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OF LOWELL

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Red Barn Mercantile opens wine tasting room

By Cliff Yankovich
contributing writer

Hopefully, by now, anyone reading this article appreciates how important it is to shop at locally-owned businesses because studies consistently demonstrate how dollars spent at a local mom and pop results in way more of that money staying right in the community. Want to know a way to double-down on that principle? It happens when you support a local family-owned business that is selling a product produced by another family-owned business.

The Red Barn Mercantile, at 217 West Main, is a mom and pop business owned by Laurie and Marty Chambers. After lots of phone calls, form-filling, and hoop-jumping, they are very pleased to open their tasting room for Love Wines – hand-crafted wines produced by another family operation located in Ludington, MI. The wine-tasting room is one more step for Red Barn Mercantile in their effort to provide a nice



Red Barn,
continued page 2

Laurie and Marty Chambers behind their custom-made bar.

Sandy Graham retires

On August 11, Sandy Graham, Regional Manager at the Alto and Englehardt branch libraries, retired from Kent District Library (KDL), after 37 years of dedicated service. It is hard to imagine KDL without her; she has had a big impact on the entire KDL community. Graham is fun, kind, smart and dedicated... the perfect combination for a wonderful librarian.

“Sandy has been an exceptional team-player, always willing to go the extra mile to support colleagues and ensure the success of the entire organization,” said Jennifer DeVault, Director of Library Operations at KDL. “She consistently displays strong leadership qualities and has a remarkable ability to motivate and inspire others, leading by example and fostering a positive and collaborative work environment.”

A message from Sandy: “After 37 years, it’s amazing to look back and see all the changes that have happened at Kent District



Sandy is holding the portrait of Lowell’s first librarian, who was a relative of hers. Photo courtesy of Kent District Library.

Graham retires
continued page 2

The 55th Fallasburg Arts Festival Sept. 16 & 17

The 55th Annual Fallasburg Arts Festival is presented by LowellArts and will be held on September 16 and 17. The two-day, outdoor festival includes 100 fine art and fine crafts booths, live music on a central stage, food booths, a children’s craft area, craft demonstrations, and annual raffle. Hours: Saturday and Sunday, 10 am-5 pm. Admission is free. Parking is \$5 per car. Location: Fallasburg Park, 1124 Fallasburg Park Drive, Lowell, MI, 49331.

Talented artists, from around the state and the country, apply every year to be part of this well-respected event. Artist booths are juried and a broad range of different mediums are represented, including: jewelry, sculpture, ceramics, glass, fiber, mixed media, wood, painting, drawing, photography, floral, basketry, and more. Annual attendance estimates are 25,000.

Musical entertainment is held on an outdoor stage both days of the event, featuring a variety of music styles. Musical acts include: Fusion Rock Orchestra, Hawks & Owls, Josh Rose, Austin Benzing Blue Grass Band, The Wild Honey Collective, Luke Lenhart Trio, Blue Water Ramblers, Bruce Matthews, and B-side Growlers.

A Children’s Area provides children the opportunity to decorate and take home a pumpkin. On Saturday, in the Children’s Area, guests

Festival,
continued page 2

Red Barn, continued

selection of Michigan-made food, beverages, cooking supplies, and sweets. (They sell a garlic aioli from Stonewall Kitchen there that can always be found in this reporter’s refrigerator.)

Spend a few minutes talking with Marty and Laurie and it seems the relationship with Love Wines was a predestined event. “There was too many things that lined-up,” Marty said. “The winery up there is on Washington Street and we live on Washington Street. She started in business in 2014, the same year we opened our business.” Laurie chimed in to report that the signed license from the State arrived in their mailbox one year later, on the same week-end they started the process.

The best part about the process of getting certified by the State taking so long was that it gave Laurie and Marty plenty of time to prepare a great looking place to present Love Wines. The most striking part of the presentation is the beautiful bar Duane Hamilton crafted for them, out of lumber that Marty reclaimed from the second floor of their building that he figures was originally harvested around 1875 to 1877. The eleven-week process of making the bar saw the planing and joining together of the lumber from upstairs and the application of six coats of clear epoxy. Even if you don’t drink wine, the bar alone is worth a visit. Carol Hamilton is married to Duane and also works at Red Barn. Now, we might have to amend our original statement about helping two families when you purchase Love Wines, and bump it up to three.

When the Chambers’ were launching Red Barn Mercantile in Lowell, 2014 found Jana Rose, who was a single mom of four children at the time, fulfilling her dream of crafting wine from Michigan grapes and fruit. Jana initially started in a tiny, rented space. She was working two other jobs at the same time she was launching Love Wines. Her hard work and financial gamble has paid off. Jana’s first season saw her working with about 500 gallons of tank space. By 2019, Jana was able to purchase a commercial space big enough to process, ferment, and bottle the wines.

These days, she and her crew, which includes her husband Nate, create and prepare small batches of a wide variety of specialty wines using about 2,300 gallons of stainless steel tanks. Nate and Jana met about a year after she started. In addition to helping bottle, wax, and label the wines, Nate helps in their tasting room in Ludington and does all the design work for their labels. They buy about 12,000 pounds of grapes from three local vineyards every year.

When you include the fact that Jana and Nate do their best to flavor their Michigan grapes with fruits grown here, we now have more Michigan family-owned businesses feeling the economic impact of Love Wines. It should be noted that their efforts have been getting the attention of wine lovers in, and around, Michigan. The proof is that Jana’s combinations have won gold, silver, and bronze awards at the Michigan Wine Competition and the Indy International wine competition at Purdue University.

“We have an ever-rotating stock of wine because we do so many different fruit and grape combinations,” Jana explained. “We have dry and sweet wines and everything in between. I prefer a fruit-forward wine with a complex, balanced

finish, which is evident in many of my creations. I love experimenting with new flavors of fruit and grape combinations. I am a foodie myself and find inspiration everywhere. Our wine is truly unique, like our brand new Two to Mango, which is a Mango and Jalapeño Chardonnay. I even have a black cherry Merlot called Twilight Kiss, which was inspired by a Bath and Bodywork’s hand soap. I think, in a state with so many winery choices, our growth stems mainly from our large and unique selection.”

The truth of Jana’s words about variety were borne out when we visited Red Barn. The store had 25 varieties of Love Wine in stock and a couple more are expected to arrive this week. When you visit their tasting room, you can purchase a flight of five different wines to sample for \$10. Marty shared a great story about how people are reacting to Love Wines.

“Last Saturday, a pair of ladies were back home in Michigan. They were sisters and they moved to Italy thirty years ago. They married and had families.



Red Barn Mercantile has 25 varieties of Michigan-made Love Wines in stock, with more coming.

They came back for a family reunion,” Marty recalled. “I asked if they would like to sample some wine and the response was, ‘Well you know we’re from Italy. We are from the place where wine-making is an art.’”

Marty encouraged them to try a flight with the promise that if they did not like any of the wine, he would not charge them. Love Wines worked it’s magic, and not only were the ladies impressed, they each bought a couple of bottles of their favorites. Lovers of chocolate will appreciate the fact that the two of them were also very, very impressed when they tired sea foam candy for the first time. They asked the Chambers, “Where has this been all of our lives?”

The serendipity involved in bringing Love Wines to Lowell, as well as the patience it took for Marty and Laurie to get everything set with Lansing, seems to have been well worth the effort. Red Barn Mercantile has a great selection of Love Wines waiting for you, along with their other curated Michigan food and beverage products.

Graham retires, continued

Library - including that name, switching from Kent County Library. When I started, we were hand-stamping due dates on every book. Now, with the KDL app, Libby, Hoopla and Kanopy, you can have an amazing library in your back pocket.

Working with our local kids has been a definite highlight of my career. KDL’s early literacy efforts are one of our crown jewels. Starting with the preschool storytimes and going on to classroom

visits, working with our young patrons to develop a love of reading has been a pleasure. In addition, it has been rewarding to help them feel comfortable interacting with adults outside their family circle and using a local, lifelong resource.

It has been an honor and privilege to promote everything KDL has to offer. Our physical collection and great programs are self-evident. Other treasures, not so much. I have really enjoyed being able to tell people about our digital offerings, Perk Passes, databases and more. Over and over, people have expressed surprise at everything they can get with their library card.

I have put a lot of effort toward making KDL an important part of the Lowell and Alto communities –

and loved doing it. It is going to be exciting to be on the community side of things and consume KDL! I am looking forward to now having time to read all the terrific books that have passed through my hands these 37 years.”

Festival, continued

of all ages and abilities are invited to participate in Drums for All with Josh Dunigan. Josh will share his love for world music and percussion through an interactive drumming and rhythm experience.

Demonstrators of traditional crafts are located in the pavilion. Visitors of all ages are invited to watch the artisans at work. Demonstrations include: gourd art, mosaic, fly tying, quilting, weaving, needle felting, wood turning, wood carving, and more. Also, a variety Food Booths are available, offering an array of fall-inspired and festival foods.

Event guests are invited to purchase tickets for the annual raffle supporting LowellArts. Participants in the raffle will be entered to win the beautiful queen-size quilt, created by Mary Tobin, or one of over 75 other artist-made items, donated by festival artists. Items will be on display at the event, and winners are drawn at the festival. You do not have to be present to win. Raffle tickets are \$2 each, 4 for \$5, 10 for \$10.

For more information, contact LowellArts at (616) 897-8545, e-mail info@lowellartsmi.org, or visit the website lowellartsmi.org/fallasburg-arts-festival.

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Roadwork updates at council meeting

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

Lowell’s city council gathered for a notably brief meeting, short one member, Mayor Mike DeVore. In his stead, council member, Marty Chambers, stepped-in to run the meeting. The council approved new wording to its tree ordinance, appointed delegates to annual meetings for both the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and the Municipal Employees’ Retirement System (MERS), and sent notice to Lowell Charter Township expressing disinterest in entering into a water-authority agreement. They also discussed speed limit enforcement and road work.

During citizen comment, Riverside Drive resident, David Bonga, expressed some concern regarding speeding in school zones, specifically on Riverside and Hudson. “I don’t see any enforcement at all,” Bonga said.

Bonga requested an account of how many speeding tickets the department has issued in the past month, to which Chief of Police, Christopher Hurst, responded. The Lowell police have stopped 119 cars for speeding during the

past month; 40 on Bowes, 40 on W. Main, 14 on N. Hudson, 10 on E. Main, 6 on S. Hudson, 2 on Alden Nash, 1 on S. Jackson, and 1 on Riverside, but only 34 of those resulted in the issuance of citations. It should be noted that Hurst’s itemized numbers add up to 114, not 119 as specified.

Bonga explained that he takes his dog out twice a day for a brief walk, and he always sees cars traveling far in excess of the 25 mile per hour speed limit. Bonga is able to accurately determine the speed of drivers in this area because of a radar speed sign that compares actual speed with posted speed limit. The belief behind signs like this is that drivers confronted with their actual speed will slow down in order to obey the posted limit, whether because of a natural desire to do the right thing or for fear of punishment. However, if residents like Bonga have noticed that speeders in this area are seldom ticketed, the efficacy of signs like this may be diminished.

Council member, Jim Salzwedel, agreed with Bonga that speeding around Riverside and Hudson is a problem and echoed his

concern to the chief. “Chief, anything you can do about it, that would be great,” Salzwedel said.

The council entertained an engineering proposal of \$34,300 submitted by Williams and Works to pave Kent Street, from Washington to Jackson, per the seven-year street plan for fiscal year 2024-2025. A previous estimate, which did not account for replacement of the water main and sanitary sewer, came in at \$160,000. The new estimate, including both water and sewer was \$562,657.

City Manager, Mike Burns, elaborated that there were issues with the sanitary sewer on Jefferson during the flood of 2013, after which half was replaced. He explained that the remaining sanitary sewer is in a state of disrepair. “It’s slowly deteriorating,” Burns said. “When they replaced the one area in 2013 because of the flood, they should have replaced the whole thing.”

The costs for the second half of the sanitary sewer alone are \$144,450, which is almost as much as the previous repaving estimate. Burns noted that the city could likely use USDA financing to pay for the water main and sanitary sewer replacement.

Though the city will have to absorb all of these costs before the conclusion of the Kent Street project, the council was only voting on the design engineering costs of \$34,300, which cover soil borings, a topographic survey, preliminary plans, advertising, and bidding. The council approved the design engineering services.

Burns reported that USDA financing for Washington Street road work was recently approved. Per the seven-year street plan, North and South Washington are slated for a full reconstruction,



City Manager, Mike Burns, takes time to provide updates on road construction projects on Washington Street, Grindle Street, and Avery Street.

including utilities, next year. Burns was happy with the 2.75% interest rate and 40-year term, as it was lower than his expected rate of slightly over 3%. Burns expects that the project will be out for bid by Christmas.

Construction on Grindle Street and Shepard Boulevard is expected to begin on Monday, August 21. Because the roads will be closed briefly following that date for resurfacing, city officials have already reached out to residents and intend to hold community meetings about the impact of the road work.

Burns also presented a preliminary estimate of \$331,000 to repave Avery Street, and North Division Street from Avery to Main, as part of the Rollaway redevelopment project. He expressed an interest in replacing the water line

down Avery, as well. “The way they’re connected on Avery is very janky,” Burns said.

Burns proposed funding the Avery Street project, using a portion of the \$1.4 million excess in the city’s general fund. Presumably, the replacement of the Avery Street water line would address concerns from neighbors about low water pressure.

Burns also welcomed Rich LaBombard back to Lowell as the Assistant City Manager and Director of the Department of Public Works, following the retirement of Dan Czarnecki. LaBombard

preceded Czarnecki in the role from 2016 to 2019, and he has since served as the City Manager for the City of the Village of Douglas on the lake shore near Saugatuck. LaBombard will resume his tenure on September 25.

Those interested in watching this meeting can find it on the City of Lowell YouTube channel, @cityoflowell. The agenda can be found at the City of Lowell home page, lowellmi.gov. The city council will meet again on Monday, August 21, 2023. As always, these meetings are open to the public.



Concerned citizen David Bonga questions speed limit enforcement along Riverside and Hudson.



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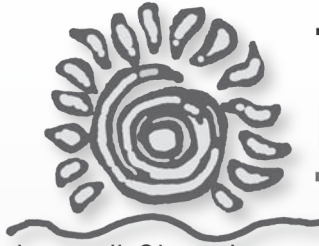
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Worth the Popcorn?

By Justin Tiemeyer

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem is an animated film co-written by Superbad and Good Boys creative team, Seth Rogan and Evan Goldberg, Detective Pikachu writers, Dan Hernandez and Benji Samit, and director Jeff Rowe, who worked on Gravity Falls and The Mitchells vs. the Machines, an absolute powerhouse team for any project focused on children’s media with added value for adults. Where previous installations in the TMNT multimedia franchise have explored the mutant (Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of

the Ooze) and the ninja (Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III) portion of being a turtle, Mutant Mayhem, instead, focuses on what it means to be a teenager. The isolation and need for acceptance that these turtle boys feel is simultaneously exactly what other teenagers feel and wholly other, as Leo, Donny, Raph, and Mikey learn from watching human teenagers congregate and commiserate during an outdoor screening of Ferris Bueller’s Day Off. There is a certain authenticity to Mutant Mayhem that is missing from many other TMNT shows and movies. This

is not Wayne’s World. In other words, the turtles are not voiced by professional actors and voice actors in their 30s and 40s. Nicolas Cantu (Leonardo), Micah Abbey (Donatello), Shamon Brown Jr (Michaelangelo), and Brady Noon (Raphael) are all real teenagers, though a couple of them may turn 20 by the time of the sequel, which has already been greenlit, along with a follow-up Paramount+ series titled, Tales of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Because of a bad experience with humans, their father Splinter (Jackie Chan) has kept them from interacting with humans, so their isolation is not imaginary. It is not until the turtles meet Superfly, voiced by Ice Cube, and his ragtag crew of make-shift Mutanimals that they receive their first glimpse of belonging. When Superfly turns out to be a streetwise Magneto, intent on destroying all of humanity—even the only good human, April O’Neil (Ayo Edebiri)—the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles must choose between finally

fitting in and doing the right thing. With the addition of Superfly, Rocksteady (John Cena), Bebop (Seth Rogen), Leatherhead (Rose Byrne), Genghis Frog (Hannibal Buress), and Mondo Gecko (Paul Rudd), Mutant Mayhem not only receives a bump for a fantastic voice cast with endless comic relief potential, but mutants become a community among and against humans. Because of this, the sophomoric focus on acceptance through teenage boys, who just want to have friends and fall in love, is elevated to the acceptance that minority communities seek, like equal protection under the law, equal access to employment, healthcare, and housing. These two themes come together as the teenage turtles dream of going to high school like other teens, which has never been addressed in any TMNT movie, despite New York law requiring children to attend school from age 6 until the end of the school year in which they turn 17. Like with the X-Men mega franchise, the TMNT use the word mutant as a symbol for any group struggling for acceptance within the broader global community, and the creative team of Mutant Mayhem was wise to make that distinction. Rogan and company do cartwheels and somersaults to make Mutant Mayhem accessible, not just for long-time fans, but also for young viewers who may be meeting the TMNT for the first time. Much of the film is visually dark, and there’s violence and peril abounding, but it is much more lighthearted than Across the Spider-Verse, which deals with complex issues of loss and anger. It takes a page from Secret of the Ooze and places the mutants front and center. Though characters like Leatherhead, Ray Fillet, and Genghis Frog have complex emotional arcs in the current IDW comic series, these mutants are light on threat and heavy on laughs, and young viewers may love the movie simply because one of their favorite animals had a speaking part in it. As for superfans, there are a number of callouts to the TMNT’s 40-year legacy across comic book, cartoon, and film media, like Eastman High and a building called the Laird, both references to TMNT creators, Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird. Perhaps the most fun, and certainly the most-telling

reference, was the TCRI faction leader named Cynthia Utrom, whose name, glasses, and general aesthetic call to mind an important character from TMNT lore. Those who arrived at the theater with enough time to enjoy the trailers, likely saw a commercial for TMNT action figures that not only speak special catch phrases, but elongate the vowels based on how long you hold them down. Seasoned filmgoers may have caught a whiff of toxic consumerism like in Transformers: The Movie, when they killed off a number of favorite characters just so Hasbro could sell more toys. However, the creativity to capitalism quotient in Mutant Mayhem is much less offensive. Purists who believe dogmatically that either the 1984 Mirage Studios comic series are the only worthy TMNT presentations, will be disappointed with this movie, but then again, they will also be unhappy to learn that the 2011 IDW comic series, the 2003 animated series, and this film are the best TMNT media ever created. To keep a long-running franchise fresh, one could do a lot worse than take a page from Sony’s Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse, and with cutting edge visuals to connect with and elevate the original comic book medium, an immersive Grindhouse-style soundtrack with strong hip-hop influences, and a story that diverse viewers can relate to, that’s exactly what Mutant Mayhem did. Both Across the Spider-Verse and Mutant Mayhem belong to the superhero fad but suggest a way beyond it, and both films give audiences an opportunity to rage against the Disney/Pixar machine at precisely the time when the Walt Disney Company seems the least consumer friendly.

Mutant Madness is one of the last big budget children’s films to premiere ahead of production stoppages due to the writer’s strike, and it is an emblem of the fact that films do not need to be done the way they have always been done. In 2009, Focus Features released Coraline as an alternative to Disney/Pixar, but it only grossed \$75 million domestically, compared to the \$293 million domestic earnings of Pixar’s Up. Even compared to other stop-motion films like Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, Coraline’s worldwide box office earnings were hardly enough to call it a success. Fast forward nearly 20 years, and alternative animated films present a real challenge to the Disney hegemony. Across the Spider-Verse absolutely trounced the new Pixar film Elemental at the box offices, opening the door for Mutant Madness and other alternative animated films to flourish. Though it may be a long time before audiences see a Mutant Mayhem sequel, it is likely that critics, in years to come, will applaud the film for how well it sets up for future films and series. By taking the risk on using Superfly as the central villain, which is not as much of a risk when you consider that this is one of Ice Cube’s best acting roles, and focusing on developing the turtles as real characters, not simply the archetypes of “leader,” “brain,” “brawler,” and “partier,” future installations with powerhouse villains, like Shredder and Krang ,promise to reinvigorate the franchise, no matter how long the hiatus. Furthermore, the factionalism between the Mutanimals and TCRI inoculates audiences against monster-of-the-week fatigue, which folks might argue was the downfall of at least two attempts at a Spider-Man franchise. Throw in some Utroms, Neutrinos, Triceratons, the Oroku Clan, the Purple Dragons gang, and the organized-crime families, and divorce them from simple labels of good guys and bad guys, and you have the potential for a highly profitable, deeply artistic series of films. Some readers are going to be watching this on repeat for years when, it makes its streaming debut, which may make some adults hesitant about seeing it in theaters, as well, but Mutant Mayhem is a film not to sleep on, and a theater experience not to miss.



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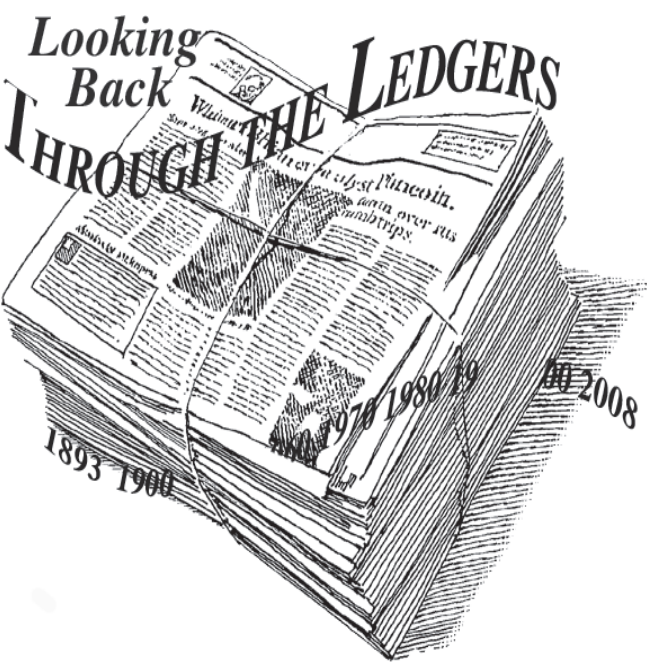
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viewpoint



150 years ago The Lowell Journal August 13, 1873

The west part of Flat River bridge is being repaired, after the big log drive has passed.
Corn, wheat and oats are very good, but not peaches and early apples.
There is talk about forming a military company with Theo Mason the captain.
The camp meeting in Irving, 12 miles south, was attended by 3,000.
Kopf's store on the west side (he is moving to a new building) will become the Morrison Hotel.
E.F. Doty's cat dives the river to catch fish, very successfully.

125 years ago The Lowell Ledger August 18, 1898

On September 19, Principal L.H. Merriman will open a high school on the second floor of the McKee block (in Alto) and will continue for eight months, in two terms of sixteen weeks each. Printed catalogues may be secured by the principal.
It now seems certain that Belding is at last to have added railroad facilities.
The great Hindu healer at Grand Rapids proves to be a dead beat and a scoundrel. Lowell people had faith in him; and who will they pine to now? Doubt has been labelled a sin in times now, but if more people had doubts, then fakirs would not fatten upon public credulity.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger August 16, 1923

Lowell High foot ball team will start practice Monday, August 27. Everybody out.
The number of casualties in the World war drawing pensions is estimated at 10,000,000 in a report to a conference of experts, held at Geneva, to study methods of placing these men at work.
J.W. Porritt and a few of his neighbors own a threshing outfit together, and hearing that they were short of help, Jack's daughter, Elinor, came home and presented him with a new grandson. Jack says he is afraid the little fellow won't help much this year, but thinks he may come in handy later.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger August 12, 1948

The Michigan Conservation Commission decides to pen the entire state to deer hunting in the fall, for the first time in 22 years.
Almost everyone at a general meeting with the school board urges a go-ahead for the new high school addition: Peter Speerstra and Jay Bolens offer to canvass for the \$20,000 need to complete the building budget.
4-H Club members and FFA boys can participate in the first-ever plowing contest at the 4-H Fair next week. Winners can take part in the state contest in late August.
A new dairy barn and livestock building are almost complete for the 4-H Fair; volunteers are asked to show up to finish the dormitory.
Traffic deaths are highest on rural roads: 119 persons died in June.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger Suburban Life August 9, 1973

Get your landfill permit at the City offices, \$2.
Erb Lumber celebrates its first year in Lowell, and Reedy Real Estate Company moves to 210 West Main.
President Nixon's price-freeze on retail beef promptly produces shortages, and cutters search for other kinds of meat.
Marching band rehearsals will be every morning the week of August 20.
Kent County Library Systems announces a new sub-regional library facility for the blind and physically handicapped residents of the county. Talking books may be picked up a KCL headquarters. Talking books and machines to play these book are provided by the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger

August 19, 1998

Thomas and Carolyn Medendorp's new home on Foreman St. was hit with paint ball guns sometime between 4 and 7 pm last Thursday, leaving \$4,000 worth of damage.
City Council unanimously approved a proposal to vacate Water Street and create a new entrance to Recreation Park.
Lowell FFA raised \$7,500 at the Kent County 4-H Livestock sale last Thursday. That is nearly two-thirds of its annual \$12-\$14,000 budget.
There were 45 vendors set-up along Main Street last Thursday and Friday for the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce's first-ever Market Days.

to the editor

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

To the editor:
I just witnessed another TB advertisement touting that charter schools outperform public schools. There are also many signs in the Lowell Area School District advertising the same nonsense.
This does not match the data that I've reviewed and would like to see theirs by districts that they advertise in.
Additionally, my hope is that parents understand by denying enrollment to the neediest in our society reinforces prejudices toward those children and each other.
Unfortunately, charter schools receive public tax dollars without the oversight that are required for public schools. This further divides the fabric of our social structure and citizens. These choices contribute to ruining the trust necessary if our republic is to survive.
Breaks my heart!
Jack Misner,
Vergennes Township

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Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8 - 5; Fri. 8-noon

We love to hear from you!



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

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



At Your Local Library

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

KDL Lab Experience: It’s a Me, Mario!
Tuesday, Aug. 8, 1:30 - 2:30 pm. It’s Mario time - oh yeah! Create, explore and have fun while engaging in STEAM learning in this event filled with everyone’s favorite video game brothers. Let’s-a go! For ages 5-10.

All Aboard! Book Club
Thursday, Aug. 17, 10:30 - 11:30 pm. Join a fun, informal discussion of great books. This month, we’ll discuss *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles. For adults 18+

Painted Birds
Tuesday, Sept. 12, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Create whimsical, boldly colored birds with thick media paper and beaded wire embellishments. Perfect for wall hangings! For ages 18+

KDL Lab Experience
Wednesday, Sept. 13, 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.

college news

Jessica M. Peckham, of Alto, has been named to the 2023 spring semester Dean’s List at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. To qualify for the Dean’s List, a student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.

Concordia University Ann Arbor officials have released the Spring Honors List for the 2022-23 academic year. To be eligible for the honor, students must

achieve a minimum 3.60 GPA and complete at least 12 undergraduate credits. Included on the list is Jonathan Braam, of Ada and Ainslee Taylor, of Alto.

Founded in 1963, Concordia University Ann Arbor, 4090 Geddes Road, offers more than 40 undergraduate majors and is affiliated with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The campus is located on 187 acres overlooking the Huron River.

ABCs of Lowell history

The ABCs of Lowell History is back for another round. This popular series explores a wide variety of topics in Lowell area history. Information provided by Lowell Area Historical Museum.

L is for Look Family

The Look family’s impact on the City of Lowell began in 1870 and continued on to today. The first member of the Look family in Lowell was John Quincy Look. J.Q. Look was in Lowell by 1870. He began his career working as a chemist and druggist. In 1885, he changed professions and worked as a bank teller and bookkeeper. He ended this career as a bank president. J.Q. Look’s real passion was in Masonry. He achieved the following: Master Mason, Grand Master, Worshipful Master, 33rd Degree Mason, and in 1916, he was the third in the nation with the greatest number of years as a Mason. Though he had moved away from Lowell, he came home to be buried with his family in Oakwood Cemetery.

J. Q.’s brother, Orson, came to Lowell at some point after 1870. Orson and his wife died within months of each other in 1879 from consumption of the lungs, tuberculosis. He was a lawyer and upon his death, his law library and furniture were purchased by Renwick & Walker, attorneys from Grand Rapids.

In 1877, their father John, stepmother Adeline, and half-brother Dexter G. Look moved to Lowell. John Look and his first wife Charlotte had moved from New York to Farmers Creek, Michigan and had four children. Charlotte became ill and went to New York thinking the climate



D.G. Look Drug Store

would help but passed away while there. John and Adeline purchased the Mrs. U.B. Williams (Susan Snell-Williams) home at 314 S. Hudson. This house, most recently, was used by the Senior Neighbors and Gilda’s club.

Dexter G. Look, half-brother to J. Q. Look, entered the same profession as his brother, that of druggist. He clerked in his brother’s store for 6 years and went on to own his own drugstore at 214 W. Main. He worked as a druggist in Lowell for 52 years. At one time, with business partner Harry Paterson, he even opened a store in Alma. He married Evelyn Rickert in 1885 and they moved into their new home at 314 S. Hudson.

D.G. Looks completely gave himself to the service of his community. He was a member and President of the School Board, leader on the Board of Trade, member and president of the Village Council, Chairman of the Centennial Committee,

Director and Vice President of the City State Bank of Lowell, Treasurer of the Lowell Specialty Company, and member of the Masonic Temple, Oddfellows and Moose. During his time on the Village Council, the municipal plant and City Hall were built. Serving beyond Lowell, he was Secretary on the Kent District No. 2 Draft Board during the first World War, President of both the Michigan State Recall Club and the Michigan State Pharmaceutical Association, and served as State Representative, serving for 5 sessions on the Ways and Means Committee. He was offered the House speakership but turned it down.

Helen Look, only child of Dexter G. and Evelyn Look, married William Burger, a banker from Constantine. He tragically died in an accident ten years later and she married Frank Newell, founder of Newell Manufacturing Company. Later, after Frank’s death, she married a

close friend, Bernard Daley. Helen shared her parents’ love for the Lowell community. Upon her death in 1981, she bequeathed money to the Lowell Congregational Church and to the City of Lowell. The city’s portion has become the Look Memorial Fund. Since its beginning, the Look Memorial Fund has put 15 percent of the annual interest earnings back into the principal of the fund, and distributes the rest of the interest, never touching the principal. Many groups and projects have benefitted over the years, including the Look Memorial Fire Station and the Lowell Area Historical Museum.

Through their entrepreneurship, community involvement and service, and representation in the state legislature, the Look family has served Lowell well in the past. With Helen’s gift to Lowell, the Look family name will continue to be remembered for generosity and service.

area churches

Riverside Fellowship of Seventh-day Adventists
"Praying and studying together"
Saturday service begins at 10:30 AM

10300 Vergennes St. SE, Lowell
616-987-0567
www.lowellriverside.com
Pastor Darrel le Roux

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
10305 Bluewater Highway
(Missouri Synod)
Halfway between Lowell & Saranac on M-21

Sunday Services - 10:30 am
www.gslc.church

Richard Boshoven, Pastor **897-8307**
All facilities are wheelchair accessible

CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF LOWELL
897-7060
Pastor Ryan Landt
1151 West Main Street, Lowell, MI
Website: calvarylowell.org

Morning Worship.....10:00 AM
Weekly Prayer Meeting - Mondays 7 PM
Barrier-Free

St. Mary Catholic Church
402 Amity Street • 616-897-9820
Website: www.stmarylowell.com
Weekend Masses: Sat 5 pm; Sun 10:30 am
Confession: Saturdays 3:30-4:30 pm
Prayer & Adoration: Wednesdays 9 am to 4:45 pm
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Thursdays 5:30 - 6:30 PM
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616-897-5906

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897-7168 • www.fbclowell.org
Pastor Jon Pickens • Lead Pastor
Pastor Andrew Bolkcom • Pastor of Discipleship

SUNDAY WORSHIP....9:30 AM (Nursery provided)
LIFE GROUPS 11:00 AM (Nursery-Adult)
Awana (K-5 during school year) **Wednesday, 6:15 PM**

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discover. grow. share
621 E. Main Street
897-5938
www.lowellumc.com • Barrier Free Entrance

WORSHIP
Traditional Service: 9 am
Contemporary Service: 10:30 am
Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

happy birthday

AUGUST 17
Brittany Essich, Jordan Harding.

AUGUST 18
Matthew D’Agostino, Sean Pawloski, Paul Reggie Owen, Paul R. Owen II, Matthew Milstead, Stan Milanowski.

AUGUST 19
Peggy Idema, Joseph Thaler, Lois Boonstra, Braydon Brown, Brian DeBold, Daryl Chamberlain, Charley VanKeulen, Betty Wierenga.

AUGUST 20
Mattie Dalziel,

B.J. Rittersdorf, Alexis Holloway, Andrea Bryant, Katelyn Kaczanowski.

AUGUST 21
Madelyn Pfaller, Charlene DeShane-Dalga, Joshua Hobrla, Tom Barnes, Ethan Shindorf, Katelyn Videto, Emma Yeiter.

AUGUST 22
Mike Blough, Shane Teelander.

AUGUST 23
Kacy Anderson, Rhea Bundy Anes, Stephen Rhodes, Brandon Taylor, Ron Kennedy, Jesse Carr, Katie Peterson, Chad Peterson.

Kent County Youth Fair enjoys success at new location

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

The new, spacious location on Cascade Road and beautiful weather have contributed to the success of this year’s Kent County Youth Fair (KCYF) ,which took place the first week of August. The attendance was approximately 35,000 visitors, over the course of the week, which was up a little from last year.

The auction results are still being calculated, with Add-a-Bids still coming in, but the primary numbers are showing a total over \$1.1 million. Add-a-Bids is a

animals came with their own processing dates and information. The money from these auctions is collected and then paid back directly to the youth that sold their project.

Some businesses and individuals have been supporting the youth, through the auction of their exhibits and animals, for more than 70 years. “We are so thankful to those supporters and buyers,” Zaske said. “Our new grounds, The Grand Agricultural Center of West Michigan, created a terrific venue for the fair.”

overflow parking. “We had a terrific turnout,” Zaske said. “I thank everyone’s patience as we put that plan into place. With this being a new facility, we have a few kinks to work-out; we are already developing new processes and procedures to help mitigate any future problems.”

Some comments from visitors, and exhibitors alike, were, “It is so much bigger than the old grounds and it feels like there is more space, more air movement.” KCYAA used approximately 80 acres, of 140 acres of The Grand for the fair this year.



program where anyone can donate additional funds for an exhibitor’s project. “This is due to the tremendous support that our youth receives from our West Michigan community,” said KCYAA fair president, Bill Zaske.

After the fair, a 2.0 online auction was held, Aug. 8 through Aug. 10, for exhibitors to sell additional fair project animals, that they were not allowed to sell in the live auction, due to selling limits. These

The Reading for Rides program was one of the most popular events, according to Zaske. On Wednesday afternoon of the fair, from 1 pm – 4 pm, if you turned in a form indicating that you read 10 books this summer, you received a free-ride bracelet at the carnival. More than 1,100 children registered and enjoyed free rides that afternoon.

At times, the main parking lot, which has the capacity for 700 cars, was full but there was a plan for

In comparison to the old fairgrounds in town, only 19 useable acres were used.

The Midway and Carnival area also doubled in size.

“The new buildings, with excellent ventilation and power, also received very positive reactions,” Zaske said. “We have room to grow at The Grand.”

KCYAA is already planning for next year. Some infrastructure things need to be worked on, such as adding wastewater treatment plant and permanent restrooms is one of the top priorities for the Board of Directors. Also, adding power and water to the campground, and planning a large four-season indoor exhibition building, tops the priority list. There are plans for improved track and events area, and a performing arts amphitheater.

“This is just the beginning; expect many more amenities and improvements in the years to come. Our goal is to become a major destination for not just our Kent County

Youth Fair, but for other Agricultural Associations and Exhibitions from across the Mid-West,” Zaske said. The campus masterplan encompasses seven buildings, all new utilities, parking and primitive campsites. The modern campground is in the planning stages and has not been constructed yet.

The six new buildings span over 76,000 square feet, which is similar to the amount of space under roof at the old grounds in 11 buildings. The biggest difference is in the overall volume, air flow and utilities in the buildings. The buildings have been designed as a modern facility with ample amounts of water, electric and space to meet the needs of today’s exhibitors. “We finally have facilities that match the

quality of our exhibitors,” Zaske said.

The Grand will eventually expand for year-round programming, including school field trips, and large-scale agricultural and equestrian shows ,as one of only three sites in Michigan.

The KCYAA is building on nearly 90 years of creating opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills, cultivate character traits, and nurture interest in the sciences through agricultural projects and experiences.

Currently, KCYAA is booking events starting this fall and spring. Go our website: www.kcyf.org or Facebook page for the latest events and happenings on the grounds.

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LOWELL
CHARTER
TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission will hold Public Hearings to consider the following requests from Stony Bluff LLC:

1. A request for Preliminary Plat approval for 20 lots which would constitute the fifth phase of the proposed 216 lot subdivision.

LOCATION & ADDRESS: The property is located at 1389 Kimber Drive SE which is the site of the former Qua-Ke-Zik Gun Club located west of Alden Nash Avenue on the south side of Foreman Street and north of and abutting the Whispering Hills subdivision.

The hearing will be held as follows:

WHEN:
TIME:
WHERE:

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023
7:00 P.M.
LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP HALL
2910 ALDEN NASH AVENUE SE
LOWELL, MI 49331

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

Greg Forde, Secretary
Lowell Charter Township Planning Commission

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Tell us about it today!

Call or email the Lowell Ledger Crew!

Phone: 616-897-9261

email: ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com



Clydesdale pays a visit to J&H Oil

Photos Courtesy of Bruce Doll

One of the Budweiser Clydesdales paid a visit to J&H Oil on Vergennes last Friday, August 11. The Lowell Fire Department was there as well with their new fire truck.





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Local parishioner travels to Lisbon for World Youth Day

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

Grace Welsh, who is a parishioner at St. Pat’s in Parnell and graduate of GRCC, had the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage in Avila, and then participate in World Youth Day in Lisbon, on Aug. 1 through Aug. 6.

The theme of WYD 2023 was Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World. Today,



Grace with pilgrim friends from Lebanon in Avila.

the world is embarking on a green transition. The main purpose of WYD, since its inception on Aug. 12, 2000, has been dedicated to educating society, engaging youth in politics and addressing worldwide challenges.

Welsh’s group stayed in a school in a town outside of Lisbon called Amadora, and traveled from place-to-place by walking, bus, train and metro. “As pilgrims

we only carried the bare minimum, we ate meals that were given to us, and we walked everywhere,” she said. “Because of this simple way of life, it was easier to appreciate the little things and to take in life a little slower. Our culture is desperate for simplicity; some know this truth and some do not.”

Welsh appreciated the simple things, such a conversation with a friend as they walked, a homemade meal from a host mom or finding an adoration chapel tucked away in one of the city’s many churches.

The mission of the pilgrimage was how youth is called out. In his final remarks about mission and the courageousness of the church, Bishop Barron said, “The saints don’t strike me as people who were really big on safety. Rather, find your mission, let Christ come to life in you, set your heart on fire, and then, you’ll know who you are. Do your mission, then you’ll find joy and transform the world. God bless you all.”

Welsh hopes to continue to receive fruit from the graces on the pilgrimage. “I want to spread a message of fortitude and love,” she said. “I pray that as pilgrims, we can go forth as the men



Making new friends in Portugal.

and women God creates us to be, to love in his image and likeness, to build-up the church in simplicity and truth, to proclaim the joy of the Gospel through our simple day-to-day lives.”

The program consisted of mass, liturgy of the hours, charismatic prayer, talks, catechesis, fellowship, praise and worship, visiting Marion apparition sites Lourdes and Fatima, hiking and meeting the world-wide church.

For Welsh, who only

speaks English, the trip was full of new beautiful languages. The group Welsch traveled with was international. The private masses were said in French, but she also learned bits of Portuguese, Arabic and Spanish from her pilgrim friends. “It was such a beautiful experience to hear songs of praise to our Father in a language different than my own, as well as learning new words describing life in other languages that we do not have words for in

English,” she said.

The first reason why Welsh decided to participate was to learn and grow with the community she would be on pilgrimage with. She was invited to join the pilgrimage by The Community of the Beatitudes. Welsch said she is still processing all the messages from the pilgrimage. What stuck with her were Pope Francis’ words, “We must come to the Lord as we are not as we want to be.”

PFCU Employees donate jean days funds to Alpha Care Center

Alpha Care Center of Lowell is a non-profit organization committed to making a difference in the lives of men, women, and children in our community. Alpha Care Center offers compassionate care and assistance to individuals facing pregnancies.

PFCU employees are given the option to wear jeans and tennis shoes throughout the year for a minimum donation, automatically deducted from their paycheck. The monies collected accumulate, and each quarter, the employees choose a charity to donate to. In the second quarter of 2023, PFCU employees voted and Alpha Care Center of Lowell was chosen.

Recognizing the support that Alpha Care Center has provided to the community they serve, PFCU employees are proud to have made a financial contribution to support the center.



About PFCU: A full-service financial institution with 13 locations from Flint to Caledonia, over 54,000 members and more than 800 million in assets. As a not-for-profit cooperative,

PFCU is owned and governed by its members. Anyone who lives, works, worships, or attends school in the state of Michigan can join PFCU. To find out more visit www.pfcu4me.com.



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Same as it ever was

By Bill Lee

(Kind of)

Put the Seat Down Ya Filthy Animal!

“Oh Daddy, you didn’t put the seat down again!” said my four-year old daughter as she went in the bathroom. “There are more girls than boys in this house, right mom?”

“Right,” she answered. She glared over at me, eyebrows raised and giving a slight nod.

A look can say so much. The matter has gotten so bad that my wife and daughter had to make a sign for me as a reminder of my transgressions. Family and friends have come over and asked, “What is going on in there?” To answer, my wife just looks my way.

Apparently, it has become a “problem.” Yes, we have a toilet seat controversy in our house, or as Shakespeare would say, “To put up or not to put up... that is the question.”

I don’t know why I can’t just naturally put it down. Is it laziness? Apathy? Am I making a social or political statement? Somehow, I am the only man in the world who won’t put the seat down. I am incorrigible, I guess. I’m like a bucking bronco who won’t get broke.

“Bill, she could fall in and get hurt you know.”

“I know, I know.”

“Then why don’t you just put the seat down?”

“I’ll try in the future.”

“No, you won’t”

“Hmmm.”

The toilet seat, up or down, debate has been ongoing, and part of my stubbornness involves the argument of “why can’t they put the seat up after they are done, and then I’ll put it down for them.” This argument goes nowhere. My wife will not even entertain

the idea. “Bill, how would you like to fall into the toilet?” I ponder that thought for a bit, and guess, I wouldn’t like it.

I blame my indifference on many things. The main one being I am a man who had many boys around him. My mother had three brothers and no sisters in her family. My mother then went onto have four boys of her own, no girls, me being the oldest, and then my brother David and I each had two boys each in our families. My daughter came much later. Simply put, I never had to put the seat down (okay maybe for my wife) until over a year ago when my daughter started using the potty (such a weird word!).

When I was growing up, we had five males and one mother in the house and only one toilet. One toilet! Presently, my house has three! And for only three people. How did we do it growing up? I had to know, so I gave my mother a call. I told her about this article and asked permission to quote her. She is 79 years old. She will be the first to

tell you that embarrassment is the last thing she thinks about. I talked to her on the phone last week.

“Mom, I’m writing about putting the toilet seat down and why I have a hard time doing it at home. I’m blaming my upbringing, mostly, because there were five males and you in the house and only one toilet. Do you remember that being a problem?”

She thought for a moment. “Honestly, it was kind of a pain, but I guess I was so used to it, and yelling ‘put the toilet seat down!’ every time didn’t really work,” said my mom. “I will say it was a pain when I sat down in the water, but that didn’t happen too often. I don’t know, maybe I got used to it. But then again it wasn’t fun, but I guess there were so many other things happening.”

There you have it. Back to the present condition. I certainly don’t want the women in my life falling in the bowl and possibly in the toilet water. Just writing this piece brings a certain



importance to the whole toilet seat, up or down, debate. With that said, just the other day I forgot again and my daughter was not happy. “Oh my gosh Daddy. If you don’t put the seat down again, I am going to make signs all over the house.”

“Sorry,” I muttered. It’s not easy being chastised by a four-year old. I told her I would do better. She didn’t believe me, but I vow to do better! As they say, the first step is recognizing that you have a problem. Now onto the second step!

outdoors

Let's take a walk

Dave Stegehuis

There are many complicated and expensive exercise devices and diet programs advertised across the media. Probably, most of these plans will be effective for addressing health issues if they are strictly followed. A more economical and simple way to achieve the same goals is to eat a balanced diet and take a walk.

There is plenty of research to support the fact that a proper diet and exercise are major factors in maintaining good health. The challenge is to incorporate these habits into one’s lifestyle on a permanent basis. Walking

may be the best way to meet most exercise requirements for those who are able within personal medical and physical limitations.

Walking can be done on a flexible schedule, so “I don’t have time” may not be a good excuse to avoid participating. Walking can be done almost anywhere, whether at home or traveling. Walking doesn’t have to cost anything. The opportunity to walk is available to most of us.

There are a number of other advantages to walking besides the obvious health issues. Hiking trails are strung-out all over our state and in places you may visit. Many of the trails and walkways pass through quiet natural areas, where one can relax and appreciate the foliage and wildlife. Experiencing fresh air and exercise in a natural setting can calm the mind and be a welcome

break from a hectic world.

Walking with a partner is an opportunity to communicate in a neutral environment and just enjoy the company or resolve mutual concerns. There is also the possibility of meeting new people on the trail or sidewalk. Walking the dog is a common task of pet owners around the world. Walking with a partner or a dog makes it easier to stick with a consistent schedule.

An internet search for reliable medical sources, or consulting with a medical professional, will provide recommendations for how much to walk, considering one’s health status and age.

It would seem that more people would be walking for exercise, given the great opportunity we have in our state. Most of the people I see walking around are looking for fudge shops. I know, because I do it.

CONNECT WITH US

Here’s how to connect with the lowell ledger

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We Look Forward To Hearing From You!



Live the Life You Want

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

Mental health myths

We have come a long way since the days of believing mental health issues were possession by an evil spirit or institutionalizing individuals and performing procedures such as lobotomies. Yet, even today we still have stigmas about mental health (MH) and mental illness (MI). So, I want to address some myths and hopefully clarify some of these beliefs.

Breaking down the myths

Myth: MH problems are not common, so they won’t affect me.

Millions of people in the U.S. are affected by

mental illness annually. The latest Mental Health America Study conducted this year shows that:

- 21 percent of adults are experiencing at least one MI. That’s roughly 50 million people.
- 55 percent of adults with a MI have not received any treatment.
- 5.44 percent of adults experience a severe MI.
- Over 12.1 million adults (4.8 percent) have reported serious thoughts of suicide.
- Around 8.4 million people provide care to an adult with a mental or emotional health issue.

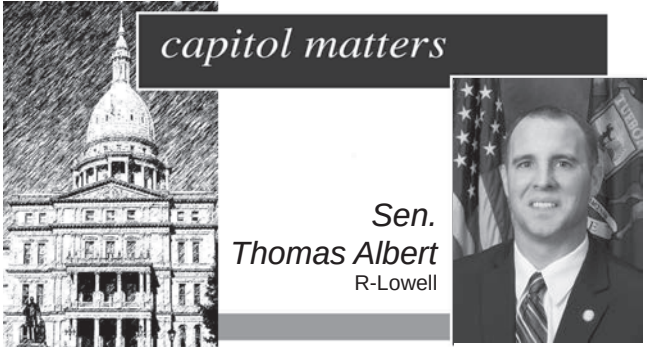
Some additional statistics from NAMI and/or

NIMH in 2021 shows:

- 7.6 percent of U.S. adults experienced both a substance use disorder and MI (19.4 million people).
- 1 in 6 US youth, aged 6-17, experience a mental health disorder each year.
- 50 percent of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75 percent by age 24.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among those age 10-14 years.
- MI is higher among females (27.2 percent) than males (18.1 percent).
- MI was the highest in those identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual at about 50.2 percent.

The most common mental health diagnoses in the US are anxiety and mood disorders (depression, bipolar...) and most people know someone that has had MH issues.

Live the Life continued page 12



The meaning of conservatism

(Note: This is the first of a four-part series)

When I first entered the field, headed toward public office, I was asked, “What does conservatism mean to you?” I must admit, I did not have a solid answer. To be fair, it is not an easy question. Unlike progressivism, which has very rigid viewpoints, the philosophy of conservatism is more difficult to pin down.

After seven years in public office, I will attempt to revisit the question of conservatism and provide a clearer answer. I will begin by dispelling the idea that conservatism is tied to party politics. While many conservatives identify as Republicans, the political philosophy and party are not synonymous. Even in recent history, it was common for conservative Democrats to win elected office.

Arguably, the best definition of conservatism is from H. Stuart Hughes, who said, “conservatism is the negation of ideology.” In a sense, this means a conservative will not

accept a given political or theoretical assertion, while ignoring contrary or inconvenient information. The conservative will look at all of the facts and weigh the most prudent strategy, for the good of both the individual and society.

There is no checklist for conservatives to run through ,when making these determinations. However, in the latter half of the last century, a great Michigan intellectual thinker, Russell Kirk, gave us 10 principles in which conservatives chiefly align. His insights had a massive influence on a conservative awakening, which culminated with the Reagan Realignment of the 1980s. Since that time, conservatism has been pulled in many ways, and it is worthwhile to reexamine the principles laid out by Kirk so we can all rediscover the essence of true conservatism.

The first principle of conservative thought is God’s relation to human beings. Before diving too deep into this principle, it is critical to point out that there is no single denomination or theology that one must adhere to. Many great conservatives of the past have varied greatly with their views on God. There were great differences among presidents Washington, Lincoln and Reagan, but they were all similar in the respect that they believed in a divine creator who established a certain moral law within our nature.

Those with a conservative outlook on humanity do not believe it is good, or even possible, to alter human nature. One would sooner teach a cat to bark than change the moral laws which are our foundation. To a conservative, murder and theft are morally wrong because they violate the

order established by God, not due to a majority position of society.

In many ways the ideas of the French Revolution still echo in western civilization today. At that time, those revolutionaries contended the human race was capable of establishing a new moral order. They first set about tearing down institutions which existed in their country and aimed to rebuild society on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. While noble principles indeed, in practice, the defects of manmade moralities were laid bare at the guillotine.

In response to these revolutionaries, an 18th Century English parliamentarian, Edmund Burke, responded with the following: “By this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or fashions... men would become little better than the flies of a summer.”

Conservatives believe there to be wisdom in adhering to a higher power, rather than often mistaken human judgements. They believe in the wisdom of a divine ‘potter’ who is the molder of human clay. For this reason, conservatives are wary of the morally relativistic dogmas of the modern progressive.

I will examine the remaining nine of Russell Kirk’s 10 principles of conservatism in three following editorials. Regardless of your political persuasion, I hope you have found it worthwhile to join, as I attempt to answer the question “What does conservatism mean to you?”

State Sen. Thomas Albert represents the 18th District, which includes Barry County and portions of Allegan, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, Kent, and Ionia counties.

Gov. Whitmer declares August as Breastfeeding Month

Michigan is committed to encouraging a strong foundation for life by supporting breastfeeding/chestfeeding parents for the first year of their child’s life and beyond. As part of this effort, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is declaring August 2023 as Breastfeeding Month.

“Breastfeeding can protect babies against allergies, sickness and diseases like diabetes and certain cancers,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, MDHHS chief medical executive. “Michigan is committed to helping breastfeeding parents reach their goals through community-based support such as doulas and WIC peer counselors to help diversify lactation support and increase breastfeeding rates in local communities across the state.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding up to 2 years old. Human milk feeding results in improved health for infants, children and parents, including preventing breast and ovarian cancers, serious colds and ear and throat infections, gastrointestinal tract infections, necrotizing enterocolitis, sudden infant death syndrome, asthma, atopic dermatitis, and eczema, celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes and leukemia – many conditions which excessively impact black, brown and indigenous people.

Although 88.4 percent of Michigan families start breastfeeding, the difference between white non-hispanic initiation (98.8 percent) and black, non-hispanics initiation (76.2 percent) highlights the barriers that impact families of color. (PRAMS 2021). Some of those barriers include lack of access to supportive health care and child care providers, and lack of paid work-leave that leads to early weaning. Additionally, there are fewer lactation professionals from communities of color.

The State of Michigan Women, Infants and Children program is celebrating National Breastfeeding Month with the theme “Into Every Drop.” WIC supports breastfeeding in the following ways:

Free, unlimited access to lactation consultants and breastfeeding peer counselors.

Training to all WIC staff to support prenatal and breastfeeding families.

Breastfeeding clients get more WIC foods than non-breastfeeding clients, including canned fish,



and are able to stay on the program longer.

At 6 months, breastfed babies receive infant meats and more fruits and vegetables.

Many WIC clinics offer telehealth appointments. WIC offers a breastfeeding warmline available seven days a week, from 8 am to 8 pm at 833-MIWICBF (833-649-4223).

For more information, visit the Michigan Breastfeeding Network.

Social Security celebrates the Americans with Disabilities Act

By Hillary Hatch, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

This year, we celebrate 33 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its importance to many beneficiaries. We’re committed to the principles and spirit of the ADA, and the way it improves the lives of millions. Matt’s story is an example of how the ADA and our Ticket to Work (Ticket) Program can help beneficiaries achieve their career goals.

As a job seeker who is deaf and needs accommodations, Matt was reluctant to tell prospective employers about his disability. He worried that employers would not hire him if they knew about his disability.

That’s when Matt connected with our Ticket Program. This program supports career development for people ages 18 to 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and want to work. Through this free and voluntary program, approved service providers offer supports and services as participants move toward financial independence through work.

Matt learned how his employment might affect his benefits. He also learned that our Medicare-related work incentive allows him to pursue a career without worrying about health care coverage.

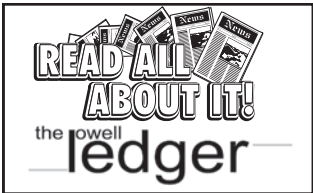
If Matt’s disability interfered with work, he could return to receiving benefits without having to file a new application through the expedited reinstatement process.

Matt now works full-time as a human resource analyst. Thanks to the ADA, he received accommodations for the interview process and on the job. He also found that the Ticket Program helped him find a path to a better future. You can learn more about the Ticket Program at www.choosework.ssa.gov.

Our online booklet, Your Ticket to Work: What You Need to Know to Keep it Working for You found at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10062.pdf, provides detailed information about the program.

You can learn more about Matt’s story at www.choosework.ssa.gov/library/matt-success-story.

Please share these resources with your loved ones.



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Closed Fri., Sat. & Sun.

classifieds

for sale

USED TIRES - Call with size, 616-292-7649/616-295-8820. Rob's Auto - thanks.^{TFN}

NEWSPAPER END ROLLS AVAILABLE AT THE BUYERS GUIDE - Many uses, table cover, art projects, packaging, etc. Usually \$6 - \$9 each. Stop by & grab one today! 105 N. Broadway.

TO COLLECTORS/INTERESTS - Vintage, 1980's, variety of Barbie items, as well as dolls. All gently used, many in original box: ie, two silver Corvettes [one w/remote control], 'Sweet Roses' Accents LR, 3-pc. wall unit, bathroom set, salon, chair lounge & end table, Campin'-out set, and [with-out box] a dream-glow bed and LR sofa bed with chair/lounger, two Ken and six Barbie dolls; plus, suitcase of clothes, hand-knitted wardrobe and two Ken outfits in box, unopened, reasonable prices. Call 616-490-0875 with questions.

for rent

WE DO BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL FAIR HOUSING LAW - Equal Housing Opportunity. It is illegal to discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin.. Anyone who feels he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint of housing discrimination: 1-800-669-9777 (toll free) 1-800-927-9275 (TTY).

PRICELESS STORAGE - Indoor/out-door. 2 loctions in Lowell. Rent online at www.mypricelessstorage.com or call 616-558-2900.^{TFN}

HALL FOR RENT - Lowell Veteran's Center, 3100 Alden Nash. Newly remodeled, smoke-free, private, great location & great rate! www.VFW8303.org. Jan., Feb, March & April Veterans Potluck at 2 pm on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Call John at 299-0486 or 897-8303.^{TFN EOW}

WHISTLE STOP MINI STORAGE - 12661 Vergennes, N. of Lowell. 5x10; 10x10; 10x20; 10x30; 12x40. Fenced lighted, key code entry. Call for more information, 897-8872.

wanted

MILITARY COLLECTOR LOOKING FOR - Military collectibles. Call 517-930-3471.

CASH FOR VINTAGE CLOTHES- 1920s- 1990s. T-shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, jeans, military dresses. Contact Matt, 312-505-8450, email: mdagost22@gmail.com

misc.

The bathroom of your dreams for as little as \$149/month! BCI Bath & Shower. Many options available. Quality materials & professional installation. Senior & Military Discounts Available. Limited Time Offer - FREE virtual in-home consultation now and SAVE 15%! Call Today! 1-877-957-1264

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Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-866-718-3124

sales

COMMUNITY BARN SALE - Fri-Sun, Aug 25th-27th, 2023. 9 am-5 pm. 9480 Prairie Dr SE, Alto. 16 ft. Donahue Gooseneck stock trailer, horse tack, tools, Paslode framing nailer, lawn mower, snow blower, hedge trimmer, ladder, garden/lawn items, yard cart, various yard equipment, tires, poly shelves, post hole digger, feed bunk, water tank, furniture, golf clubs, dog crate, etc.

GARAGE SALE - August 17 thru 19, 9 am - 5 pm. Tons of furniture & antique furniture, craft supplies & fabric, variety of bikes. First sale in 15 years. Too many things to list! 6117 Eillison Rd., Belding.

help wanted

TAKING APPLICATIONS for driving and walking route carriers to deliver the Buyers Guide on week-ends. Must be dependable! Work less than 1 day a week! Very flexible hours. Get paid weekly, pickup papers at Buyers Guide office. Apply in person, 105 N. Broadway, Lowell.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER WANTED - The Lowell Ledger is looking for a news/feature reporter with strong writing skills and can meet a deadline. This is a stringer position. Please send writing samples and brief resume to: The Lowell Ledger, PO Box 128, Lowell, MI 49331 or email: ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com

services

WHEN IN AN ACCIDENT - CHOOSE WHO TOWS YOUR VEHICLE-Request J&K Roadwide Service, 616-690-0983. Towing, tire change, jump starts, fuel delivery.

NEED A DUMPSTER? - Dumpster rental, 10-20 yards. Mention this ad for \$10 to \$20 off. Call or text Doug for estimates at 616-295-6640.^{TFN}

DRIVER'S LICENSE SUSPENDED OR REVOKED? - Don't get sucked into \$100-\$300 evaluation fees...I NEVER charge for your record evaluation & consultation! Driver's license RESTORATION: Flat fees only, no hourly billing. FREE consultation & evaluation of your case. Have a question? Call Attorney Martin Mead (616) 235-0330.

WORK WANTED - Double D's tree service Plus 70' & 40' bucket trucks. Tree trimming and removal, brush chipping, Stump grinding. Free estimates and Insured. Call Dave Delinsky 616-212-3008. ^{TFN}

services

SCANNING SERVICE - Do you need something scanned & emailed? The Buyers Guide now offers this service! Price is \$1 for the first sheet & 50¢ for each additional sheet. Stop by 105 N. Broadway, Mon. - Thurs., 8 - 4 p.m. Ph. 897-9555 with any questions

CARPENTER WANTS JOBS, JOBS, JOBS- New homes, remodeling, additions, flooring, siding, decks, kitchens, baths, plans drawn. Licensed since 1967. References. Mel Cooke, 676-9239. No Sunday calls please.

FREEAD! - Place & pay for a classified ad in the Buyers Guide & Lowell Ledger for 3 weeks & receive the 4th week FREE! You must mention the special in order to receive this offer. Valid only with new classified ads, and must be paid for when ad is placed. Call 897-9555, fax 897-4809 or email to: classifieds@lowellbuyersguide.com, Lowell. Ph. 897-9261.

coming events

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

TOPS (TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY) WEEKLY MEETINGS - Tuesdays, 6:30 pm at Schneider Manor Community Room, 725 Bowes Rd., Lowell. Cost \$37 per year and \$5 per month...start losing weight TODAY

AL-NON IN PERSON MEETINGS - are held at the FROM Building, 11535 Fulton E. on Fridays at 10 am in the Lowell Serenity Club Room and Tuesdays at 7 pm in Room 21. Enter through the southeast parking lot door. Al-Anon principles can help those affected by someone's problem drinking. There are no dues or fees. For more info call 616-987-6587.

ATTN LOWELL WIDOWS - We are meeting at various places for lunch or dinner most Mondays. All are welcome. Questions on location, call Elaine 616-856-8022 for more information.

AUXILIARY BINGO - Every Tuesday, 1-5 pm. Doors open at noon. Public welcome! Food & beverages available. Hard cards & chips format. 25¢ per card per game. No up front buy in required. Alto American Legion Post 528. License A22680.

QUEEN OF HEARTS RAFFLE - Every Wednesday at 7 pm through Sept. 27. Ticket price \$1 each. Need not be present to win. Public welcome. Purchase tickets at Alto American Legion. Jackpot prize card Queen of Hearts. 50% of ticket sales added to jackpot prize each week. Alto American Legion #528. Raffle license C30929.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

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

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



The Restless Viking

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

~ key hole bar and grill

by Martha Hayden

Following our helicopter flight over The Straits of Mackinac, we settled into seats at one of our favorite watering holes, The Key Hole Bar and Grill. Energy buzzed as the line of customers grew outside. Aaron hustled out from behind the bar to take our drink orders. He was everywhere at once.

States of Seafood” competition in 2018. The Key Hole Bar and Grill was chosen to represent Michigan!

Sharon Zulski, who has owned her restaurant for 42 years, lives in Mackinaw City. Zulski and her family have worked hard to care for their employees during the global pandemic.



This trend grew as patrons brought keys to add to the décor.

The Trap Door

A most curious sight is the trap door in the floor behind the bar. I asked if I could take this picture and stepped into the ‘employees only’ area. Aaron smiled, “Would you like me to open it for you?”

“Oh, this is so cool! Thank you!” my mouth gaped in awe, as did the bar patrons, when they noticed

Key Hole Bar and Grill Facebook page. He recently shared fascinating history of the establishment. Since the opening of this building in 1893, it has always been a saloon, tavern, pub and bar going by several names. Aaron shared that this

Bar, Poor Richard’s and finally, in 1971, The Key Hole Bar. In 1986, “and Grill” was added to the title, as the bar expanded with a full kitchen.

Connecting with Aaron, on such a bustling day, was a special treat! This time

So if you’re in Northern Michigan, I encourage you to make The Keyhole Bar and Grill a destination on your journey!



Motel keys dangle from the perimeter of the bar.



Built in 1893, this structure has housed a tavern or bar since it’s opening. Trip Advisor has rated The Key Hole Bar and Grill as “Excellent!”, with a whopping 91% approval.

Humble Fame

In 2014, The Keyhole Bar & Grill won the people’s choice award for the Best Neighborhood Bar in Northern Michigan. The vast region competing was ALL of northern Michigan, including the entire Upper Peninsula! The Keyhole Bar and Grill is one of the few restaurants in the northern counties that stays open during the winter months.

In addition, The Food Network highlighted the best seafood restaurant from each state in their “50

The eatery has adjusted hours and added outdoor seating. “I worry about our community.” Zulski had said in a 2020 interview.

As we watched the line of customers continue to grow outside during our July 2022 visit, it gave proof of a strong comeback.

Keys Are Everywhere!

Over 25,000 keys add to the ambiance of the establishment. The legend shared is that when the bar was named Poor Richards, the wife of the owner started adding keys as decorations.



Keys watch customers from their resin resting place on the table top.



1905 Ryan’s Saloon

the opened floor. The stairway leads to storage areas. An employee has to knock to have the door opened. It was a rare sight to see the opened storage hatch.

Aaron

Aaron, the dedicated worker pictured above, “pretty much grew up” in Key Hole Bar and Grill’s owner’s home. “Sharon Zulski has owned it for nearly 42 years. Her and her children operate the business. I’m not related, even though I have considered them family my entire life.” When I had messaged Key Hole Bar and Grill’s Facebook page with a few clarifying questions, Aaron had answered my inquiry right away! “I have worked there (Key Hole Bar and Grill) for 16 years.” He wrote.

The History

Aaron is the administrator of The

bar, holding the gentlemen’s lean, later became Mama Mia’s Pizza counter. Unfortunately, it was lost in a 2005 fire. Aaron reported the succession of pub names as Ryan’s Saloon, Perry’s Place, Ty-Jo Bar, Miller’s

honored establishment continues to serve the community and customers from afar. There was even a delivery made to the White Shoal Crib Lighthouse, located five miles offshore in Lake Michigan.

Resources:
Aaron, 323 East Central Avenue, Mackinaw City, Michigan 49701 (231) 436-7911
Key Hole Bar and Grill Facebook Page
Detroit Free Press article
MLive article
Mackinaw Chamber of Commerce Website
Trip Advisor



Aaron, fourth generation, opened the trap door.

FUN PAGE

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

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

Guess Who?

I am a singer born in Arizona on August 15, 1989. My brothers and I made appearances on hit TV shows like “Hannah Montana” before becoming known as a pop music group. I was the lead singer, but left the group to be a solo artist.

Answer: Joe Jonas

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

COUNTY FAIR WORD SEARCH

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

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

- Puzzle solutions on page 13
- COUNTY FAIR WORD SEARCH
- ADMISSION
AMUSEMENT
ANNUAL
BAND
- BOOTH CARNIVAL
CORN DOG
COTTON CANDY
ENJOYMENT
ENTERTAINMENT
FAIR
- FAMILY FERRIS WHEEL
FIELD
FIREWORKS
FUNNEL CAKE
GAMES
LEMONADE
- LIVESTOCK LOCAL
MUSIC
PARKING
RAFFLE
VISITORS

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to fairs.

S E D I R

--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Rides

- CLUES ACROSS
1. Civil rights organization
5. Calendar month (abbr.)
8. Monetary unit of Burma
11. Twyla __, US dancer
13. Everything included
14. “Antman” actor Rudd
15. Italian city
16. Nowhere to be found
17. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
18. Turkish officer
20. Perform on stage
21. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
22. Canadian coastal provinces
25. Furnishes anew
30. Edible mollusk
31. No seats available
32. Garden figurine
33. Two-legged support
38. Rest here please (abbr.)
41. In a silly way
43. One from the Golden State
45. Photographers
48. Native religionn in parts of China
49. Dickens character
50. Brodway actress Daisy
55. Ancient Greek sophist
56. Undivided
57. Daniel __, French composer
59. Nocturnal S. American rodent
60. Rusty
61. Jewish spiritual leader
62. Patti Hearst’s captors
63. Popular global holiday (abbr.)
64. Tall, slender plant
- CLUES DOWN
1. Defunct US energy company
2. Fellow
3. It’s issued from volcanoes
4. Type of acid
5. Winged nut
6. Arouses
7. Things are served on it
8. San Diego ballplayer
9. Currency and a Chinese dynasty
10. __ mater, one’s school
12. Exclamation that denotes disgust
14. Hairstyle
19. Supreme ancient Egyptian god
23. They __
24. Connecting line on a map
25. Mock
26. One point north of due east
27. Chinese philosophical principle
28. Type of tree
29. Persuade to do something
34. A place for travelers to rest
35. National Gallery of Art designer
36. Panamaniaan province
37. Field force unit (abbr.)
39. Whalers’ tool
40. Simply
41. Nigerian City
42. Not one
44. Obstruct
45. Political plot
46. Manila hemp plant
47. Dough made from corn flour
48. Fishes by letting the bob fly
51. Swiss river
52. Plant that makes gum
53. A French abbot
54. One point east of northeast
58. Get free of

Michigan eyes miles-traveled charge for roads as EVs cut into fuel tax



Michigan officials are exploring whether to replace gas taxes with “usage charges” as the auto industry’s shift to electric vehicles is expected to cut into tax revenues for road repairs.

With fuel taxes projected to decline by hundreds of millions of dollars in coming years, the \$82 billion budget Gov. Gretchen Whitmer resigned last week supports ongoing efforts to explore one possible alternative: charging motorists for each mile driven, rather than each gallon of gas consumed.

Michigan plans to spend more than \$5 million — including \$2.6 million from a federal grant authorized in the budget — to survey 20,000 Michiganders this fall and study the potential impact of a road usage charge system.

The budget also directs MDOT to apply for federal grant funding for a national “motor vehicle per-mile user fee pilot program” created through the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill signed by President Joe Biden in late 2021.

If awarded the grant, Michigan must use it “to establish a pilot program to determine the feasibility of road usage charges as a replacement for motor fuel taxes as a basis for transportation funding,” according to the new state law.

The budget directives come as Michigan prepares its own research report on road usage charge programs in other states like Oregon, Utah and Virginia, which have already implemented voluntary mileage-based pilot programs.

Lawmakers requested that research as a follow-up to a toll road study the department released earlier this year, said Jeff Cranson, a spokesperson for the transportation department. It’s due by the end of September.

The ramped-up research timeline comes as the Democratic governor and new Democratic majorities in the Michigan Legislature continue to plot the future of road funding in the state.

Upon winning re-election last fall, Whitmer told Bridge Michigan she would not propose another fuel tax increase after lawmakers in 2019 failed to support her plan for a 45-cent hike that would have made Michigan’s gas tax the nation’s highest.

Michigan’s gas tax is now 28.6 cents a gallon, which combined with a 6 percent sales tax on fuel that does not fund roads, means state motorists pay the sixth-highest rate in the nation.

Instead, Whitmer told Bridge in December that she wanted to convene a broad group to find a bipartisan approach to road funding “that recognizes the historic transition that’s happening in the auto industry.”

That call took shape in June when Whitmer created a population growth council tasked with making Michigan more alluring to new residents, in part by figuring out a long-term plan to upgrade and modernize transportation and water infrastructure.

MDOT’s pending road usage charge survey predated the governor’s recent push and legislative interest in the similar concept of toll roads, said Jean Ruestman, administrator of MDOT’s Office of Passenger Transportation.



Michigan is spending \$5 million this year to survey Michiganders’ opinions about road usage charges and study the potential impacts of such a funding system. (Shutterstock)

“Hopefully, what we do can help inform that bigger discussion that the department and the Legislature has to have about how we make up for the lost revenue, because we’re using a source right now that we know is not sustainable,” Ruestman told Bridge Michigan.

Chairs of the Michigan House and Senate transportation committees did not immediately respond to requests for comment from Bridge.

Earlier this year, legislators hosted hearings on another potential revenue option: toll roads, a concept Whitmer has also said she would consider.

Michigan now generates about \$1.5 billion in annual fuel tax revenue to help fund road repairs. But because of electric vehicle adoption, experts

project the state could lose a third of that money, \$500 million, per year by 2030.

In a project narrative prepared for the federal government, MDOT said it “believes that (road usage charges offer) public entities a powerful tool to a) efficiently raise revenue, b) holistically manage roadway performance and reduce congestion, and c)

placing GPS data collection devices in residents’ vehicles.

States that have begun pilot programs have also provided non-GPS options, including odometer image capture systems that allow users to upload cellphone pictures in a manner akin to a mobile check deposit.

Oregon lets drivers decide who to share their

transit networks in Grand Rapids and metro Detroit to assess whether road user charges could reduce congestion and carbon emissions by “educating participants about the environmental impact of their transportation choices and offering viable alternatives,” according to the project narrative.

Working with technology subcontractor VIA Technologies of California, MDOT will provide some residents with “a mobility wallet,” giving them a certain amount of money for transportation along with information about their potential spending choices, including gas for a single-passenger car or a local bus ride.

The goal is to see whether understanding a mileage-based road usage charge will “impact people’s choices,” including whether they’d be more likely to use public transit if they understand the actual cost, said Ruestman.

Public transit is an important part of the discussion because most of the state funding for local systems also comes from fuel taxes, she said.

“It makes it even more complex to try and figure out a fair and reasonable funding source for public transit because by the very nature of us trying to get people on transit — encouraging them not to necessarily own their own car or to drive their own car less — it actually reduces our income.”

Alternatives sought as revenues from gas taxes are expected to decline as automakers build more electric cars

increase the environmental sustainability of our transportation system.”

As part of the survey, the state hopes to learn how many residents would be “willing to share GPS data with a third party” to compute a miles-driven tax.

But the state does not want to give the impression GPS tracking devices are a foregone conclusion, Ruestman said.

“We don’t want people to come away somehow thinking, ‘Oh, the state’s planning on putting a chip in all of our cars.’ They’re going to track every mile.’ We want to make it clear that this is just to understand how you would feel,” she said. “How would you feel about self-reporting the number of miles you travel?”

Supporters acknowledge that the push for a mileage-based tax system is complicated by privacy concerns about

mileage data with: The government, or two private vendors that contract with the state to administer the program and tax payments.

Road usage charges have become popular with libertarian and free-market groups like The Reason Foundation and Mackinac Center for Public Policy, which last year recommended Michigan begin the transition toward a mileage-based tax system on interstates and freeways only.

Doing so would allow the state to overcome privacy concerns by using in-car transponders like the EZ Pass toll system already used in other states and “proven as acceptable to millions and millions of people,” Bob Poole of the Reason Foundation told Bridge earlier this year.

In a second phase slated for early next year, MDOT plans to work with The Rapid and SMART public

