



page 6

Movie Review



page 4

Restless Viking



page 14

Lowell Area Schools Sports



page 10 & 11

\$1.00



Christmas Through Lowell is this weekend

By Emma Palova
contributing writer

A unique holiday experience awaits shoppers from all over Michigan and neighboring states, as homes and businesses put out their best for the 31st annual Christmas Through Lowell (CTL) this weekend, starting on Nov. 17 through Nov.19.

The CTL tour, featuring more than 300 artists and crafters, covers the Greater Lowell Area, from Red Barn Market north of Lowell to Dairy Discovery on 84th Street in Alto. The event goes east to Kaufman Farm’s Wreath Workshop on Darby Road by Saranac, and west to Studio Downes on Downes Street.

New participating business locations include: Green Acres, Rogers Neighborhood Realty, West Michigan Mortgage, Four Acre Freedom, Showboat Spirits & Fine Wine, and Big Boiler Brewing, hosting crafters in the upstairs banquet room. The Lowell Showboat VI is returning



Christmas Through Lowell Banner Nov.17, 18 &19

to CTL, but this time as a host location to a group of exclusive artisans.

“Christmas Through Lowell shoppers are captivated by Lowell’s charm, an expansive selection of décor and gifts, and a whole new Christmas shopping tradition tends to take root,” Shannon Kennedy, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, said.

A new Christmas Through Lowell Guidebook is available as a digital flipbook, making the ability to view the guide on your smartphone easier.

There are 68 participating locations in this year’s CTL, which is an increase over last year and higher than the pre-Covid,

Christmas thru Lowell, continued page 8

Local realtor featured on HGTV’s *House Hunters*

By Justin Tiemeyer
contributing writer

Kim Southwick is a realtor operating out of the Ada office of Five Star Real Estate. “I work from Lowell to



Local realtor, Kim Southwick, on the set of HGTV’s *House Hunters*. The episode titled, “Trying to Downsize in Grand Rapids” was filmed in July and first aired in November.

the Lakeshore,” Southwick said, “and I have sold many homes in Lowell, especially in the Eastbrook development, Harvest Meadows, and Whispering Hills areas.”

Does Southwick look familiar? Perhaps it is because of her Instagram presence, or her Facebook page, or maybe it is because she was featured on a recent episode of the HGTV reality real estate series, *House Hunters*. Airing for the first time on Sunday, November 12, at 10:00 pm, “Trying to Downsize in Grand Rapids” is the seventh episode of the 242nd season of *House Hunters*.

No, *House Hunters* did not drop the same year as the Articles of Confederation in 1781. Starting with the show’s third season in 2001, HGTV had to shoot multiple seasons per year just to meet viewer demand for real estate shows. As such, the number 242 is more of a measure of interest than tenure.

Though the episode featuring Southwick aired

Local realtor, continued page 2

Grand Rapids Public Museum celebrates launch expansion project

The Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM), a cornerstone of Grand Rapids for nearly 170 years, celebrated the kick-off of the construction for its long-awaited expansion. The \$50 million expansion project will expand access, experiences, accessibility, and sustainability through multiple enhancements to the Museum and its prominent space on the Grand River at Pearl Street.

Grand Rapids Mayor, Rosalynn Bliss; City Manager, Mark Washington; State Senator, Mark Huizenga; State Representative, Carol Glanville; and Chair of the Kent County Board Of Commissioners, Stan Stek, led Museum officials, and those in attendance, for a ceremonial signing of a section of sheet piling that will be used in the construction process to commemorate the beginning of construction.

“Our Museum is the steward of many of our city’s historical and cultural assets,” said Grand Rapids City Manager, Mark Washington. “These assets are not only housed in the Museum and its archives, but include locations, from the banks of the Grand River, to the historic Heritage Hill, to the Veen Observatory in Lowell, to the experiences in the southeast side of our city. This expansion will revitalize our river’s edge for all to have a better understanding of how the waterway and Museum have played an important role in our city’s history.”

The project prioritizes riverfront accessibility by introducing advanced stair and ramp systems that exceed ADA standards. It will also seamlessly link a 7.5-mile urban trail to prominent

Museum, continued page 9

Local realtor, continued

in November, it was shot in July, during the hottest month in human history. Southwick said the cast and crew were melting during the shoot. “I haven’t seen the show yet,” Southwick said, “but I’m afraid I’m going to look like I’ve just run a marathon.”

Southwick was required to sign a nondisclosure agreement (NDA), so no spoilers, but here is the description of the episode on the HGTV website: “A Michigander is hoping to downsize from her previous home that had a headache’s heap of upkeep. She’s zeroed in on Grand Rapids for its exciting city life, but she’s also tempted

to head out to the suburbs for the familiar lure of space.”

Southwick’s *House Hunters* journey started when a producer emailed her last January looking for a specific storyline and client profile. At first, she was skeptical of a scam. Why would someone from HGTV reach out to her out-of-the-blue? Ultimately, she set the email aside, because none of her clients met the description of what the producer was looking for.

Months later, Southwick met a client who reminded her of the opportunity. Her client didn’t fit the description, but her story was compelling. She was a recently divorced woman looking to

downsize to a smaller home. Moreover, she was young, fun, and cute, and Southwick thought she would make for good TV. Southwick has no problem performing in front of a camera. She has posted a number of videos to her Instagram account, which is likely where the producer found her in the first place, but she also worked on camera for the News 8 morning show shortly after she graduated from college.

While Southwick’s NDA prevents her from talking about production details, she was able to share some general thoughts. “I think that people would be surprised as to how much time is put into shooting one half-hour episode,” she said, “because I think there were five days of filming, and they were very long days.”

When she worked for News 8, she performed on live television, which meant that it was a quick shot, and then you were done. Working with HGTV, she spent much more time on-screen, and she was present as the camera crew filmed long-establishing shots and everything else, as well. In film, there is a concept called the shooting ratio, which compares total hours of footage to the amount of footage in a final product. Visual anthropologist, Kerim Friedman, broke down the concept of shooting ratio on the London School of Economics and Political Science Blog.

“For a Hollywood film, where the scenes are planned in advance, this might be four to one,” Friedman wrote. “That is, shooting four hours of footage for every hour of the final film. The shooting ratio on a documentary film is likely to be more like 60:1, one hour of footage for each minute used in the final film.”

Presumably, with a tight HGTV crew using the tried and true methodology that has produced nearly 2,000 half-hour episodes in the past 25 years, the number is somewhere in-between.

While Southwick could not share addresses or even neighborhoods for the three houses featured on her *House Hunters* episode, she was able to share that two were in Grand Rapids, and a third was just north of town.

Southwick joins a growing number of Lowell and Lowell-adjacent neighbors who have found themselves on reality TV shows. Most recently, Lowell’s own Lindsey Garcia, aka LVNDR, auditioned on NBC’s *The Voice*, singing the Drake song “Hotline Bling.” In years past, an Alto native, named Kim, was featured on MTV’s *Catfish*, with reference to the Ice Cream Caboose, no less), and Ada resident, Stephanie Davison’s, courtship with Belizean paramour, Ryan Carr, became public knowledge during the eighth season of *90 Day Fiancé*.

Now that Southwick’s episode has aired, she is back in action, finding homes for West Michigan clients. While Southwick sells houses throughout West Michigan, she is fond of selling houses in Lowell because of the high-quality school system and community-minded neighbors who are always ready



Local realtor, Kim Southwick, joins the crew for HGTV’s House Hunters in a real estate reality TV selfie.



Grand Rapids can be seen in the background of this production photo for HGTV’s House Hunters, and those who move in close and squint, can see local realtor, Kim Southwick, in the reflection of the glass.

to help. If Lowell is not on the radar of a client, she puts Lowell on their radar. “I love what I do,” Southwick said. “I love helping people on their journey, and I consider it an honor to do so.”

The *House Hunters* episode, featuring Kim Southwick, first aired Sunday, November 12 at 10:00 pm, but those who missed it can catch it on the Discovery

Plus app. For those looking to work with Southwick on buying or selling a house, there are a number of ways to reach her—on Instagram at soldwithkim, on her Facebook page Kim Southwick - Realtor, Grand Rapids, on her website www.kimsouthwick.com, via email at kim@kimsouthwick.com, or by phone at 616-309-6121.

MI Tobacco Quitlink celebrates 20 years

This November, the Michigan Tobacco Quitlink is celebrating 20 years of helping Michiganders become tobacco-free.

Tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in Michigan. Approximately 70 percent of all adult smokers report wanting to quit, but fewer than one in 10 succeed in quitting for good, without the assistance of coaching and/or nicotine replacement therapy. The Michigan Tobacco Quitlink is a free and confidential service, that offers several

different programs designed to help Michiganders quit tobacco, based on the level of support needed, including phone and online coaching.

“We know the use of tobacco takes a significant toll on people’s health,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, Chief Medical Executive. “Quitting can be difficult and the Quitlink offers Michiganders the resources and support they need to successfully quit tobacco and begin living healthier lifestyles.”

The Michigan Tobacco Quitlink, formerly the

Tobacco Quitline, was established in October 2003 as a pilot project for Upper Peninsula residents. In 2004, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) received a grant to expand the service statewide.

In 2022, 27 percent of Tobacco Quitlink phone coaching participants quit using tobacco. However, Quitlink enrollees, who participated in four or

Quitlink, continued page 12

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Council enjoys a pro-parks agenda

By Justin Niemeyer
contributing writer

The Lowell City Council met on Monday, November 6, 2023, at 7:00 pm, for a regular council meeting. With six brief items on the docket, the meeting was not lengthy, clocking in at just under 45 minutes.

The first concern, which was not on the docket at all, was a statement by Pastor Josh Langdon of Bible Believers Church. Langdon was concerned with the council’s disinterest in developing standards for acceptable conduct for Riverwalk events, following complaints about Lowell Pride 2023. After accusing Mayor Mike DeVore and Council member, Leah Groves, of a bias against biblical Christianity, making claims of abuse against the entirety of the LGBT+ community, Langdon concluded by quoting two Bible verses.

Public comment is placed at the beginning of each council meeting, and council comment, at the end, to discourage argument during the deliberative process of local law. As a result, by the time council member, Groves had an opportunity to respond to the accusation against her, Langdon had already left.

“My allyship to the LGBT+ community does not make me a biased council member,” council member Groves responded. “It makes me a human rights activist. Being an advocate for fair and equal living for all is the very reason I ran for council; why I believe the Lowell citizens voted for me.”

If it was Langdon’s

attempt to deride sitting council members the day before city council elections, it was unsuccessful. Both Mayor DeVore, who Langdon directly accused, and council member, Jim Salzwedel, who Langdon implicated indirectly, won reelection by a strong margin. Council members, Marty Chambers and Groves, were not up for re-election, and council member, Cliff Yankovich did not run for another term.

Resolutions 20-23 and 21-23 both addressed the addition of 990 North Washington, hereafter referred to as 848 North Washington, as that is the legal designation for the parcel. The first resolution proposed an amendment to include not only 848 North Washington, but also 846 and 1047 North Washington, as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The second resolution proposed the official annexation of 848 North Washington, currently located in Vergennes Township but adjacent to the city limits. Both resolutions passed unanimously. The annexation itself is subject to the approval of the State of Michigan.

As the third old business-line item, City Manager, Mike Burns, recommended approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Lowell Rotary Club, regarding the reconstruction of Creekside Kingdom. The Memorandum serves to clarify the roles of each entity for the duration of the project, and it,

therefore, commits Lowell Rotary to responsibility for general fundraising efforts and communications through the “Rebuild Creekside Kingdom” Facebook page, with the city pursuing DNR Passport Grant aid and taking ownership and maintenance responsibilities after the conclusion of the project.

“I love these pro-parks packets,” Mayor DeVore said. The council voted unanimously to approve the Memorandum.

The first line item of new business was a request for Los Portales Mexican Bar & Grill to be added to the Social District. The former Rio Plano Taqueria building, at 101 West Main, was recently sold to the family that runs several West Michigan restaurants, including both El Rancho and El Jalapeño in nearby Greenville. While Rio Plano had also received a Social District endorsement on their liquor license, the endorsement does not transfer with the property, so the owners of Los Portales were merely applying for the same endorsement offered their predecessors. The council approved this inclusion unanimously.

Also in new business was a request to adjust the stipend offered to planning commission members for their work, raising the rate from \$35 per meeting to \$45 per meeting. This would align the planning commission stipend with that of Lowell Light & Power board members. Earlier this year, city council members were given a similar raise, as neither group had seen a raise for quite some time. This too was approved unanimously.

Finally, City Manager Burns proposed to modify the list of observed holidays for city employees per a request from Council Member Groves, who noticed that there was no council meeting on Martin Luther King Day this year, but there was one held on Juneteenth. Council Member Groves



Council member, Leah Groves, explains that she ran for Lowell City Council in order to be an advocate for fair and equal living for all.

proposed that both federally recognized holidays have similar standards. City Manager Burns brought up three holidays for the council’s consideration. The council currently observes Martin Luther King Day, but the offices are open on that day. Neither the council nor city offices currently observe Juneteenth, and City Manager Burns also floated the idea of allowing veterans the day off on Veterans Day.

Mayor DeVore objected to the limits on Veterans Day, suggesting that they are too narrow to accommodate spouses, children, and parents of veterans. “You don’t know what people have sacrificed outside of dedicated service,” Mayor DeVore said.

Council member Salzwedel had no concerns with the holidays in question but worried that more days closed would limit city offices to being open less than 200 days a year. City Manager Burns was less concerned, as many holidays take place on days where offices are already closed. The subject was ultimately tabled to be discussed at a future meeting.

City Manager Burns did have a couple of pertinent updates. Monroe Street has been fully paved, and the next step is to stripe the adjoining parking lot.

There was a ponding issue in a couple of spots, where the contractor put too much asphalt down. The plan is to get through the winter by installing two leech stations, to catch water and direct it to the storm sewer before repavement in the spring, at no cost to the city. There was also a concern about the estimates the city had intended to send to Lowell Charter Township regarding possible water system upgrades. The estimates did not address the need for groundwater storage and places to connect generators, but City Manager Burns has added this new data to both proposals, and given the data to the city attorney, who will forward it to the township attorney. Finally, the state has some money set aside due to the state

of emergency declaration for Kent County following the August 24 storm, but the city cannot access this money until the federal government decides whether they would like to declare a federal state of emergency, as well.

At the conclusion of the public meeting, the council moved to closed session. The next City Council will take place on Monday, November 20, 2023, at 7:00 pm, following a joint meeting of the City Council and the Lowell Light & Power board at 6:00 pm. Those interested in watching the November 6 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.



Mayor Mike DeVore was overjoyed to tackle an agenda with multiple parks-related line items on it.

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Worth the Popcorn?

By Bill Lee

Sofia Coppola explores an iconic relationship in *Priscilla*

Priscilla
Starring: Cailee Spaeny and Jacob Elordi
Director: Sofia Coppola
Writers: Sofia Coppola, Sandra Harmon, Priscilla Presley
Running Time: 113 minutes
Rate R

If you are looking for a story placing Elvis Presley on a pedestal as the iconic American entertainer, you'll be greatly disappointed in the new Sofia Coppola movie, *Priscilla*. Although Elvis, played by a relatively unknown Jacob Elordi, gets almost equal screen time as Priscilla, we rarely

see the movie through his perspective. Overall, he is portrayed as aloof, dark, depressed, complicated, and passive-aggressive most of the time, but then we also get a glimpse of his charisma and magical qualities too – the reasons many have been attracted to him since he began performing. After the movie ended, I overheard a man say, “Well, that was underwhelming.” At first, I wanted to defend Coppola’s movie, as I am a big fan of hers, but after more thought, I had to agree with the man, but not with his connotation. Most of Coppola’s eight movies can be considered

“underwhelming” to many theater goers, as the films usually have a slow burn to them. Look at *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), *Lost in Translation* (2003), and *The Beguiled* (2017), as perfect examples of Coppola’s tempered pace, a pace that creates a stronger conflict and complex characters. “Underwhelming,” in this context, becomes a strong point to her films. Add *Priscilla* to that list.

Priscilla, based on Priscilla Presley’s book, *Elvis and Me*, published in 1985, gives us an insider’s look into Elvis’s prime years (1959-1972), but through Priscilla’s perspective. The movie opens in 1959 when Elvis is stationed in Germany with the US Army. Connected through a friend of Elvis, 14-year-old Priscilla Beaulieu (played convincingly by Cailee Spaeny) meets Elvis at a party. When he discovers she is only in ninth grade, he says, “Well, you’re just a baby.”

And it is here, and throughout the movie, where Sofia Coppola explores

another common theme in her movies: teenage girls or younger women and their relationships with older men. In *Priscilla*, Coppola treads lightly on this subject, and in interviews about the movie, admits to being careful when dealing with one of the most beloved entertainers in American history, Elvis Presley. The Elvis Presley Estate did not sign off on this movie and did not allow Coppola to use any of his songs in the soundtrack. Although Coppola would have liked to use some of his songs, she also found this a blessing in disguise, as more “Elvis” would have taken away from the film’s central character, Priscilla Presley.

Priscilla’s plot could have been laden with action - parties, drugs, sex, bus tours, and backstage at concerts – and we do see a pinch of those, but mostly it is filled with isolation (another Coppola theme), with Priscilla waiting for Elvis to return to Graceland. Even at Graceland, Priscilla is isolated, as Elvis’s father will not allow her to take any part of the business. And when Elvis does return, it usually involves parties with his family and entourage and no individual time with her husband. In fact, the only time she seems to spend with Elvis is in their bedroom.

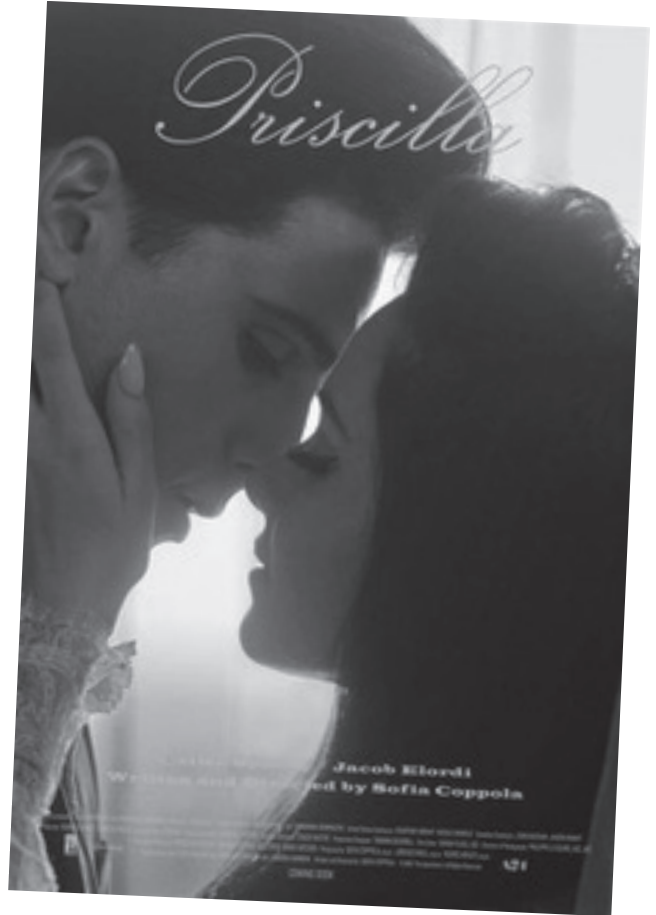
Through much of this movie, Priscilla is lonely and seeks companionship, not only from Elvis, but everyone around her. This is a common theme in Coppola’s work too. In *Lost in Translation*, both Bill Murray’s and Scarlett Johansson’s characters are isolated, distant from their significant others. In response, they connect through their shared loneliness. In *The Beguiled*, the young women, isolated because of the Civil War, seek their own relationship with a Union deserter, Colin

Farrell. In *Marie Antoinette*, Marie is separated from her life in Austria to be with the future husband of Louis the 16th. In *The Virgin Suicides*, the attractive sisters of the neighborhood are kept safe in their home, away from boys and the dangers of the world. All of the young women seek real connections with other human beings, particularly men, and often times, with the exception of *Lost in Translation*, the stories do not end well.

What I like about Coppola’s films are the

eye makeup, the works. He creates her in his perfect image and she is okay with that.

The performances by Spaeny and Elordi are strong and Coppola’s use of music, costume design, and set design recreate the mid-60s very well. Coppola is presently one of the giants in regards to writing and directing stories for women, about women. But these stories are for men too. *Priscilla* may seem “underwhelming” but when unpacked, it possesses layers and layers of complexities that all



layers of complexities to the relationships between the female and male characters. Both sides have their foibles. Elvis is not the only bad guy here. Even though she is still only a teenager, Priscilla is complicit in her own isolation and obedience to her boyfriend/husband. She enables Elvis by giving him what he wants: a princess with painted nails, fake eyelashes, perfect hair, and dresses that he likes. In one particular scene, Elvis says “let’s go shopping.” We are led to believe it will be a date between Elvis and Priscilla, but she ends up modeling many dresses in front of him and his entourage of seven assistants. She comes out in one dress that she really likes, an earth-toned elegant one. He doesn’t approve. “That dress doesn’t suit you,” he says. “You’re a small girl. You’ve gotta keep away from the prints, baby.” She capitulates. Also, he suggests she change her face and hair. “Black hair and more eye makeup will make your eyes stand out more.” She does what he wants and we begin to see the symbolic image of Priscilla Presley – big hair, elegant dresses,

relationships have. This just happened to be one of the most famous ones of American pop culture. Don’t go see this film to learn more about Elvis and Priscilla. Go because it is a tremendously intricate story about two flawed characters trying to find their way in a unique world.

In the end of *Priscilla*, I couldn’t help but ask, with all the women Elvis could have married, why did he choose Priscilla? Priscilla’s father – who also seems to surrender to Elvis’s affections too easily (a whole other conflict worth unpacking, if I had more space) – asks Elvis the same question. “Why my daughter?” Sofia Coppola hangs the question out there, a teaser – the answer only left for speculation. What was Elvis’s infatuation with a 14-year-old girl who would eventually become his wife and mother of his daughter? We don’t get that answer and maybe that was intentional. After all this is not his story. It’s Priscilla’s. I give *Priscilla* 3.5 out of 5 popcorn kernels.



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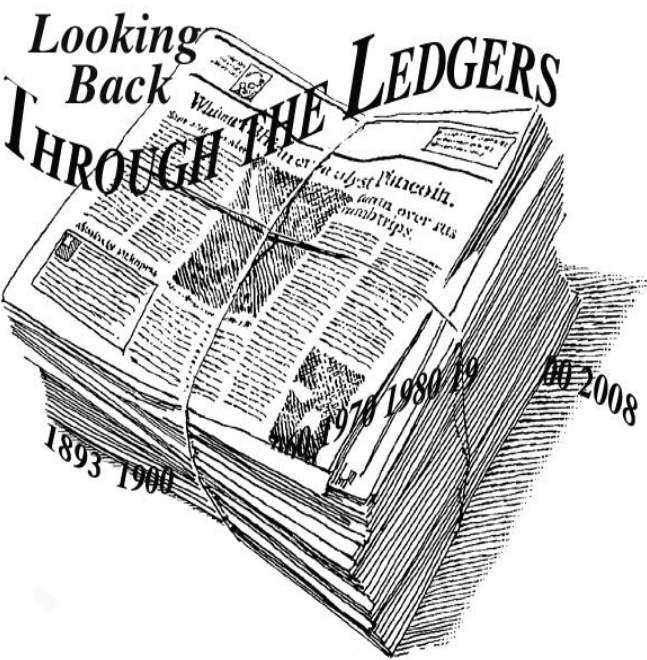
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viewpoint



150 years ago The Lowell Journal November 12, 1873

Several squirrel hunters brought back the usual story last week, so there must be a million dead squirrels in the hole of that tree by now.

Wood-stealing is a problem in Lowell, to the tune of about three cords a month.

The editor asks subscribers who owe him to pay up this month; he wants to enlarge and improve the Journal.

A new building is going up on Wilhelm's lot, corner of Main and Hudson.

"Potato bugs are gone, traveling agents are dropping off, and we are ready for Thanksgiving."

125 years ago The Lowell Ledger November 17, 1898

As the time draws near when Postmaster Hine must surrender his badge of office to a Republican successor, several candidates are doing more or less hustling for the position.

Old survey too expensive for the projected extension to bending by way of Smyrna. The company has now employed Surveyor Gordon, one of the best railroad surveyors in the state, to make a new survey that will leave Smyrna out.

One man who raised 500 heads of cabbage this year has none to sell. He and his family propose to eat every last one of them this winter. Cabbage heads are better than none.

100 years ago The Lowell Ledger November 15, 1923

The Hotel Waverly building has been sold to Peter Very of the Derby Hotel-restaurant in Grand Rapids.

Lewie Root has bought the new Reed building opposite the Ypsilanti-Reed factory and will put in up-to-date restaurant equipment there. His former stand on Riverside drive is closed while the new place is being made read for his opening day.

Chicken thieves stole about a dozen large Plymouth Rock hens from Ernest Fullington's river road bar just north of the village limits, on Friday night. They beheaded the fowls in the barn, cutting them off close to the bodies. Judging by the tracks, there were two of the culprits and they walked away, as there were no car tracks visible.

75 years ago The Lowell Ledger November 18, 1948

Somebody has a bunch of tens and twenties under the mattress a long time ago. They turned up in a Lowell bank with marks from the springs still on them; the oversize bills are traded to the US Treasury.

The school building fund is just a little more than \$5,000 from its goal.

Esther Fahrni says the 1949 license plates will go on sale in the Lowell branch of the Secretary of State's office on January 3.

Gee's Hardware advertises Revere ware and Pyrex ware for the holidays.

50 years ago Lowell Ledger Suburban Life November 15, 1973

Chief Barry Emmons is working with residents who have too many cars or not enough space to park, now that the streets are not dug up for sewer work and parking laws can be enforced.

The juniors ask for School Board approval for a trip to the Bahamas during spring vacation.

One-half of the Main Street lights will be turned off to conserve energy in the fuel oil crisis.

The new traffic diverters on Lincoln Lake are hit by a few motorists accidentally, and by many more who just ride over them. Landscaping should help.

The Lowell Chamber of Commerce office moves to the new shop on West Main, "That Special Place."

25 years ago The Lowell Ledger November 11, 1998

Lowell Light & Power's Superintendent, Paul Christman, will be retiring November 15, but will stick around until Dec. 2 to help with the transition of new Superintendent, Ronald Holcomb.

Frank Kirsch breaks the school record time at the state meet, with a time of 16:34.

Tim Wittenbach is voted in as Vergennes Township Supervisor. He collected 1,112 for the 1,368 votes cast.

Lowell School Board adopts weighted grade concept. The insertion of weighted grades is expected to help eliminate some of the risk of taking classes that challenge a student's ability.

Dinorah Espinoza is working in conjunction with Lowell's Calvary Christian Reformed Church Pastor, Bill Renkema to get emergency relief to her native land of Honduras after Hurricane Mitch passes through.

At home or on the go: Social Security is online

By Hillary Hatch,
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

When you retire, if you become disabled, or if someone you depend on dies— we are there when you need us. With your personal and secure my Social Security account, you can access your information, benefits, and important services from just about anywhere. Having a personal my Social Security account allows you to:

- Compare future benefit estimates for different dates or ages when you may want to begin receiving benefits.
- Check the status of your benefits application or appeal.
- Review your earnings history.
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most states).

If you already receive benefits, you can also:

- Get a benefit verification or proof of income letter.

- Set up or change your direct deposit.
- Change your address.

Get a Social Security 1099 form (SSA-1099).

You can even use your personal my Social Security account to opt out of receiving certain notices by mail, including the annual cost-of-living adjustments notice and the income-related monthly adjustment amount notice. These notices are available in your Message Center when you sign into your account. We will email you when you have a new message, so you never miss an important update.

It's easy to sign up for a my Social Security account. Please let your friends and family know that they can create their own my Social Security account today at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

We love to hear from you!

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

The requirements are:

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

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



At Your Local Library

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

ToddlerTime

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

Storytime

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

Fall Fest

Thursday, Nov. 16, 10-11 am. Celebrate the season with autumn crafts, games and art activities. All ages.

Teen Advisory Board

Thursday, Nov. 16, 4-5 pm. Teens ages 11-17 are invited to meet with a teen librarian to develop teen programs, discuss teen books and make sure that our teen space is as fun and functional as possible. Meetings can count as volunteer hours for things like the National Honor Society. Students ages 14+ can apply for additional volunteer opportunities. For ages 11-17.

Storytime

Friday, Nov. 17, 10 - 11 am. Nurture your child’s love of books and build early literacy skills through stories, rhymes, music and movement. For ages 0-5.

One Shot RPGs

Monday, Nov. 27, 6-8 pm. Explore new RPG systems during our monthly one-shot adventures! Join an all-raccoon racing team, take on a quest as a reanimated skeleton or plan a fool-proof heist as a group of bears. New and experienced players are welcome for these easy-to-learn adventures. For ages 11-17.

Teen Advisory Board

Thursday, Nov. 30, 4-5 pm. Teens ages 11-17 are invited to meet with a teen librarian to develop teen programs, discuss teen books and make sure that our teen space is as fun and functional as possible. Meetings can count as volunteer hours for things like the National Honor Society. Students ages 14+ can apply for additional volunteer opportunities. For ages 11-17.

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

Y is for Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Factory

The Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Factory originated in Ypsilanti and moved to Ionia in 1903. They made specialty reed furniture in the state’s factory building at the Michigan Reformatory using the prison labor pool. In 1911, the company started operations at its first plant outside of the prison, in Ionia, with 150 men. The company had been told that Ionia could not support such a company, due to lack of labor. They disproved that theory by growing rapidly and even opened an additional plant in 1913. Shortly afterwards, a fire destroyed the reformatory factory. The Ionia factory was owned by Fred Green, a Veteran of the Spanish American War, one of the



founders of the Ionia Free Fair in 1915, Mayor of Ionia from 1913-1916, and 31st Governor of Michigan from 1927-1931. During World War I, the company began making observation balloon baskets and airplane seats.

Ypsilanti and Ionia, what does this have to do with Lowell?

The company prospered and soon needed more factories. Branch factories were built in

Portland, Saranac, Lyons, and Lowell. The Lowell Board of Trade (now the Chamber of Commerce) worked hard to bring the company to Lowell. They saw the additional Lowell jobs to be worth their efforts. They wanted to buy the former Auto Body Building. The purchase price could not be agreed upon for the building. The Board of Trade stepped in, seeking donations and pledges from local businessmen and laborers. In the end, with contributions from \$5 to \$100, the necessary \$2,300 was raised. The businessmen and laborers all came together for the betterment of the Lowell economy and labor opportunities. Operations began April 5, 1920, with Fred Jacobi as the manager. They employed 200 people, half were men and half were women.

In 1923, the Lowell factory changed from making reed furniture to

reed baby carriages. The idea was “not how cheap, but how good” they could be made. A *Ledger* reporter wrote that he “found a healthy-looking shipment of crated cabs, ready for the toot-toot cars, to broadcast over the United States, carrying the fame of Uncle Sam’s best finished baby carriage from coast to coast and from Lakes to Gulf.” These baby carriages had a brass plate that read “Ypsilanti Baby Carriage Co., Lowell, Michigan” and were made exclusively in Lowell in 1924.

The company didn’t last long in Lowell, they sold the building to Superior Furniture at the end of 1925. The company suffered during the great depression and sold the Portland plant and abandoned the Saranac and Lyons plants. Furniture production was discontinued in 1948 when the company completely switched names and the products that were manufactured.



area churches

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

happy birthday

Riverside Fellowship of Seventh-day Adventists
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10300 Vergennes St. SE, Lowell
616-987-0267
www.lowellsda.com
Pastor Darrel le Roux

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

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

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

St. Mary Catholic Church
402 Amity Street • 616-897-9820
Website: www.stmarylowell.com
Weekend Masses: Sat 5 pm; Sun 10:30 am
Confession: Saturdays 3:30-4:30 pm
Prayer & Adoration: Wednesdays 9 am to 4:45 pm
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN TO ADULTS

NOVEMBER 15
Beth Stouffer, Emily Myers, Gina Gildner, Doug Decker, Alyssa Rash, Dave Hildenbrand, Janet Allison.

NOVEMBER 19
Ken Mulder, Jamie Zoodsma, Marlene Nash, Lewis Powell, Betsy Maki.

NOVEMBER 16
Cherryl Lilley.

NOVEMBER 20
Brian Brown, John Butler, Sr., Michelle Wernet.

NOVEMBER 17
Scott MacNaughton, Cory DuBridge, Tyler Shindorf, Mary Schutts, Anastasia Barnes, Ali Wernet.

NOVEMBER 21
Michael Hewitt, Tammy Gildner.

NOVEMBER 18
Brent Noskey, Lindsey Sherman.



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

Hundreds come together to create touching tribute to Hastings tow operator killed in accident

Hunter McLaren
Staff Writer

The sounds of humming diesel engines and truck horns filled the air Saturday morning as hundreds paid tribute to Hastings tow truck operator Keagan Spencer.

Hundreds of tow vehicles from across the state and the country gathered at Bliss Riverfront Park to form a funeral procession before heading west to Thornapple Valley Church. Mourners gathered along State Street to pay their respects and remember Spencer, who was killed in a tragic accident on Nov. 4.

The tow community immediately rallied around Spencer's family, forming a procession from Grand Rapids to Hastings the same day as the tragic accident. They came together again on Saturday, first forming the procession to the funeral service and once more from the church to Irving Cemetery.

Spencer is survived by his fiancé Olivia Kain, as well as children Lenora and Ryker. A GoFundMe to raise funds to support his family had reached over \$40,000 in donations Saturday afternoon.



Honking horns could be heard and flashing lights could be seen for miles as hundreds of tow trucks passed through Hastings. Traffic was stopped at the intersection of Broadway and State for nearly 40 minutes as the vehicles made their way to Thornapple Valley Church.

Hundreds come together to create touching tribute to Hastings tow operator killed in accident



Groups of mourners and onlookers gathered along State Street, waving to passing tow trucks. Tow companies arrived for the procession early Saturday, coming from communities across Michigan and even from out of state.

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Christmas thru Lowell, continued

62 locations, in 2019.

“It’s wonderful to have new home locations added to the map this year,” Kennedy said. “Equally exciting is the number of area merchants thinking of their space differently and making space for new vendors and crafters.”

Four Acre Freedom, a new business location, loves the fact of shopping locally, first and foremost, while giving quality gifts to the community. They sell a variety of hand-crafted goods from wood signs and boxes to 3D printed toys. “Let’s not forget our freeze-dried candy which is great for stocking stuffers,” co-owner, Victor Murdock, said. “By now I’m sure locals have had a chance to see the quality in our craft, and our hope is continued customers because of this.”

Most locations showcase more than one artist or vendor, and sites fill-up quickly. For anyone still hoping to exhibit their art, crafts, or other unique treasures, visit ChristmasThroughLowell.org for a list of locations accepting vendors.

Among multiple vendors stationed at Red Barn Market will be Earth Stories Jewelry, which also carries rocks, minerals, fossils, and lapidary. “We have eight vendors,” said owner Barb Roth. “You can sip and shop, grab a bite to eat.”

This will be the sixth year for the Lowell Area Historical Museum participating in the tour, with seven artists plus the museum gift shop. Offerings at the museum will include candles, soaps, glass fusion,

baskets, jewelry, cozy scarves, resin items, local author Emma Palova, and more. “I hope people will visit and see the wonderful items our vendors have for sale. The museum shop has calendars and books that make great gifts also,” museum director Lisa Plank said.

The Old Theatre (TOT) will present an expanded event with 17 booths, including two on the stage. Explore a diverse array of offerings from photographs and pottery to textiles, metal art jewelry, freeze-dried foods, and more. The venue, featuring public restrooms, handicap accessibility, and concessions, is designed to provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere for both artisans and shoppers. “Our aspirations extend beyond the event itself. We see this as an opportunity to showcase The Old Theater as a delightful rental venue and an ideal setting for thoughtful, family-friendly activities,” co-owner, David Reed, said. “It’s a chance to connect with the community, offering a closer look at our unique space, engaging with the owners.”

Each location will offer a door prize. To enter, leave your completed stamp-card at the home or business of your choice. Stamp-cards are available at every CTL location and are considered complete after a minimum of 15 stops have stamped your card.

In addition to the door prizes, each location has contributed to the CTL



Four Acre Freedom

Grand Prize. The Grand Prize winner will be selected from all direct mail postcards. “If you received a postcard in the mail, be sure to bring it with you and turn it in at any CTL location,” Kennedy said. “Christmas Through Lowell brings the magic of the season to life in a unique way.”

CTL kickstarts the holiday shopping season and supports local, small business owners, crafters, and artists.

“You really don’t want to miss a single stop,” Kennedy said. “Take time to plan your route; several stops are closed on Sunday. Visitors appreciate the variety and the talent on display at each stop. Whether it’s affordable Christmas ornaments to upscale art, there’s sure to be something for everyone.”

As in the case with most events, the weather factors into the attendance numbers. Approximately 8,000 to 15,000 attendees visit the stops on CTL. Guests come from as far away as Traverse City, Detroit, and St. Joseph. “We also enjoy welcoming visitors from neighboring states, as well,” Kennedy said. “For regulars, we hope they will make it a point to introduce someone new to the event.” It may be hard to imagine shopping in



someone’s home, but each home takes care of creating a welcoming, festive experience, according to Kennedy.

The featured artist this year is Jody Haybarker with Eclectic Finds location #15 at 423 Suffolk St. in Lowell. Haybarker started participating in CTL in 1992, in two rooms in her house, along with other crafters. “I helped organize the show for the first two years and headed it up until 2012,” Haybarker said. “The Chamber started managing the event in 2004. Under the leadership of the Chamber, the event flourished.”

Eclectic Finds offers mostly wood products

and refurbished furniture, ornaments, Santas, snowmen, and more. Other vendors will be at the location, as well; Carol’s Country Touch, Bob and Julie Ford with metal art, reindeer, snowmen, trees, and sleighs. “I love the whole atmosphere of the show,” she said. “The sights and sounds and smells. I look forward to it every year. The city, businesses, and the community seem to embrace the show and everyone gets involved.”

And if you want to get a glimpse of Santa at work in his shop, then visit Eclectic Finds at the right time. His workshop is in the garage. Ho, Ho, Ho.



Soaps at the museum

christmas toy store
& food basket

This free program at FROM
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provides families an opportunity to
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This opportunity is open to those living in the Lowell Area School District. Learn more online or by phone.



Booths at TOT

Taekwondo students demonstrate strong skills at tournament

The Ramos Institute students, of both Lowell and Ionia, came back winners from the November 11, 2023 Tae Park Taekwondo annual national tournament.

Thirty students, competing in forms (a set pattern of kicking and striking techniques); sparring, board breaking, and kicking event returned home with 32 gold medals, 20 silver medals, and 8 bronze medals. “This isn’t just about winning medals, this is about the bravery, confidence, and the perseverance its takes to use your skills for self-

defense in unfamiliar circumstances,” said Master Patricia Ramos, 5th dan Instructor. The belt levels range from 3rd degree Black belt to White belt (beginner level,) with 14 years to 6 months of experience and dedication. Grandmaster Richard Warren, began 50 years ago, in 1974, and is now the President of World Class Taekwondo. Master Ramos started in 1989, 34 years ago.



Pictured from left to right: Back row: Jackson O'Brien, Sydney Graham-Roberts, Markus Hemminger, Teo Sequeria, Max Munger, Krysta Cashen, Master Ramos, Lance Miller, Marek Douglas, 9th dan Grandmaster Richard Warren, Zachery Williams, Xander Hadley, Kevin Cashen, Garrett Graham, Noah Schneider, Cheryl Totch; Middle row: Natalie Thompson, Kathy Adams, Cali Janowiak, Kiera Stoutjeskyk, Ben Rottier, Jacob Schneider; Front row: Ayrton Thompson, Hailey Totch, Justin Anderson, Ella Stevens, Meara Douglas, Oliver Manning, Tristan Catanach, Jonah Schneider. Missing from picture: Drexton Coulier and Ahmed Mokhtar.

Museum, continued

regional trails, such as the White Pine Trail, Kent Trail, and Grand River Greenway.

Further enhancements are planned for the Museum’s north lawn, incorporating aesthetic elements like a living roof. A standout geologic rock wall will adorn the riverfront, offering visitors an educational insight into the Grand River’s geology.

“We are excited to see the kick-off of this transformative expansion,” said Bliss. “This is one of the first enhancements to the Grand River and the lands surrounding it. We look at this project as a catalyst to our planned Grand River restoration project and the other projects being planned along the river’s edge.”

Earlier this year, Michigan Senate Majority Leader, Winnie Brinks, and State Representative, Carol Glanville, announced that \$1 million from the State of Michigan’s “Make it in Michigan” budget was approved for the Museum’s expansion project, which was recognized as a win for the city’s pillar of history, science and lculture.

“This \$1 million investment from the state will support the Museum in its continued effort to be a great neighbor and important resource in our community,” said Rep. Carol Glanville.

The major renovation is the first since the Museum opened the new location in 1994 and is slated to be the first in a series of restorations planned along the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids.

The expansion project is funded, in part, by an \$11 million earmark in the 2023 state budget, a \$1 million contribution from Kent County, \$2.5 million from the City of Grand Rapids, an \$800,000 ARPA placemaking grant from The Right Place and the Great Lakes Fishery Trust.

“The Museum is, and will continue to be, a place of learning and research for all residents in Kent County,” said Stek, who serves as Chair of the Kent County Board of Commissioners. “It is important that those who live here have access to the rich history our region has to offer.”

The expansion is a shared community investment, with the Museum at its heart. The remainder of the funds will be raised through donations to the project’s Capital Campaign.

Dale Robertson, the GRPM’s President and CEO, underscores the project as a reflection of the Museum’s dedication to community and its mission to inspire curiosity and learning. “The time has come to further our commitment to the community. This expansion responds to a surge in demand, with visitation increasing by 279% over the past decade,” Robertson explains. “Last year, we had to turn down requests from school groups, due to our capacity limitations. With this expansion, we aim to double our capacity to welcome and educate our community’s students. All of this came together to say that now is the time. There’s demand, and there is a need.”

Robertson also recognized the GRPM’s position along the river and its integral role in the city’s GR Forward, River for All, and the City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan. “As an institution on the river, we’ve long focused our educational programming around it. With this expansion, we don’t want to wait any longer to improve our access to this vital resource.”

spreadchristmas joy

Donate new toys and gifts for the free Christmas Toy Store event at FROM (Flat River Outreach Ministries)

Please drop all gifts off by December 6 to FROM!

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Red Arrow

- SOCCER

SPORTS

Soccer concludes season at banquet

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

In the first ever *Lowell Ledger* Podcast, LHS soccer seniors, Jace Dixon, Jack Schaedig, and Lincoln Homolka got the chance to sit down and open up about their time with the Lowell High School soccer program. The three senior standouts talked for 20 minutes about their favorite parts of the season, big moments, and looking forward to the future.

Just one day later, the podcast opened up the night at the King Milling Building, as the program got together for the last time as Red Arrows. The three seniors were amongst a large group of seniors this year. All three would compete during the season with their brothers, as well; Lincoln and Jack with their brothers Ben and Emmett on the field, and Jace with his brother Elijah on the coaching staff. Fellow senior Carter Szymanski had his brother Sebastian on the coaching staff, as well.

End-of-season banquets are the norm in high school now for concluding a sports

season, giving out awards, having coach and senior speeches, and celebrating the team one last time. JV Coach Nick Struckmeyer spoke highly of his players, including JV scoring leader, Mason Rose, who split time between varsity and JV.

On the varsity side, Lowell celebrated a comeback season, with a big jump in wins from 2022 to 2023, including a win over eventual state champion Grand Rapids Christian, who knocked off Mason in the finals 3-0.

“When we beat GR Christian, that really showed what was marked by sheer determination and unity, and stands as a testament to the skill of this team,” Coach Elena Barriger told the group, concluding her first season at the helm of the boys soccer program. Lowell finished the season with seven wins this year, including a third-place finish in the conference tournament, compared to just two wins the year prior.

Lincoln Homolka earned team MVP honors, leading from the back as



Lowell soccer seniors sit at their banquet.

goalkeeper with 227 saves on the season, also earning all-district honors, all-conference, and a captain. “Your belief in our abilities helped us surpass even our high expectations,” Homolka said in his senior speech.

Fellow senior, Jackson Liley, who was only able to play a portion of the season, made an emotional speech about how he had really wanted to play high school soccer this year. The balance of club and high school soccer, made him

unable to finish the season, but noted he cherished the time he was able to spend finally being able to play soccer with his best friends. Other award highlights included Owen MacNaughton being named the team’s most improved

player of the year, and Bryce Thompson earning honorable mention All-State honors. The podcast series, in partnership with the school radio program WRWW, can be listened to at our LowellLedger.org/podcasts.



Live the Life You Want

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

The power of self-talk

We all have an inner voice. It’s helpful when thoughts are supportive and encouraging, reminding us to reach our goals, exercise, or eat healthier. That inner voice can also be harmful when it becomes negative, limiting, or self-sabotaging. If this inner voice can help or harm us, then how do we tap into it and make it work for us?

Self-talk is influenced by your subconscious mind, and it reveals your thoughts, beliefs, emotions, questions, and ideas.” Some believe there are three-types of self-talk; positive (I can), negative (I can’t), and possibility (What if?). For this article, I will focus on positive (supportive), and negative (self-sabotaging), self-talk.

Negative self-talk - our inner critic

Most of us have experienced our “inner

critic” at some point in our life. Negative self-talk comes across in many ways. It can be subtle, “I’m no good at this, so I should just avoid it.” It can be harsh, “I’m worthless and never do anything right!” It may sound logical or evaluating, “I did a bad job on this project. I’m just not good at science.” It can also be fear-based or irrational (catastrophizing), “I’ll probably fail this exam and not get my certification so I’ll never get a good job.” This inner critic can, and often does, have negative effects on your body, your mind, your emotions, your life, and your relationships. The bottom line, it’s often harmful.

Consequences of negative self-talk

By not believing in yourself and your abilities, you may limit your potential. The brain is powerful. The

more you hear yourself say, you can’t, the more you start to believe it and make it a reality.

Thoughts + beliefs = actions

Perfectionism, often a trait of those with low self-worth, becomes a form of self-abuse when good is never good enough. By trying to be perfect, we look to others for validation, resulting in more stress and pressure to reach this idea of perfection. The inner perfectionist pushes us to do better to reach a goal that is unattainable (self-abuse).

Relationships can be a challenge when the inner critic leads a person to appear insecure, needy, and feel unworthy of a healthy partner or relationship. To feel healthier and more balanced, which will also improve relationships, work to change negative self-talk.

Those that view themselves negatively and have a harsh inner voice are also more likely to take things personally. Then, tend to catastrophize, blame others, lack motivation, have feelings of helplessness, depressive symptoms, and increased stress and anxiety. So, how do we develop a more positive and supportive inner voice?

Changing to supportive self-talk

When you notice negative self-talk, try to figure out why it continues. Is there a “perceived benefit”. Did it start as a defense to protect yourself or is somehow comforting? For instance, it may be “protective” when it leads you away from trying something difficult or challenging. Why? Because the brain wants to protect us from possible threats, which may include things that could bring us discomfort or emotional harm (possible failure). Knowing why you have negative self-talk will help you learn to stop it.

If your inner voice is saying things that you wouldn’t say to anyone else, then stop the thought. To stop a thought, imagine a stop sign or change to a more positive thought. It’s a handy tool.

Learn to reword thoughts and phrases. Change, “This is stupid! I can’t teach myself how to think more positively” to, “I know I can learn to think more supportively as it will improve my self-confidence and happiness.” Repeat this process with negative self-talk phrases until you find yourself needing to do it

less often. This works well with most negative habits, you replace the harmful habit with something more supportive and positive.

Thoughts and feelings are not facts. They are reality only if you believe them. Thoughts can be skewed and influenced by many things. Think about witnessing a crime. The police take the statement of all witnesses and each person relays seeing something a bit different. This is because what you see is influenced by your environment, experiences, family of origin, beliefs, biases, mood, and perceptions.

Try positive affirmations and phrases. Each day, make at least one positive statement about yourself and repeat it throughout the day. This will start reinforcing supportive self-talk and help to increase feelings of self-worth.

Give yourself permission to be imperfect, we all are. It’s okay to not always be productive, to be human, to not always be motivated, to make mistakes without labeling yourself as lazy or flawed. Would you criticize another person the same way? If not, then why do you hold yourself to a different standard?

Be realistic in your goals and actions. Don’t purposely set yourself up for failure. This only reinforces a lack of self-worth and increases negative self-talk.

Your thoughts and beliefs are the source of your emotions and result in your actions. The conversations you have with yourself can be harmful or beneficial. Self-talk is so powerful it can influence how you feel about yourself and how you respond to events in your life. So, learn to harness that power by banning that inner critic. For some, this may be difficult but you are worth the effort and can retrain your brain!

Thoughts become words. Words become actions. Actions become habits. Habits become character. Character becomes your destiny.

If you’ve criticized yourself for years, and it hasn’t worked to get you what you want, try approving of yourself and see what happens. If you can’t get the desired results on your own, find a supportive therapist to help. I hope you find this info helpful but it’s not intended to provide advice, diagnose, or treat. Be safe and well!

Red Arrow

- NEW CONFERENCE

SPORTS

Income distribution key to balance in River Cities

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

The River Cities Schools - Lowell, Cedar Springs, Sparta, Allendale, Coopersville, Greenville and Kenowa Hills.

Current OK White - Lowell, FHN, FHC, EGR, Byron Center, Northview, Greenville and GR Christian.

What would have been the OK Black - Lowell, Mona Shores, Reeths-Puffer, Muskegon, Northview, Kenowa Hills, Greenville and Cedar Springs

Now that it's official, we can come out and say it. Life in the OK Conference has been tough for some Lowell sports teams. It's all about one thing, income disparity.

Lowell left the Tri-River for the OK Conference in the fall of 1984. How many times, in those nearly 40 years, did the Lowell boys golf team, boys tennis team, and girls tennis team win a conference title? Championships, co-championships, it doesn't matter, the number is the same. Zero times.

The unspoken can become spoken. Lowell hasn't had a shot at conference titles in some sports during OK conference realignment. It's not the OK Conference's fault. They could only realign, based on factors like location,

enrollment, and there is some degree of competitiveness. That leaves the teams near Lowell with similar enrollment, and four schools, currently in the OK White, come to mind that seem to dominate a select few sports; Forest Hills Northern, Forest Hills Central, East Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Christian.

We've all heard the stories. We've all seen the trophy room. It's no surprise that the number one school in the state, in terms of median income, happens to be East Grand Rapids at \$163,500. There's a reason they win so many state titles. Not to say talented kids don't go through their school, but the income certainly helps. Income has a direct correlation to high school sports success, on a macro scale, based on data over the last 100 years. In number 10, Forest Hills, at \$124,718. The database of 515 K-12 districts does not discern FHC, FHN, and FHE, since they are all a part of the same district. These numbers come from 2020 census data. Now Grand Rapids Christian, as a private school not having a true boundary, can't be measured but was estimated at around \$133,000, they would rank pretty high. This holds true with most private schools charging tuition. Tuition to GR Christian for one year in high school costs \$11,900 a year, per kid.

Lowell's median income, \$90,443, #68 in the state. So in sports, where money matters, how was Lowell ever going to compete with EGR? FHC? FHN? GR Christian? In some sports, we never could. It's not an excuse, but when you have more resources, you'll be better. There are some sports where income matters more than others. Tennis, soccer, lacrosse, golf, hockey, swimming; these are just some sports where you need money to play at a high level. The average family pays \$883 annually for one child's primary sport, and that's without high-end travel leagues, lessons, and other additional options that can improve your child's skill in those sports. Player fees for Midwest United, for example, a premier youth soccer travel team, are well into the four figures for a year.

Take tennis, for example; Forest Hills Northern has been top two in the state the past four years. Their players are in tennis year-round, grown up with the sport, and with private lessons, are sending kids to play college tennis on a yearly basis. Lowell, who has had good tennis players

School	Total Results	Wins	Losses	Ties	WIN %
Greenville	931	514	396	7	55.21%
Sparta	675	388	267	5	57.48%
Cedar Springs	615	391	200	10	63.58%
Kenowa Hills	433	250	165	10	57.74%
Coopersville	245	149	91	1	60.82%
Allendale	21	17	3	1	80.95%
	2920	1709	1122	34	59.65%

Lowell's win percentage against schools in the River Cities historically.

come through over the years, doesn't have those premier facilities around. Most Lowell tennis players are multi-sport athletes, and many pick up the game in high school. It's why 8-0 scorelines are common for Lowell against these top schools; there's a huge disparity between the two. There are times Lowell has bucked that trend. Look at girls golf the last two years, extremely close to finishing first in a conference with GR Christian, FHC, and FHN. In a sport, golf, that is an expensive sport to play. Soccer has seen wins over those top schools in years past. So it's not that in any given year, Lowell can't win, but the odds are well-stacked against them.

So, now we look at the River Cities Alliance. These are the schools and their median income rankings: Lowell (68), Cedar Springs (89), Sparta (199), Allendale (117), Coopersville (103), Greenville (390), and Kenowa Hills (116). Now Greenville is an outlier here (\$58,459), but keep in mind, in the current OK White conference, the Yellow Jackets have to play a school (EGR) with over an \$100,000 difference in median income. So, yes, but income in the River Cities Alliance, Greenville is an outlier, but things are much more competitive across the board for Greenville, starting next year. They'll be much more competitive for Lowell too.

Is median income a perfect statistic? No, nothing is, but it does give a good idea of some of the reasons that we haven't seen conference championships in some sports over the years.

Starting in 2024, Lowell tennis can win a conference title. So can Greenville. Coopersville and Allendale have felt this. Both schools in the OK Blue now face three private schools (Unity Christian, West Catholic, and Holland Christian), so that income disparity has been clear with other schools, as well. In an extreme example, Ottawa Hills plays in the OK Gold with GR Catholic Central, FHE, and South Christian. Geography, enrollment, and income disparity are a balance that a conference should have. While the OK Conference has focused on the first two, it's the latter adjustment that will make the River Cities Conference a sports league with a balance of champions. Lowell has a 58 percentage win percentage over the River Cities, while the current OK White, that number is under 45. Without Greenville, it drops to under 43 percent.

Next week, we'll take a look at all the Lowell sports and how they'll stack up to the competition next year.

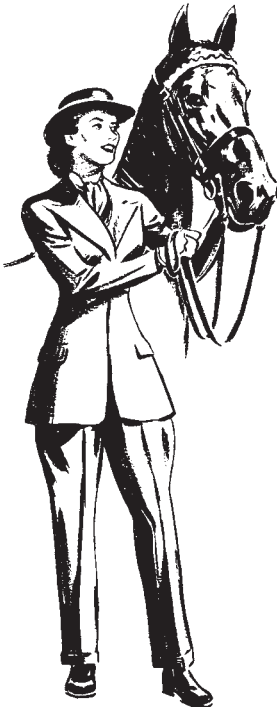
School	Win Percentage	Median School District Income
Greenville	55.21%	\$56,875
Sparta	57.48%	\$66,333
Cedar Springs	63.58%	\$67,863
Kenowa Hills	57.74%	\$70,846
Coopersville	60.82%	\$85,929
Allendale	80.95%	\$74,278
EGR	39.57%	\$154,514
Northview	52.88%	\$78,201
FHC	37.25%	\$138,909
FHN	44.03%	\$138,909
GR Christian	33.97%	\$133,686
Byron Center	49.33%	\$85,293

School income vs. Lowell's win percentage against them

Equestrian wins reserve State Title

By Justin Scott
sports reporter

Last month, the Lowell Equestrian team brought home a reserve state championship in Midland,



finishing behind Oxford in what was a close battle in the Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association's Division B State Championship weekend. The title was a three-way battle between the two schools and Owosso, with just 12 points separating the three.

"The week started off a little rocky, as we had three lame horses and we weren't sure what that was going to mean on Thursday when it came time to compete. We were able to get two of the horses ready for competition and sophomore, Brianna Huisman, stepped up and competed in a class that she had not done all season, to fill the spot of the horse that was not ready for show. We were sitting in 5/6th place for the majority of the week until Sunday rolled around

and we had two classes left. The team had their game faces on, and not only did we end up Reserve State Champs, but we were 5 points shy of first place," Coach Emma Hancock told the *Ledger*.

LHS had no seniors this season, and with back-to-back reserve state championships, which is a notation for second place in equestrian, there's plenty of optimism around the team.

"My favorite part of the week would have to be the energy of the whole event. You're spending a whole week competing against the same people, so during that time, you make new friends and before you know it, you are cheering on your own competition making the whole week memorable. We had a fun season and are excited to see what next year brings," Hancock concluded.

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obituaries

BURNS

Dennis Lynn Burns, age 78 of Lowell passed away peacefully on November 9, 2023, with his family by his side. Dennis worked for Keebler and retired after 35 years of employment. His favorite things in life were his family and grandkids. He looked forward to Sunday dinners and afternoons of watching football with the “boys.” Dennis loved anything Michigan State, Grand Valley, Detroit Tigers, and Detroit Lions. He was a quiet, private guy, but could joke around with the best of them, still making jokes up until the end. Dennis was preceded in death by his parents, Orville and Esta Burns; sister, Marjorie Hartel; brothers-in-law, Russ Huyser, Bud Huyser, and Don Basham; sisters-in-law, Sharon Van Orman, Jackie Vincent. He is survived by his



loving wife of 56 years, Janet Burns; children, Rachel Burns, Ryan (Jenna) Burns, Robin (Chris Cavanaugh) Cross; grandchildren, Tyler Cross, Tanner (Madden Meroney) Cross, Evan Cross, Emma Cross, Nolan Burns, and Reagan Burns. Funeral Services will be held at 12pm on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at the First Baptist Church of Lowell, 2275 W. Main St, Lowell, MI 49331, with visitation one hour prior. Memorial Contributions can be made to the First Baptist Church of Lowell or to the family for the care of Rachel Burns.

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KAYSER-BOWHUIS

Justin Lee Kayser-Bowhuis, age 39 of Lowell, passed away unexpectedly on November 8, 2023. He was preceded by his grandparents, Leon Saunders, Al and Ruth Marckini, and Robert and Geogeanne Kayser. Justin is survived by his mother, Karen (David) Kayser; father, Steve (Luann) Bowhuis; brother, Patrick (Kristy) Kayser; twin brother, Jeremy (Michelle) Kayser; grandmother, Veronica Saunders; nieces, Riley, and McKenna Kayser; nephews, Leon and Stark Kayser; Uncle Doug & Aunt Val & Connor Saunders, Uncle Keith & Aunt Pat Bowhuis; many other special aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends; and his fur babies he loved so much. Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 11am at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 402 Amity St SE, Lowell, MI 49331 on Tuesday, November 21, 2023, with visitation one hour prior. Rev. Michael Goodwin, presiding. Memorial Contributions can be made to Michigan Veteran Homes, <https://www.michigan.gov/mvh/support/make-a-gift> or Kent County Animal Shelter, 711 Ball Avenue NE Grand Rapids, MI 49503.



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COOK

William “Bill” Arthur Cook, age 96 of Lowell, passed away November 11, 2023. He was preceded in death by his wife, Olive; son, Gerald; and brother, Robert (Irene) Cook. William is survived by his children, Linda (Len) Hamp, Bill, Barb, Steve (Perry), Ken and Tim Cook; 11 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, 6 great-great-grandchildren; sisters-in-law, Alice Wheat, Mary Lou Botma. He enjoyed going to the local car shows with his 1962 Pontiac Bonneville.



Bill will be greatly missed. Graveside services will be held at 2pm on Saturday, November 18, 2023 at Oakwood Cemetery, 325 Fremont St, Lowell, MI 49331.

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BIEBER

Dennis passed away October 26, 2023, after a nearly 3-year battle against cancer. Dennis was preceded in death by parents James and Marianne Bieber. Dennis was born April 5, 1958, in San Antonio, Texas. He graduated from Lowell Senior High School in 1976 and attended Grand Valley State University for the following four years, obtaining a degree in Computer Sciences. After receiving his degree, he spent the next thirty years living in Sunnyvale, California and working for Lockheed Martin corporation. After leaving California, he returned to West Michigan, residing in Grand Rapids then returning to Lowell. Dennis is survived by his brother and Sister-in-law, Perry Bieber, and Marcia (Downer) of Lowell, nieces Stefany (Bieber) Westbrook and husband Brandon of Allegan, Corrine (Bieber) Peak and husband J. Sebastian of Kalamazoo, great niece, and great nephews Kurah, Julian, Ivan, and Hudson. Various cousins in Wyoming, Michigan and Wurzburg, Germany and aunt in Anahuac, Tx. Graveside service will be held at 1 pm Friday, November 10, 2023, at St. Mary's Cemetery, Lowell, MI.

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Quitlink, continued

more coaching calls, had a quit rate of 34 percent, illustrating that Quitlink participants who stuck with their program had a better chance of quitting tobacco for good.

MDHHS reminds Michigan residents there are numerous benefits to quitting tobacco, including financial savings, better health, and more time spent with loved ones. As it can take several attempts to quit for good, tobacco users are encouraged not to give up after a failed

attempt. Quitlink uses proven strategies that have helped more than 1.5 million people quit tobacco.

For residents who need assistance quitting tobacco, the Michigan Tobacco Quitlink – 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Individuals can also text or chat with coaches online. Visit Michigan.gov/Quitlink for more information.



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AUXILIARY BINGO - Every Tuesday, 1-5 pm. Doors open at noon. Public welcome! Must be 18 or older. Food & beverages available. Hard cards & chips format. 25¢ per card per game. No up front buy in required. Alto American Legion Post 528. License A22680.

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

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

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~ Pictographs

by Martha Hayden

The Great Lakes sea monster, Michepezhoo of Lake Superior, has threaded its way through centuries of legends and remains the center of Ojibwa culture. My husband, Chuck, and I journeyed to Lake Superior Provincial Park in Ontario, Canada to see several ancient pictographs along

wooded path narrowed to a tunnel between granite walls. “This had once been full of lava which had hardened into basalt.” Chuck explained. “Then, the basalt eventually washed away. Basalt is softer, but the harder



ropes stretched into the water, lying ready to assist any visitor who may slip into the frigid lake. I noticed that the ropes were covered with slick algae. ‘That would make them difficult to grasp and so

silence I clicked a few photos. Then he questioned aloud, “I wonder what was used to paint this? How has it stayed all these years?”

I shared what I knew about the crushed iron oxide, hematite, mixed with animal fat. The man silently nodded. His eyes remained fixed on the figure. I felt that he needed space, so I took my leave. From further down the ledge I looked back. The gentleman had remained standing quietly with his hand next to Michepezhoo. It appeared that the two were engaged in a wordless conversation. This proves that Michepezhoo still holds a mesmerizing power, even today.

A Michepezhoo Legend

This whole Gitchee Gumee region (Lake Superior) had once been Ojibwa land. The legend had started that many years ago an Iroquois tribe had started to paddle across the lake in an attempt to challenge the Ojibwa tribe. Ojibwa Chief Myeengun had stood firmly, high on the cliff and raised his arms calling on Michepezhoo, The Great Lynx. Michepezhoo rose from the depths and thrashed his spiked tail. This sudden furry had created

warnings to others on the face of Awaga Rock. Michepezhoo, The Great Lynx, had been featured as fiercely protecting the people of Gitchee Gumee. The Great Lynx’s spiky tail, spiny back and large horns would give pause to anyone.

Four Canoes

In a nearby location, on the rocky wall, Myeengun had painted four canoes heading directly into the path of animals known for their strength: a crane, a thunderbird and a beaver. This artform would serve as a further warning to anyone considering another attack on the Ojibwa.

Shingwaukonce Legends

I side-stepped further down the rock face. “Oh my gosh! Here’s another one!” I silently realized, captivated by the long-ago messages reaching out from previous centuries.

Oral recollections shared a centuries-old tale of Shingwaukonce, an Ojibwa shaman, who had gone to this cliff on a spirit quest when a rival shaman had challenged him. Shingwaukonce fasted and had a vision where he’d turned himself into a louse and rode a raven into the spirit world. Only a great shaman could achieve such

are many more artists and legends, which have been erased by time. Piecing together oral histories, since the first written documentation, didn’t occur until 1851; archaeologists have definitely linked two Ojibwa leaders: Myeengun and Shingwaukonce.

These connections were made in the mid-1800’s when a descendant tribe member had been interviewed. Shingwauk, Little Pine, drew these pictograph images on birch bark from memory when Henry Rowe Schoolcraft researched tribal culture. Schoolcraft had been assembling native stories for his 1851 book, *Intellectual Capacity and Character of The Indian Race*. These drawings and legends about Myeengun and Shingwaukonce appear in Schoolcraft’s publication. This book stands as the first written recording of these legends.

It wasn’t until over 100 years later, in 1958, that modern inhabitants confirmed the pictographs existence. Selwyn Dewdney, on an expedition, reported witnessing these drawings on Agawa Rock cliff.

Ponderings

Viewing these ancient pictographs, snapshots

the Agawa Rock, which included Michepezhoo. Join us on our adventure as we learn about some ancient stories and find out who had painted several of these pictographs.

Lake Superior Provincial Park Location

About 100 miles north of Sault Ste. Marie stand the Agawa pictographs.

A Serious Warning!

Chuck and I headed for the hiking trail as soon as we reached Lake Superior Provincial Park. I couldn’t wait to witness these centuries-old rock paintings. At the beginning of the trail, we were met with a bright red sign, “Death and injury have occurred” so “extreme caution is necessary.”

The Hike To The Pictographs

Soon the rocky,

granite has remained.”

Reaching Lake Superior

Warm breezes and lapping waves greeted us as we neared the rocky shoreline. Lake Superior was resting peacefully under a bright August sky.

The Sloping Ledge

A dozen people were gingerly stepping, single-file, along the sloping ledge. A chain laid along the first section of the trek. I willingly grabbed ahold of the metal life-line.

As we moved around each other, the silence of the tourists set the tone of reverence and respect. What an honor it was to be witness to these Great Lakes pictographs! I kept concentrating on each footfall as I inched my way along the ledge.

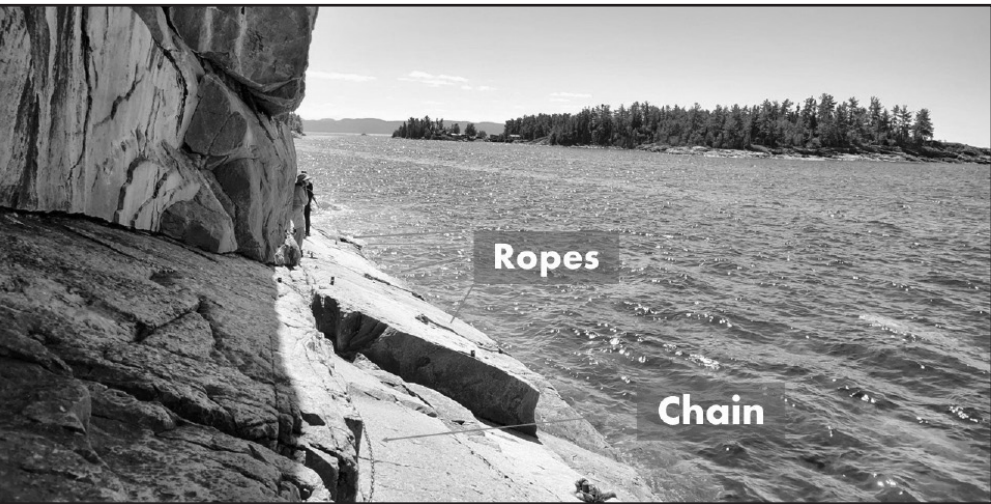
The “Life Guard”

slimy to touch’; I winced and stepped even more deliberately.

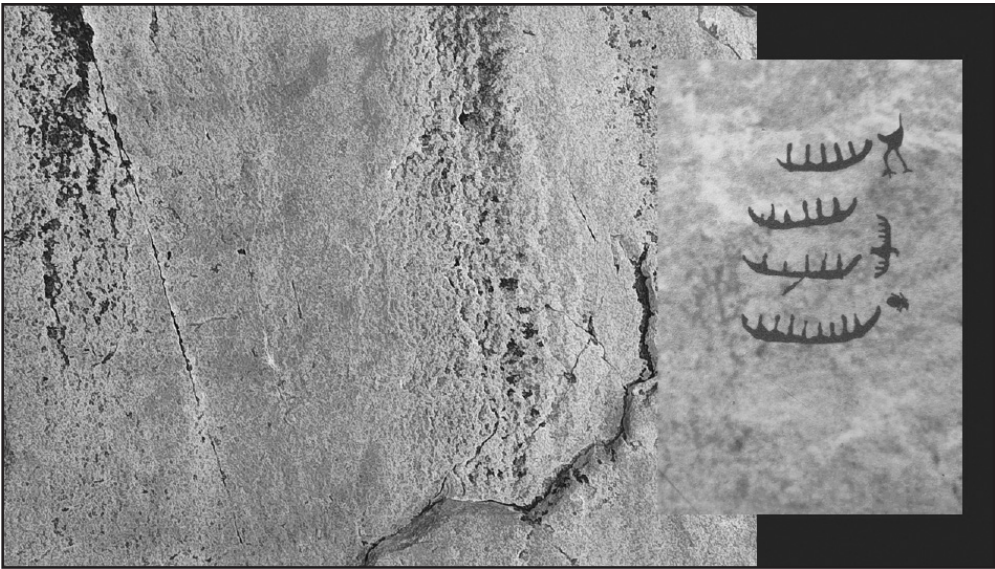
A narrow staircase led to the ledge. Grabbing the chain, I side-stepped along the cliff. I imagined the challenge it would take to move along this slanted, slippery path during Lake Superior’s angry days. Even with this bright, calm day, I crept carefully along the ledge to view these miraculous paintings.

My Moment With Michepezhoo

A gentleman, wearing a knee brace, and I, skirted around each other at the Michepezhoo illustration. “I saw this twenty years ago,” he quietly commented, “I just needed to see it again.” We pondered while Lake Superior shimmered. In



ROPES: Yes, you see people standing against the cliff. One has to walk along the ledge to view the pictographs!



FOUR CANOES: Taken in 2023 one can see how much these pictographs have faded. On the right are illustrations of the original artwork.

wind and waves, which had capsized the Iroquois canoes. Michepezhoo, under the Chief’s direction, had prevented the Iroquois invasion!

Chief Myeengun, The Wolf of the Mermaid, felt a warning needed to be displayed to others who may consider disparaging the Ojibwa. He decided to paint a scene on this rocky ledge.

In pursuit of red iron oxide, ochre-like rock he paddled 35km to an island. The Chief crushed the stones into a powder. Then he mixed it with fish oil and animal fat.

Using this red paste, the chief had painted his

a feat! Shingwaukonce decided his story must be painted on the rock face. It was like a ‘primitive resume,’ author Mickel Classen had called it. The stories confirmed that Shingwaukonce had kept his leadership position in the tribe.

A View From The Water

The best way to see the whole display of pictographs would be by kayak. ‘Naturally Superior Adventures’ holds training classes and rents kayaks. They also have a guided tour in a large freighter canoe that can fit 20 people.

Pictograph History

It is believed that there

of long-ago sagas, has captivated my imagination. I immediately began conjuring stories about the illustrators and their adventures. The serene reverence of quiet tourists along the lapping shore will be a place I’ll revisit often in my mind.

Resources:

True Tales: The Forgotten History of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula by Mikel B. Classen
Lake Superior Provincial Park website
Naturally Superior Adventures website
Thanks, David!

FUN PAGE

SUDOKU

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

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!

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

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

Puzzle solutions
on page 13

VEGAN LINGO
WORD SEARCH

ANIMAL
AQUAFABA
BUDDHA BOWL
BYPRODUCT

CAROB
CASEIN
CONSUMPTION

ETHICAL
FAUX
FLEGG
FLEXITARIAN

GELATIN
HARDLINE
HEALTH

JACKFRUIT
LEGUMES
MOCKMEAT
NUTRITIONAL YEAST

PAREVE
RAW
SEITAN

TEMPEH
VEGAN
WELFARE

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in Canada on November 12, 1980. I was a “Mickey Mouse Club” child actor and I also performed in an Elvis Presley tribute band as a kid. My most recent film has me playing a popular doll with blonde hair.

Answer: Ryan Gosling

			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				

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to veganism.

A E N B S

Answer: Beans

CLUES ACROSS

1. Beats per minute
4. Hindu deity
10. Polynesian garland of flowers
11. Not chained to
12. Metric ton
14. Tall, rounded vase
15. Musical composition
16. St. Francis of ____
18. Discover the location of
22. Compact group of mountains
23. Mend
24. Not current
26. Atomic #64
27. Young hawk
28. Or ____
30. Pouches
31. Southern Thailand isthmus
34. Mends with yarn
36. Downwinds
37. One of two equal parts of a divisible whole
39. Italian archaeological site
40. Cold appetizer

41. Yes

42. Peninsula
48. Of that
50. A way to divide
51. Relating to the physical senses
52. One who makes money
53. ____ Spumante (Italian wine)
54. Inconvenience (abbr.)
55. South Dakota
56. Snow sport
58. The products of human creativity
59. Change mind
60. Born of

CLUES DOWN

1. Similar to the color of a clear unclouded sky
2. Former name of Iran
3. Made smaller
4. Type of meter
5. Revolt
6. Killed with rocks
7. Gregory ____, US dancer
8. Nullifies
9. Home to the Flyers

12. Female parent
13. Pre-1917 Russian emperor
17. Outsourcing (abbr.)
19. Regal
20. Line
21. Hermann ____, author of “Siddhartha”
25. Clearing up
29. No seats available
31. Leaves of an Arabian shrub
32. Groove in organ or tissue
33. Not of this world
35. Cooking device
38. Forget
41. Operational flight
43. Actress Danes
44. Poke holes in
45. A way to discolor
46. Shouts of welcome or farewell
47. Pharrell’s group
49. Red fluorescent dye
56. Jr.’s dad
57. Electronics firm

Lowell Area Community Fund

ANNUAL UPDATE 2022 - 2023

The Lowell Area Community Fund was established in 1997 by longtime resident Harold Englehardt. The purpose of the Community Fund is to seek community cooperation and participation to create a healthy and dynamic community. To achieve this, the Community Fund provides grants in seven critical areas: arts and culture, economic development, education, environment, health, human services, and recreation.

Agricultural Education Center at The Grand

The Lowell Area Community Fund is proud to continue it’s investment in the ongoing capital needs of the Kent County Youth Fair, and support the “Raising Barns, Building Youth” capital campaign for The Grand Agricultural Center of West Michigan’s new fairground facilities.

This multi-million-dollar development for the Grand Agricultural Center will host classes, field trips, and learning opportunities for all ages year-round.

The Lowell Area Community Fund’s support of this structure positively reflects on the community’s long-standing commitment to youth and the valuable role our farmers and agricultural businesses play in creating a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Medic and Command Officer Vehicle

The Lowell Area Community fund was also proud to support the replacement of a dated medic unit, and the addition of a command officer vehicle, for the Lowell Area Fire & Emergency Services Authority. LACF’s longstanding support for the Lowell Area Fire & Emergency Services Authority dates back to 1998 in funding requests for necessary equipment updates to continue providing outstanding response services to the community.



Lowell Community Fund Financial Highlights

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	
REVENUE	
Investment Earnings/(Losses)	\$1,415,540
Contributions	\$2,500
Total Revenues	\$1,418,040
EXPENSES	
Grants and Scholarships	\$581,041
Investment Manager Fee	\$79,196
Support Services	\$71,052
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$731,288
Change in Net Assets	\$686,751
Net Assets, Beginning of the year	\$15,079,225
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$15,765,976

Community Fund Advisory Committee

- Michael Burns, Lowell City Manager
- John Darling, representing the Englehardt Family
- Ray Duimstra, Senior Vice President, Mercantile Bank
- Dave Emmette, Risk Manager, AIC Insurance Services
- Nate Fowler, Superintendent, Lowell Area Schools
- Stephen Gough, Principal, Lowell High School
- Misty McClure-Anderson, Executive Deputy to the President and Board of Trustees Liaison, Grand Rapids Community College

LOWELL COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

PROGRAM NAME	DESCRIPTION	ORGANIZATION	GRANT AMOUNT
Lowell Area Splashpad	To construct a splashpad to be operated by the City of Lowell and Lowell Township.	City of Lowell	\$28,000
Lowell Historic District Commission (LHDC)	To support continued historic restoration and preservation of 54 buildings in Lowell.	City of Lowell	\$20,000
Fallasburg Historical Village Revitalization Phase1 - Schoolhouse	Historic schoolhouse museum HVAC system installation to preserve the building and allow the museum to operate year-round.	Fallasburg Historical Society	\$13,250
Storage Unit	To purchase a storage unit for use by Senior Neighbors, Gilda's Club of Lowell and First Congregational Church of Lowell.	First Congregational UCC of Lowell	\$10,000
Rides To & FROM Transportation Program	To support the launch of a transportation program for use by community members and for food collection and delivery.	Flat River Outreach Ministries, Inc.	\$15,000
Lowell LaughFest 2023 Events	Underwriting support for LaughFest 2023 events in the Lowell community, which bring residents together in laughter-focused activities and engage them in dialogue about emotional health.	Gilda's LaughFest	\$5,000
Community Marketing Plan	The Greater Lowell Community Marketing Plan promotes Lowell as an attractive area to work, establish a business, go to school, raise a family, shop, dine and enjoy Lowell's many other amenities.	Greater Lowell Chamber Foundation	\$50,000
2023 Lowell Showboat Sizzlin' Summer Concerts	To provide funding for the 2023 Lowell Showboat Sizzlin Summer Concerts.	Greater Lowell Chamber Foundation	\$15,400
2023 Greater Lowell Community Calendar Kaleidoscope	To provide one year of funding to publish the Kaleidoscope ads, brochure and community-based website	Greater Lowell Chamber Foundation	\$13,390
Community Marketing Plan	The Greater Lowell Community Marketing Plan promotes Lowell as an attractive area to work, establish a business, go to school, raise a family, shop, dine and enjoy Lowell's many other amenities.	Greater Lowell Chamber Foundation	\$25,000
Agricultural Education Center at The Grand	To support the Agriculture Education Center construction. Once complete, the center will host classes, fieldtrips, and learning opportunities for all ages.	Kent County Youth Agricultural Association	\$200,000
Medic and command officer vehicle	To support the purchase of a replacement medic unit and a new command officer vehicle to ensure prompt response to emergencies in the Lowell community.	Lowell Area Fire & Emergency Services Authority	\$42,000
Reprint ABCs of Lowell History Booklet	To reprint the first volume of the ABCs of Lowell History Booklet.	Lowell Area Historical Museum	\$2,500
2022-2023 Lowell Education Foundation Support	To fund innovative projects that enhance and support the learning experience at Lowell Area Schools.	Lowell Education Foundation	\$25,000
LowellArts: Connecting Artists and Audiences	General operating support.	LowellArts	\$25,000
Replacement Ovens	To support Lowell's Open Table's mission to address food insecurity and build community through shared meals.	Lowell's Open Table	\$5,000
Strong Kids YMCA Child Development Center Playground	Support for the installation of a playground at Strong Kids YMCA Child Development Center, which will provide high-quality childcare to Lowell families.	YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids	\$33,000
Scholarships	College scholarships awarded to Lowell Area residents	Scholarships	\$53,501
TOTAL GRANTS			\$581,041