

UNDEFEATED GIRLS TOP WATKINS 42-40 TO WIN BASKETBALL TOURNNEY

LANSING COMMUNITY NEWS



Serving the Town and Village of Lansing, Cayuga Heights, King Ferry & Genoa
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Town Board Approves DEC Bendway Weir Grant Application

An article describing the "Bendway Weir" flood mitigation strategy and its application to persistent flooding along Salmon Creek appeared in the Nov. 28 edition of the Lansing Community News.

At its last regular meeting of 1996, the Lansing Town Board unanimously approved a resolution committing up to \$15,000 to participate in a grant application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The application proposes the design and installation of Bendway Weirs in and along Salmon Creek to control perennial flooding.

"We reviewed feedback from Pete (Larsen) on other Bendway projects and concluded that this would be a reasonable approach to solve a long-term problem," explained Councilman Herb Beckwith.

If the grant application is approved, the DEC will match the town and county's \$49,000 cash and in-kind contributions dollar-for-dollar for the \$98,000 project. In addition to the town's \$15,000 cash commitment, it will contribute labor and equipment rental to complete its share of the project.

It is also expected that Tompkins County will make a cash contribution and that the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District will contribute in-kind engineering and technical support services to the project.

"With the DEC putting up a large portion of the project costs, we think it's a good investment to solve flooding problems along the creek," said Councilman Paul Butler. "There's no guarantee, of course, but this should help considerably, based on experience with other rivers and streams."

The competitive grant proposal now goes to Albany where it will be reviewed and evaluated by the DEC.

Lansing And Neighboring Schools Get High Marks On First State Report Card

By Matthew Shulman

Despite a raft of internal problems, New York's first "School Report Card" on students' performances ends up giving high marks to Lansing and our surrounding communities.

Officially released by the New York State education department (NYSED) on January 3, the "report card" presents the results of standardized testing at the elementary, middle and high school levels on a building-by-building basis in every public school in New York State.

According to Education Commissioner Richard P. Mills, the report cards are, "not a comprehensive review of all aspects of schools' programs." However, by presenting "key measures of core academic performance," they are supposed to permit the local residents to measure the relative effectiveness of their schools. The report cards are also intended to provoke community discussions among parents, students, educators and community members on how well their schools are doing and what needs to be done in the future.

The good news is that Lansing (and all of our contiguous neighbors) exceeded statewide performance levels on virtually every testing measure at every educational level. The bad news for the future of our state is that testing results at many of our urban high schools' results suggest a state of educational disarray.

Due to the volume of data in the NYSED Report Card, analysis of our individual school's performances will be presented over several weeks. Summary tables comparing results for the Raymond Buckley Elementary School with overall state performance and our closest neighbors appear in this issue. Middle and high school reports will follow.

Problems in the "Report Card" include: methodological flaws in the high school data processing, inconsistencies in the way elementary school data is presented, questionable assumptions about middle school "mastery" reading criteria and NYSED plans to change some assessment formats so it will be nigh impossible to compare this year's report card with future efforts.

Raymond C. Buckley Elementary School

"I wish they'd started the report cards next year," said principal Shari Dempsey. She feels that the test results are only "of limited utility" for two reasons.

Though the NYSED won't require school districts to test all students until next year, Lansing has gone beyond minimum requirements by including "special needs/ special education" students in the test pool for the last two years. Though our scores are already excellent, they would be relatively higher compared to neighboring districts if they had also included special education students in their test pools.

Second, NYSED intends to change the elementary school assessment format before the next set of test results is reported. An unintended consequence of this change is that New Yorkers won't be able to compare future test results with this year's report card.

On the elementary reading evaluation, the percentage of third grade students scoring at the highest "mastery" level exceeded the state average by 71 percent. The average score of our fourth grade students on the 1996 science test was 19 1/2 percent higher than the state average. And 100 percent of our third grade math students exceeded state minimum levels compared to 95 percent statewide.

(See elementary school statistical tables on page 5)

Now That You've Chosen A College, How Do You Finance An Education?

By Jim Dill

In last week's paper, we presented information on using free Internet resources to help parents and high school students work together to make the "right" college choice among the thousands of 2 and 4-year colleges, technical institutes and professional schools that offer post-high school instruction.

Today's article by parent Jim Dill goes the next step in helping you identify strategies to finance your child's college education without destroying your family's financial base.

Lansing guidance counselor Bill Hefner describes Jim Dill as the most informed parent he's met to date when it comes to researching financial aid options.

If, after reading Jim's article, you have additional ideas that could help other families, don't hesitate to share your input. In the meantime, take Jim's hint and start early, do your homework and apply often.

Good luck!



VALID THROUGHOUT TOMPKINS COUNTY, Ithaca Hours will still not supplant the \$125,000 bill your child may face for his/her college education.

sophomore and junior years. Suddenly I went from an environment where only the most athletic students (of which I was not one) were on teams to a high school of 300 (about the same size as Lansing High School) where there were lots of sports teams and everyone was expected to participate - the skinny and plump, the tall and short, the fast and slow, everyone competed. Guess what? Almost everyone managed, almost everyone was quite a bit more athletic than they first thought and almost everyone had fun.

Emphasize reading and make it fun. Subscribe to some magazines interesting to a teenager. Give books as presents. Reading will help build vocabulary and reading comprehension skills needed for PSAT, ACT, and SAT tests.

Do not overlook the PSAT test. It creeps up on you during the junior year and it much more than just a practice test for the SATs. The PSAT score determines your eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Program and the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students. Doing well on the PSAT is a success that the student can build upon. Unlike the SAT or ACT tests it can only be taken once although you can take it your sophomore year for preparation. Consider preping for either the PSAT, the SAT or both. There are some good test prep

schools in Ithaca. They have a wide range of prices and philosophies with some emphasizing review of basic knowledge such as math and vocabulary while others concentrate on test taking strategies. ACT tests are used by colleges in the south and west while SAT tests are preferred in the north and east.

Many scholarships are handled after college acceptance through the college financial aid office. Many of these scholarships are only available through the college or university. However there are many other scholarships which must be applied for by the student before, during or after the college acceptance and which are independent of the college or university.

Scholarships many times are awarded to students whose family is or has been part of some group. You should identify what these groups are a be sure you are a member. For example, for a student to get an American Legion Scholarship you must be a member of the American Legion, for a student to get a Lansing PTSO scholarship the family must be a member of the PTSO. For a student to get a National Honor Society Scholarship they must be a member of the National Honor Society. Gender, race, national origin, athletics, scholastics, occupation, employer, military experience, future profession; any one of these criteria and many others can make your family eligible for a scholarship. When you read the lists of scholarships you'll be amazed at the variety of opportunities for scholarships.

Once you decide to apply you should be aware that there are deadlines which for some scholarships start as early as the junior year and end as late as April of the senior year. Requests for applications should always be accompanied by a stamped self addressed envelope.

If you buy a package of #9 and #10 envelopes at Staples or Paper Cutter, get some self sticking 32 cent stamps, make up some return address labels with the students name, and get some file folders in a box or drawer then the process can be organized better. Each scholarship should get a sepa-

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Got An Insurance Question? Have An Insurance Problem?
No Problem With Allstate!!
 Get a real, live "Hello" at 4:22 a.m. or whenever you call -- 24 hours a day.
See Page 4 For the Full Scoop On Ithaca's Only Premier Service Agency.