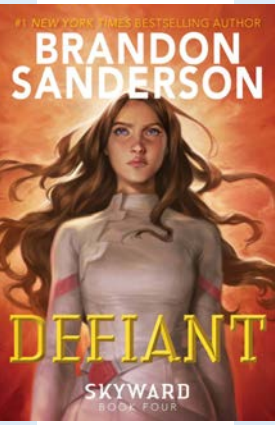




page 6

Book Review



page 4

Restless Viking



page 14

Lowell Area Schools Sports



pages 10 & 11

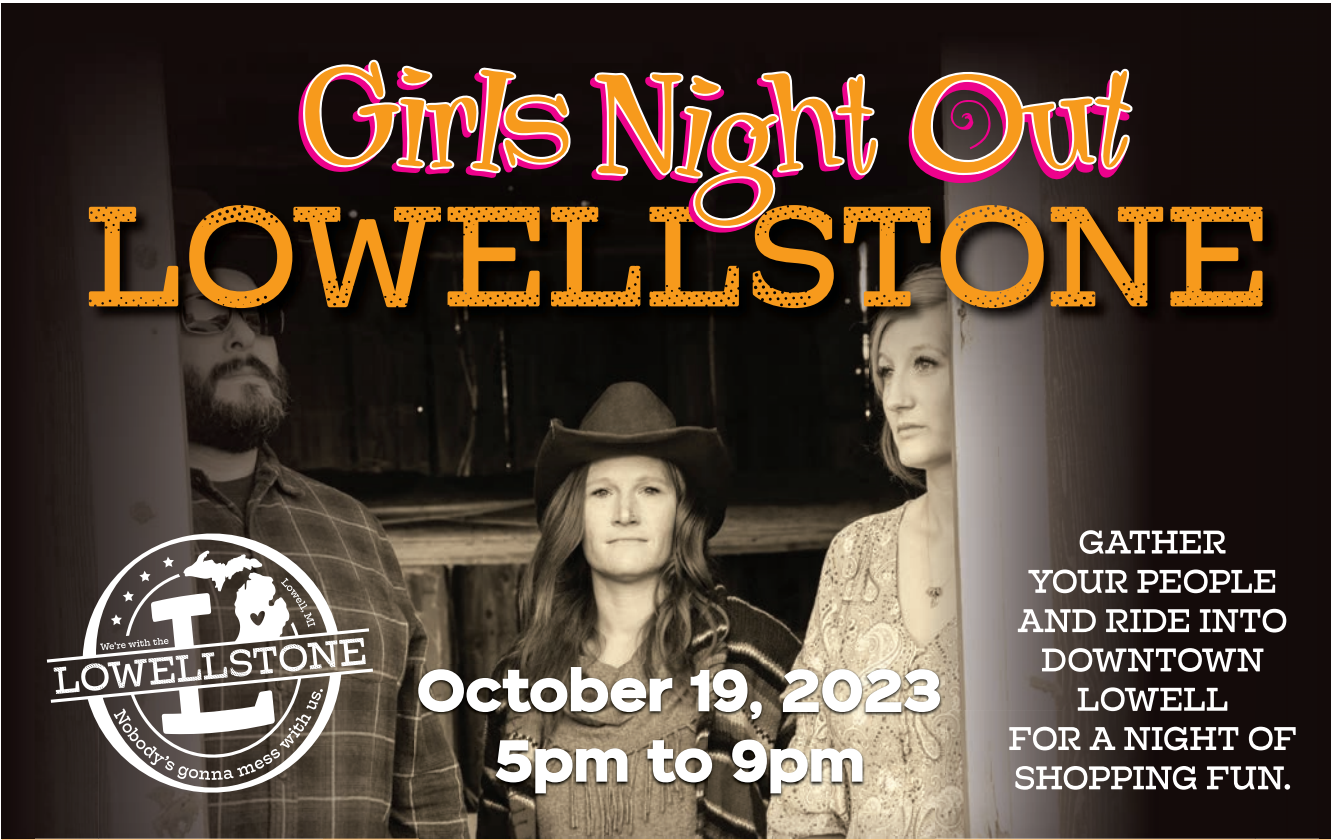
Girls’ Night Out next Thursday, 5 - 9 pm

Calling all “Beths”! Dust off your western wear and stroll the streets of Lowell during our Yellowstone-themed Girls’ Night Out event.

There are over 30 businesses participating in Girls Night Out, which will have special treats and some good ol’ fashion savings for those who come in. Get your postcard signed by 15 merchants for a chance to win one of four shopping bags filled with local goodies.

Ride on into Lowell for a super fun night out!

For more information on Girls Night Out visit: www.girlsnightoutlowell.org



Girls Night Out
LOWELLSTONE

October 19, 2023
5pm to 9pm

GATHER YOUR PEOPLE AND RIDE INTO DOWNTOWN LOWELL FOR A NIGHT OF SHOPPING FUN.

LowellArts announces \$43,500 in MACC Minigrants

Through the Michigan Arts & Culture Council (MACC) Minigrant Program, LowellArts granted awards of \$34,500 for arts projects to sixteen local arts, and cultural organizations and \$9,000 for professional and organizational development to six organizations and five artists.

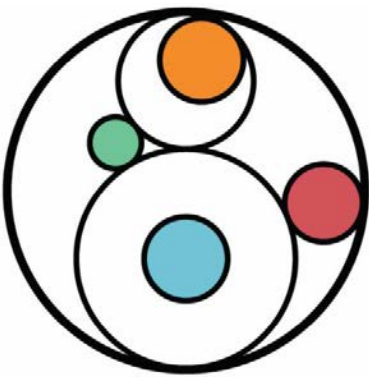
LowellArts serves as one of the regional regranting agencies for the MACC, for the counties of Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mecosta, Montcalm, Newaygo and Osceola.

developed, high-quality arts and cultural projects, which are special opportunities to address local arts and cultural needs and increase public access to arts and culture. These grants support a broad range of artistic expression from all cultures through projects which preserve, produce or present traditional or contemporary arts and culture and arts education.

The following twenty-two organizations received Arts Projects awards:

Organization	County	Grant Award:
Big Rapids Festival of the Arts	Mecosta	\$1,880
Croton Township Library	Newaygo	\$546
Cultivate Arts and Education	Kent	\$1,880

Dis Art	Grant Award:	
Kent	\$1,880	
Earful of Fiddle Music and Dance Camp	Mecosta	\$1,540
Genevieve and Donald’s Gilmore Foundation		\$1,880
Grand Rapids Swing Dance		\$1,880
Grand River Watershed Arts and Music Council		\$1,680
Hope Network – Big Rapids		\$1,540
Lake County Historical Society		\$1,680
Mecosta Intermediate District	Osceola School	\$1,540



MICHIGAN
ARTS &
CULTURE
COUNCIL

For the Fiscal Year 2024, LowellArts received thirty grant applications for arts project, with a total of \$107,326 in requests and \$34,500 awarded. Organizations could request up to \$4,000 for locally

Big Rapids Festival of the Arts Mecosta, \$1,880
Croton Township Library Newaygo, \$546
Cultivate Arts and Education Kent, \$1,880

Newaygo Area District Library, \$1,680
Project ESME, \$1,680
Rockford Community

LowellArts,
continued page 2

Verity Ballet offers a variety of outreach programming

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

Hannah and Noah Trulock, of Lowell, are passionate about ballet and dance. Hannah got an early start from her mother, who was a professional ballerina, as she went to all her classes. “I really enjoyed it; I just kept dancing and moving to more and more intense programs until my injury,” she said.

Hannah fractured her foot twice in the same spot. The doctors said it would be very difficult to come back from, it never quite healed right. “I would not be able to dance eight hours a day like I was,” she said. “I had already been teaching at that point so decided to continue with that instead, since I had had the time away to realize how toxic the environment was.”

Noah got his start with dance in color guard. In order to do well at color guard, he had to take dance classes at the time he was 15. “Some people think that is much too late

to start,” he said. “I think ballet, like any classical art form, is good for you to experience, whether it be participating or watching from the audience.”

Although Verity Ballet is based in Ada, the focus is on community outreach and bringing dance to those who may not get to see it otherwise. “I find as many venues as I can for these students to give back,” Hannah said. “They learn adaptability, confidence, and charity through these frequent performances.”

Verity Ballet does not have a non-compete contract, unlike many other studios where you have to sign that you will exclusively train with that particular studio. “We encourage you to make the right training decisions for you and your dancer,” Hannah said.

What sets Verity apart from other dance studios is its smaller classes, as

Verity Ballet,
continued page 9

\$1.00



LowellArts, continued

Orchestra, \$1,260
San Juan Diego \$675
Academy, \$1,128
Sparta Area Schools, - Artist, \$762
\$1,128
Sparta Community Artist, \$261
Works, \$1,540
The Vagrancy, \$1,529
Vox GR, \$1,880
West Michigan \$1,050
Bluegrass Festival, \$1,680
West Michigan Flute Association, \$1,529
Wyoming Public Schools, \$1,540

In addition, LowellArts received eighteen grant applications for Professional and organizational developement, with a total of \$24,230 in requests and \$9,000 awarded. Organizations and professional artists could ask for up to \$1,500 to support a variety of nonprofit organizational and individual needs, which strengthen the capacity of the organization or artist. These dollars can be used to attend conferences, workshops, seminars or to hire short-term consultants.

The following twelve organizations/artists received professional and organizational development awards:

Alby Blazo -Artist, \$ 680
Arts Rockford, \$773
Danielle Wyckoff - Artist, \$826
D i s A r t , \$675
Grand Rapids Cable Access Center, \$773
Grand Rapids Women’s Chorus, \$1,050
Lowell Area Historical Museum, \$425

Lowell Area Schools, Mandy Cano Villalobos - Artist, \$762
Shannon Pinkster - Artist, \$261
Vox GR, \$1,050
West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology, \$1,050
LowellArts administers these grants through a regranting program, through the Michigan Arts & Culture Council. The State of Michigan Minigrant Program is a partnership between the MACC and fifteen regional re-granting agencies throughout the state.

LowellArts Mission: Connecting Artists and Audiences through the Visual and Performing Arts. LowellArts stated purpose is: to encourage the understanding, appreciation, and importance of the arts in the schools and communities we serve, and to provide expression and enjoyment of the arts to all segments of these communities. LowellArts is a 501(c)3 designated nonprofit organization. The purpose of a nonprofit is to provide programs and services identified by its community and defined by the nonprofit’s mission. LowellArts believes that the arts are an integral part of our quality-of-life and an important asset for the community it serves.

Detective Culver graduates from Police Staff & Command Course

Submitted by Chief Christopher Hurst
The Lowell Police Department has announced that Detective Aubrey Culver graduated from Eastern Michigan University Police Staff & Command Course, a course sponsored by the West Michigan Criminal Justice Training Consortium (WMCJTC).

At EMU the Police Staff & Command is taught in-house over a period of 16 weeks. The course is an eight-week, very intensive course for veteran officers looking to move into leadership positions. During the eight weeks of instruction, Detective Culver studied leadership, employee relations, human resource management, department budgeting, planning and decision making, unified command in critical situations, policy writing, media relations, among other topics. This course of study involved practical exercises in grant writing, using the existing Lowell Police Department budget to make budget proposals or cuts, an on-site survey for security at LMCU Ballpark and Van Andel Arena, critical incident management

table-top exercises, and the development of a policy that will be used at our department.

The Police Staff & Command course started the week of June 26, 2023, with Detective Culver graduating on Friday, October 6. Detective Culver traveled to Holland, MI every other week from June to October and spent the week in class, returning to her detective duties on the opposite week. Police Staff & Command was taught by EMU instructors with law enforcement background, and with guest instructors from area departments teaching the latest information from the law enforcement and public service realm. Detective Culver was elected class No. 40 vice president, graduated with a final GPA of 95.47, and has earned 16 college master level credits.

Detective Culver has been in law enforcement for 20 years. She started with the Kent County Sheriff Department Reserves, then served with Sparta Police Dept., Carson City Police Dept., and Stanton Police Dept. Culver eventually returned to Lowell to work in her hometown. Over her career she has been



Detective Aubrey Culver and Police Chief Christopher Hurst

a Field Training Officer, Background Investigator, Forensic Interviewer, PPCT/DT Instructor, National

DEC (Drug Endangered Children) Trainer, and currently serves as Lowell Police Dept. detective and internal IT.

How SSA.gov helps you

By Hillary Hatch, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist
We’re excited to announce the addition of two helpful screening tools on SSA.gov! These tools are the Benefits Screener and the Card Replacement Screener. The Benefit Screener helps you determine your eligibility for benefits and the Card Replacement Screener helps you request a replacement Social Security card. Let’s go over how you can use these tools.

Benefits Screener
You can access the

Benefits Screener tool at www.ssa.gov/prepare/check-eligibility-for-benefits to determine which benefits you may be eligible for, typically in 10 minutes or less! Whether you’re considering retirement, disability, survivor, or other types of benefits, this tool will guide you in the right direction.

To use the screener, select the “Start” button and answer a few questions about what’s going on in your life. You will immediately get a response that tells you which benefits you may be eligible

for, based on your answers. Card Replacement Screener

You can access the Card Replacement Screener at www.ssa.gov/number-card/replace-card. If you need a physical Social Security card, you can use this screener to determine the best way to replace it.

Depending on your situation, you may be able to request a replacement Social Security card without visiting a local office. Select “Answer a few questions” on the Replacement Card page to get started. If you can’t complete the process online and have to visit an office, you can save yourself time by starting with the online application.

Requesting a replacement Social Security card is free. In most situations, you do not need to present a physical card – just knowing your Social Security number is usually enough. But if you do need the physical card, you can use this online screener to get started.

SSA.gov continues to be a safe and secure way to conduct your business with us online. The redesigned website—with its online tools—is the quickest, easiest, and most convenient way to begin.

Please share this information with those who need it.

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Rich LaBombard oversees brief council meeting

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

The Lowell City Council assembled for a 30-minute meeting on Monday, October 2, with all council members present. Standing in for City Manager, Mike Burns, who was busy representing Lowell at the 2023 International City/County Manager Association (ICMA) annual conference in Austin, Texas, was Assistant City Manager/Department of Public Works Director, Rich LaBombard, who filled the position following the retirement of Dan Czarniecki. LaBombard has ample experience in the role, having served in the same position from 2016 to



Resident, Bob Rowley raises concerns that the Planning Committee and CopperRock Construction are ignoring the complaints of residents in “the Rollaway community.”

2019, prior to Czarniecki’s tenure. LaBombard was largely silent and supportive during the brief meeting, primarily delivering updates on roadwork projects during the acting manager’s report, but the council was anything but silent about LaBombard. The council was ecstatic and on-record about their support of Rich LaBombard’s return to the City of Lowell family.

Lowell Light & Power General Manager, Charlie West, started out the meeting with a presentation on public power. During the first full week in October, over 2000 municipal electric systems nationwide celebrate Public Power Week. West spoke to how fortunate Lowell has been for resisting the urge to sell Lowell Light & Power, because most communities have sold their public utility. West shared a number of statistics, like how public power is five times less likely to

experience an outage, and electric rates are about 27 percent cheaper overall. Lowell Light & Power has provided \$1.5 million in retail rate savings, and contributed 10 percent of the City of Lowell’s general fund, through pilot payments. Following recent storm outages across West Michigan, due to a storm cell that produced a number of tornadoes, many Lowell restaurants and businesses experienced their biggest sales the Friday and Saturday after the storm hit.

“That’s something I never thought about,” Council member, Cliff Yankovich said, “the positive economic impact,

property, into a three-story, 44-unit apartment building with a 3,800 square foot commercial space for a restaurant. Pam expressed concern that on-street parking, in the surrounding residential neighborhood, will reduce visibility for residents pulling in and out of their driveways, claiming that businesses should have all on-site parking, which is not the case for many businesses along Main Street in Lowell. Mayor Mike DeVore explained that MDOT is ultimately responsible for the decision to add or remove parking spots, but the city would have to do the leg work ahead of time. Later, Pam returned to the podium to explain that she has spoken with MDOT, and the city can make this decision without asking MDOT.

Bob listed some concerns about parking ordinance, but his main concern was that neighbors, in what the Rowleys described as “the Rollaway community”, are being ignored. At Planning Committee meetings, residents were initially told they would have five minutes to speak, but when the meeting took place, this was reduced to three minutes. Furthermore, neighbors were asked not to speak about the same concerns more than once, which disrupted the prepared testimony of a number of concerned citizens. “I think it’s a big problem,” Bob said, “and ignoring it is the wrong thing to do.”

Mayor DeVore explained that comment was limited to three minutes, when he was first elected, and he ran on being accessible and transparent, and the council



Council member, Cliff Yankovich, draws attention to the economic impact for the community, when Lowell’s businesses are open and others are not, following a storm.

subsequently lengthened public comment to five minutes. However, he does not have the power to set expectations for other boards. Council member, Leah Groves, commented that different expectations for different meetings may be unnecessarily complicated for residents looking to engage in the political process, and Mayor DeVore suggested getting all of the board chairs together in order to come up with a uniform procedure.

The only agenda item the council entertained was a request by Police Chief, Christopher Hurst, to sell the department’s three Remington Model 870 pump-action shotguns, in order to earn money to put toward a patrol rifle for officer Fredi Raymundo, who was sworn in at the previous council meeting. Nobody in the department qualified with these shotguns this year, because nobody carries these weapons with them on patrol. Council member, Jim Salzwedel, asked

what the advantage was for officers to use a patrol rifle rather than a shotgun. Chief Hurst explained that the AR-15 style rifles are accurate to a distance of 300 yards and can penetrate armor. Furthermore, the shotguns carry five rounds, whereas the rifles carry 28. The council approved the sale of the three shotguns.

Chief Hurst also reported 128 traffic stops during the month of September, an uptick from previous numbers that came about as a result of traffic-stop quotas the department mandated in response to public concerns about speeding throughout the city. Chief Hurst also intends to download electronic speed-sign data every three months in order to shed some more light on the city’s speeding problems. Council member, Marty Chambers, celebrated the results from the police department’s quota as a sign that the police are doing the right thing.

Just prior to the end of the meeting, resident, Beryl Bartkus, came to the podium to get an update about the museum steps. After the money the city put into repairing the steps, she was concerned with the stymied progress and the quality of the pillars. Council member, Chambers, explained that the pillars were not built tall enough, so they had to be extended, and all of this delayed the completion of the project. Bartkus asked for a timeline on the completion of the project, to which Council member, Salzwedel responded, humorously, “Hopefully, by election.”

The next City Council meeting will take place on Monday, October 16, 2023 at 7:00 pm. Those interested in watching the October 2 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.

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**NOTICE FOR TESTING OF
ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT FOR
THE SPECIAL ELECTION
NOVEMBER 7, 2023**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Public Accuracy Test for the November 7, 2023, Special Election will be conducted on:

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.
at the Lowell Township Hall, 2910 Alden Nash S.E.
Lowell, MI 49331

The public accuracy test is conducted to demonstrate that the computer programming used to tabulate the votes cast at the election meets the requirements of Michigan election law.

Monica Burt, Clerk
Lowell Charter Township

Book Corner

Defiant is a fitting end to Skyward Series

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

Brandon Sanderson is the most beloved, contemporary, fantasy author in the world, a title that may have gone to George R.R. Martin or Patrick Rothfuss, the authors of *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *The Kingkiller Chronicle* series, respectively, if those two authors were not known for decades-long waits between novels. Sanderson, on the other hand, whose beloved *Mistborn* and *Stormlight* Archive series present some of the most highly acclaimed fantasy novels of the millennium, is known for the sheer number of pages he is able to produce, surprising readers periodically with a new, unscheduled 1000-page novel, here and there. Unlike other prolific authors, like Stephen King, for example, who has often been accused by readers

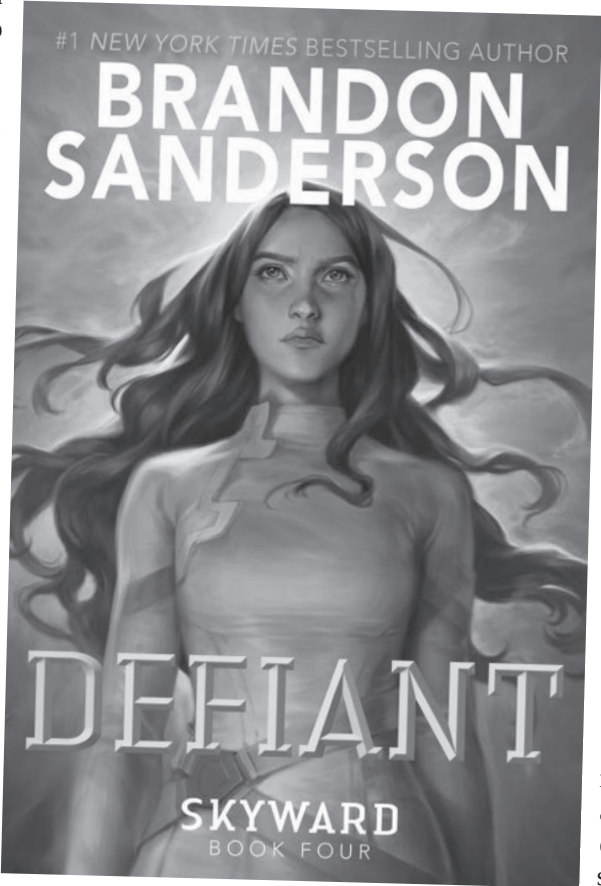
of publishing unedited, unrefined manuscripts, Sanderson’s novels are precisely winnowed down by the time they make it to publication. Not only does Sanderson finish his own books and series according to reader expectations, but he also finished the *Wheel of Time* series, which some place behind *Lord of the Rings* as the second most important fantasy series of all time, following the death of author Robert Jordan. He is credited as co-author on the final three books of the series, *The Gathering Storm*, *Towers of Midnight*, and *A Memory of Light*. If there is a negative to Sanderson’s prolific writing, it is that there are a number of shorter works that are simply overshadowed by the fat fantasy tomes he pumps out regularly. In particular, Sanderson’s young adult and teen novels and novellas deserve more attention. In

The Rithmatist, Sanderson presents his very own magic school, where skilled warriors prepare offensive and defensive magic using chalk lines in geometric patterns. *The Reckoners* is a series of superhero novels set in a post-apocalyptic world, where a cosmic event, known as Calamity, gave a number of people the ability to defy the laws of the universe. People who read these novels swear by them, above and beyond the rest of Sanderson’s bibliography, for their brevity, immersiveness, and relatability, and the *Skyward* series, which concludes with the forthcoming novel *Defiant*, is no exception. *Skyward* is a science fiction series that focuses on air combat between inhabitants of a skyless planetoid and a hegemony of aliens that sees these humans as a threat to galactic civilization. The protagonist is Spensa “Spin” Nightshade, who, over the series of four novels, transforms from an outcast, due to her father’s perceived betrayal of his people, to the savior of those same people, and likely, the

entire universe. In *Defiant*, Spensa struggles to control a number of extraordinary powers, from her cytonic teleportation abilities that are the birthright of her people, to her reality manipulation powers that she acquired after bonding with a mysterious cosmic being called a delver, in order to conquer the Superiority forces intent on destroying her people, once and for all. The pressure is huge, and when it becomes too much, Spensa suffers from panic attacks that cause objects to disappear and reappear elsewhere, alienating her from the friends, who ground her, and the man she loves. The three novels *Skyward*, *Starsight*, and *Cytonic* are technically the only required reading prior to *Defiant*. However, the first half of the book makes references to characters and events that were never addressed in the prior novels, but who showed up in a series of three novellas co-written by Sanderson and Janci Patterson, titled *Sunreach*, *ReDawn*, and *Evershore*. Two of these books (*Sunreach* and *ReDawn*) take place during *Starsight*, when Spensa was far away from her people on a Superiority space station, and they follow the adventures of her friends FM and Alanik. The third book, *Evershore*, takes place during *Cytonic*, while Spensa is lost in a mysterious dimension known as the Nowhere. The novella stars Spensa’s boyfriend, Jorgen, as he learns to control his own latent cytonic abilities. Reading *Defiant* is more pleasurable for readers who treat the *Skyward* series as a seven-novel series, as opposed to a quadrilogy, as the events of these three novellas are anything but skippable. Sanderson is surprisingly skilled at writing with the voice of a young woman, and some of the coming-of-age drama in the first novel is absolutely captivating. Spensa is one of the best female leads in science fiction/fantasy, an echo of the spitfire Lyra Belacqua from Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* series. While *Defiant* is not as immediately welcoming as

the previous three novels, feeling aimless at times during the setup for the epic final battle between the inhabitants of the planet Detritus and the Superiority, it is no less powerful. During the second half of the novel, Sanderson tells the story with the voices of Spensa, Jorgen, FM, and a number of characters, whose perspectives, readers have not yet seen, and this is where the story starts to pay

it will be written by Janci Patterson, likely without Brandon Sanderson, save as a sort of executive producer of the universe, but there’s reason for excitement. The novellas Patterson wrote with Sanderson between the four books were incredibly strong, to the point that they were viscerally connected to the main series, as opposed to simple, removable stories that neither make nor break. Moreover, the cytoverse is an interesting setting, promising a number of other quirks that Sanderson did not have time to write about in his four hyper-focused novels. At the end of a book review, a reviewer will typically make a recommendation to potential readers about whether or not the book in question is worth reading, but this is not a typical review. In this instance, it is not about whether or not the reader should read *Defiant*; it is about whether readers should read the book themselves or listen to the audio book instead. Suzy Jackson is the American reader for the *Skyward* series, and her audiobook performances in the first three novels perfectly captured the voice of Spensa Nightshade, to the point that reading the review copy of *Defiant* felt a bit lonely by comparison. It is true, as mentioned before, that Sanderson is surprisingly skilled at telling a compelling story from the perspective of a young adult woman, but Jackson is that woman. Sanderson works hard for his readers, and purchasing or pre-ordering a physical copy of any of his books is a great way for readers to help him forecast interest, but the audiobook of *Defiant* is guaranteed to be the best experience for readers, who are able to listen without distraction for long periods of time. That said, it is worth reading *Defiant* in any form, just as it is worth reading three novels in preparation and three novellas to make the experience all the more rich. If you are not already a Brandon Sanderson fan for life, this is a good time to start.



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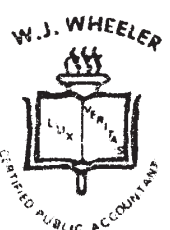
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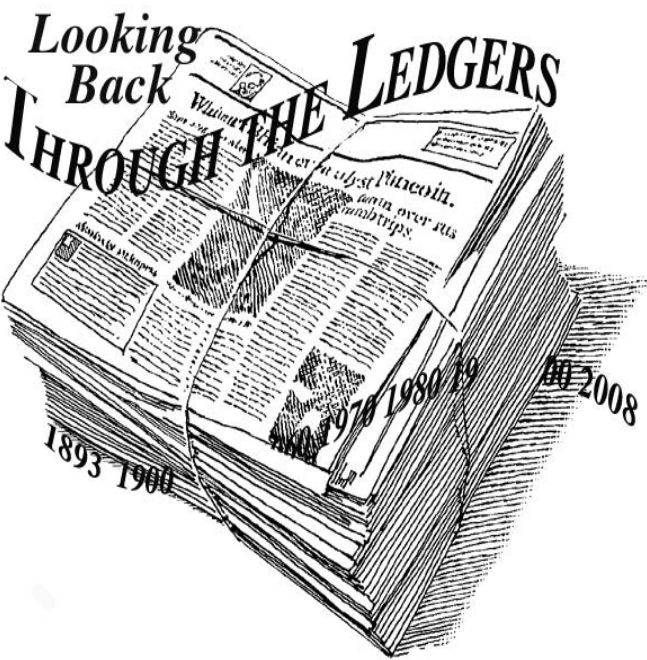
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viewpoint



150 years ago The Lowell Journal October 8, 1873

Last Sunday afternoon a young man went into the woods, west of this village, and fired seven shots, broke two or three commandments, and hunted four hours to get three squirrels. Then he brought the squirrels out of the woods and threw them in the road and went home. We want to know why?

John Haight was put in the lock-up on Monday for durnkenness and cruelty to animals. He will go before the court to day and find out a thing or two.

125 years ago The Lowell Ledger October 13, 1898

No less than two boys have had their arms broken on school ground during the last few days while indulging in the game "Pull away". This game rivals foot ball or pugilism for hazard to life and limb.

A bachelors' supper was served to seventeen Lowell young men in the honor of Phil Althen, at the home of Jay Medler, last evening. It was 1 am before the boys were ready to quit.

Jay Taylor, after having a felon, commenced work again at the cutter factory and on Monday his shirt sleeve caught upon a saw and drew his arm upon it. An artery was severed and Jay is taking another lay-off. Hard luck.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger October 11, 1923

After having possession of The Ledger for but a week, we have relinquished same to the former owner, F.M. Johnson; not, however, through any misunderstanding with Mr. Johnson, who has treated us with utmost courtesy and absolute fairness in every detail. The call of our old home town and the home folks has been too much for us.

David Atkins, aged 68, well-known Ada township farmer, fell from a chestnut tree last Friday , breaking his skull and fracturing his right wrist, causing his death soon afterward.

John Kilgus, age 14, was accidentally shot by Chester Willits, a neighbor boy, while the two were hunting woodchucks Sunday afternoon. The bullet hit the Kilgus boy in the back, passed through a kidney and his liver and nearly through his body, lodging in the ribs. At last reports the lad's condition was serious but not hopeless.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger October 14, 1948

Schools will be closed for two days for Teachers Institute ,in Grand Rapids next week.

State police remind that October is the month of highest traffic fatalities: fog, frosted windshields, slippery pavement, more darkness and much football travel.

Bambi is playing at the Strand Theatre.

The King Milling ad reminds recipe contest entrants to include instructions along with ingredients.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger Suburban Life October 11, 1973

A movie, sponsored by Jaycees, warns school children about being approached by strangers. Twelve complaints in 1972, and three already this year, prompt the action.

Money order limited are raised from \$100 to \$300 at the Post Office, says Postmaster Charles Doyle.

Lowell Showboat, Inc. petitions the city for permission to build a ticket office and conference room next to the Levee Restaurant on Main Street.

Lowell will possibly have a new water treatment facility within the next two years; this in answer to complaints about dirty water in Valley Vista.

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger October 14, 1998

Lowell School District will receive a one-time payment increase in the foundation allowance of \$51 per per student. For the 1999-2000 school year, it will get a \$190 foundation allowance increase per student.

In just his third attempt, Lowell's Chad Harvey won the BMX Michigan State Championship at Freedom Hill in Sterling Heights.

The Lowell freshman qualifies to participate in the President's Cup in Columbus, in December.

The Bookabout, at 100 W. Main, has been providing readers with some of their favorite novels for almost 20 years. The last 13 years it has been operated by Gwen Freeman.

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to the editor

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

To the Editor,

I am a conservative for things that work and a progressive for things that don't. Just as conservatives are not right about everything, progressives are not wrong about everything.

Senator Albert has written a series in the *Lowell Ledger* promoting conservative values. There are many that all can agree with.

It would be wise for our Senator to reach out to those of different religions, education, experiences and political philosophies to craft legislation that is fair for all.

Jack Misner
Vergennes Township

outdoors why hunt?

Dave Stegehuis

Hunting for big and small game has been practiced in Michigan for eons. Native people hunted and trapped birds and animals as a part of everyday life. Hunting and gathering was the only source of food at one time. As time moved-on, domesticating animals and growing crops reduced the need to hunt wild creatures. The knowledge and skills related to hunting have been passed down through generations. Today in our tech-heavy culture, hunting wild game is still a tradition for thousands of Michigan citizens. For valid reasons, not everyone chooses to hunt. For those who do hunt there are good reasons for them to do so.

Michigan is blessed with millions of acres of public and private land that provides viable habitat

**outdoors,
continued page 7**

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



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

At Your Local Library

Storytime

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

All Aboard! Book Club

Thursday, October 19, 10:30 - 11:30 am. Join a fun, informal discussion of great books. This month, we’ll discuss *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. For ages 18+

Fall Fest

Saturday, October 21, 10 - 11 am. Celebrate the season with autumn crafts, games and art activities. For all ages.

KDL Lab Experience: Superhero Training

Wednesday, October 25, 4 - 5 pm. Create your own superhero costume, design a superhero vehicle, Hulk Smash® villains, race heroes down a zipline, create superhero code and more to help save the day! For ages 5-10.



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, in weekly online articles. information provided by the Lowell Area Historical Museum

T is for Telephone

The telephone was first displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876. One year later, experimental use of the telephone took place in Grand Rapids. Professor Alexander Graham Bell gave the Grand Rapids Plaster Company two instruments to try, and they were installed between the company office and the mill on October 30, 1877.

In 1879, the *Lowell Journal* reported, “Hatch and Craw’s two flour mills are now connected by an acoustic telephone which works first rate. Telephonic communication between the village and the depot will probably be had in a few days.”

Michigan Bell Telephone Company was established in 1882 and exchanges were set-up in the cities. City people could have telephones in their homes and offices. In 1893, when the Bell patent expired, independent companies were allowed to form. The Citizen’s Telephone Company of Grand Rapids extended service to a network of cities, villages and farms, including the Lowell area.

Advertisements in 1908 proclaimed, “a



Mattie Rulason, Alice Denny and Agnes Perry in phone office

short talk over Citizens’ long-distance line will save you time and a long journey!” Another ad, in 1913, from the Citizens Telephone Service stated, “an immediate answer by telephone is far superior to correspondence or travel. Don’t travel, don’t write - TALK!”

Telephone connections finally reached farms south of Lowell in 1914. However, a person could call only those people who also had telephones from the same company. In 1923, the two telephone companies merged so that everyone with a telephone could call anyplace in the United States.

The ‘Hello Girls’ became well-known to the telephone community. They operated the switchboards necessary to connect phone calls. The office was located on the second floor of 214

West Main. In 1921, the operators were rescued from the smoke of a fire in their building but returned an hour later to resume telephone service. The operators were important to the town. They knew of the emergencies and summoned the doctor, police or firemen. Some of these ‘Hello Girls’ in Lowell included Agnes Perry, Alice Dennie, Clara Kingdom, Lela First, Rose Wingeier, Mayme Nelson, Marion Needham, Shirley Seese, Phyllis Walker, Shirley Richmond, Olive Wood, Donna Miller, Bernadeen Norton, Louise Ryder, Freda Story, Olive Kropf, Myrtle Rulason and Dorothy VandenHout.

In 1930 it was announced that Lowell had 735 phones and those phones were making 3000 calls each day!

Lowell celebrated the change from manual

exchanges to automated direct dial in January of 1953. “Lowell Bids Goodbye to ‘Hello Girls’” was the *Lowell Ledger* headline on January 8, 1953. The operators employed to connect the lines in the old system were transferred to Hastings, Ionia, and Grand Rapids.

It wasn’t long before every home had a telephone, and telephone booths could be found in convenient places to assist those on-the-go. Today, few residential land lines exist, while most everyone has a phone in their pocket or purse. The telephone booths are almost all gone. Lowell does have one telephone booth, and it can be seen inside the Main Street Inn.

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

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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

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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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Pastor Jon Pickens • Lead Pastor

Pastor Andrew Bolckom • Pastor of Discipleship

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LIFE GROUPS 11:00 AM (Nursery-Adult)

Awana (K-5 during school year) **Wednesday, 6:15 PM**

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897-5938

www.lowellumc.com • Barrier Free Entrance

WORSHIP

Traditional Service: 9 am

Contemporary Service: 10:30 am

Sr. Pastor - Brad Brillhart

happy birthday



OCTOBER 12

Neille Stephens, Becky Batt.

OCTOBER 13

Adam Thaler, Joe VanLaan, Patrick Doyle, Kurtis Clouser, Jr.

OCTOBER 14

Ericka Onan, Barb Erickson, Debra Duiven, Court Duiven, Kyle Hildenbrand, Stacey Kinyon, Kelsey Callihan, Caleb Baker, Jim Watrous, Judy Timpson.

OCTOBER 15

Jamie Roth, Jason Roth, Elizabeth Raab, Jan

Lippert, Annie Oesch, Kevin Clouser, Frank Grudzinskas, Doug Felling.

OCTOBER 16

Paula Blough.

OCTOBER 17

Collin Kaeb, Kurt Telman, Jason Nearing.

OCTOBER 18

Mary Ellen Rivers Barber, Brian Willmarth, Brian Scott Kunard, Hayden Andrews/Snyder.





The Creator: A concept movie that overwhelms its characters

Director: Gareth Edwards
Writers: Gareth Edwards and Chris Weitz
Starring: John David Washington, Madeleine Yuna Voyles, and Gemma Chan
Rated PG13
2h 13m

I enjoy a good science fiction movie, and Hollywood likes to produce them, too. Gareth Edwards, best known for directing *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (in my opinion, the best of all the new *Star Wars* movies), takes aim at the future of artificial intelligence, aka AI, in the year 2065. Presently, our world is in the beginning stages of artificial intelligence with its use in web search technology, self-driving cars, Siri and Alexa, and most recently (and controversially), ChatGPT, a program that can write stories and essays, write tests (for teachers), simulate chat rooms, play tic-tac-toe, among many other things. Mostly, the technology is way beyond me, but the concept of what it can do and how it can affect the future of humanity is not.

What will AI be like in 40 years? Gareth Edwards tackles this question in his futuristic sci-fi thriller, *The Creator*. Edwards has created a world where humans, robots, and a hybrid form of human-robots are attempting to inhabit the Earth without destroying each other. As you can imagine, it is not going so well, and there is a war between the two factions, all starting

over a nuclear bomb that detonated in Los Angeles in 2055, killing millions of humans.

The world is divided in two: the West, the Americans who want AI destroyed - specifically the human-robot forms – and the East, New Asia, whose society accepts humans, robots, and the human-robots living together.

The story revolves around an American soldier named Joshua, played by John David Washington. Joshua has been working an undercover operation for years in New Asia, gaining the trust of its people and robots and even married one, a woman named Maya, played by Gemma Chan. Apparently, the New Asians are building a weapon named Alpha O that will neutralize the Americans’ own super weapon that has been destroying cities in New Asia. Joshua is on the cusp of finding New Asia’s super weapon, when his cover is revealed, and his wife is killed during a surprise attack on his village.

The first half of *The Creator* offered potential with its unique story line and outstanding cinematography and

digital scenery. The war-torn countryside of New Asia was reminiscent of movies like *Platoon*, while the scenes in the city reminded me of *Blade Runner*. The concepts of the movie explore a theme that is voiced by one of the New Asian villagers: “Those things down below. They have bigger hearts. You can’t beat AI. It’s evolution!” A big statement from an extra. In essence, this is what writers Edwards and Weitz hope to examine. Can humans and Artificial Intelligence live together in harmony? Or will the weaknesses that each group possesses destroy them?

The movie does its best to give us an answer but falls flat in the process of doing so. *The Creator* is a concept movie, meaning, its main goal is to entertain and educate its viewers about a novel idea. Examples of other concept films are Charlie Kaufmann movies, like *Being John Malkovich* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and the grand daddy of them all, *The Matrix*, written and directed by the Wachowski sisters. The ideas of these stories are just as important as the characters and the plot. All three of these movies, arguably, find a balance between creating dynamic characters that we care about and the mind-boggling concepts they are introducing.

The Creator also has a mind-boggling concept: that humanity and artificial intelligence (robots) will not only need to co-exist in the future, but be treated as equals. Unfortunately, *The Creator*’s main and supporting characters lack the depth they need to make the audience care about them. I will concede that the relationship between Joshua and Alphie, played by the young Madeleine Yuna Voyles, creates some sparks that will touch the audience, but in the end, the convoluted plot is too much for even them to overcome. In trying to help

the audience, the writers break the story into titled sections like “The Child” and “The Mother”, hoping this will help with the amount of back-story and flashbacks needed to limit confusion. It does not. The story goes down a rabbit hole that it seemingly can’t get out of. Are characters dead or alive? Are they robots or human? Will its highly explosive and world-changing ending bring the two sides together? We don’t get answers, and maybe it is for the best, but I can’t help but feel Gareth Edwards could have pushed his concepts better with a

simpler story and a less-pricey budget.

In the end, the viewer will be entertained by the futuristic battles complete with massive explosions and energetic chase scenes, but it won’t gain any wisdom about how AI might help or hinder humanity. If Edwards picked a side, it might have made the story more engaging. Instead, I guess everyone wins. I give *The Creator* 2 out of 5 popcorn kernels.



Outdoors, continued

for all kinds of birds and animals. Harvesting a natural food source is an opportunity to personally experience these special resources and feel a sense of independence.

Hunting encourages the thoughtful stewardship of both public and private land. Hunters, through licenses fees and taxes on certain kinds of equipment, help fund the conservation of public land and wildlife which all residents and visitors can use in their own way.

Animal populations must be balanced with available habitat, so hunters

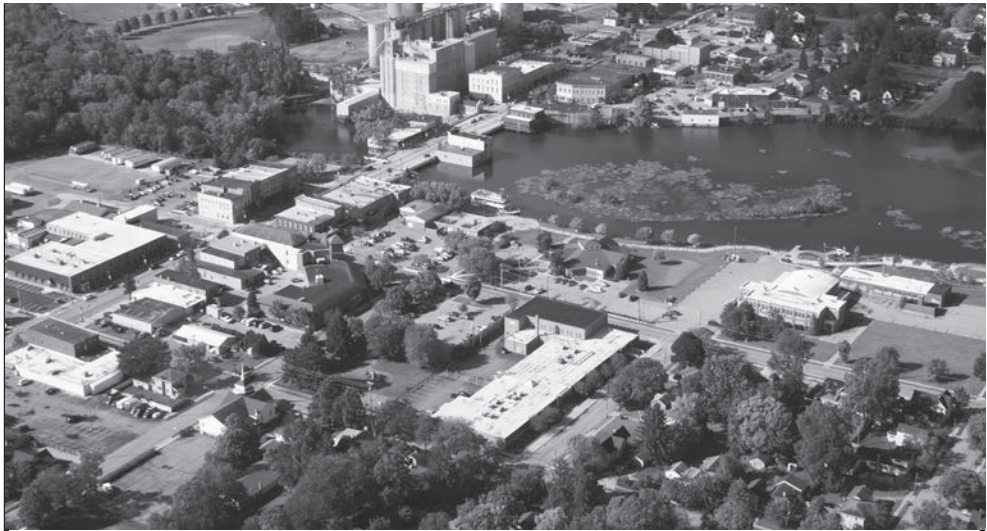
are a crucial component of successful game management. Hunters are often the first to point out problems when something is going wrong out there. Wild turkeys, elk, moose, and wolves, as well as a number of non-game species, are alive and well in our state due to hunter supported conservation efforts.

Mental health has become an issue as our lives become more complicated. Hunting gives us a reason to seek out places of peace and quiet. Hunting also provides the motivation to get out and about and get

the exercise necessary for a more healthy life. Hunters with disabilities will find special seasons and regulations which make the hunting experience more accessible.

Another great reason to hunt is to donate your venison to Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger. Every year hunters donate thousands of pounds of venison to non-profit food banks and shelters across the state through this organization.

Hunting is much more than harvesting a game animal.



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Assassins Clash in
Tom King's *Danger Street*

The Gotham War has proven an unexpected and exciting Batfamily crossover with *Batman* #137 (9/6/23), *Catwoman* #57 (9/20/23), and *Batman/Catwoman: The Gotham War-Red Hood* #1 (9/27/23) out this past month. Tom King's *Wonder Woman* #1 (9/20/23) promises to shake up the DC universe, much like *Fall of X* has shaken Marvel. Following the ill-received Knight Terrors event, *Green Lantern* (9/13/23) and *Shazam!* (9/6/23) finally found their stride, each in its third issue. DC's films may be in disarray, but September proved that the company still knows how to do comics.

Here are the top three comics published in September!

Danger Street #9 (DC

Comics, 9/13/23)
With his DC Black Label miniseries *Danger Street*, Tom King calls back to the 1975 series *1st Issue Special*, which featured a motley group of characters, including Atlas, Manhunter, Warlord, Lady Cop, Creeper, Doctor Fate, and the New Gods. King's throwback derives its name from a gang of kids called the Dingbats of *Danger Street*, whose antics are central to this miniseries. Where *1st Issue Special* gave these characters solo stories, King weaves their fates together in a compelling, albeit a bit confusing, way. While a reader may have no idea where the overarching story is going, it is fairly easy to forget any such concerns by focusing on King's scene-level mastery, and Jorge Fornés' art is a great complement.

Issue #9 pulls away from the sprawling drama to focus on two characters, Manhunter and Codename: Assassin. Its focus on a simple contest, or a joust between knights, as solicits described it, is an oasis in the shifting sands. The stakes are clear: Manhunter wins if he kills the Commodore, and Codename: Assassin wins if he kills Manhunter. If you are wondering how a sword fight can be interesting enough to last over 30 pages, you may wish to read Kazuo Koike's manga masterpiece *Lone Wolf and Cub*, where the final battle between Ogami Ittō and Yagyū Retsudō takes place across multiple volumes and hundreds of pages. As with Gilgamesh and Enkidu, Manhunter and Codename: Assassin find a strange kind of camaraderie in this battle to the death, and the unexpected shows its face on a number of occasions.

Immortal Thor #2 (Marvel Comics, 9/27/23)

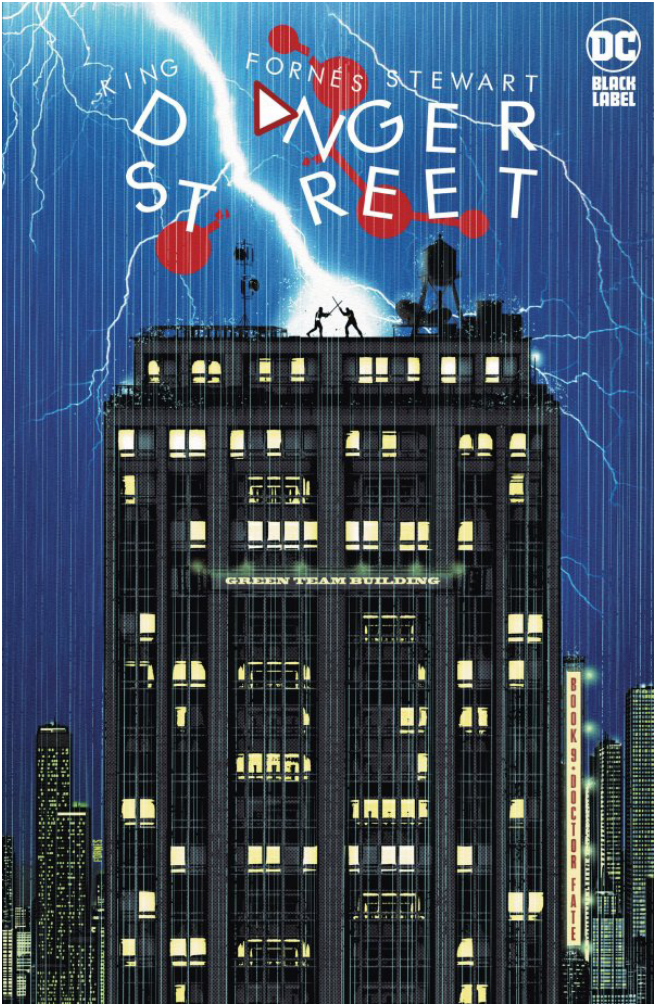
Just as *Immortal Thor* will be forever in the shadow of writer Al Ewing's epic *Immortal Hulk*, which brought Hulk back to his horror story roots, issue #2 faces Thor against his primordial shadow self, Utgard Thor,

or Toranos, and it is a battle for the ages. With a cover, illustrated by the indefatigable Alex Ross, *Immortal Thor* promises splendor and escapism, but there is subtext for those who desire, not just to escape, but to engage. Thor's attempt, to both stop the onslaught of the Norse elder god and rescue the Midgardian city Toranos, has been nearly laid to waste is compared to climbing a mountain, and then finding a second at its summit, which for a reading populace, who barely survived three years of a worldwide pandemic only to find a terrible recession as their reward, is not far from the truth. Ewing asks, "Have you faced your mountain upon a mountain yet? If you have not, I hope it never comes. But if you have... if you face it now... know this: You have the courage of Thor."

Utgard Thor posits that Midgardian civilization, and all the values the Asgardian gods stand for, are mere fictions, and the Utgardian way of death, despair, and a return to nature are an inescapable fact. In this way, Ewing's series echoes Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "We live in the flicker—may it last as

long as the old earth keeps rolling! But darkness was here yesterday." However, Utgard Thor is fighting a philosophical battle with a hero known for his battlefield prowess, but what if he faced off against a god with a silver tongue?

is the eternally quotable "Darmok." However, Kirkman unravels his story with small, self-contained plots—how to get off this rock, how to escape this slaver, etc.—that hearken back to 1970s campy serialized science



If this is a battle of fact versus fiction, who better to represent the cause of Asgard than the god of stories, a cunning trickster and brother to Thor, Loki.

Void Rivals #4 (Image Comics, 9/27/23)

It is fairly easy to adjudicate the top two comic series of the 21st century—it comes down to *The Walking Dead* and *Saga*, but deciding which comes out on top is a bit more difficult. Luckily, for fans of the two series, there is no longer any need to debate because you can have both. After all, Image's new series *Void Rivals* features a space war rivalry like that of Brian K. Vaughan's *Saga*, only written by *The Walking Dead*'s Robert Kirkman. Add to that the fact that *Void Rivals* is the first installation from Skybound Entertainment's Energon Universe, which promises a *Transformers* series by Daniel Warren Johnson and a continuation of *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero*, by none other than Larry Hama, and there's reason for just about anyone to celebrate.

Void Rivals follows two enemies stranded together on a desolate planet where they will die if not for mutual support, and the obvious cinematic analogue for this story is the 1985 science fiction film *Enemy Mine*, or for *Star Trek: The Next Generation* fans; it

fiction stories, and this is his greatest strength. There's something big going on in *Void Rivals*, and this is evident nowhere more so than in issue #4, but Kirkman is teasing-it-out incrementally, with unwavering support for a small, human story.

Other Noteworthy September 2023 Comics

Boom! Studios: *Stuff of Nightmares: Red Murder* #1 (9/27/23), *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* #112 (9/27/23); DC Comics: *Action Comics* #1057 (9/27/23), *Batman/Superman: World's Finest* #19 (9/20/23), *Nightwing* #106 (9/20/23), *Penguin* #2 (9/27/23), *WildC.A.T.s* #11 (9/27/23), *World's Finest: Teen Titans* #3 (9/13/23); IDW Publishing: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* #143 (9/20/23); Image Comics: *The Cull* #2 (9/13/23), *The Dead Lucky* #9 (9/27/23), *Saga* #66 (9/20/23), *What's the Furthest Place From Here* #14 (9/27/23); Marvel Comics: *Alpha Flight* #2 (9/20/23), *Fantastic Four* #11 (9/6/23), *Immortal X-Men* #15 (9/6/23), *The Incredible Hulk* #4 (9/13/23), *Invincible Iron Man* #10 (9/27/23), *Scarlet Witch* #8 (9/6/23), *Ultimate Invasion* #4 (9/27/23), *Uncanny Avengers* #2 (9/20/23), *Uncanny Spider-Man* #1 (9/20/23), *X-Men* #26 (9/6/23), *X-Men: Red* #15 (9/13/23)

Veterans Day Tribute

The Ledger, along with local businesses, will be saluting area Veterans in the Nov. 8 edition.

If you would like to spotlight a Veteran living in our area, please mail, email or bring their picture, along with their name, branch of service and years served, and your name and phone number to:

The Lowell Ledger, PO Box 128 • Lowell, MI 49331
They may also be emailed to: ledger@lowellbuyersguide.com

If the Veteran you want to honor was in last year, we still have their photo.
No need to resubmit.

Deadline for photo submission is Thursday, Nov. 2 by 4 pm
You, or the Veteran you are honoring, must be from the Lowell area.

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Verity Ballet, continued

well as a plan to protect students from bullying, with a Zero Tolerance bullying policy. “I am very passionate about this,” she said. “We want everyone to get an equal chance to excel. I’ve seen studios crumble as a result of three to four girls that drive all the others away.”

I think ballet, like any classical art form, is good for you to experience, whether it be participating or watching from the audience.

Noah Trulock

The studio also gives eight times more performance opportunities than some other schools in the area. “We have age-appropriate costumes, music, and choreography,” she said. “All things are tasteful and not compromising for students.”

Both Hannah and Noah believe that dance can be a part of a healing process in a conducive environment. However, it can also be quite the opposite in many circumstances - rigorous

something they feel passionate about.”

The studio has a similar safe feeling that Lowell does, according to Noah. “We certainly looked in Lowell to get a space that is closer to our home and would consider it in the future, but the lack of availability didn’t

never attended a formal dance class previously. Students learn some technical aspects of each style and get plenty of practice. Many come as a couple, although it’s not required. The end goal, whether it be to experience social dancing, to practice for a wedding, or even to prepare for competing or performing ballroom dance one day, is all fulfilled by a solid foundation in training, without the high sales pressure that accompanies many ballroom studios, according to Noah.

The upcoming performance of The Nutcracker promises a lot of nostalgia. “It’s the same story you know and love, beautiful costumes, as well as a more bite-sized length for the tiniest of tots,” she said. “I have done this format before with other fairy tales, and I narrate the story along with the dancers. The Lowell Library is very welcoming to it.”

The performances are Saturday, November 11th, 2 pm, Village of Heather



Hannah and Noah Trulock

Hills; Sunday, November 12th, 2 pm, Maple Ridge Manor; Friday, December 8th, 7 pm., Northpointe Christian High School; Saturday, December 16th, 7 pm, The Old Theater, Lowell; Thursday, January 4th, 10:00 am, Lowell KDL Englehardt Branch.

“Since we started up last month, we have had a lot of fun in classes, holding events, and getting to know everyone in the community,” Hannah said. “I am pretty in-tune with Lowell, from living here, but it’s been awesome continuing to grow the professional relationships we have developed and getting creative with how we can collaborate and be of service.”

Noah said that the studio has had some students who are real trailblazers. “The students we have so far have stuck with us because they see the value in the instruction, the environment, and can see the difference,” he said.



Kids rehearsing: Audrey and Isaac Alexander, Blythe Carvajal.



Moonlit Ballroom dancing at The Old Theater.

training under pressure. “We hope that people will see the difference behind how we relate to one another, our students, and how we run the business, and we credit that to Christ,” Hannah said.

According to both dancers, abuse, behind the scenes, is prevalent at many dance schools, in figure skating, gymnastics, pageants, and dance, presenting outdated teaching methods, bullying from teachers, belittling, demeaning, and over-sexualization. “Some of the best dancers stop dancing in their mid-teens because of the rigorous training with too much disregard for their mental well-being,” Noah said. “We aim to reverse that, and cultivate people’s love for working hard through

brightening their day with dance.”

The outreach at Maple Ridge consists of two parts - one is Moonlit Ballroom Classes for the residents. The ballroom class is modified so the residents are able to enjoy it. Verity also brings performances to Maple Ridge with the Ballet Ensemble.

The Moonlit Ballroom classes at The Old Theater in Lowell have been well-received. Verity has been offering them since August. “We have a core group of couples, with a couple of singles that regularly attend,” Noah said. “We have felt the need to add a second class for intermediate couples.”

Moonlit ballroom classes are great for adults who want to try out ballroom and maybe have

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Red Arrow

SPORTS

Wagamon commits to Broncos

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

A Lowell soccer player committing to a Division 1 school; You can count on your hand the number of times that has happened. The Red Arrows got one recently as Lowell junior, RJ Wagamon, committed to Western Michigan University last week.

“I felt comfortable there; it felt like I fit in there, and I was supposed to be there. After meeting some of the current players, I just loved how it’s a tight knit group and it all felt right. I was also pulled in WMU’s direction because of the coaching staff. I am familiar with the coaching staff, so

that definitely helped me, but they made me feel wanted,” Wagamon, who played forward for the Lowell varsity girls soccer team last season, told the *Ledger*.

Wagamon started playing soccer at the young age of four-years-old, through the YMCA, and now plays for prestigious youth club Midwest United. She earned Division 2 all-third team honors last spring for the Red Arrows, along with all-conference honors.

“I started reaching out to coaches in 2021, when I joined my current ECNL team, and it definitely helped getting coaches to

look at me. Reaching out before having the ability to have a conversation with them helped me in the long run and built smaller connections along the way. I was also reaching out to coaches whenever I traveled for soccer before June 15, but again, there wasn’t much communication back and forth. Those email’s definitely helped because it brought some coaches out to our games,” Wagamon said of the recruiting process.

She is not sure of her major yet, but wants to be involved in sports, possibly sport management, about a 10-year-old program at WMU.

The Broncos are currently 7-3-3 on the season and compete in the MAC conference, along with Eastern Michigan and Central Michigan. They have three players who played in the OK White, two from Forest Hills Central, and one from Grand Rapids Christian. Wagamon would start playing for the Broncos in the fall of 2025.

Right: Lowell junior RJ Wagamon commits to WMU



Lowell among eight schools eyeing potential conference change

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

In a surprise twist to OK Conference realignment, Lowell, along with seven other schools, could breakaway from the conference entirely. Those schools include a majority of the new OK Black conference; Lowell, Cedar Springs, Kenowa Hills, and Greenville, in what would be a sharp rebuke to the new OK Black. They are joined by Coopersville, Allendale, Sparta, and an unknown eighth school. Though the identity of that school is unknown, signs point to Northview being that eighth school, the lone GR

area school from the new OK Black not specifically named in the report.

The information broke early last week from former GR Press reporter, Lenny Padilla. The article notes that four athletic directors and superintendents confirmed the seven schools’ interest in the proposal. Only one of which was able to go on the record; that was Sparta Superintendent, Joel Stoner, who spoke on behalf of the interests of Sparta. Sparta landed in the OK silver in conference realignment, the highest-enrolled school in the league, along with

Godwin Heights, Belding, Comstock Park, Hopkins, NorthPointe Christian, Calvin Christian, and Kelloggsville. A division with their own geographic concerns.

“The O-K Red is the only one that doesn’t change,” Stoner said. “The rest of us, every five years, we’re one vote away from being shifted around.” Stoner told Padilla.

Travel was the primary concern for athletic directors, but private schools were also a concern for some athletic directors. South Christian, Unity Christian, Holland

Christian, West Catholic, Grand Rapids Catholic Central, Grand Rapids Christian, Calvin Christian, and NorthPointe Christian are the private schools in the OK Conference, although for Lowell, it is only Grand Rapids Christian who has been a consistent opponent in recent years. There were no private schools in the new OK Black.

Six schools voted against the original realignment that sent Lowell to the OK Black, along with Kenowa Hills, Northview, Greenville, Cedar Springs, Muskegon, Reeths-Puffer, and Mona Shores. Lowell, then under the guidance of now retired athletic director, Dee

Crowley, was one of those six votes citing the concern of travel to the Muskegon area, along with a bus driver shortage, as the primary concern.

“For Greenville, how is it sensible to drive to Muskegon?” Stoner said. “I can see why the Muskegon kids wouldn’t want to be driving all this way either. How can we have our kids driving an hour away each way? Hopefully, people can see the rationale in that,” Stoner said to Padilla.

The new conference would form a suburban league that would be incredibly balanced socio-economically. It is demographics, like income, that have proven to matter

more in competition than even enrollment, although enrollment is, of course, a huge factor in win-loss percentage based on historical data of Lowell sports teams. Travel in the new league would also be greatly improved, with Allendale as the one primary outlier.

Though this is just in discussion, and could not become reality, it is an interesting situation that has developed for the Red Arrows, whose athletic conference has remained quite steady for nearly four decades.

Lowell High School athletic officials could not comment on this story at this time.

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Football falls at FHN

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

A slow start ultimately doomed the Lowell football team in a road-loss to Forest Hills Northern, last Friday, by a score of 23-20.

The Huskies, with two conference losses to Byron Center and FHC, came in under the radar at 4-2 after the Red Arrows had an emotional win at Byron Center the week before. That, and a cold, rainy, dreary game on the road, made it a tough one for Lowell.

FHN jumped out to a 10-0 lead before Lowell responded in the second quarter on a Nick Williams touchdown catch. The Red

Arrows aired it out their next possession, and Jackson Reisbig hit Xavier Young for an 84-yard touchdown pass to take a 14-10 lead into the break. Up 20-10, thanks to a Reisbig quarterback keeper, the Red Arrows were relatively in control.

Northern would score a touchdown only for the extra point to go awry. Lowell came up with the ball and looked to return in for a score, but the ball was called dead. In high school you cannot return an extra point try for two points ,regardless.

That’s when mother nature made her presence known and a wet slippery ball caused a Lowell

fumbled snap. The Huskies took advantage to make it a 23-20 game.

On 4th and inches, looking to run out the clock, FHN would go for the QB sneak. The QB sneak in the NFL right now is being popularized for being impossible to stop. Lowell would stop it, however, giving their offense one last shot at a game-winning drive.

The Red Arrows would be stopped on 4th and inches though, and FHN was able to run out the clock. The Huskies and Red Arrows both went to 5-2. Lowell is at home this week for homecoming against FHC.

Red Arrow

-SOCCER-

SPORTS

Soccer takes down Eagles in conference tournament

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

With postseason soccer upon us, that means the magic of the upset looms large over state tournament brackets. Lowell got one of their own, knocking off top-ten Grand Rapids Christian in the first round of the OK White Conference Tournament.

The Eagles held a 1-0 lead at halftime in front of their home crowd. Soccer, though, is a funny game; one team can dominate possession, shots, corners, but the only thing that matters at the end of the day is the number of balls that go into the back of the net. Lowell is a team that can hang with any other,

their ability to score from longer range makes them a dangerous team to play against. That long ball made a difference in the second half.

A long ball from the Red Arrows, fell to Bryce Thompson, who put the ball in the upper left corner to get Lowell on the scoreboard, making it 1-1. The game would go onto overtime, two ten-minute periods, then if the score was still tied, penalty kicks. In the second half of overtime, Todd Parcheta connected with a long ball that also hit the upper left corner, which would be the game winner.

It was a big win for the Red Arrows as the Eagles came into the game ranked

sixth in the state in Division 2. The Red Arrows would fall to FHC in the semifinals and competed against Byron Center on Monday night in the last round of the conference tournament.

Lowell will head to districts this week where they will start the postseason on the road at East Grand Rapids on Thursday. The Red Arrows and Pioneers drew 0-0 earlier this season. The winner will face-off against the winner of Greenville and Forest Hills Central in the district semifinals.



The Lowell soccer team after upsetting GR Christian.

Harriers host Jamboree #3 Volleyball splits tournament matches

Submitted by Coach Paul Judd
and Coach Clay VanderWarf

The Red Arrows hosted the OK White Jamboree on a tough Lowell course. The lady harriers finished in sixth place in the meet, which was won by GR Christian with FHC and EGR completing the top three. Leading the Arrows was Claire O’Boyle and Evie Deur, who finished in 22nd and 33rd with times of 22:13 and 23:00. Audrey Latchaw and Mia Vonderheide came in next

for Lowell, finishing in 34th and 48th with times of 23:04 and 24:13. Closing out the varsity were Olivia Lothian, finishing 49th in 24:14 and Brooklyn Jackson finishing 65th in 25:07.

The boys team took fifth place at their home course on Wednesday. Grand Rapids Christian won with 37 points, followed by Byron Center, 60 points, and East Grand Rapids, 78 points.

Cooper Byrne was

the first Arrow in at 18.08, earning 21st place, followed by Marshall Huhn, 25th, 18.33 and Drew Swayze, 27th, 18.38. Not far behind were Mason Saylor, 30th, 18.45 and Colin Stawasz, 32nd, 18.49. Wyatt Remar and Paul Fowler completed the varsity lineup with places of 47th, 19.42 and 50th, 19.55 respectively. The Red Arrows next week will be Friday at the Kent Ottawa Invitational at South Christian High School.

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

Following a 3-1 conference loss to FHN last week, the Red Arrow volleyball team traveled to Lakewood on Saturday for a tournament. There, they split four games to go 2-2 on the day.

The Red Arrows fell to Three Rivers 1-2 (25-22, 16-25, 10-15) and BC Harper Creek 0-2 (21-25, 20-25). Lowell bounced back with 2-0 wins over Marshall (25-19, 25-14) and Hamilton (25-18, 26-24).

A Piper Risdon block got the Lowell scoring started against Hamilton in a back-and-forth first set. Risdon also recorded an ace to give Lowell an 18-14 lead late in that first set.

Braxcynn Baker recorded an ace to give Lowell a 23-19 lead late in the second half; the Hawkeyes closed the gap, but the Red Arrows secured the win with back-to-back points.

Baker, Jordyn McClymont, and Natalie Cornell combined for 13 kills in the win. Rylie Barriger added six digs. Against Marshall, Lowell was led by Risdon with 12 kills. Amaya Jackson recorded six digs. Lowell hosts Grand Rapids Christian this Thursday.



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Are we living in a blame culture?

I had an interesting conversation recently with someone who has differing views. Part of what we discussed was the change in our culture, personal responsibility, and blame culture. The question on my mind after the conversation, was “are we currently living in a blame culture?”

What is a Blame Culture?

Blame culture is when people, or groups of people, are frequently singled-out and blamed, criticized and faulted for mistakes and errors. Some might say it’s happening in our current culture and can be seen in politics, education, recent significant events, and within various ethnic, and gender groups.

Possible examples of blame culture

One of the things I mentioned during my conversation is my belief in personal responsibility. I noted as adults, I believe each of us is responsible for our own choices and decisions. It may not be easy but I feel we can change our situation and correct mistakes. I’m talking in general terms, as there are probably situations that can’t be changed. In those cases, we can change our attitude toward our current situation to one of acceptance, and work to be content with what we have and where we are in life. Anyway, I wasn’t trying to blame individuals for being in a disadvantaged position,

but instead, show that in many situations, they have the power to change their circumstances. This, in turn, helps build resilience, enhance decision-making skills and so much more. The person I spoke with seems to feel this attitude is part of the blame culture.

Is part of the blame culture an underlying struggle with what we perceive as the unjust actions of others, or the unfairness of a situation, in general? If that’s the case, then how do we end unfairness when we all have varied beliefs, values, perceptions, situations, and experiences? What’s unjust to one person may be acceptable to another. To clarify, I’m not talking about life and death situations or situations involving serious harm to others. I’m also not talking about situations that happened before my life began because I can’t change the past. My focus is on the here and now. If a person’s perceptions are “their” reality, then how to we make things fair for everyone? Is it even

possible?

A professor of psychology, Gail Sahar, wrote a book, *Blame and Political Attitudes: The Psychology of America’s Culture War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), which looks at how the perception of blame can fuel deep political division. After reading some of her findings, I think it translates to other areas outside of the political arena. In a recent interview she had in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, on June 21, 2023, the author notes doing a great deal of research in social psychology, which seems to show that individuals want to understand the causes of events, especially negative ones. She feels the causes lead us to hold individuals or entities responsible (blaming) and influences our emotions, attitudes, and actions. She also looked at how one’s worldviews and culture play a role in placing blame for social problems in certain ways. She went on to say “that blame perceptions underlie many current topics that have become lightning rods for debate”. She

mentions police violence, some educational hot topics, cancel culture, and other movements. She further suggested that “Politicians, themselves, and the increasingly politicized media, are fueling the fire. Each side, politicians who are Democrats and those who are Republicans, have moved farther to the left or right, respectively. There is less overlap in the views of political elites on many issues. And gone are the days of the media trying to take an objective perspective. As we often observe, many media outlets lean strongly in one direction or the other and spend a good deal of coverage attacking the other side. Do you agree with her conclusions?”

While these are just a few examples of possible blame culture, I’m sure there are just as many examples that would show the opposite. I know from my work that it’s human nature to focus on, and be more accepting of, what supports our personal beliefs, while ignoring or disagreeing with things that don’t support them. Due to my work, I research, verify, analyze and

process beliefs, behaviors, etc., to try and see all sides and underlying causes. I’ve relayed in many articles that thoughts and beliefs are not facts but we often treat them as a hard truth. I think much of the blame culture could be eliminated, if we work to be open to alternative viewpoints and try to see value in them. I’m not saying, automatically adopt others views as your own, but instead, try not stamping them as right or wrong.

Takeaway

I don’t know if I really answered any questions, including my own, or just created more. What I hope is that we all do the best we can to be content and happy while doing as little harm to others as possible. I wish I could say ‘no harm’, but it seems inevitable that we will hurt others, even when trying not to. Maybe shifting our focus from the problem to solutions will help us avoid getting caught up in the blame culture. This article is mainly based on my viewpoint/musings and is for informational purposes only. Be safe and well!

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Financial Focus

With Christopher C. Godbold
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When should you sell investments?

If you’re a long-term investor, your portfolio may stay fairly stable over time. However, that doesn’t mean you will never sell any investments. But when should you sell — and why?

Here are some scenarios to consider:

If an investment has consistently underperformed — For one reason or another, some investments may not live up to your expectations. Rather than holding these investments in the hope that they will eventually show consistently positive returns, you might be better off selling them and using the proceeds to buy other investments that could help you make progress toward your goals. Keep in mind, though, that short-term price swings are inevitable for virtually all investments, so you may not want to sell an investment after just a few price drops, as it may still have strong fundamentals and good prospects.

If the investment itself has changed — The nature of some investments, such as stocks, can change over time. Stocks represent

companies, and companies can evolve and adapt — or not. So, you may own shares in a company whose management has changed or whose products are less competitive than they once were. If this company no longer seems like a sound investment, you may consider selling your shares and moving on.

If an investment is “redundant” — Over time, you may have added investments that are similar to others you already own. If you do have too many investments that are alike, you risk not having a fully diversified portfolio, and while diversification can’t always protect against all losses or guarantee profits, it can help reduce the impact of market volatility on your holdings. Consequently, you might want to sell an investment that may now be “redundant” to your portfolio and replace it with another one that could boost your diversification efforts.

If an investment takes up too much space in your portfolio — If you bought an investment years ago, and it’s grown substantially in value, it could eventually

take up more space in your portfolio than you had intended, which could expose you to more risk than you’d like — because too much of any single investment may leave you more vulnerable to market downturns. Of course, if the investment is still appropriate for your needs, and still has a good outlook, you may not want to totally liquidate it, but you could consider scaling back on the shares you own.

If your own needs have changed — You originally created your investment mix to help you reach certain goals, such as a comfortable retirement. And during much of your working life, you could possibly afford to invest primarily for growth, accepting the risk that comes along with that approach, as you knew you’d have time to potentially overcome the short-term volatility that’s part of investing. But as you near retirement, you may want to lower your risk level. Consequently, you could decide to sell some of your growth-oriented investments and move the money into income-producing ones. However, even during retirement, you’ll still need your portfolio to provide some growth opportunities to help you ahead of inflation.

Generally speaking, you may not want to do a lot of selling (or buying) of investments once you’ve built a portfolio that’s appropriate for your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. But if you are going to sell investments, make sure you do so for the right reasons.

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~ Old Sam Honored

by Martha Hayden

A Civil War horse, Old Sam honored

A wise horse, Old Sam, who had served in the Civil War, now has plaques and a grave marker in Coldwater, Michigan, where he'd been born. Old Sam's story is one of dedication and bravery. How did he become a Civil War hero? Where is Old Sam buried? His burial is a captivating story, too! Come along with Chuck, my husband, and I, as we learn Old Sam's legend!

Old Sam - the early years

Sam was born on April 4, 1849, at The Abraham Fisk 160 acre horse farm. O.B. Clark and Henry Clay Lewis co-owned this

assigned Cyrus Orlando Loomis to command the militia squad, which was given the name, "The Loomis Battery." Right away, Cyrus enlisted Old Sam for duty. Cyrus knew that Old Sam was used to screeching whistles and breaks from trains, as well as the crowded chaos of the streets. The Loomis Battery would be Old Sam's band of brothers.

Training

Old Sam had been one of two hundred horses from Coldwater, Michigan, who had been donated to the war effort. Most horses

four miles in just twenty minutes. Old Sam had "crested Baker's Hill and swung the gun into position."

These men had graciously shared their rations of hard tack and sow belly with their dedicated counterpart. These extra calories helped sustain Old Sam during the extended hikes and battles that had lasted for days.

Even with all the losses already endured, Chickamauga had been recorded as their worst battle. Many men, and more than fifty horses, had sadly,



had opened, "Sam's ears perked up, as he seemed to recognize his surroundings. The crowd waited with bated breath, wondering what Sam would do. As he approached Division and Chicago Streets, the old war veteran was turned loose to test his memory. He looked down Chicago Street, as if to get his bearings, and then, turning the opposite

be permitted to be buried next to his fallen comrades in Oak Grove Cemetery.

A plan for a secret burial

The militia group had gathered at Henry and Lucia Clark's home on Division Street. How could they give their loyal friend a proper burial? The men felt that Old Sam deserved

secure a large enough grave in the not-yet-frozen ground. Next, with great care, the men laid blankets over the fresh soil and gently rolled Old Sam into his final resting place. After filling in the grave, they spread dried leaves over the black dirt. Then, with their heads hung low and tears in their eyes, one man fired the final salute and a bugler played taps.



Old Sam had pulled this Parrot Gun (front). The Caisson (behind) held the gun powder and cannon balls.

direction, walked leisurely up the street until he came opposite the hotel. Then with a nicker of pure delight, he whirled on his heels, whisked down the street and down the alley to the old barn and into his own stall. Old Sam was home again and he knew it."

Memorial Day parades and reunions

Old Sam spent his days in the green pastures at Fisk Stables. He proudly flared his nostrils when reenacting the firing of his cannon at The Loomis Battery reunions. At Memorial Day parades, which began on May 30, 1868, Old Sam would plod proudly down the center of the street. He was accompanied by men dressed in blue to honor those militia members who hadn't made it home.

Old Sam's passing

At 27-years-old, Old Sam's strong, yet tender heart, stopped beating. The chill in the air on November 8, 1876, ran through the men of The Loomis Battery, as they realized that their devoted companion wouldn't

full military honors, after faithfully serving four years in "The War Between The States."

The Oak Grove Cemetery sexton conveniently informed the clan that both he and Sheriff Culp would be out-of-town on business. 'Only a night watchman would be on duty.'

Lucia Clark later learned how the men had carried out their secret plan under the dim light of a quarter moon. First, a small group had dug an unauthorized grave in the Oak Grove Cemetery. Simultaneously, one person had created a diversion by releasing Floyd Brown's cows. Rounding-up the herd had sufficiently stolen the attention of the on-duty night watchman, as well as several area farmers.

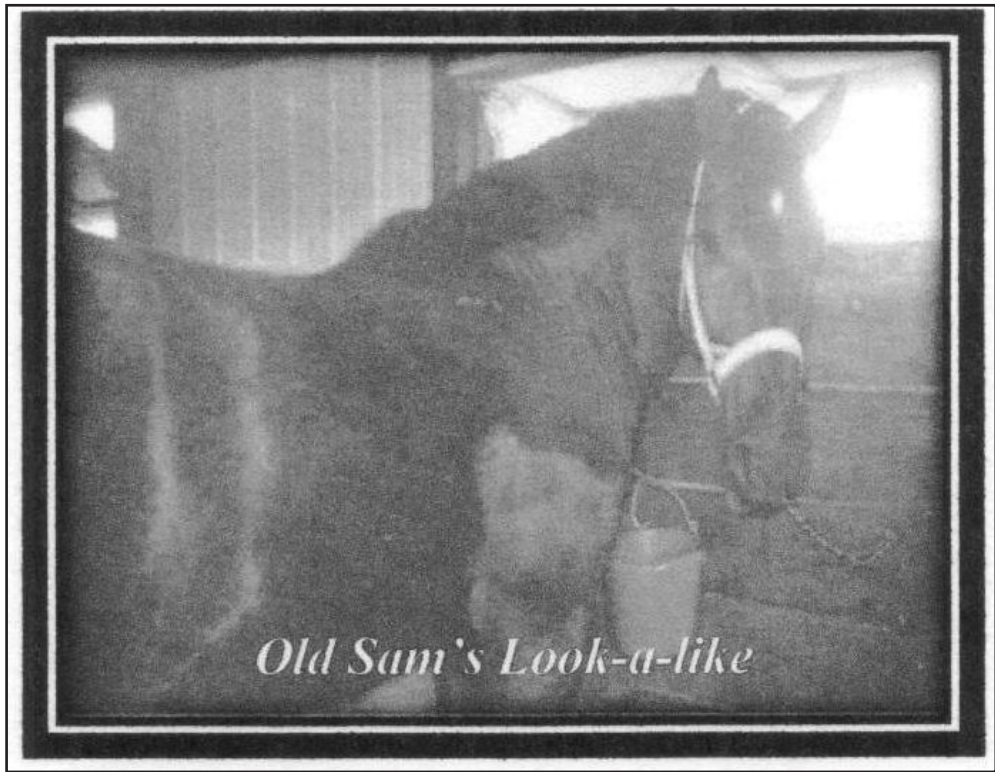
Then, using a pair of draft horses the men crept quietly, with Old Sam in a wheeled cart. They traversed two miles along Chicago Road from the Fisk Farm to the Oak Grove Cemetery. This silent and slow parade gave the diggers time to

A marker now stands over this secret grave

Settled next to his Civil War comrades, Old Sam's previously secret grave, is now proudly marked with a proper gravestone. The flowers and coins left on top of his stone let us know that we will all remember Old Sam and the 3.5 million horses and mules who had died serving in The Civil War.

Recalling our country's turbulent past gives me pause for the current divisions within our nation. I hold concern that we have yet to learn from our mistakes. However, seeing these solemn displays for Old Sam brings me hope that we will remember sacrifices that have been made in our history and move forward in a positive direction. Old Sam served his men and his country well.

Resources:
Michigan Day By Day Article
Old Sam's Facebook Page



Old Sam's look-a-like from Old Sam's Facebook page.

famous breeding business and training facility. Old Sam had been a strong, smart and gentle draft horse, bred for hefty work. His occupation had been pulling a streetcar from the train station to the Southern Michigan Hotel, owned by Mr. Loomis. Old Sam had been a dependable, friendly sight in the community of Coldwater, Michigan. Old Sam's stall and pasture had been located behind the Southern Michigan Hotel. Cyrus Orlando Loomis, the hotel owner's son, had worked in the these stables with Old Sam. Cyrus Orlando Loomis had also been a prominent artillery militia volunteer.

Old Sam - put into service

As northern and southern states' tensions loomed, Gov. Austin Blair

had aged three to five years, where Old Sam had already celebrated his twelfth birthday when he'd been drafted into service.

After being trained at Fort Wayne in Detroit, the militia had been sent into battle. On May 28, 1861, Old Sam had been assigned to pull Parrot Gun #1.

Civil War battles

Over the next four years, Old Sam had served in at least twelve battles. Thirty-three of Old Sam's stall-mates had fallen in Perrysville, KY. Shortly after, another forty harnessed horses had made their last stand at Stone River, TN.

The militia men had grown fond of Old Sam, who had a sense of where the gun needed to be. On their way to Bowling Green, KY, the troop accomplished the amazing feat by rushing

expired. Five of the six guns had been captured by the enemy. Only Old Sam had knowingly pulled his Parrot cannon back into a safe position, saving it from beings stolen.

Even with constant hunger and painful injuries, Old Sam had persevered with his duties! The Loomis Battery had suffered a total of thirty-seven militia men, giving their ultimate sacrifice, along with 199 horses. Old Sam was the only surviving horse from their troop. On July 28, 1865, 158 years ago, the Loomis Battery had been decommissioned.

Old Sam comes home

Old Sam had arrived home at the Coldwater train station, where hundreds of people and a band had lined the streets. According to the newspaper account, when the box car door



Old Sam's gravesite has finally been adorned with a marker, which was first photographed on July 31, 2011.

FUN PAGE

SUDOKU

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

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 race car driver born in North Carolina on October 10, 1974. I followed my legendary father into the racing business, but made a name for myself by winning the Daytona 500 twice in my career. I remain one of the most popular drivers of all time.

Answer: Dale Earnhardt, Jr.

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			

ANIMAL WELFARE WORD SEARCH

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

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

SUMMERTIME WORD SEARCH	COOLING ENJOYMENT	POOL RELAXATION	SUNLIGHT SUNSCREEN
AUGUST	FAMILY	REST	SWIMSUIT
BACKYARD	FAN	RETREAT	ULTRAVIOLET
BARBECUE	GRILL	SEASIDE	VACATION
BEACH	HOT	SHADE	WARMTH
	JULY	SUMMER	

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to animal care.

S R U E E C

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

Answer: Rescue

CLUES ACROSS	55. Capital of Qatar	Greek alphabet
1. Information	56. Portable bed	27. Very long period of time
5. Seaport (abbr.)	57. Afflicted	28. Gas usage measurement
8. Agricultural disease (abbr.)	59. Lying down	29. North American native people
11. Riding horses	60. Midway between northeast and east	34. It says "moo"
13. Boxing's GOAT	61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation	35. Folk singer Di Franco
14. Hurt or discomfort	62. Inflamed	36. Resinlike substance of certain insects
15. A small sharp knife to trim vegetables	63. Soviet Socialist Republic	37. Residue
16. A beaver builds one	64. Impudence	39. Grand homes
17. Horizontal passage into a mine		40. Popinjays
18. Self-immolation by fire rituals	CLUES DOWN	41. Man who behaves dishonorably
20. Chain bar with lots of games (abbr.)	1. A way to fish	42. Figures
21. Goo Goo Dolls' hit	2. Greek mythological figure	44. One who watches over children
22. Agreeable	3. Scarlett's home	45. Expressed pleasure
25. In an early way	4. Assist	46. No longer living
30. In a way, struck	5. More doleful	47. Hebrew calendar month
31. It's there in the morning	6. Premeditated	48. Part of the ear
32. County in the S. Pacific	7. Dish featuring minced food	51. Swiss river
33. Central Florida city	8. San Diego ballplayer	52. Prejudice
38. Numbers cruncher	9. Eight	53. Italian Island
41. Mexican beers	10. Unwelcome picnic guests	54. Resist authority (slang)
43. Lawyers say you can indict one	12. Human gene	58. Criticize
45. Capital of South Australia	14. Bucket	
47. Wings	19. Make full	
49. Drug used to treat HIV/AIDS	23. Dirt	
50. Fencing sword	24. Person cited as ideal example	
	25. A part of (abbr.)	
	26. The 17th letter of the	

Fish & Chicken Express catfish fillet

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

“Catfish” is one of the more entertaining terms to perform a web search on. You might come across the terms “catfisting” or “noodling,” which refer to the practice of sticking your hands into mud holes in Southern rivers, in hopes of grabbing a catfish by the gills. This particular rabbit hole might lead to a weekend binge of the Animal Planet series, *Hillbilly Handfishin’* and a few laughs at the expense of a Boston woman surprised that Oklahoma has “bugs the size of lobstahs!” You may also encounter “catfishing”, an online dating practice introduced to most Americans by Nev Schulman in the 2010 documentary, *Catfish*. In the first season of the series that followed, Nev caught up with a woman named Kim from Alto, Michigan, who worked at the Ice Cream Caboose, where many Lowell residents have dined over the years. Much less often will you find insightful articles on the origin of fried catfish among slaves from West Africa in the American South. Like so many great American

cuisines - barbecue, lobster, and caviar, for example - fried catfish found its origins within impoverished communities before ending up on menus at steakhouses.

It is better to search for “Fish & Chicken Express” instead, even though the search results are minimal. Using this search string, you can find the address (608 W. Main Street) and phone number (616-897-3474) for Fish & Chicken Express in Lowell, and more five-star ratings than any other restaurant you have ever seen across Facebook, Yelp, and Google. Following the closing of Fry Daddy’s, due to the retirement of the previous owner, Fish & Chicken Express has been a staple of Lowell cuisine for just over a year now, which means that the acclaim it has acquired is only from the limited few prone to leaving reviews over the past few months. Fish & Chicken Express is hot, and there is no sign of it cooling down any time soon.

True to its name, Fish & Chicken Express is the go-to restaurant for both fried fish and fried chicken, though the latter is limited to chicken strips and wings,

not legs, thighs, and breasts. One of the most popular dishes, the Chicken Bowl, features fried chicken tenders over a bed of french fries, with a choice between three homemade sauces, buffalo, BBQ, and smack sauce. Though all are delicious, the smack sauce is certainly the most talked about, making the Chicken Bowl with smack sauce the equivalent of McDonald’s Big Mac at Fish & Chicken Express - this is the entree every chicken lover should order, at least if they cannot decide what other entrees to try out. However, the best dinner to order, as the title has already spoiled, is the fried catfish fillet.

As many have noted in their reviews, it is uncommon to find high-quality fried fish outside of the South. Many of the best fish fry traditions either never made it to Northern climes or never took-off for some reason, like fresh fish availability or low receptivity to authentic fish flavors. Casey Cole noted on Facebook that Fish & Chicken Express is the “best seafood since we left Florida!!!” It definitely tastes like the type of food



The catfish fillet at Fish & Chicken Express.

one would get in Texas or the Carolinas, not Michigan, even though the pleasant peninsula state has access to some of the best freshwater fish in the world. However, even in places with rich, fried seafood traditions, there is a limited window where fried catfish tastes good. For a few minutes, it is hot as lava, and any attempt to eat, will leave a tongue seared and dead to the flavor of the fish, but if you wait too long, the fish is often limp and embarrassing. This is not the case at Fish & Chicken Express, which features the rare, fried catfish fillet that is still good the next day. This is because the fish is fresh, it is fried in front of customers, and the delicious, seasoned breading is just a little thicker than the thin, almost absent breading most folks are used to on their fried catfish.

Fish & Chicken Express is a minimalist operation - just a couple of employees take the orders, make the food, and provide excellent customer service, and this is smart. By lowering overhead costs, the restaurant delivers huge portions of the highest-quality food in town, at some of the lowest prices folks will ever see. The \$11.99 chicken bowl could easily make for four fantastic dinners for an individual whose portioning skills exceed the temptation to eat the whole thing in one sitting, and the \$5.99 catfish

fillet is ample enough to leave leftovers. The food itself is all the advertising budget a restaurant could ever need, as those who have dined at Fish & Chicken Express come back often and recommend the food to everyone they know. There is still such a small town feel to the restaurant that frequent diners have a level of loyalty to Fish & Chicken Express, similar to if they were the owners themselves.

The biggest challenge of dining at Fish & Chicken Express is deciding whether to stick with one of the restaurant staples you and your friends have enjoyed in the past, or take a chance with something on the menu that you have never tried, like the cod, ocean perch, white fish, smelt, or jumbo shrimp. There are combo-deals that make the decision easy. If you loved the wings last time, you can always get the three wings and three perch combo deal with fries and a drink. However, at some point, you just have to buckle-down and admit that you are going to have to come back to Fish & Chicken Express a couple times each month, maybe even once a week, just to have the opportunity to try everything out and decide, once and for all, what you think is the best item on the menu.

There is no subterfuge at Fish & Chicken Express. Nev Schulman is not about to do a reverse-image search

and reveal that you were, in fact, eating dogfish, or clownfish, which, it seems clear, would probably be just as delicious prepared by the folks at Fish & Chicken Express. What you see is what you get. The menu is simple, the food is cooked right before your eyes, and the quality holds-up to the rave reviews you will find across the internet. Though more people talk about the chicken, which is effortlessly better than the wings and tenders found at most other eateries, people who love seafood swear by the fish. It is an absolute rarity to have fried catfish this good in the state of Michigan, and outside of greater Detroit, where soul food is so much more common, to boot. When you find something like this, an absolute unicorn, it becomes all the more important to preserve it, and diners can do so by dining at Fish & Chicken Express often, letting the owners know what they love, and, more importantly, convincing others to eat there, as well. Flavor on its own is not enough to weather a recession, but loyalty, free advertisement, and a constant flow of cash into a great restaurant like this - that is what keeps the flavor coming in good times and bad.

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