of Main Street, near the east bank of the Flat River, and their shingle mill was on an island in the river. Trees were cut down during the winter by lumberjacks, many of whom were farmers, and in the spring, the logs would be floated/driven downstream in a massive log drive to the sawmill. This sawmill operated from 1871 to 1892.

In 1890, with the end of lumbering in sight, Frank Twining King, Francis King, Reuben Quick and Charles McCarty, purchased the defunct Superior flour



Bringing wheat to King Milling in the winter of 1908.

mill on the west side of the Flat River and organized the stock company ownership as the King Milling Company. The former lumber office building was moved to this location on Main Street, placed on a new foundation and painted in 1900. It became the main office for

King Milling Company. Now the building is used as an engineering office and the main offices of the King Milling Co. are at 222 W. Main.

In 1900, another local lumberman, Thomas F. Doyle, purchased part-ownership of King Milling, his three sons, Charles, Renis, and William, went to work for the company. In 1936, William Doyle assumed management of the company.

The structure behind the office was destroyed by fire on March 7, 1943; the office survived. William C. Doyle worked

hard to rebuild the mill in a continuous cement-pour operation with the help of the community. However, Doyle died ten days after the new mill commenced operations. William Doyle’s sons, King (age 23) and Mike (age 15), assumed ownership. King, who was serving as an Ensign on a U. S. Navy destroyer in the South Pacific (WWII), was called home to take-over operations. Mike joined him as vice president, after serving in the U. S. Army during the Korean Conflict.

The King Milling Co. buildings, machinery, and silos have since been expanded and updated several times. Ownership has remained in the hands of the Doyle family for five generations.



This building was constructed on the east side of the Flat River, near the sawmill of King, Quick and King, to be their office in 1883. It was on the corner of Avery Street and Lafayette Street which is today’s Riverwalk.

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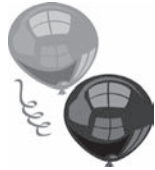
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happy birthday



MARCH 23

Brian Gabrion,
Brendan Lally, Caleb
Koeppel.

MARCH 24

Joe Vezino Jr.,
Candy Speerstra, Angela
Titcombe.

MARCH 25

Chris Yeiter, Shirley
Carigon, Sari VanKeulen,
Andy Quada, Troy Sloan.

MARCH 26

Margaret Hoats, Carol
Maynard.

MARCH 27

Joel Roudabush, Kelly
Geldersma.

MARCH 28

Amie Thaler, Aaron
Kastanek, Beck Butler.

MARCH 29

John Ellison, Sandra
VanWeelden, Laura Rasch,
Robin Burns, Casey Yonker,
Brianna Homrich, Priscilla
Nearing.



Cliff's

By Cliff Yankovich

Riffs

Alternatives to four year college –
Part two: Become a truck driver

Here in Michigan, along with most of the rest of the entire country, we enjoy almost instant access to an assortment of food, clothing, electronics, and a host of other things that would have seemed unimaginable to people a couple of generations ago. The fact of the matter is that we would not have this incredible array of products from which to choose were it not for truck drivers. A disturbing fact on this subject is that most estimates indicate that we have a shortage of somewhere between seventy-five and eighty thousand trained drivers on a national basis. Projections indicate this number will continue to grow if the current trends are not changed.

Please note that “truckers,” in this article, refer to people who have obtained a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) that enables them to operate large semi-tractor and trailer rigs, tanker trucks, and vehicles transporting hazardous materials. You must be 18 years old to obtain a CDL and over 21 to transport hazardous materials in Michigan.

There are a couple of factors that have fueled the shortage, but the single biggest one is that older truck drivers are retiring and there are not enough qualified people to take their place. Also, the life of a long-distance truck driver can be very challenging when trying to settle down

and raise a family. On a positive note, many trucking firms are recognizing that younger people are looking for a balance of personal and professional life and are changing their methods, requirements, and expectations to reflect this.

Marty Chambers is a friend of mine; we serve on our City Council together. Marty grew up on a farm and had his CDL from an early age. He has been a truck driver for 21 years. “A buddy asked me if I could help out the company he drove for. He said they just needed me for a couple of weeks,” Marty said with a laugh. “That was 21 years ago.”

Chambers works for the Phillips Pet Supply Distribution center (DC) in Lansing. The Lansing DC covers 35 acres and has 163 bays for trucks to load and unload. Phillips has a total of eight DCs across the country. They have 27 drivers who work out of Lansing. Marty told me they need nine more drivers immediately, if not sooner. Chambers is a route driver which means he drives the same route, or routes, on a regular basis. He works four days a week; on two of them, he does an overnight route in Michigan, going as far north as Traverse City, and the other two days, he drives as far as Erie, PA, which is also an overnight route. Seventeen of the Phillips drivers have routes and the other seven transport material between the various DCs and fill-in

on routes when needed.

To drive his routes, Chambers has to be in Lansing, ready to leave, at 3 am or 4 am, depending on which direction he is heading. When asked why he has stuck with the profession for over two decades, Marty said, “I don’t have a boss looking over my shoulder all day. I am my own boss. I am responsible for my safety and the safety of those around me on the road. You can make really good money doing this, if you are willing to work hard, good money.”

Phillips will start a trucker with one year of driving experience at \$25.50 an hour, plus health care and other benefits.

As you can imagine, retail giant Walmart has a large fleet of trucks nationally. Right now Walmart is offering truckers \$110,000.00 a year to drive for them. Marty explained one reason they are offering to pay so much and are still short of drivers is because very few of their drivers have established routes and schedules. There are other large trucking firms that constantly have ads, even on their own trucks and trailers, looking for drivers. Chambers explained that some of the big companies actually have their own training schools. He also told me that the days of a driver, having to negotiate 18 or more gears while driving, are fast disappearing. All of the trucks in the Phillips fleet feature automatic transmissions.

Now, on to the good news; the cost of learning to operate large trucks. Tuition can be as low as \$2,000 up to \$8,000 or \$10,000. It depends on location, type of equipment used, and what the tuition covers. My web search for CDL driving schools turned up locations all over the country and many of the tuition costs were between \$3,000

and \$5,000. Spending \$5,000 to earn \$50,000, or considerably more, seems like an excellent return on your investment. Many of the larger trucking firms have tuition reimbursement programs that are done monthly or based on how long you remain with the firm.

West Michigan has a CDL school in Grandville: West Michigan CDL (www.wmcdl.com). They have a very comprehensive three-week training course with an emphasis on more time spent behind the wheel than in the classroom. They also offer on-site CDL skills testing, which means a driver can demonstrate

his or her abilities using the same equipment and environment they trained on. The school, like almost all similar schools, also offers help with job placement.

You can find a fairly extensive listing of CDL training sites in Michigan at this website: www.truckdrivingschoolsinfo.com. You can search by any state there, and one thing that made it a little different than others, is the fact that there are reviews of many of the schools listed. While I have mixed feelings about online reviews, they can be helpful. Trust me, if you have any interest in obtaining your CDL license and finding a job in the trucking industry, a few minutes spent with your favorite search engine will provide a plethora of options in the Mitten or in any other state you might wish to learn this trade.

It is worth mentioning that West Michigan CDL and other schools do their best to help interested students fund their education. There are several programs available to veterans that were mentioned on more than one site. If you have interest in learning how to operate the big rigs that keep the pipeline of food and merchandise in Michigan and our entire country flowing, you might want to look into a career in the trucking industry.



Nutrition continued

It’s no surprise that nine out of ten participants say they would recommend a senior nutrition program to a friend. We know these services help create healthy, strong communities where everyone can thrive at any age.

Find a senior nutrition program in your area and help us spread the word about this program by sharing it with your loved ones, neighbors, and community. Visit eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx for more information.

The Senior Nutrition Program is administered by the Administration for Community Living, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Oddities & Curiosities Expo, coming to GR on April 1

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

It's all about being yourself, unapologetically. If you love weird stuff, you're in luck. From creepy doll planters, spooky gem jewelry, crystal skulls, a gallery of wicked damsels, and Nosferatu art pieces to glamorous showgirl rat taxidermy, you'll find it at the Oddities & Curiosities Expo in Grand Rapids on April 1.

If you're a serious curious collector of oddities, then the Oddities & Curiosities Expo is also for you. If you love performers swallowing swords or walking on glass, this show is for you.

Making their debut appearance in Grand Rapids, are the creators of the expo, Michelle and Tony Cozzaglio. Tony grew up in Lowell and graduated from Lowell High School in 2005.

The husband- and- wife team started the

Oddities expo in Tulsa, OK, in 2017, but before that, they were into music, and Tony performed with Al & Black Cats. From then on, the oddities expos just kept getting bigger each time they returned to the big cities.

Michelle and Tony grew up in punk/alternative cultures and lifestyles and had been collectors of odd items for years. "We wanted to support unusual artists and businesses by bringing the community together. We could have never dreamed it would blow-up into what it has today. Each city is bigger the following year - we're growing fast," said Michelle. "They're all honestly high-attended shows, but some of our largest are in Denver, Portland, and Chicago."

It is the goal of the expo is to have something weird for everyone, according to Michelle. A large demographic of all ages and backgrounds attends the

show. "We always pull the alternative crowds in each city, as well as people into antiques, serious oddities collectors, and just anyone who's curious about what they will find," Michelle said.

Among some of the highlights of the expos are wet specimens, bones, and taxidermy, which are acquired through sustainable routes by the vendors. This may be via nature, the meat processing industry, antique stores, auctions, vet clinics, farms, etc.

Vendors have a variety of price ranges within their booths. They try to have a little something for every price range - you can come and spend thousands or you can come and spend \$20 on cool stickers. "Come to the Oddities show and see for yourself," Tony said. "You'll find taxidermy, wet specimens, dark art, and much more."

The Oddities & Curiosities Expo showcases hand selected vendors, dealers, artists, and small businesses from all over the country with all things weird. You'll find items such as taxidermy, preserved specimens, original artwork, horror/ Halloween-inspired pieces, antiques, handcrafted oddities, quack medical devices, creepy clothing, odd jewelry, animal skulls/ bones, funeral collectibles & much more. There are no live animals at the expo.

"We truly have something weird for everyone at our shows. All items you see at our shows are legal to own and sustainably sourced," Michelle said.

The O&C Expo



Michelle and Tony Cozzaglio, creators of The Oddities and Curiosities Expo. Photo - Jarrett Barnes.

provides a safe place for anyone to come and discover new artists, meet new friends, and be surrounded by an amazing community of like-minded people. They pride themselves in being a completely "DIY" run show, from start to finish. "We find so much joy in being able to provide a place where you can feel at home, surrounded by others that share the same interests," Michelle said.

"We are the first, and original, traveling event, exclusively showcasing oddities vendors and dark artists, in the country. We are a one-of-a-kind event and the first to do what we specialize in. We take tremendous pride in this and hope to gain your support along the way," she said.

And a piece of advice for vendors from the organizers, Michelle and Tony. Let's say you display butterflies, and a lot of

people do. "Try and come up with your own way to have unique items and stand apart. We're always looking for the best of the strange and unusual, and we love seeing the creativity some people have within their businesses. For example, there are thousands of people who frame butterflies; come up with your own signature display and stand out from the rest!"

Among one of the dying methods used for wet specimens is diaphonization, which is a staining method used on animal specimens that renders the body of the animal transparent by bathing it in an array of chemicals and dye. The dye colors the bones, muscles, and cartilage giving them vibrant fascinating colors.

The 2023 show features a Full-Mount Rabbit Taxidermy Class, which is open to those 18+, to participate in. The class price includes everything you need to complete your rabbit and even put your own spin on it.

The Oddities & Curiosities Expo hosts a museum each year. This year's museum is "The Cryptic Collection of a Mad Clown" and is hosted by a non-profit organization, based out of Atlanta, called The Oddities Museum. It features an array of rare and one-of-a-kind pieces and sideshow history.

And what's the biggest attraction of the show? "The attention is split between the incredible vendors and our sideshow performers on stage! You can walk through the event and be drawn to so many amazing booths, and then catch someone on stage, performing class sideshow stunts like swallowing swords, walking on glass, a human pin cushion, and much more," according to Michelle.

The touring show has 30 different stops around the country. Don't miss out on this. For more info go to: odditiesandcuriositiesexpo.com



Customer who has found his favorite oddity. Photo - Jarrett Barnes.



A customer checks out one of the booths at the Oddities & Curiosities Expo. Photo - Jarrett Barnes.

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Retirement, continued

artists apply for funding with grant writing, coaching, and program development,” she said. “I was very excited when the

Michigan Arts & Culture Council reached out to me about becoming one of the regional regrantors for their Minigrant program for eight counties in Michigan.”



Smalligan has a master’s degree in non-profit arts management, and she worked at the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids before joining LowellArts. After leaving graduate school at the University of Cincinnati, Smalligan moved back to Grand Rapids with a focus on local arts management.

“When the job opened up at LowellArts, I had already moved to Lowell,” she said. “I loved the idea of bringing the arts to a rural community that doesn’t have as much access to the arts that are available in larger communities like Grand Rapids and Lansing.” Over her 24 years with LowellArts, Smalligan had eight employees, with the current staffing level at three employees. She will continue as a part-time employee, managing the Minigrant Program. LowellArts is one of 15

organizations in the state of Michigan that is a regional regrantor of arts and culture grants offered through the State of Michigan Economic Development.

What Smalligan will miss the most are the interactions she had with all the people engaged with LowellArts as artists, visitors, patrons, volunteers, and staff. “I will miss the artistic side of program planning and visioning forward for what LowellArts will provide and become in the future,” she said.

“With retirement, I am looking forward to making more art, volunteering, and traveling,” she said. Her current art medium is multi-media, using oil paint and cold wax as the binding agent. The paintings include natural elements like grasses, leaves, and flower petals to add texture to the paintings.

Smalligan officially retired on February 24, 2023. She is replaced by Janet Teunis, who has been with LowellArts for 10 years and previously worked at the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts.



Photos courtesy of Ted Bergin’s Facebook page.



Should Michigan schools teach cursive? Some say yes.



Michigan schools could have more reason to teach students cursive in the 2024-2025 school year, if a bill sponsored by State Rep. Brenda Carter, D-Pontiac, is approved.

House Bill 4064 would encourage the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to develop or adopt a “model program of instruction on cursive as a type of penmanship.”

Traditional public schools and charter schools would also be “strongly encouraged” to use the cursive program, according to the bill.

Lawmakers approved an amendment from State Rep. Dylan Wegela, D-Garden City, that would allow MDE to create a list of model cursive programs rather than one specific program.

Carter told the House Education Committee Tuesday that teaching students cursive would help students with their cognitive and memory skills.

A 2020 study analyzed children and young adults’ brain activity when they

wrote in cursive, typed on a keyboard or drew a picture. Findings showed that each of these activities are different and that an “optimal learning environment” includes all three.

Carter presented a letter that her son, who later died, had written in cursive as a child and Carter gave the letter to her 9-year-old granddaughter.

“So the bottom line of

incur new costs since model cursive programming already exists, according to analysis from the nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency.

Carter proposed a similar cursive bill in 2019 and the House unanimously approved the bill in September 2020. But the bill never passed out of a Senate committee.

There are 21 states



(Shutterstock)

this is: This letter here was written 25 years ago, but my granddaughter was able to read it because she could read in cursive,” Carter said.

There is currently no state curriculum for cursive, MDE Spokesperson Marty Ackley told Bridge.

Both the Michigan Department of Education and Oakland Schools submitted cards in support of the bill.

MDE does not expect to

that require students to learn cursive, according to MyCursive, a website with cursive tutorials and curriculum.

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Red Arrow

- SOFTBALL

SPORTS

Softball to start their season this week, weather permitting

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

A new season begins with a new coach for the Lowell softball program, but it's a familiar face who will be taking the helm. Matt Dood, takes over



as head softball coach for Lowell this season, filling the shoes of Blu Conrad, who coached the past two seasons.

Part of the LHS Class of 2005, Dood has been active at LHS over the past decade in a variety of roles, including assistant coaching roles with softball, football, and wrestling, a team of which he was a part of during his time as a student.

"I began coaching softball shortly after high school with a travel team based out of Lowell/Caledonia, and moved to high school coaching in 2008. I coached until 2014, where I had to step away due to a new job. I was then asked, last season, to return as the varsity assistant, and after taking the Security Director position at the high school in the fall, it allowed me more time to return to coaching softball. I am excited to start year one as the varsity softball coach," Dood said of his first season as a varsity head coach.

The Red Arrows will be led by seniors Haylie

Beers, Taylor Clark, Karina Peplinski, Hope Rummelt, Courtney Witten and Alyssa Woern this season. "The seniors have bought into the new expectations and culture. They have been working hard in the weight room and skill development since I took over in the fall."

Weather in the spring sports season, especially pre-spring break, is unpredictable at best. One year, it's 60 degrees and sunny during stretches of late March, and others, snow is on the grind. Michigan does, at least, keep things interesting in that regard.

Lowell has seven games lined-up prior to Spring Break, six of them as part of doubleheaders. Weather and field conditions permitting, Lowell is set to face Wyoming in a single game this Thursday at home.

Kenowa Hills at home in a doubleheader on Saturday, an away doubleheader with Cedar Springs next Monday, and a home doubleheader next Wednesday against Lakewood, round out the spring-break schedule.

"We have three juniors who will be joining and playing their first varsity games this spring. Emmah Handlon, Mya Pender and Lynsi Fetterhof will all be seeing the varsity field for the first time, and I am excited for their progress and work for the Lowell softball program," added Coach Dood.

The Red Arrows are coming off a 16-21 season last year, losing four seniors from last year's team, including all-conference Macy Huver. Earlier this year, members of the program joined members of the baseball team in serving meals at Gilda's Club of Lowell, a common volunteer program for varsity teams before the season.

One event, each year, that the program hosts is the Mandy Tichelaar Memorial Tournament, this year being held on May 13th. Lowell hosts two state-ranked opponents in Escanaba, and potential district opponent, Rockford.

"I believe that we have to challenge ourselves daily to be ready for the highest competition. I know this season will be a very exciting year and we have high expectations for ourselves. We hope to have a ton of community support this season. We have a lot of talent 9-12th grade and they are all looking forward to showcasing that at the varsity and JV levels," Dood concluded.

SOCCER

Soccer duo to play for Northwood

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

From young ages, David Foster and Avery Miller have been playing soccer together. The LASSO youth program, through high school, and now they plan to play on the same team in college. Both Lowell seniors have committed to Northwood University to play soccer starting in the fall.

Miller started playing soccer at the age of 5-6, through the local YMCA,

while Foster also picked up the game in elementary school, when his family had recently moved to Lowell from Grand Rapids.

"Northwood is a business school and I have always been inclined to pursue a career in business. I met with the coach and felt a good connection with him," Lowell senior, David Foster, said of his commitment. He is planning to enter a career in international business and automotive management.

Both athletes were assisted in the recruiting process by Lowell assistant Coach, Elena Barriger, who played soccer at Northwood, as well, in the mid-2000's.

"What sold me was how the program was structured; by that I mean training, liftings, and overall schedule for the games. Currently, I'm planning on pursuing a degree in cybersecurity," LHS senior, Avery Miller, said of the Northwood program.

Northwood competes in the NCAA Division II in the Great Midwest Athletic Conference. Hillsdale is the other Michigan school in the conference. Located in Midland, Northwood went 8-6-4 last season, including a 2-1 win over local Davenport, also a Division II school.



On the right, David Foster (#6) and Avery Miller (#12), after a goal during the 2022 Pink Arrow Game.

Both Miller and Foster were important pieces in the soccer program's lineup this past season, especially on offense with Miller at striker and Foster in the midfield.

"The recruitment process was really simple and easy for me, just emailed the coaches some highlights, had a couple conversations with them, and had a visit around the sports complex," Miller added.

The Timberwolves roster has a heavy mix of both Michigan talent, as well as international, nearly 40 players in all. International players came from Belize, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Senegal. From Michigan, most players on the roster were from the eastern and central part of the state.

"Team building and leadership is the best thing I have taken from Lowell soccer," Foster concluded. "The chemistry of a team is very important to succeed in any form of life after high-school."

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Red Arrow

- CREW

SPORTS

20 years later, Lowell crew is going strong

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

When you think of tough sports to participate in, maybe crew isn't the first one that comes to mind. It should, though. Crew, or rowing, is one of the hardest endurance sports there is available. Teamwork, strength, communication, and stamina are integral parts of the sport. Lowell is one of few schools in the state to offer a crew team, and for those involved in the program, that challenge is something there's pride in taking on.

2023 marks 20 years of crew at LHS, which began their program in 2003. The Lowell program this year is under the guide of Head Coach, Sam Stoner, who recently got involved with the program through his son, Max.

"My oldest son joined the team his freshman year, which was the year COVID shut us all down. After the next season, Coach Dave

Cadwaller was looking for help with the team and asked for volunteers. I stepped up and fell in love with the sport. This is my second year coaching the team," Stoner told the Ledger, who has Max and his younger son, Anderson, on the team.

"Max is our only 4-year rower. We also have juniors Mara Carbines, Maya Kemp, Elizabeth Plank and Ania Fleszar, as well as sophomores Anderson Stoner, Patrick Hoke and Harper Postema returning this season. The eight returning rowers are joined by an impressive freshman class of 10 new rowers this season. Those are juniors Hiyori Eldred, Jayden Franks and Gwen Hoke; sophomore Gabe Selover; and freshmen Seth Harvey, Connor Rapson, Lumoon Franks, Gianna Gates-Duprey, Brooke Shellenbarger and Gabs Stodola.

"We have a young team with a lot of new rowers and are really excited to see how these kids develop and grow over the next few years. We are hoping to grow the team even more in coming years and compete with some of the best teams in the area."

Geography is a big factor when it comes to schools with rowing programs. Lowell, where the Flat and Grand Rivers meet, makes for an ideal location. Geography, though, is just one part of the equation. Other programs in the area include schools like East Grand Rapids, able to practice at Reed Lake, where water sports are a part of life; a quick walk from EGR High School. Or the Forest Hills Central crew club, with up to 100 student-athletes each year, the largest athletic program at FHC, backed by a powerful sponsor program. These programs are well-funded, with student-athletes who



have rowed their entire lives.

It's something Lowell doesn't have the luxury of having, but the crew program has been strong for 20 years. This is thanks to tireless work by those involved with the program, and with 10 freshmen joining the ranks, that

bodes well for the program, as they seek to continue to grow and get better.

This year, the team will travel around the state for regattas, competition against other schools. With the weather warming, albeit slowly, the club is looking forward to getting boats in the water.

"The State Regatta in Milford, at the end of May, is always a highlight. We are also looking forward to two scrimmages at the Michigan State University Boathouse this year, as well as a return of the State Games of Michigan Grand Regatta in June," Coach Stoner concluded.

GOLF

Golfers primed for good year

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

How good could Lowell golf be this year? Head coach, Tom Koert, has 31 years of experience coaching golf, and has high praise of the possibilities his team has this year.

"We need to see how all results play out, but this team has the talent to be one of the best teams ever in the history of HS Golf at LHS. This team is talented and this lineup will be deep in talent," Koert said of his roster this year.

Spring weather shouldn't be too much of a problem for the boys golfers this year, with all of their matches starting after the spring break holiday. Lowell tees off the season on April 12th at Brookside Golf Course. The schedule features no dual meets, instead, nine-hole conference jamborees and plenty of 18-hole tournaments; a pivot that has happened within the last decade of Michigan high school golf.

"Our schedule is one that has some neat golf courses on the schedule for memories and challenges.

Muskegon Country Club is a favorite, along with Detroit Country Club, Bedford Valley twice, and we return to Lincoln to defend our title there," Coach Koert added.

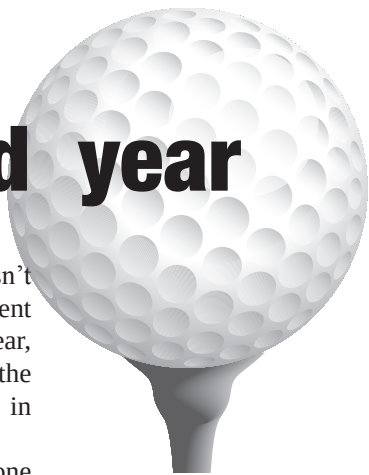
The Red Arrows return five players, and only six overall. The rest of the team, down at the JV level for match experience with such a strong starting group. Returning players are seniors, a GRCC commit, Cam Sluss, a Spring Arbor commit, and Drew Veldman, a Spring Arbor commit. This senior trio is joined by Nicholas Lothian and Trevor Mead, two juniors returning for their second seasons on varsity.

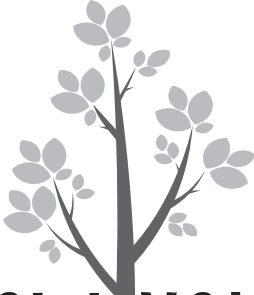
"We will also see Daniel Mitchell play, as he made the team. We look to add a player or two as we get into April. These players need some seasoning, and our JV team with Lance Perkins, they will see the right time to work on improvements," Koert added of his roster.

Lowell will be eyeing records this year, but most importantly a spot at the state tournament. They were narrowly edged-out late last year by Hamilton for a final spot. The program hasn't made the state tournament since 1991, and this year, Lowell will be among the favorites to be playing in mid-June.

"This team is one to watch. If we play to our potential, we can see numerous awards all year. This is my 31st season coaching HS golf and this is the best team I've had the pleasure to be a part of. They are talented, but their attribute is, they all work hard. They understand how good they can be. Our O-K

White Conference is one of the toughest Conferences in Michigan HS Golf. These jamborees will test us and help to meld us for the Regionals run at Katke May 31st," Coach Koert concluded.





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SPORTS SCHEDULES

VARSITY SOFTBALL
* Denotes a home game at LHS softball field
3/25 at 10 am Kenowa Hills * - doubleheader
3/27 at 4:15 pm at Cedar Springs - doubleheader
3/29 at 4:15 pm Lakewood* - doubleheader

GIRLS VARSITY TENNIS
* Denotes a home game at LHS tennis courts
3/27 at 4:15 pm at Ionia
3/29 at 4:15 pm at Lakewood

BASEBALL
* Denotes a home game at LHS baseball field
3/25 at 10 am Kenowa Hills*
3/27 at 4:15 at Cedar Springs
3/29 at 4:15 pm Howell* - doubleheader

GIRLS VARSITY SOCCER
* Denotes a game at LHS North Athletic Complex
3/24 at 6:45 pm Thornapple Kellogg*
3/27 at 6:45 pm Forest Hills Eastern*
3/29 at 6:45 pm Portland*

GIRLS VARSITY LACROSSE
* Denotes a home game at LHS North Athletic Complex
3/24 at 6 pm at Northview
3/27 at 6 pm at Hudsonville

BOYS VARSITY GOLF
* Denotes a home meet at Arrowhead Golf Course
4/12 at 3:30 pm OK White meet at Brookside Golf Course

BOYS & GIRLS TRACK
* Denotes a home meet at Red Arrow Stadium
3/27 at 4 pm at Sparta
4/11 at 4:15 pm at Forest Hills Eastern

obituaries

VAN SPRONSEN

Carol Jean Van Spronsen passed away into the arms of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on March 12, 2023. She was born on August 22, 1934 in Grand Rapids to the late Plink and Minnie Wolfert. She was preceded in death by her husband Neil, son Roger, grandson Chad, granddaughter Brooke and great-grandson Ethan. She is survived by her children Robin (Lee) Baldwin of Ada, Randy (Sue) Van Spronsen of Lowell, Bob (Mary) Van Spronsen of Middleville, Rhonda (Dave) Fosburg of Ionia, 16 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren and her sister Phillis (Pete) Miedema and several nieces and nephews. Carol loved spending time with her grandchildren and family. She enjoyed knitting, baking, camping and playing cards. She will be greatly missed. Funeral services were held on Friday March 17th at Ada Christian Reformed Church. Interment in Bailey Cemetery, Vergennes Twp. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in her name may be made to Faith Hospice.



Live the Life You Want

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

The need for self-forgiveness

This will be a two-part article. This first article will focus on why self-forgiveness may be needed, why it's important, and why it's so difficult. The second article will provide some steps that may help you with your self-forgiveness journey. I agree with others, in the mental health community, that self-forgiveness is needed in order to let go, to start the healing process, for self-acceptance, and to move forward. We often deny that we have anything to forgive ourselves for, especially when it comes to traumatic situations (emotional, psychological, physical, sexual). While I see self-forgiveness denial most often in those that have experienced trauma, it also happens with other life events. The bottom line is that if you feel flawed, guilt, shame, that you did something wrong, or are

“less than” in some way, due to a trauma or life event, you may be dealing with self-blame and/or self-hatred. These feelings negatively affect your overall well-being and quality of life. So, in order to move on, you need to fully accept any responsibility you had in the situation and forgive yourself. “You had your reasons for all of your actions and decisions. You’ve done the best that you could do. Forgive yourself.” **Why is self-forgiveness so difficult?** When I bring up self-forgiveness as a starting point in therapy, some clients feel they have nothing to forgive themselves for, even when they clearly have self-blame and/or self-hatred issues. As we start to explore their emotions and beliefs, it becomes clear that self-forgiveness this necessary. Most especially in those that have suffered trauma. Trauma often results in self-blame. This can happen in both adults and children but children, are especially vulnerable to self-blame and/or self-hatred. Why? Because children are not fully self-aware and will usually take the blame for things having

nothing to do with them. If a child has been traumatized, they often feel it is due to their actions and/or they are not good enough in some way. So, they will often try to become the best...fill-in the blank (son/daughter, student, friend, sibling...) to stop the abusive behavior. They try and try to be perfect but we know this is an impossible task. So, when it doesn't work, they feel flawed that there must be something wrong with them. This blame is turned inward ,resulting in self-worth/esteem issues, developmental issues, even self-hatred. Unless the child has been in counseling, or somehow, these beliefs were corrected, they continue into adulthood. This can negatively affect relationships they have as an adult (romantic, friendships, social interactions, work), their health (both mental and physical), and career. Self-forgiveness can be more difficult than forgiving others because our past is part of us as a whole. So, forgiving this part can feel like losing a piece of yourself. During this process, it isn't unusual for someone to go through emotions similar to grieving. The goal is to keep the knowledge learned but to let the rest go and move on. Another issue that can sometimes be a barrier to forgiveness is admitting that we have made, and will make, mistakes. Add to this that some feel they are truly flawed inside or somehow “less than” others, and it makes taking responsibly more difficult as they don't

want to feel vulnerable by admitting these feelings. To make mistakes, and sometimes even fail at something, means you are an imperfect human being. Once someone can fully accept themselves, life becomes a bit easier. I do things all the time that I shake my head at but I own it. My internal voice chuckles and I think, “Yep, I just did that” or “Yes, I just said that”. I acknowledge the lesson with humility, humor, and move on. “Perfectionism can become self-abuse when good is never good enough.” Many adults, that experienced childhood trauma, blame themselves for their childhood feelings, experiences, behaviors, etc. because of what they know now. They take this adult knowledge and blame their child self for not knowing better. Is this reasonable? No, of course not. Trauma can change how a person develops, so having these cognitive distortions and unrealistic expectations is another area that needs processing and self-forgiveness. Self-forgiveness is more difficult when a person doesn't fully accept themselves. This acceptance is part of learning to love yourself and having a good sense of self and self-worth. It's difficult to forgive someone that you don't like or who doesn't seem worthy, even if that someone is you. **Take aways** The purpose of self-forgiveness is to get unstuck from a place you don't belong. When you forgive yourself, you work to let go of the pain and anger, along with negative emotions about yourself, so you can move forward. You learn, grow, make better decisions, and work to fully accept yourself. This leads to healthier behaviors, attitudes, and more positive emotions about yourself. The goal is to learn to love and respect yourself because this brings more contentment and happiness to your life. This article is for informational purposes only. Stay safe and healthy!

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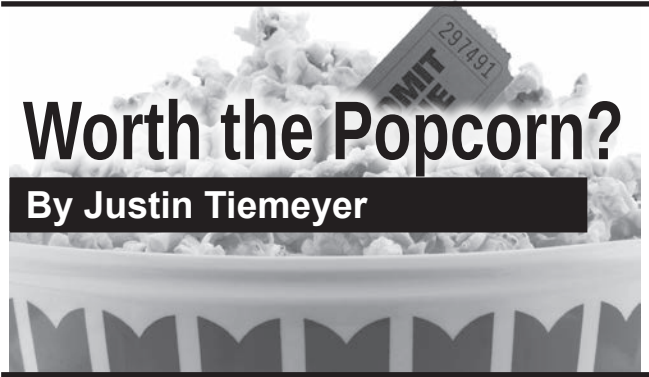
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Shazam! Fury of the Gods

At the conclusion of the 2019 film, *Shazam!*, giant superhero Billy Batson (Zachary Levi/Asher Angel), smashed the staff of villain, Thadeus Sivana (Mark Strong), and put an end to his threat. Little did he know that the staff was the only thing keeping the gods from entering into the realm of humans, and by destroying the staff, he had welcomed two angry goddesses, Hespera (Helen Mirren) and Kalypso (Lucy Liu), the Daughters of Atlas, into the world. Once the goddesses acquire the staff, and reassemble it with the help of the Wizard (Djimon Hounsou), they use it to take back the power that once belonged to the goddesses and gods. If the Daughters of Atlas succeed, the empowered family of Freddy (Jack Dylan Grazer/Adam Brody), Mary (Grace Caroline Currey), Eugene (Ross Butler/Ian Chen), Pedro (D.J. Cotrona/Jovan Armand), and Darla (Meagan Good/Faithe Herman) will be disempowered, and seeing that they are superheroes, probably killed in the process. This deadly threat to the Shazamily explains the origins of their powers at the same time as it promises to take them away permanently.

Fury of the Gods has its fair share of laugh-out-loud moments, and some of the shots of Kalypso atop her fear dragon, Ladon, were downright awe-inspiring, but something definitely felt like it was missing in the sequel to what was easily one of the best DC Extended Universe (DCEU) movies to date. Part of this seems to stem from the fact that there are essentially twelve protagonists; the six superheroes who share the Shazam powers and protect Philadelphia, and the six alter-egos who have to go to school and worry about finances and that sort of thing. Many of the latter are played by actors who seem to be at the point where they are aging out of the franchise, which is a problem when comic book characters are eternally children but the actors who play them are not. Asher Angel, who plays the kid Billy Batson, looks like a man now, with muscles and everything. It is also difficult to suss out the protagonist of this film. If properly balanced, all six characters could have had significant arcs, as with Joss Whedon’s 2012 film, *The Avengers*, but that was not the case here. Billy Batson’s worries about aging

out of the foster care system and introducing financial woes for his foster parents, Rosa and Victor Vásquez, easily fell into the background, resurfacing only at the end. Part of that is adult Billy’s constant deflection and self-protecting sarcasm, but the other part is poor narrative control. Freddy absolutely steals the show in this one, with Jack Dylan Grazer’s cute and comedic acting emerging as the best reason to see *Fury of the Gods*. It also does not hurt that actor, Adam Brody, finally gets to play the superhero, his character Seth on *The O.C.*, would have given anything to be. His hurt, when love interest, Anne, does not know what comic con, is was one of the movie’s finest moments. Even Mary’s classic 1960s *Jean Grey* story arc about going to college, living a normal life, and potentially, leaving the team, feels more important than Billy’s. The Daughters of Atlas are wooden and unimtimidating, the power limits are under-defined, and it just feels like the excitement is missing from this film. *Fury of the Gods* feels like a mixture between *Thor: The Dark World*, a nearly unwatchable sequel to Kenneth Branagh’s pristine super-powered family drama, and *The New Mutants*, the final installation of Fox’s *X-Men* franchise. One might expect something like this to happen with a different creative team, as with *Thor: The Dark World*, but *Fury of the Gods* features the same writer, director, and actors as the original. By process of elimination, this places the blame for the lackluster sequel on the problematic Warner Brothers team, who

has consistently delivered underwhelming blockbuster films and ruined franchises that could have been the best of the best. This is where the comparison to *The New Mutants* feels particularly warranted. Warner Brothers has already announced that the existing DCEU is getting replaced by a new continuity, overseen by *Guardians of the Galaxy* director, James Gunn, and that a number of franchises, including Henry Caville’s, *Man of Steel*, and Dwayne Johnson’s, *Black Adam*, are getting the axe. There’s reason to believe that the only two franchises likely to survive this change are *The Flash* and *Aquaman*, so *Fury of the Gods* may just be the death throes of a dying universe, and this could explain why some of the passion was really missing from the film. What’s the future for *Shazam!* and the DCEU? Little on this topic is clear. *Fury of the Gods* makes a case, through its after credits scenes, that a third *Shazam!* film and a team-up movie ought to happen. However,

with reports that the upcoming *The Flash* film will restart the universe and edge out the *Shazam!* franchise, this seems unlikely. This is unfortunate, because the new universe could have easily been built around *Shazam!*, which featured references to DC superheroes but no commitment to who they are played by. Superman’s appearance in the first film was notably from the chest down. Instead, DC has committed to a superficial change, while giving no commitment to ending the abuses reported about Warner Brothers executives. Furthermore, the choice of

Gunn as the head of the new DCEU suggests that the studio has doubled down. Fans may remember that Gunn was temporarily removed from the *Guardians of the Galaxy* franchise for some pretty terrible tweets, before getting reinstated after fans petitioned Disney to reconsider, claiming that the tweets were from a long time ago and Gunn has changed. If you’re looking for a fun movie to watch this weekend, look elsewhere. Adam Driver’s 65 looks pretty fun, *Scream VI* is getting great reviews, and Jonathan Majors, who delivers gold with every performance, is the main antagonist in *Creed III*. If you are committed to watching every canonical DCEU film, maybe wait until James Gunn figures out if this film is actually canon before committing, or buy a ticket for an unimpressive second film, in hopes that it guarantees a more impressive third. That said, superhero movie-watchers are going to watch superhero movies; that much is known. The final conclusion: *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* does not warrant the cost of the ticket, not on its own merits.



Find and fix leaks during Fix a Leak Week, March 20-26

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has issued a proclamation recognizing this week, March 20-26, as Fix a Leak Week. Fix a Leak week is an annual event created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and supported by WaterSense partners across the U.S. and Canada. During this week, EGLE’s Office of the Clean Water Public Advocate will provide some practical tips on finding and fixing household leaks and spotlight free home energy efficiency programs offered by some utilities within the state. “Fixing water leaks in home plumbing can reduce consumer water bills and prevent water

damage within the home” said Kris Donaldson, EGLE’s Clean Water Public Advocate. The EPA estimates that fixing easily corrected household leaks can save homeowners about 10 percent on their water bills. Residents are encouraged to get involved and track down leaks in their home using EPA’s at-home checklist. Common types of leaks found in the home, like worn toilet flappers and dripping faucets (don’t forget to clean the aerators too!), are often easy and relatively cheap to fix. Share a photo and tag your post with #FixALeakWeek and #IFixLeaks! Some energy utilities within the state offer free at-home energy efficiency assessments to qualifying customers. These can



include a basic home walkthrough and installation of energy-efficient products, such as faucet aerators, lightbulbs, or showerheads. Contact your energy utility to find out what programs they offer. More information and resources are available at Michigan.gov/FixALeakWeek. For more information about the Office of the Clean Water Public Advocate visit Michigan.gov/CleanWater. To stay up to date on other EGLE news follow us at Michigan.gov/MIEnvironment.

CONNECT WITH US

Here’s how to connect with the lowellledger

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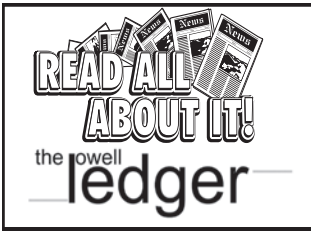
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MAIL

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Lowell, MI 49331

We Look Forward To Hearing From You!



FUN PAGE

SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

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 an actress born in Louisiana on March 22, 1976. I became a fashion model for a TV advertisement at the age of 7. My various screen roles have kept me busy. One movie in particular helped me earn several awards.

Answer: Reese Witherspoon

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		

RAINY WEATHER WORD SEARCH

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

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

Puzzle solutions
on page 13

RAINY WEATHER
WORD SEARCH

CLOUDY
DAMP
DEW POINT
DRIZZLE

GALOSHES
GUSTS
HUMIDITY
INDOORS
JACKET
OVERCAST
PROTECTION

PUDDLES
RAINFALL
SLIPPERY
SLUGGISH
SOGGY
UMBRELLA
VISIBILITY

WET
WINDY

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to umbrellas.

C D U O L

--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Cloud

CLUES ACROSS

1. Millisecond
5. Narcotic drug
11. Accident
14. Formal submissions
15. Popular 70s rock band
18. Discourage from doing
19. More socially elite
21. Arid
23. A way to look
24. Heroes
28. A surfer rides it
29. Potato state
30. Insect repellent
32. Cool!
33. Have already done
35. Collegiate women's fraternity
36. To the ___ degree
39. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
41. Blood type
42. Looked over
44. Language of Cameroon and Chad
46. Species of armadillo
47. Touch softly
49. Part of your upper body
52. Large, stocky lizards

56. Lack of social or ethical standards
58. Congressman
60. Unofficial force
62. As a result of this utterance
63. A main branch of Islam

CLUES DOWN

1. Woman (French)
2. Province of Pakistan
3. This (Spanish)
4. Transportation device
5. Greater in importance or priority
6. The human foot
7. Within
8. Consumed
9. Respectful Malaysian term
10. Therefore
12. Ceased to exist
13. Type of macaroni
16. English composer
17. Wooded tract
20. Tall, slender-leaved plant
22. 36 inches
25. Take too much (abbr.)

26. Allow
27. Individually
29. Journalist Tarbell
31. Bar bill
34. Hong Kong food stall: ___ pai dong
36. Not messy
37. Species that includes reed mace
38. Former MLB catcher Ed
40. Northern U.S. state
43. Wilt
45. Commercial
48. Bolivian river
50. Nursemaid
51. A car needs four
53. Guns (slang)
54. American state
55. Clusters of fern fronds
57. Body part
58. A person's brother or sister
59. Breed of sheep native to Sweden
61. Of I

Mackinac Island ferry will go electric with support from EGLE grant

A \$3.06 million award from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Fuel Transformation Program (FTP) Part 2 will support the first-ever conversion of a Mackinac Island passenger ferry to zero-emissions electric power.

Star Line, now known as the Mackinac Island Ferry Company (MIFC), will replace two 1988 diesel engines with two brand new electric propulsion motors on a ferry, the Chippewa, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 14,152 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents and 887 metric tons of nitrogen oxides over the boat's lifetime. The project will begin immediately as part of a two- to three-year overhaul that will redesign and modernize the vessel's hull and appearance.

"The ferry trip to Mackinac Island is Michigan at its best—a view of our two peninsulas and the Mighty Mac while gliding through our Great Lakes. Now, with a new grant from EGLE, one of the iconic island ferry fleets is switching to electric, ensuring that this Pure Michigan journey is more cost-effective and sustainable for decades to come," said Governor Gretchen Whitmer. "We are continuing to make investments to lead the future of mobility and electrification, so we can grow our economy, create

good-paying jobs, and lower energy costs for families and businesses. Our mobility leadership must extend from electric cars and buses on the road to industrial power and watercraft, too.

"Converting a ferry in the Mackinac fleet to electric will build on our clean-energy leadership and help us achieve the goals of the MI Healthy Climate Plan to make our state carbon-neutral by 2050. The budget I put forward includes several investments in this space, and today's ferry grant is another step forward as we build a brighter future for Michigan."

The grant covers half the cost of the project, which includes installing 1.5 megawatts in shore power infrastructure at the Mackinaw City ferry dock, as electric power upgrades are also planned for the ports of St. Ignace and Mackinac Island.

"This project is a first critical step in the strategy to upgrade and modernize marine transportation in the Straits of Mackinac," said Director Chris Byrnes of the Mackinac Economic Alliance (MEA). "Of course, Mackinac Island is famous for alternative modes of transportation, as cars are not allowed on the island. Everyone walks, rides bikes or horses and, of course, ferry boats, so the island is already a Michigan leader in alternative forms of transportation."

As the primary means of

transportation to Mackinac Island, ferries serve about 500 year-round islanders and 750,000 visitors a year, with a summer peak of more than 16,500 a day. During peak months, ferries make up to 125 round trips daily. The 84-foot ferry Chippewa, built in 1962, is expected to carry 250-300 passengers after the electric conversion and MIFC's concurrent redesign and modernization of the vessel.

After converting the Chippewa to electric power, MIFC intends to similarly upgrade the propulsion systems on its other seven steel vessels that operate passenger or freight service to Mackinac Island. Eventually, MIFC will evaluate its seven high-speed aluminum passenger vessels for upgrades to electric or hybrid electric propulsion.

The Chippewa conversion is a pilot project for electrification of 28 Mackinac Island ferries in all. It marks the launch of the MEA's Mackinac Marine Mobility Strategic Plan to create full-time, year-round marine and shipbuilding jobs in the straits region. Also partnering in the project is shipbuilder Incat Crowther.

The project is the first initiative from the Mackinac Island Transportation Master Plan, conducted by the Michigan Department of Transportation as the key piece of a larger initiative to modernize the ferry fleet and freight ships serving the

region. That effort includes transition from fossil fuels, supported by creating local shipbuilding and servicing jobs and a marine industry training hub. The long-term goal is to transition all 138 Upper Great Lakes ships in the 50- to 200-ton range to electric or hybrid-electric power.

In a related move in January, plans to build a new, more efficient, reliable, and environmentally friendly Charlevoix-to-Beaver Island passenger ferry advanced with a \$6.63 million federal grant added to a previous \$14 million investment from the state.

Electric shore power for the Soo

A separate FTP Part 2 grant of \$2.18 million to the city of Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula will cover approximately two-thirds of the cost to install electric shore power at an international dock just downstream from the Soo Locks, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 9,405 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents and 650 metric tons of nitrogen oxides, over the project's lifespan.

The shore power, supplied by nearly 50% renewable energy, will reduce the need for docked vessels to idle their diesel engines, lowering carbon emissions and improving air quality for nearby workers, visitors, and residents. Part of the match for the project comes from a 2018 federal grant of \$20.7 million



The Mackinac Island passenger ferry Chippewa will be converted from diesel to electric propulsion. Photo courtesy of Star Line/Mackinac Island Ferry Co.

awarded to the City of Sault Ste. Marie to rehabilitate the Carbine Dock Port.

Continued support for Michigan's clean maritime industry

Meanwhile, Michigan's Office of Future Mobility and Electrification (OFME) is working to launch a grant program aimed at accelerating Great Lakes marinas' decarbonization efforts, helping companies test and deploy recreational and commercial alternative-based fueled or electric powered technologies, and driving private-sector investment to bolster economic development across the state.

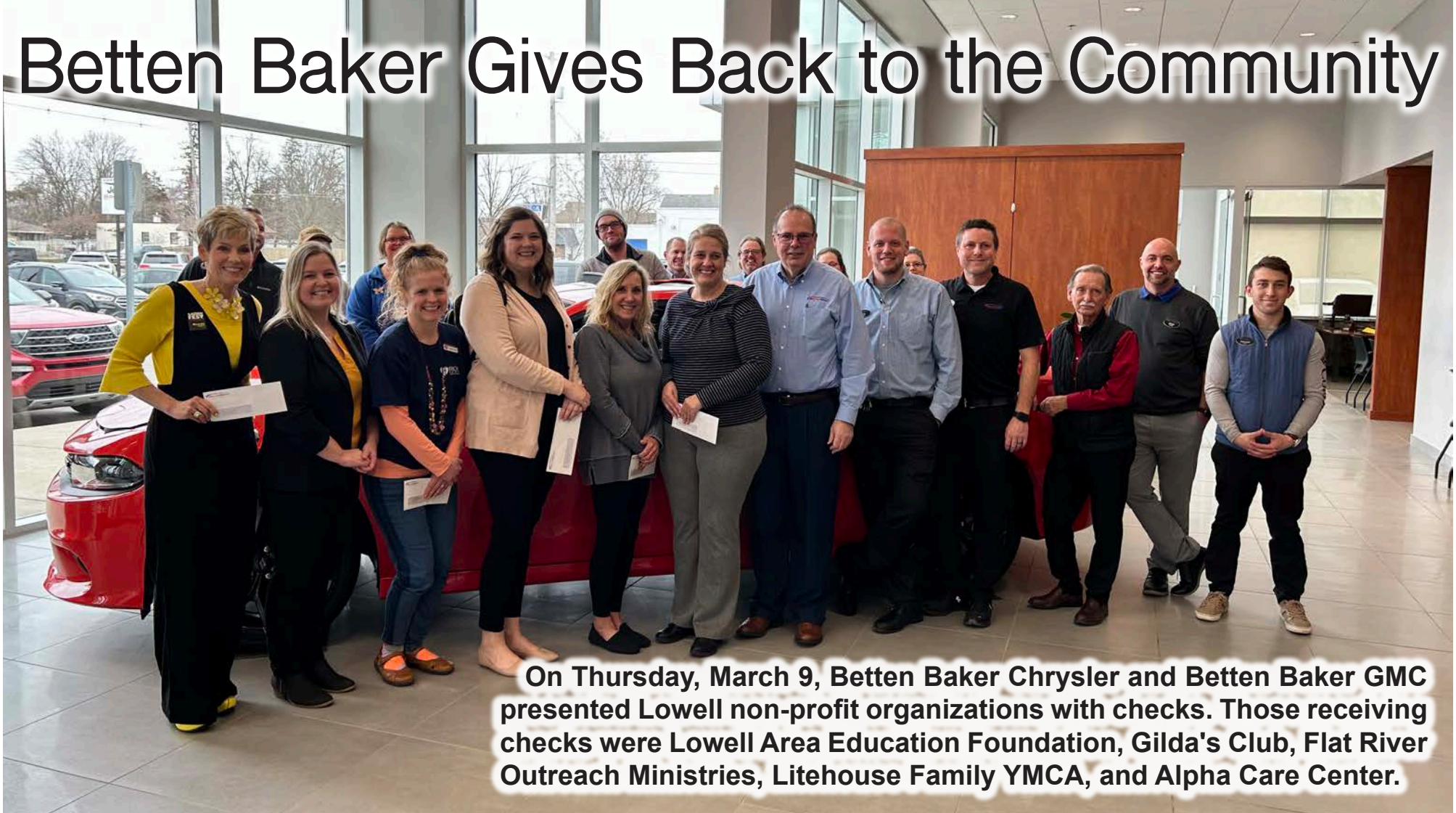
The program, featured on Page 17 of the Michigan State of the Great Lakes 2022 Report, is conceived as the nation's first regional freshwater electric boat charging network.

About EGLE's Fuel Transformation Program

The FTP supports replacement of qualifying diesel vehicles, vessels, and equipment with new, cleaner versions that have low to no emissions. Grants total \$30 million over approximately three years, funded through Michigan's \$64.8 million Volkswagen Settlement Beneficiary Mitigation.

Along with announcing these two grants, EGLE has opened a request for proposals for FTP Part 3, which will allocate \$5 million for electrification of airport ground support equipment, port cargo handling equipment, and forklifts. Find more information on the Fuel Transformation Program webpage for Part 3, or contact Irene Queen, environmental quality analyst, Sustainability Section, Materials Management Division, EGLE, at QueenI1@Michigan.gov or 517-420-3230.

Betten Baker Gives Back to the Community



On Thursday, March 9, Betten Baker Chrysler and Betten Baker GMC presented Lowell non-profit organizations with checks. Those receiving checks were Lowell Area Education Foundation, Gilda's Club, Flat River Outreach Ministries, Litehouse Family YMCA, and Alpha Care Center.

The Lowell Community thanks Betten Baker for their generous support of our local non-profits.