

CityPULSE

a newspaper for the rest of us

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March 14-20, 2012

The St. Patrick's Day/ Spring Gardening Issue

Bar Guide on Page 17

See page 21



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GREAT CLIPS PAGE 31

JUSTIN BLICKI 2012

DEAL OF THE WEEK

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BILL WHELAN

Produced by
MOYA DOHERTY

Directed by
JOHN MCCOLGAN



"A PHENOMENON OF HISTORIC PROPORTIONS!"
-WASHINGTON POST

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Saturday, March 24 at 2PM & 8PM
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PUBLIC NOTICES

Public Notice

The Ingham County Land Bank is accepting proposals for **Appraisal Services on Vacant Lots** held by the Ingham County Land Bank. The Bid Packet is available after March 12, 2012, at the Ingham County Land Bank, 422 Adams, Lansing, Michigan 48906, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday or at www.inghamlandbank.org. Proposals will be due on March 21, 2012 by 4:00 pm. The Bid Opening will be March 21, 2012 by 4:00 pm. The Ingham County Land Bank is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply.

The Ingham County Housing Commission, on behalf of the Ingham County Land Bank is accepting proposals for the **Identification and Marking of Hazardous Materials**, including, but not limited to, asbestos, mercury and various containerized material, located at various sites listed in the **Bid Packet# NSP2 12-001**, which can be obtained at the Ingham County Land Bank NSP2 office located at 600 W. Maple Street, Lansing, Michigan 48906 between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday or at the website: www.inghamlandbank.org, refer to "NSP2 12-001". Proposals will be due at the NSP2 office before 11:00 am on March 29, 2012. The Bid Opening will be March 29, 2012 at 11:01 am. The Ingham County Land Bank is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply.



CITY OF LANSING
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

SLU-2-2012, 221 N. Pine Street
Special Land Use Permit – Parking Lot
SLU-3-2012, Vacant Property – W. Jolly Road
Special Land Use Permit – Church

The Lansing Planning Board will hold public hearings on Tuesday, April 3, 2012, at 6:30 p.m., Neighborhood Empowerment Center Conference Room, 600 W. Maple Street (Corner of W. Maple and N. Pine Streets) to consider the following cases:

SLU-2-2012. This is a request by the Michigan Retailers Association to construct a surface parking lot on the property at 221 N. Pine Street. Parking lots are permitted in the "D-1" Professional Office district, which is the designation of the subject property, if a Special Land Use permit is approved by the Lansing City Council.

SLU-3-2012. This is a request by Bethel Seventh-Day Adventist Church for a special land use permit to construct a church on the vacant 2.99 acre property located on the north side of W. Jolly Road between S. ML King Blvd. and Tressa Drive. Churches are permitted in the "A" Residential district, which is the designation of the subject property, if a Special Land Use permit is approved by the Lansing City Council.

If you are interested in these matters, please attend the public hearings, or send a representative. Written comments will be accepted between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on City business days if received before 5 p.m., Tuesday, April 3, 2012 at the City of Lansing Planning Office, Department of Planning and Neighborhood Development, Suite D-1, 316 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing, MI 48933-1236. For more information concerning SLU-2-2012 or SLU-3-2012, call Susan Stachowiak at 483-4085.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

**2012 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS
FOR THE ANN SREET REDEVELOPMENT AREA**

CITY OF EAST LANSING
410 ABBOT ROAD
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN 48823

Sealed proposals will be received by the City of East Lansing at the Office of the Director of Public Works, up to 11:00 A.M., Tuesday, April 10, 2012, at which time and place proposals will be publicly opened and read for the furnishing of materials, labor and equipment for installation of combined sewers, water mains, a new asphalt pavement, and surface improvements along portions of Albert Street, Grove Street, and an alley in the City of East Lansing. Proposals may either be mailed to the Director of Public Works at 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, Michigan 48823 or hand delivered to the Office of the Director of Public Works located at 1800 E. State Road, East Lansing, Michigan.

The Contract Documents, including Specifications, Plans and Bidding Forms may be obtained at the Director of Public Works' Office, located at 1800 E. State Road, East Lansing, Michigan, by paying a Thirty Dollar (\$30.00) non-refundable preparation fee.

Proposals must be accompanied by a certified check, cashier's check or bid bond payable to the City of East Lansing, in the amount of not less than five percent (5%) of the bid amount, which shall be forfeited to the City of East Lansing if the bidder to whom the Contract is awarded fails to enter into a Contract within ten (10) days after the Contract is awarded. The unsuccessful bidders' checks or bid bonds will be returned upon final award of Contract, approved and executed.

Prevailing wages are required for this project.

A Prebid meeting will be held on Thursday, March 29, 2012 at 10:00 AM at the DPW Building at 1800 E. State Road, East Lansing, Michigan.

The City will apply its Local Purchasing Preference Policy, Policy Resolution 2009-3, in making the award of this contract.

The City of East Lansing reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive defects in proposals, and to make the award in its own best interest.

CITY OF EAST LANSING

By: Marie McKenna
City Clerk

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Editor & Publisher
Berl Schwartz



7 p.m. Wednesdays
This week
New Michigan AARP President Bob Kolt

Laura Sager of Northwest Initiatives on the Affordable Care Act

Joe Torres on the "Day of the Woman" conference



COVER ART



A LEPRECHAUN TENDS HIS GARDEN by JUSTIN BILICKI

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW





Does #lovelansing #hatecasino?

Will the young, “creative class” build opposition to the downtown Lansing casino proposal? It already is.

Turns out the people behind some organized opposition to Lansing’s downtown casino proposal are young, up-and-coming entrepreneurs who think a casino does nothing to bring more people like themselves to Lansing.

A trio of young small-business owners — ages 31, 28 and 33 years — passed out t-shirts reading “STOPLANSINGCASINO.COM” Monday night at a City Council public hearing on the issue. They’ve been organizing for the past month and a half. They’re not raising money for their efforts — yet.

Ted Wilson, who owns a house on the east side near the business he co-owns, Capital City Creative Productions, said it all “seems to be going very, very fast.” The group is opposed to a casino in Lansing because they are concerned it would siphon hundreds of millions of dollars out of the Lansing area and send them to Sault Ste. Marie. They also worry that it would destroy competing local businesses, hence negating job growth from the casino itself.

Moreover, they fear that the Bernero administration and City Council will “disenfranchise” voters by not letting them vote on the proposal.

“As a local business owner, I just can’t fathom the idea of taking money from sales and giving it to a sovereign nation who doesn’t live here,” Wilson said.

Ultimately, Wilson thinks voters should make such a “monumental” decision. The sentiment is amplified on the group’s website: “Without bringing this matter to a public vote, the Mayor and is (sic) backers are disenfranchising the Lansing voters out of a decision that is more important than the recent golf course parkland sale vote that was on the ballot last year. It’s just another dirty trick used by the gaming industry to bypass the people.”

Wilson also said the group is behind the Michigan Economic Sustainability Alliance, which was granted domestic nonprofit corporation status by the state on March 1. He added that the StopLansingCasino.com contingent may raise money through that entity to oppose the casino project.

Later on in Monday night’s meeting, another Lansing resident and small business owner explained that a casino isn’t the kind of economic development that lures

young people.

“I’m part of the young, creative, entrepreneurial class of people you want to keep in Lansing,” said John Krohn, who ran unsuccessfully for an At-Large Council seat last fall. “Most of my friends don’t like casinos but like to go out. We like culture, art. We choose to go to places like New York, Portland, Austin, Chicago. In Michigan we don’t go to places like Battle Creek and Mount Pleasant. We like Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids where there is a critical mass of things to do downtown that are engaging. This casino is not going to be like that.

“I can’t stress enough that (a casino) doesn’t fit in the plan with what we want for our downtown region. It’s a good idea but not the best idea,” Krohn added.

Krohn and Wilson were two of 16 people who spoke against the casino Monday night. However, unlike the casino public hearings Feb. 29 and March 7, the supporters outnumbered opponents, 21 to 16. Six of the supporters identified themselves as small business owners, students or young professionals living in Lansing. One was a former law clerk for City Attorney Brig Smith and two others were former staffers on Mayor Virg Bernero’s gubernatorial campaign, Charles Moore and Farhan Bhatti. Two others — the owner of a kayak rental business on the Grand River and the CFO of American Eagle

Superstores — said increased traffic downtown will benefit their businesses. Others representing local UAW units and the Lansing School District advocated for the project because of the \$5 million to \$6 million the administration says is earmarked for four-year scholarships to any university in the state for Lansing graduates.

“The talk about the jobs, jobs, jobs: I hear a lot of people talk about business investment like it’s bad. I thought the whole point behind economic development is to draw people here to do business in the city of Lansing,” said Moore, a local accountant and treasurer of Bernero’s gubernatorial campaign. He asked for all of the “naysayers” of the casino to consider what downtown Lansing was like 17 years ago: “It used to be dead, seedy places.”

Like Krohn, though, Thomas Stewart (who turns 30 on Saturday) is another small business owner in Lansing who ran unsuccessfully for an At-Large City Council seat last fall.

“People I’ve heard from my network of the creative class say they’re not really interested in a casino,” he said. “I think it’s about quality jobs and what are the real numbers going to be?” he said, questioning the amount of spinoff economic activity and annual revenues, which the administration projects around \$400 million and \$250 million, respectively.

Stewart describes himself as going from “totally opposed” to the casino at the start to being “much more interested in the development than I used to be.” He called casinos a “predatory business” and agreed with Krohn that perhaps part of the negative sentiment among the young creative class is one of image.

At-Large City Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar said her sense among the young, creative class — such as the #lovelansing contingent that came out in droves to support developer Pat Gillespie’s Market Place



Andy Balaskovitz/City Pulse

Organizers of the website www.stoplansingcasino.com (from left): Colin Foley, Greg Day and Ted Wilson.

project over a year ago — is that they are for the casino about 60 percent to 40 percent. She added that’s about what it is “across most demographics” she asks. “I also hear from older folks who say downtown is only for young people because they don’t go to bars all night,” she said.

Dunbar said she does not foresee the Council’s putting it on the ballot.

Before Monday’s public hearing, Bernero told the Council and audience members the casino proposal is “one of the most important projects in Lansing’s history.” When asked if he thought the Council should have voters weigh in on such a lofty proposal — like it did with Bernero’s millage increase proposal — he said: “I think it’s unnecessary.” He called the millage comparison “apples and oranges” because that was a “tax question” and this is “economic development.”

“This is a big decision we can make,” the mayor added.

— Andy Balaskovitz



Properties: 517 and 519 W. Grand River Ave. (Grand River Coffee Café and Archives Book Shop)
Owner: Lansing Farm Products
Assessed value: \$135,300

It’s easy to take great design for granted. Take the intersection of Rosewood and West Grand River avenues in East Lansing. It really has it all, and what makes this intersection so great is its mixed uses — single family residential, low-rise multi-family and commercial — all within an eighth of a mile.

Have you noticed the commercial bit? Have you taken the time to think about what makes it so great? It’s simple. Archives Book Shop and Grand River Coffee Café are two single-story storefronts easily missed because they blend in so well, from exterior materials to form and mass. It is easy to love them not just for the bookstore/coffee shop combo, but also for how naturally the buildings fit in with their surroundings. Unlike so many vast commercial stretches that conflict with adjacent residential, this is a lesson in seamless urbanism. Scale, use and context are what make it work.

— Amanda Harrell-Seyburn

“Eye candy of the Week” is our weekly look at some of the nicer properties in Lansing. It rotates each with Eyesore of the Week. If you have a suggestion, please e-mail eye@lansingcitypulse.com or call 999-5064.

Michigan AARP President

PR man Bob Kolt takes on a new cause: the needs and wishes of the state's seniors

Bob Kolt's buttery baritone is butteriest when he's on message, and that's always.

"I embrace 'spin doctor,'" Kolt said. "I get called that all the time. I don't think it's pejorative."

Kolt, a longtime Lansing public relations man, has worked for some big clients, but now he speaks for the state's demographic 800-pound gorilla. Last week, Kolt was named president of the Michigan chapter of AARP. Kolt has belonged since he became eligible at 50, when his wife gave him a membership as a birthday present. Now, after just three years, he is state president.

"Frankly, after the vetting process, it's easier to become secretary of state," he joked.

The talking points are already absorbed in his bloodstream.

"We're beginning a national discussion: 'you've earned a say in Medicare and Social Security,'" he said on City Pulse's radio show, taped Monday and set to be aired today.

After the show, he stopped to talk about the new gig and his life as a P.R. man.

"My goal is to inject some enthusiasm into this age group," he said. "Mick Jagger on stage is having a blast and he's making money, too."

Kolt is a bit of a rock star himself. He's juggling the AARP post — a two-year voluntary gig — with his professional life as a public relations consultant and a 19-year career teaching P.R. techniques at MSU. By his own count, he graded 2,143 papers last term.

"The more I do, the more energy I get," he said.

He's not the kind of pro who hides the toolbox.

"There are a lot of factors in effective persuasion communication — statistics, drama, emotion, testimonials," he explained. "Timing and context are factors."

Don't forget "repetition." Kolt used the phrase "behind closed doors" to describe the national debate over Medicare and Social Security four times in a half hour.

Now that AARP has launched its "you've earned a say" campaign urging seniors to get more vocal about preserving long-established entitlements, expect to hear the phrase again, especially if Kolt is at your party.

But does he really want that? Kolt knows that whenever the health care debate goes public, things have a way of getting ugly. If you're a reformer, the word "care" is nailed to the back of your name as a badge of scorn. Talk of "death panels" is inevitable.

"An open, public debate is sometimes hard

for the public to listen to," Kolt said.

Kolt zeroed in on Michigan's new pension tax, enacted in January. AARP wants it repealed.

"Seniors are an asset here," Kolt said. "Why would we be the first place they would look for taxation?"

Kolt figures that seniors' growing numbers made them an attractive target.

"The governor is an accountant," Kolt said. "I believe he did it because it's the biggest growing area of income in the future." There are 100 million 50-plus people in America. "It's the only growing demographic," Kolt said. "37 million are AARP members — 1.4 million Michigan residents."

After swinging the statistics, Kolt ran the rest of the toolbox, from the appeal to policy to the appeal to fairness, climaxing with gentle threats.

"It's bad policy," he said. "It's just not fair." (A quick twofer.) "Seniors spend \$37 billion in Michigan in income, 90 percent in the state. We already contribute in so many ways, and now to tax pensions!"

Then came the threats.

"Seniors are filing their taxes now," Kolt said. "It's an easy decision. 'Oh, I'll just change my residence to Florida.'"

He added one more.

"Seniors may delay retiring," he said. "What does that do for new people coming into the work force?"



Kolt

Never mind that those two threats — seniors fleeing the state, taking their spending power with them, and seniors staying in the state and hogging jobs — seem to contradict each other. Kolt is still on message.

He snuck one more tool out of the box: the untestable proposition. "We think seniors should be at the center of that debate, because they care most about future generations," he said. Even with a Care-o-meter, it would be hard to determine whether seniors care more about future generations than those generations care about themselves, but let it pass.

With all his duties, Kolt manages to get up at 5 a.m. to read. He just finished Dick Cheney's memoir, "In My Time." He was fascinated by Cheney's account of the run-up to the Iraq war.

"They were convinced there were WMDs in Iraq," Kolt said. "They even made the case well after the fact when there weren't WMDs. Dick Cheney would defend it. 'We did find materials, we did find things.' It was fascinating."

Kolt is a perceptive man. He could see the next question in my eyes.

"Dick Cheney used communication in almost a propaganda way," Kolt said. "That's information to deceive or control." Kolt sees public relations as a very different thing.

"Persuasion communication is very ethical, but you have to be honest."

After our talk, Kolt headed to dinner and a senior meeting in Holt with MSU Trustee Dianne Byrum. The happy warrior is flourishing on his new field of battle.

"I'll be the last guy out of the room," he said.

— Lawrence Cosentino

PUBLIC NOTICES

B/12/081 VIDEO EQUIPMENT as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing.

The City of Lansing will accept sealed bids at the FINANCE DEPARTMENT, PURCHASING OFFICE, 8TH FLOOR CITY HALL, 124 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48933 until 3:00 PM local time in effect on **MARCH 22, 2012**, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read.

Complete specifications and forms required to submit bids are available by calling Stephanie Robinson at (517) 483-4128, email: srobinso@lansingmi.gov or go to www.mitn.info

The City of Lansing encourages bids from all vendors including MBE/WBE vendors and Lansing-based businesses.

RFQP/12/080 – 2012 JULY 4TH FIREWORKS DISPLAY as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing.

The City of Lansing will accept sealed proposals at the FINANCE DEPARTMENT/PURCHASING OFFICE, 8TH FLOOR CITY HALL, 124 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48933 until 3:00 PM local time in effect on **APRIL 3, 2012**.

Complete specifications and forms required to submit proposals are available by calling Stephanie Robinson CPPB at (517) 483-4128, or for content and purpose of this proposal contact: Brett Kaschinske at (517) 483-4042 or go to www.mitn.info

The City of Lansing encourages bids from all vendors including MBE/WBE vendors and Lansing-based businesses.

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING EAST LANSING CITY COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearing to be held by the East Lansing City Council on Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 7:30 p.m., Council Chambers, 101 Linden Street, to consider **Ordinance No. 1277**; an Ordinance to amend Section 38-31 of Division 1 – Generally- of Article II – Streets – of Chapter 38 – Streets, Sidewalks and other Public Places – of the Code of the City of East Lansing and to amend the Code of the City of East Lansing by adding a new division, which new division shall be designated as Division 3 – Complete Streets – of Article II – Streets – of Chapter 38 – Streets, Sidewalks and other Public Places – of said Code and shall contain Sections 38-81, 38-82, 38-83, 38-84, and 38-85.

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable accommodations, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at this meeting, upon notice to the City of East Lansing, prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should write or call the City Manager's Office, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 (517) 319-6920, TDD 1-800-649-3777.

Marie E. McKenna
City Clerk

B/12/083 CONCRETE SAW as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing.

The City of Lansing will accept sealed bids at the FINANCE DEPARTMENT, PURCHASING OFFICE, 8TH FLOOR CITY HALL, 124 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48933 until 3:00 PM local time in effect on **MARCH 27, 2012**, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read.

Complete specifications and forms required to submit bids are available by calling Stephanie Robinson at (517) 483-4128, email: srobinso@lansingmi.gov or go to www.mitn.info

The City of Lansing encourages bids from all vendors including MBE/WBE vendors and Lansing-based businesses.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING EAST LANSING ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearing to be held by the East Lansing Zoning Board of Appeals on **Wednesday, April 4, 2012**, beginning at 7:00 p.m., in the 54 B District Court, Courtroom 1, 101 Linden Street, East Lansing:

A public hearing will be held on the appeal of Ross Heath requesting a variation for the property located at 613 Gunson Street, in the R-2, Medium Density Single-Family Residential District, from the following requirements of Chapter 50 - Zoning of the Code of the City of East Lansing:

Section 50-301. To allow the garage to be setback one (1) foot from the side yard where three (3) feet is required.

The applicant is proposing to increase the existing garage width by two (2) feet.

Call (517) 319-6930, the Department of Planning and Community Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, for additional information. All persons interested in these appeals will be given an opportunity to be heard.

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon request received by the City seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring aids or services should write or call the Planning Department, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823. Phone: (517) 319-6930. TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777.

Marie McKenna
City Clerk

GOP eyes House district in Ingham County

POLITICS



KYLE MELINN

Of Michigan's 110 House districts, only one district held by a term-limited Democrat can realistically be considered a pick-up possibility for Republicans in 2012.

That district is the rural Ingham County-based 67th held by Rep. Barb Byrum, of Onondaga.

While slightly tweaked through redistricting last year, the 67th is essentially the same — covering southern pieces of Lansing, Delhi Township, Mason and the various other smaller communities south of East Lansing, Meridian Township and Williamston. It maintains a 52 percent Democratic base, but with the right candidates in the race, the R's are hoping for a pick up to their 63-47 majority during an election cycle where losses are coming.

So far the GOP has its eyes set on running a familiar face — Jeff Oesterle, a Mason-area farmer who lost to Byrum in 2010 by 53 percent to 47 percent in a huge year for Republicans.

The former Vevay Township supervisor enjoyed past support from the local farm bureau, a huge plus in this district. He

covers all the GOP bases, being a member of Right to Life, the National Rifle Association and the Mason Area Chamber of Commerce.

Oesterle is already out there. He filed for the seat with the secretary of state in January and has a couple hundred bucks left over from the '10 run to start with.

Will Oesterle face a challenger in the primary? Nobody has formally stepped up, but 25-year-old Williamston resident Timothy Grant, a Williamston firefighter and EMT said he's running as an independent, which could slightly chew into Oesterle's support if he follows through.

Although he announced last May, Grant reported only spending \$6 on his campaign in 2011. With the \$20 Grant put into the race from his own pocket, he's got all of \$14 to work with going into 2012.

The more interesting primary is on the Democratic side, where three candidates are emerging — former radio host Walt Sorg, Delhi Township Trustee Jerry Ketchum and Mason School Board member Tom Cochran, who retired recently as Lansing's fire chief.

Sorg's been running for the seat before he even knew it. Originally, Sorg had his sights set on the Lansing-based 68th District until the Republican legislature

redrew the districts last summer and put Sorg's residence in the 67th.

Since then, he's announced support from county Register of Deeds Curtis Hertel, Drain Commissioner Pat Lindemann, Treasurer Eric Schertzing and Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth.

He's also signed on to a plan with neighboring Democratic state rep candidate Doug Drake to get voter approval for a \$2 billion bond that would be used to cover tuition costs for Michigan students if they live and work in Michigan after graduation. Those who move out-of-state would gradually pay the money back.

The knock on Sorg is that as a first-time candidate he hasn't proven himself on the campaign finance or door-knocking front. Sorg raised \$11,818 in 2011 (much of which came from his own pocket), but he spent all but \$217 of it by year's end. While neighboring candidate Andy Schor in the 68th District may be a special case, Schor reported \$44,453 in the bank at the end of last year.

Observers also wonder if the leftish Sorg is the right philosophical fit for the more rural, conservative 67th. Byrum and her mother before her, Dianne Byrum, traditionally had more moderate voting records than their Democratic colleagues, which helps explain their mini-dynasty in the district.

Ketchum, 64, a 12-year veteran of the Delhi Township Board, gets into the race as a former Department of Transportation employee. He told local media last month when he filed with the secretary of state that he was ready to begin knocking doors and start working, but some Dems wonder if he's too conservative given his record on the township board.

Matt Bennett, a volunteer firefighter in Delhi Township, filed campaign finance paperwork with the secretary of state, but he's not expected to go forward with a run.

The final name floating among Democratic circles is Cochran. He has appeal with the union crowd, having served as a union president for eight years. He worked with the Lansing Fire Department for 28 years before retiring last November.

Cochran could be more of a middle-of-the-road Democrat, but he is running behind Ketchum and Sorg in getting his name out there. That said, he may be the one to watch when he gets in, which should be shortly.

National politics could take this seat off the board for state Republicans and Democrats in the battle for state House control in 2013-'14, but the numbers may be too tempting for Republicans not to make a play, especially if they expect heavy losses elsewhere in the state.

(Kyle Melinn is the editor of the MIRS Newsletter. He's at melinn@lansingcitypulse.com.)

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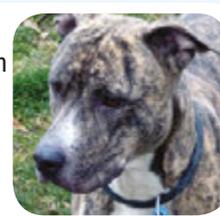
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Arts & Culture

art • books • film • music • theater

Au revoir to 'Oklahoma' and so long 'Hello, Dolly!'

This season's high school musicals include 'Hairspray,' '9 to 5,' 'Chicago' — and 'The Phantom of the Opera'

By JAMES SANFORD

To some, the term “high school musical” calls to mind visions of Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens and Ashley Tisdale. To others, it means wake-me-when-it's-over productions of “H.M.S. Pinafore” or “Peter Pan.”

But to others, a high school musical is “Chicago,” which is still doing business on Broadway. Or “9 to 5: The Musical,” which played at the Wharton Center a little over a year ago and opens next weekend at Holt High School. Or, for director Steve Delp at Grand Ledge High School, Andrew Lloyd Webber's “The Phantom of the Opera.”

'Chicago'

Everett High School
3900 Stabler St., Lansing
7 p.m. Wednesday, March 14,

Thursday, March 15, Friday,
March 16; 2 and 7 p.m.
Saturday, March 17

\$7

(517) 755-4444

'Hairspray'

East Lansing High School
3900 Stabler St., Lansing
7:30 p.m. Friday, March 16,
Saturday, March 17,
23 and 24; 2 p.m. Sunday,
March 18 and 25; 7 p.m.
Wednesday, March 21 (all
seats \$5 for Wednesday
performance)

\$10 adults; \$5 students
(517) 333-7490

“It's one of those shows,” Delp said. “When you say ‘theater,’ you think ‘Phantom of the Opera.’”

When you say “high school theater,” however, you usually think of something a little less grandiose than crashing chandeliers, gondolas gliding down underground rivers and the Phantom hurling fireballs from the top of a mausoleum. Effects like those cost money, and Delp — who admits he has “always liked big shows” — was prepared for that. Planning on the show (which opens in May) began a year ago, immediately after Grand Ledge secured the rights to produce it. A budget

was put together, and Delp and his crew set out to raise the \$80,000 to cover it from corporate sponsors and donations. Students are involved in the construction of some sets, while many of the other elaborate costumes and set pieces (such as that famous chandelier) will be rented.

“We don't get funding through the school district; we're completely self-funded,” said Delp, who is well aware that a price tag like that could raise questions.

“As far as production expenses are concerned, we are completely on our own. It's a little nerve-wracking, but



Courtesy Photo

East Lansing High School students rehearse “You Can't Stop the Beat,” the finale of “Hairspray.” The production, which opens Friday has a cast of 106. “Tell me about it!” says director Mark Shaheen, with a laugh.

the show has been a phenomenal success at other schools that have done it recently,” like East Grand Rapids High School and Portage Northern High School.

To cover the costs with an auditorium of just under 800 seats, Delp had to set a price of \$15 general admission, with premium seats priced at \$20.

“Historically, our tickets have been between \$8 and \$10,” he said. “But given what we're trying to do as far as quality, \$15 seems reasonable.”

'The students want to do contemporary stuff'

When Mark Shaheen attended Powers High School in Flint, he appeared in shows like “My Fair Lady” and “Mame.” Now, he's directing “Hairspray,” the musical based on writer-director John Waters' 1988 movie, at East Lansing High School. Shaheen says that while his program still does Shakespeare and musicals like “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” or “Fiddler on the Roof,” his students are drawn to more recent work.

“I think part of it is because of ‘Glee’ and shows like that that make performing and being in choir cool,” Shaheen said. “So the students want to do contemporary stuff — not think about ‘Oklahoma.’ You want to cater to that, and it seems like we've been pushing modern shows, from the 1960s onward.”

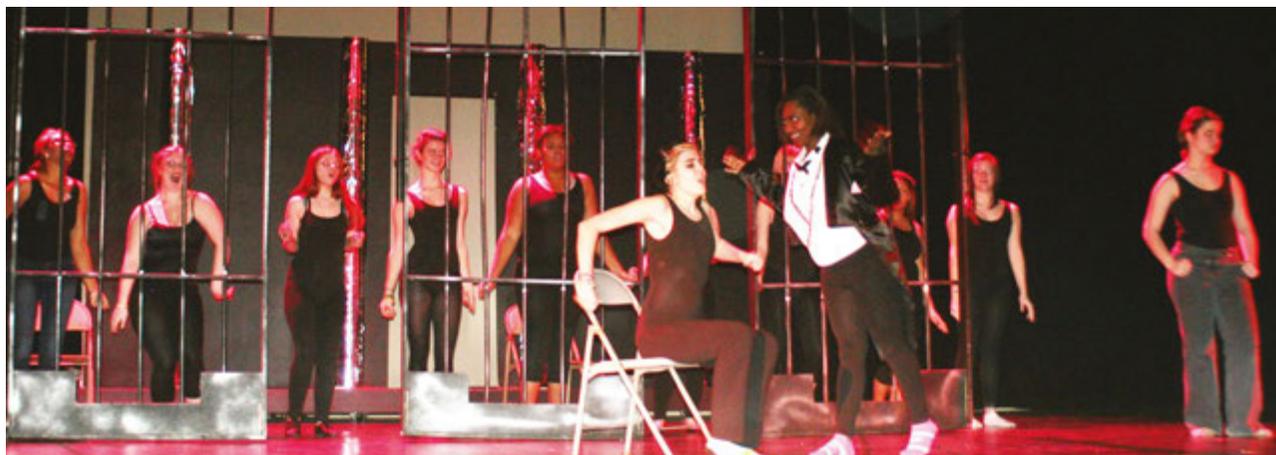
Shaheen knows what East Lansing likes: His “Hairspray” cast includes an astonishing 106 people. “Tell me about

'9 to 5: The Musical'

Holt High School
Holt Performing Arts Complex
5885 W. Holt Road, Holt
7 p.m. March 22-24;
2 p.m. March 25
\$8 adults; \$6 students
(517) 699-6439

'The Phantom of the Opera'

Grand Ledge High School
820 Spring St., Grand Ledge
7:30 p.m. May 3, 6 p.m. May 4
(red carpet gala); 2 and 7:30 p.m.
May 5 and 6
\$15; \$20 premier seating
glphantom.com
tickets@glphantom.com
(517) 925-5895



Courtesy Photo

The cast of Everett High School's “Chicago” rehearses the “Cell Block Tango” number, in which “the six merry murderesses of the Cook County Jail” recount their crimes.

High School

from page 8

it!" he says, laughing. "In the moment, it's kind of crazy because even if people want to whisper — "Did you get that?," "What did he say?" — with that many people, it comes off as a huge noise."

About a third of his cast has speaking roles; the rest are dancers or chorus members. "We were trying to make sure as many kids as possible could be involved," Shaheen said.

But because of its subject matter — the battle between integration advocates and segregation supporters in 1962 Baltimore — "Hairspray" can make getting everyone onstage at the same time a tricky proposition.

"We have black featured dancers and white featured dancers, but in Act I, you can't use them together," Shaheen explained, because "The Corny Collins Show," the "American Bandstand" knock-off that is central to the show's story, is still all-white, except for its monthly "Negro Day" special. "As a teacher, that feels so discriminatory. But the kids have been very understanding. They've learned a lot about the end of the Jim Crow era because ('Hairspray') captures that time period, that pivotal year."

Although much of "Hairspray" is light-hearted and funny, it's built around some serious issues that today's teens still wrestle with, such as body image — Tracy Turnblad, the teenage heroine, is teased because of her weight — overly protective parents and racism.

Although she's white and sports a Sandra Dee-style bouffant hairdo, Tracy (Catherine Sherman) finds acceptance among Baltimore's African-American community, befriending record store owner and DJ Motormouth Maybelle (Nyasha Mazhangara) and Maybelle's son Seaweed (Elie Kirkland). Tracy's crusade for civil rights doesn't sit well with former beauty queen Velma Von Tussle (Alyssa Goeckle) and her bratty daughter, Amber (Ashley Person), who scheme to keep Tracy off "The Corny Collins Show." Edna (Joseph Ambrose), Tracy's long-suffering mom, initially disapproves of her daughter's new role as an activist, but soon sees the light.

In terms of content, "Hairspray" is relatively mild, with a few references to French kissing and interracial romance, but not much else. The only edits Shaheen has made involve a few slightly tweaked lyrics. "There's some language that I don't think really does anything, and that was my choice," he said. "But there were no storylines that had to be changed."

Nor were there any steamy situations that required toning down.

"Whenever you start putting high school kids on stage with sexual (innuendo), you always have parents sitting out there in the audience, going, 'Hey, wait a minute!'"

'The wow factor'

You don't have to tell Jim Allen that: The Everett High School teacher brought Jonathan Larson's Pulitzer Prize-winning "Rent" to the stage of the visual and performing arts magnet school two years ago as soon as the "school edition" of the script became available.

"It was interesting," Allen recalled. "They cut out some of the really, really strong stuff, but we still had two guys kissing onstage and two girls kissing onstage. It was funny: The only call we got was from this guy complaining that there were two homosexuals kissing onstage. I had to explain to him that the actors weren't gay, that they were playing roles. But that was the only problem I heard about."

Allen is producing Everett's version of "Chicago," which opens tonight. While the show — based on the true stories of two 1920s vixens who got away with murder and parlayed their scandalous situations into tabloid fame with the help of a sleazy lawyer — has a spicy reputation, Allen says that it's not really shocking.

"Actually, we're the third high school in the state to do it, so it's not that unusual," he said. "We did edit some obvious language and the characters aren't in bed together onstage. But if you look at the stage production — not the movie — there's not much you need to cut to make it appropriate for all ages."

"Rent" is gutsy — way more gutsy than 'Chicago' because of the issues it addresses, like AIDS and homosexuality and homelessness. In 'Chicago,' the only material is the costuming that everybody thinks about."

That would be those striking all-black get-ups that cling to vampy Velma Kelly, ribald Roxie Hart and their cohorts in the chorus line. Allen says director Laura Croff-Wheaton and her cast know the difference between slinky and sleazy when it comes to attire.

"There are girls in leotards and tights, but they have costumes on them," he said. "Nobody who does the show with high schoolers does it with skimpy costumes."

Allen credits Lansing's Tolman Foundation for providing the grants that made "Chicago," "Rent" and last year's Everett production of "Dreamgirls" possible. "Without their support of the arts, we would not be doing theater at the performing arts high school," he said.

When Allen attended Traverse City High School in the late 1960s, the theater program included "South Pacific," "My Fair Lady" and "The Music Man." That's the kind of work he avoids.

"Let's move on: There's plenty of theater that's happened since then," he said.

"I'm not interested in 'Oklahoma' or 'Hello, Dolly!' or 'South Pacific.' There's a certain canon of modern shows that have significant appeal, and I want to do those shows. Shows that have 'the wow factor,' if I can steal that line from one character in (A&E's reality show) 'Storage Wars' — significant shows that are worth doing."

A dancer's 'Answer'

MSU concert tries to define the meaning of 'home'

By ADAM ILENICH

What exactly is dance the answer to?

Michigan State University Associate Professor and Director of Dance Sherrie Barr replies to that question in "Dance is the Answer."

Barr teamed up with community arts choreographer Peter DiMuro to revisit his piece "The 13 Steps," which focuses on the concepts of home and trust.

"I really started considering how 'home' can be a comfort level in one's own skin," Barr said. "You're

at home now, but where is that for you?

Is it where you live with your parents? Your dorm room? Is it with your friends or your apartment?"

The concert also examines comfort levels. "For example, in my piece there are two couples: One couple is two males and one couple is two females," Barr said. "What does that do to people, watching two males touch one another? Or watching two females be close to one another?"



Photo by: G. "Max" Maxin IV

'Dance is the Answer'

Michigan State University
8 p.m. March 20- 23; 2
and 8 p.m. March 24; 2
p.m. March 25
RCAH Auditorium in
Snyder-Phillips Hall
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Michigan State University dancer Clare Eagle rehearses choreographer Sherrie Barr's "In Their Skin," one of the pieces in "Dance is the Answer."



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THE SCREENING ROOM

by JAMES SANFORD

The humor is hard-hitting in Gleeson's 'Guard'

Mismatched cop comedies are certainly nothing new, but leave it to writer-director John Michael McDonagh to put a bit of Irish spring into an all-too-familiar concept.

"The Guard" teams dumpling-faced, plain-talking small-town police sergeant Gerry Boyle (Brendan Gleeson) with the considerably more polished and professional Wendell Everett (Don Cheadle), an FBI agent assigned to track down international narcotics traffickers who are bringing a boat full of cocaine to the Emerald Isle.

Boyle and Everett get off to a shaky start minutes into their first meeting when the blustery Boyle scoffs at Everett's pictures of the suspects, all of whom are white. "I thought only black lads were drug dealers," Boyle muses. "And Mexicans."

Everett, an African-American, is stunned by such out-in-the-open ignorance. "I'm Irish," Boyle reasons. "Racism is part of my culture."

There's a surprising sting in much of the humor in "The Guard," but Gleeson and Cheadle never allow the verbal violence to degenerate into shock for shock's sake. In

'The Guard'

Presented by East Lansing Film Society

7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 14, and Thursday, March 15
Hannah Community Center
819 Abbot Road, East Lansing
\$8; \$6 seniors; \$3 students
7 and 9:15 p.m. Friday, March 16, Saturday, March 17 and Sunday, March 18
Wells Hall, MSU Campus
\$7; \$5 seniors; \$3 students
(517) 980-5802

seriously and lives by his own (admittedly shaky) moral code. The film opens with him surveying the wreckage of a fatal car crash that claimed the lives of a bunch of party-hearty types; Boyle checks one of the

corpses, reaches into the man's jacket and finds a tab of Ecstasy — which he nonchalantly pops into his mouth.

That kind of rule breaking doesn't sit well with the by-the-book Everett, and the partnership is generally prickly. "Did you grow up in the projects?" Boyle asks Everett, who indignantly replies that he came from a privileged background, attended prep school and was a Rhodes Scholar. Everett doesn't expect a bumpkin like Boyle to appreciate the significance of that honor, but Boyle once again surprises him: "I do know what a Rhodes Scholar is," he snorts. "Kris Kristofferson."

While Gleeson and the dryly funny Cheadle make these conversations crackle, director of photography Larry Smith and production designer John Paul Kelly ensure the look of the movie is every bit as lively

and unpredictable as the dialogue. "The Guard" rings with bold colors, marvelously moody lighting and alluring coastal scenery of County Galway.

"The Guard" is not as impressive in terms of its story. McDonagh's plot dawdles and, despite his unconventional approach to much of the material, the climax is disappointing.

It seems the crime drama was nothing more than a framework for all the amusing incidental bits McDonagh cooked up, including peculiar philosophical debates among the crooks (Liam Cunningham, Mark Strong and David Wilmot) and a disarmingly sweet subplot involving Gerry's terminally ill but relentlessly feisty mother, Eileen (the priceless Fionnula Flanagan), that gives Gleeson an opportunity to slightly soften his character's rough edges.

"You never gave me a moment's grief," Eileen murmurs as she and Gerry share a night out on the town. "You know that's not true," Gerry groans. "Let's pretend it is," Eileen quietly tells him.



Courtesy photo

Brendan Gleeson is an uncouth Irish cop in "The Guard."

Brahms away

Symphony unleashes two juggernauts and a fawn

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Saturday's Lansing Symphony concert featured the most highly anticipated orchestra-and-soloist tandem of the 2011-'12 season, French pianist Philippe Bianconi's energetic go at Johannes Brahms's Second Piano Concerto. Would the collision of a top pianist and a mighty music make for a memorable night?

Review Tune in slightly later, masticators of high culture. I turn first, in case I die and transfigure, to the second work on Saturday's Lansing Symphony slate, for it was truly a mind-blower.

Maestro Timothy Muffitt and the crew outdid themselves in sheer sweep and grandeur, all but nailing Richard Strauss' tone poem, "Death and Transfiguration," to the gates of Heaven.

This orchestra seems to thrive on big challenges, as recent Bruckner and Mahler blockbusters have shown. This crew works well with a large canvas and plenty of space to layer sound upon sound. The slow, cosmic wheeling of Strauss' meditation on death was riveting from the start, when a growling contrabassoon began to vibrate from the depths. The buildup was

both excruciating and ecstatic, but in due time, supernovae of shimmering strings and brass gilded my cochlea and fused my eyeballs into diamonds.

Muffitt doesn't draw attention to himself on the podium, but when he presides over large scale music like this, his granitic resolve and dignified athleticism make him a joy to watch. Stretching his arms what seemed like several yards outside of his tuxedo, he coaxed and pulled a Herculean density of sound out of his legions. The final build-up, a slowly ascending stairway of huge chords, climbed to blinding summits of beauty that ought to be forbidden to mere mortals.

So what happens after you've climbed the stairway to heaven? The Brahms Second had a lot to live up to, even after the cosmic force of Strauss dissipated into an orgy of Toblerone and coffee at intermission.

Usually, Muffitt has a firm but diplomatic way of giving his guests their head without letting them forget whose roof they're under.

This time, the dynamic between maestro and soloist was a bit different. There was a slight, but not unwelcome, tension in the marriage. Through the epic storms of the first two movements, Bianconi and Muffitt were on the same page, but not always in the same paragraph. Bianconi

See Story, Page 11

Guitar star

Grammy winner Isbin picks up on 'Passion'

By RICH TUPICA

When classical guitarist Sharon Isbin played a prestigious concert at the White House for the Obama family, she was able to honestly say afterward, "I wasn't nervous."

That confidence is a testament to her steadfast skills with the nylon strings and her poised on-stage coolness. At the November 2009 show, Isbin performed just feet away from the First Family and did what she does at every show: sat, guitar in lap, masterfully nailing each note.

Perhaps the Grammy winner's interest

Sharon Isbin

7 p.m. Sunday, March 18
Pasant Theatre at Wharton Center
(800) WHARTON
\$35; \$15 students (two per MSU ID and one per non-MSU college ID
www.whartoncenter.com

Guitar."

"In her hands, the guitar takes on the precision of a diamond, each note a clear, shining facet that catches, prismatic, a glimpse of the spectrum," noted The New York Times' Anne Midgette.

Isbin plays Sunday at the Pasant Theatre at the Wharton Center.

While the 55-year-old Minnesota-native is regarded as one of the best classical players, after 46 years of playing, she prefers to mix it up. Isbin's catalogue includes over 25 recordings, extending from Baroque and Spanish/Latin to 20th century to crossover and jazz-fusion. Isbin said she embraces her versatility.

"I've never seen that as a problem," Isbin said, in a phone interview. "It's really an asset in that I've drawn so many different kinds of music. For me it's all under one umbrella, which is 'good music.' That way, I don't see boundaries and I'm not limited by them."

Having no borders means Isbin can collaborate with an assortment of players from all genres, including numerous collaborations with virtuoso rock 'n' roll guitar slinger Steve Vai, who is featured on Isbin's new album "Guitar Passions." So what sets Isbin's style apart from Vai's?

"He's playing steel strings with a pick and I'm playing nylon strings with my fingernails — that's the first major difference. Also, he's improvising," Isbin explained. "We bring our worlds together in a way that has to do with the kind of music we choose to play. He and I have been collaborating for almost 10 years now."

That's not out of the ordinary for Isbin.

"I was doing unusual collaborations long before that was even considered to be popu-

See Isbin, Page 11

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Isbin

from page 10

lar, dating back to the 1980s," she said. "I really learned how wonderful it is to be able to mix steel string with nylon and to mix improvisation with a classical style."

While "Guitar Passions" features guest spots from the likes of Nancy Wilson of Heart, obviously Isbin also frequently connects with artists within the modern classical scene.

"I have worked with many contemporary composers to have works written for me," she said. "One is called the 'Joan Baez Suite,' inspired by songs that she made famous in the early part of her career. In fact there'll be two of those on the concert I play in East Lansing."

Isbin's 2009 album, "Journey to the New World," breathed new life into centuries-old folk music. The disc, which features violinist Mark O'Connor and vocals by Joan Baez, also snagged a 2010 Grammy for best instrumental soloist performance (without orchestra).

"That was an exploration of folk music, starting in the 16th century in the British Isles and then crossing the ocean with the immigrants and their music and their dreams to the New World," Isbin said of the "Journey" album. "After the success of that album, Sony asked if I would consider doing something that would be a tribute to the guitar and would honor people from the past as well as the present. That was how 'Guitar Passions' was born."

Isbin said she plans to play some selections off the new record at the Wharton Center, giving East Lansing a first-hand view of her ability to seamlessly blend genres.

"The CD has a very Latin American/Spanish flare to it," she said. "Most of the music comes from those roots. We wanted to create something that would be really



Courtesy Photo

Veteran rockers Steve Vai and Nancy Wilson join classical guitarist Sharon Isbin on her new CD, "Guitar Passions." "I was doing unusual collaborations long before that was even considered to be popular, dating back to the 1980s," Isbin says.

unique and it would combine the classical world and bring into that world people from the rock, pop, and jazz genres."

Her journey into music started when Isbin was 9. Her discipline at an early age enabled her to gain notice while still in her teens; she never looked back.

"When I was 14, I won a competition and the award was to perform with the Minnesota Orchestra," she recalled.

"I walked out on the stage in front of 5,000 people, and I decided this was more exciting than what I had been spending my time doing, which was building and launching model rockets and sending little worms and grasshoppers up into space. So I switched gears and started to practice five hours a day on guitar, and things sort of went from there."

Brahms

from page 10

was reading ahead; Muffitt was savoring.

It was hard to read Bianconi at first, by demeanor or sound. He looked tense and his tone was hard, verging on brittle, like a bottle ping-pong as it rolls down the sidewalk. He was almost too firmly plugged into the music, as if he lacked the musical equivalent of a ground wire or a surge suppressor. He kept rushing onward, a hair ahead of Muffitt and the orchestra, but never so far as to break the thread that bound them together.

As it happened, the tension dovetailed with the music's inherent energy. At the end of the first movement, the piano makes some extra ominous rumbles, as if it's thinking of jumping off the train entirely. Bianconi made it a genuine relief when he seemed to give up the idea and go back to the melody like a team player.

The Big Statements of the first two movements having been made, maestro and soloist seemed to relax into each other for the achingly lovely slow movement. They fell into a deep-breathing rapport and locked in for the rest of the night. After the interval of cushiony languor, they got to their feet, still glowing with warm rapport, and melded into Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers for the high play of the last

movement. Orchestra and pianist traded off melodies and finished each other's phrases so smoothly listeners were grinning in the galleries.

The omission of over-played, overloud overtures is a welcome trend in recent Lansing Symphony concerts. This season, Muffitt has already used Jennifer Higdon's "Blue Cathedrals," David Diamond's Rounds for Orchestra and Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring" to give the audience a gentle but substantial nudge into concert land. After all, since when did the sun come up like a tromping band of toreadors or a Soviet missile parade?

This time, the wake-up whisper was Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," played with all of its elusive wisps and flutterings in high definition. On the radio or on record, you hear the violins float along, playing a watercolor-soft melody, and wonder: What's holding that thing up? Even on a good sound system, the support from the winds sounds like a vague "oodly, oodly, ahh."

The French Impressionists mixed orchestral colors like Monet worked pigments. You have to see those hay stacks and lily ponds in person to appreciate the magic, and the same goes for the music. Saturday, you could trace the complicated harmonic updrafts supporting that drifting melody, and watch the musicians create it — unless your eyes were closed in reverie.

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'Checking Out' checks in at LCP

By JAMES SANFORD

Sarah Hauck's "Checking Out" is set in a hotel, which allows the playwright to have a bit of fun with her title.

'Checking Out'

Lansing Civic Players
March 15-25
Curry Street Theatre
6025 Curry Lane,
Lansing
8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays
and Saturdays; 2 p.m.
Sundays
\$10 Thursdays (\$8 students
and seniors); \$14 Fridays,
Saturdays and Sundays; \$12
seniors and students
(888) 419-5458
www.lansingcivicplayers.org

The Lansing Civic Players production unfolds inside The Lonely Pelican, located in fictitious

CURTAIN CALL

Pepsicola, Fla., where manager George (Rick Wendorf) and his daughter, Karin (Brittney Benjamin), have to face their own reservations about life.

"Basically, the story is about the idea that everybody deserves love," Hauck said. "All of my plays seem to deal with love. The characters are coming to terms with themselves and with each other."

Hauck, 41, has been a playwright since she was in college. "I've written a bunch," she says. "Some will never see the light of day, but I am hoping more of my plays will get produced locally."

Hauck is particularly proud of the diversity in the "Checking Out" cast.

"The characters range from 12 to upward of 60, and there are six women and six men, with several different nationalities represented," she said. "There's an Arabic girl, Latina staff, a Creole woman. I thought it would be fun to have a play with a lot of different kinds of characters that have a lot to say from different viewpoints."

While Hauck is also a performer — she appeared last month in Holt-Dimondale Players' "Company" — she says as much as she enjoys acting, she feels her real talent is writing.

"They say write what you know, and I would say of all these characters each of them has piece of me in them. I try not to base characters on real people. There's a joke: 'Be careful — or you'll end up in my play.' But I don't do that: I don't like to put other people's business out there. But there's a lot that's happened to me that's reflected in this play."

'Let's Murder Marsha'

With a title like "Let's Murder Marsha," you might expect some potentially gruesome goings-on. But let Starlight Dinner Theatre artistic director Linda Granger set your mind at rest.

"No one gets murdered in the show," she says. "Some people have felt they don't want to go to a show and see someone murdered — and it's not a whodunit. It's a farce with a lot of twists and turns and surprises."

Not to mention misunderstandings. Voracious reader Marsha Gilmore (Sarah Sonnenberg) can't get enough of killer thrillers — until she overhears talk that convinces her that her husband (Bob Purosky) and a supposed mistress (Michele Booher) are planning to close the book on her.

"Marsha" co-stars Angela Dill, Jason Carlen, Carol Ferris and Bob Murrell under the direction of Susan Chmurynsky, who's directing at Starlight for the first time.

"It's definitely goofy," Chmurynsky said of Jack Sharkey's script. "It reminds me of an 'I Love Lucy' show, the one where she's

reading a mystery and thinks Ricky's trying to kill her."

But while Chmurynsky wants to keep the comedy lively and loony, she also insists the actors don't go over the top.

"My philosophy is that it has to play like it's real. So we've got a lot of backstory going on. We figured out who met where and what their parents are like — all that. I think that's the secret to good farce. I just don't want to see people acting, and I definitely don't want to see people saying, 'I'm so funny: Wink, wink!'"

Chmurynsky says her actors have been working to keep up the brisk pace — "I want to make sure people who've had good meal don't fall asleep, so we have to keep this show moving along" — and to jell as an ensemble.

"Some shows, you have a prima donna in the bunch," Chmurynsky said. "Not this one: There are no divas in the bunch — except me."



Photo by Linda Granger

Clockwise from top left, Bob Murrell, Jason Carlen, Michele Booher, Bob Purosky, Carol Ferris and Angela Dill create confusion for mystery-loving Marsha (Sarah Sonnenberg, center) in Starlight Dinner Theatre's "Let's Murder Marsha."

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Courtesy Photo

"You know what? I'm not going to fit into any boxes," says violinist David "Dixon" Hammond. The 42-year-old Lansing native performs Thursday at Creole Gallery.

Take a bow

Violinist makes his own 'transitional journey'

By RICH TUPIKA

After playing conventional classical violin for 25 years, David "Dixon" Hammond suddenly had a life-altering revelation about music: Abandon all the rules and burn the sheet music.

The Lansing native, who now performs under the moniker Dixon's Violin, attended the Burning Man Festival in a Nevada desert back in 2005. It proved to be a liberating vacation.

He now plays, what he calls, "a transformational journey through digital violin." It's a field that relies heavily on improvisation, digital-effects processors and looping pedals, creating an experimental blend of classical, even some rock tones. On Thursday, he brings his ingenuity to the Creole Gallery.

"It was the first time I saw a completely different way of living," Hammond recalled of his first trip to the Burning

Man Festival.

"People were being very creative, following their hearts, creating art and doing things that were outside of the norm. Nothing fits in a box there, everything is different. Not that you need to do it that way, but realizing you can actually create your life the way you want it is huge."

Since he ditched the rulebook, Hammond, now 42 and living in Dearborn, has opened his mind to spiritual influences, along with a few contemporary ones. He's even performed live at the Burning Man festival.

"Musically, it's a combination of classical and modern influences; everything from Pink Floyd to Radiohead," he said. "But more than that, it's about following the moment and feeling the vibe, there's some influence from yoga and meditation."

Dixon's Violin

Dixon's Violin
7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 15
Creole Gallery
1218 Turner St., Lansing
\$10
www.dixonsviolin.com

See Dixon, Page 14

Curtain Call

from page 12

'The Tale of Snow White'

Attention, trend-spotters: "Snow White" is red-hot this season.

The Magic Mirror's favorite beauty returns to cinemas on March 30 in "Mirror Mirror," with Lily Collins, Julia Roberts, Nathan Lane and Armie Hammer, and again on June 1 in "Snow White and the Huntsman," with Kristen Stewart, Charlize Theron, Ian McShane and Chris Hemsworth.

But if you can't wait that long, there's Mid Michigan Family Theatre's "The Tale of Snow White," opening Friday.

"We're beating the rush on it a little bit," says director Bill Gordon, chuckling.

This adaptation puts a comic spin on the Brothers Grimm, adding characters you may not remember from the original story, including limerick-loving ladies-in-waiting and a Department of Natural Resources agent who advocates responsible use of the forest.

"It's a fun version," Gordon says. "I think everybody knows the story, so to tell it like it is, that's probably not worth spending any time on it. With a new angle, it makes it more interesting for the actors and the audience."

Gordon found the script after perusing almost a dozen other "Snow White" plays. "This one seemed to have what we were looking for: a large cast and a different slant on the story."

Although Snow White and the Evil Queen are still the headliners, this version also had roles that boys might be interested in tackling.

"They want to play the dwarves and the prince and the huntsman," Gordon said. "They shy away from stuff like 'Cinderella,' because that's more romantic."

He speaks from experience: "We did 'The 12 Dancing Princesses' a while ago, and there was not a boy to found in the vicinity of Frandor."

'The Tale of Snow White'

Mid Michigan Family Theatre
March 16-25
7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays;
3 p.m. Sundays
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Dixon

from page 13

"And there's a visual aspect to it as well," he added. "At the Creole Gallery, there will be a whole computer light show that will react to the sound in real time."

Hammond, who has a graduate degree in computer science from Michigan State University, is now able to pursue music full time, spending ample time touring across the United States. It's quite an accomplishment for a man who possibly invented a new genre on his violin.

"It's very experiential, and I've absolutely thought, 'You know what? I'm not going to fit into any boxes; this doesn't fit under any genre. I'm going to do my own thing.'"

Hammond's avant-garde playing extends beyond effects. In the world of Dixon's Violin, a bow is not necessarily needed to make passionate music.

"There's plucking, I'll smack the bow, maybe even take the violin off my chin and put it on my knee; I'll play the wrong parts of the strings," Hammond explained of his techniques.

"I also use the effects pedals to get it to sound like another instrument. It'll sound like a bass, it'll sound like an electric guitar, or it could sound like a siren. It's really about what is the mood trying to evoke

and how to get that sound out."

While Hammond, who began playing violin at age 10, may have a rough blueprint in his head before he walks on stage, he said he's always willing to go off course. A far cry from his years spent starring at sheet music.

"I have some ideas but if in the middle of it I say to myself, 'Well, the spirit's telling me to go in a completely different direction' then I'm open to changing that plan," he said. "I also use words (in between the songs) quite a bit, just as guidance. I want to guide people through a journey."

"It's not, 'I thought of this song because my girlfriend dumped me' - there's none of that," he added. "It's more of, 'Here's some imagery for you, here's something to think about as I'm playing this next song.' I've found words can be very powerful during a performance."

Hammond has found his personalized music is touching music lovers and some musicians, too.

"I'm very blessed. I've had a lot of people say, 'After hearing you I decided to take up the violin again,'" he said.

"This mom sent me an e-mail and said her young daughter, who is just learning the violin, was at one point slapping the bow against the strings; she said to her mom, 'It's just like Dixon!' I get a tickle out of that because I frequently will play the violin the way you're not supposed to. I do break the rules quite often."

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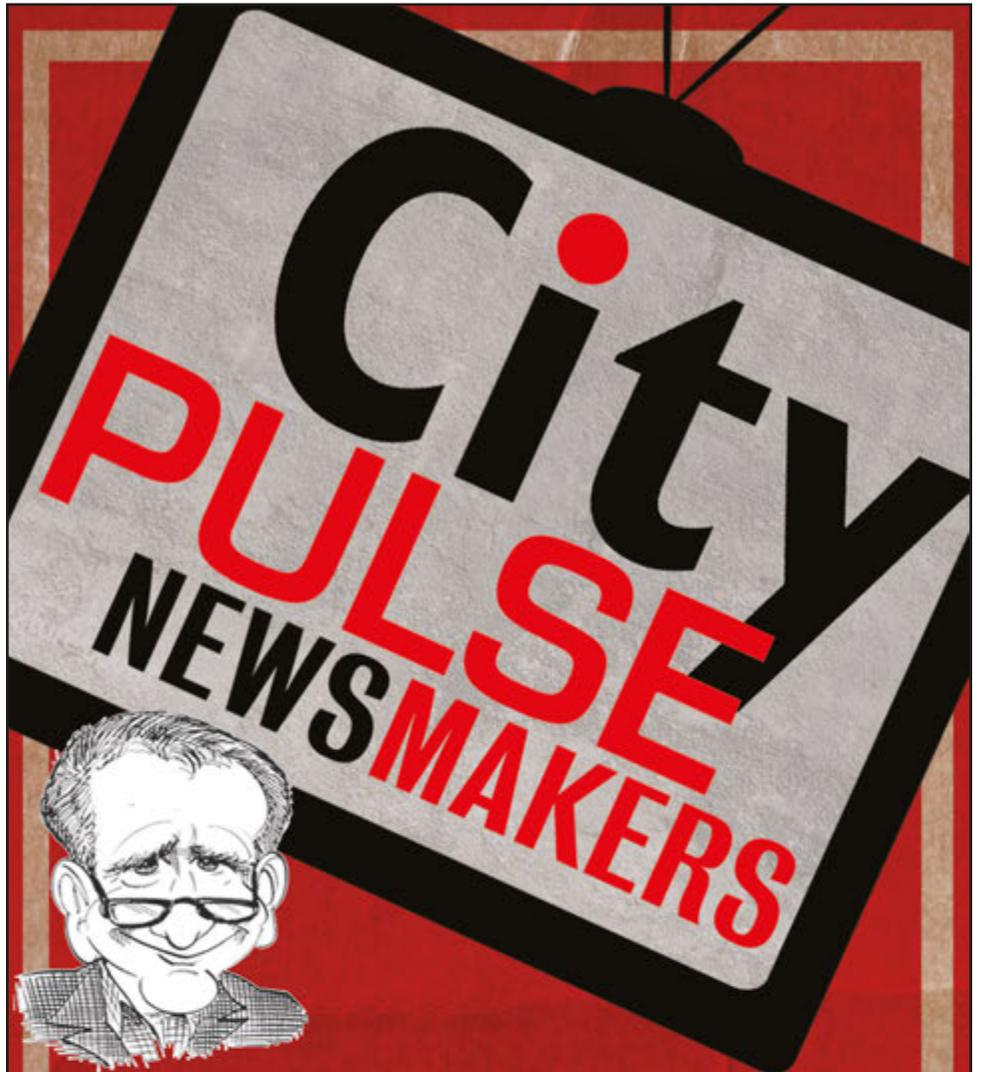
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An officer and an author

Actor-soldier-memoirist Benjamin Busch looks back on being a Marine — and playing a Marine

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Will the real Benjamin Busch please stand up? Busch's memoir, "Dust to Dust: A Memoir," is a modern version of the 1960s TV show, "To Tell the Truth."

Busch — an artist, actor, soldier and now author — shows his poetic vision of life and death in this unusual memoir, which doesn't follow the usual conventions. For example, the story isn't linear, but is broken into the sub-categories of Arms, Water, Metal, Soil, Bone, Wood, Blood and Ash, things the author refers

to as elemental. Typically, he alternates chapters on his war experience with those of growing up.

He describes the journey of writing the memoir as "seeking to disinter my childhood."

"We all come from the memory of our childhood," he said. "We go into ourselves, but we don't go into them and they pass us by." He says writing the memoir forced him into being "in his childhood," actually being there to see his parents.

Nothing is conventional about Benjamin Busch. Although he is the son of the late novelist Frederick Busch and his mother, Judy, was a librarian, he admits to not reading much. "As a child I was physically restless and could not sit down," he said. "Even in college, I had the same mentality."

The young Busch always inhabited more of the physical world, and in his book he writes "what my father built with words, I built with pieces of the earth, stone and wood."

Benjamin Busch

7 p.m. Wednesday,
March 21
Schuler Books & Music
1982 Grand River Ave.,
Okemos
Free
www.schulerbooks.com

Busch tells of a somewhat conventional childhood, of playing with sticks and stones and building tree houses and forts while pretending to be a warrior. He then goes off to study studio art at Vassar College, a predominately female school.

Breaking with tradition, he also begins to study war as he enters the Marine Corps Officers Training Program. After graduating, he serves in active duty from 1992 to 1996.

Then, beginning with a job as an extra in the film "Contact" (with Jodie Foster and Matthew McConaughey), he commits himself to learn everything there is about acting. He lands roles in "Homicide" (he plays a corpse), "The West Wing" and, if ever life mirrored art, he plays a Marine in the Tommy Lee Jones/Samuel L. Jackson drama "Rules of Engagement."

In 2003, when he is called up for the



Courtesy Photo

"Dust to Dust" author and former Marine Benjamin Busch took a self-portrait during his second tour of Iraq in 2005.

invasion of Iraq, Busch writes about how he inadvertently continued his acting career. Faced with leading battle-hardened veterans from the Gulf War, Busch describes how his acting skills came in handy and how he played the role of a hard-assed commander. He emerges from his first deployment relatively unscathed, both physically and emotionally.

Home safely, Busch takes up where he left off, playing Anthony Colicchio, the ex-Marine cop in HBO's "The Wire." But his acting career is put on hold when he is sent back to Iraq in 2005, this time to Ramadi, where he confronts the randomness of war when a sniper's bullet hits a member of the unit accompanying him.

"For the Marines, it was entirely random. I went over to talk to them. All that I knew was all that they knew. We would have to go back out tomorrow," he writes.

The same year, he and several other Marines are injured when a cargo vehicle in which they are riding strikes an improvised explosive device. It was during this time that Busch describes how his life view changed from the invulnerability he felt during his first tour to expecting death in his second tour. "But the belief in immortality and the certainty of doom produced almost the same lack of anxiety in me," he writes.

Toward the end of his second tour in Iraq, his father writes an essay titled "Don't Watch the News" for Harper's Magazine about his son's second deployment and how a family back home copes while also confronting their long held anti-war beliefs. "Perhaps by slicing another day off our lives as we wish it away to bring him home we are spending our lives to buy his," his father wrote.

In his typical existential style, Frederick Busch ponders the question he would like to ask his son: "How far do you burrow inside yourself before it's difficult to work your way out?"

Benjamin Busch reflects on his parents' values: "I remembered them raising me not to carry a gun. My father had chosen words over war."

The younger Busch has embraced both words and war, and in 2008 — in a surreal example of method acting — he was back in combat gear as one of the stars of "Generation Kill," an HBO miniseries about the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In a few short years, Busch had gone from being an actor playing a warrior to a warrior being an actor playing a warrior.

Since his tours in Iraq, Busch has moved to Reed City and thrown himself into raising his family while creating and directing two short movies, "Sympathetic Details" and "Bright," both with assistance from actors from "The Wire."

Although Busch has been a soldier for more than half of his adult life, "Dust to Dust" does not glorify or glamourize warfare (only one-third of the 300-page book covers his days as a Marine). Instead, Busch has created an unusually poetic memoir (he says he tries not to use the same word twice) and one that he hopes will inspire introspection in others. No matter what career Busch finally decides on — if he ever does pick just one — you can expect him to bring to it a deep sensibility of life, death and the importance of memories.

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Benjamin Busch is an actor, photographer, film director, and a United States Marine Corps Infantry Officer. He played the role of Officer Anthony Colicchio on the HBO series The Wire, and has appeared on Homicide, The West Wing, and Generation Kill. His writing has appeared in Harper's, has been twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize. He lives on a farm in Michigan with his wife and two daughters.

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CityPULSE

ST. PATRICK'S DAY BAR GUIDE

What's better than a day dedicated to drinking? Not having to take a day off work to enjoy a day dedicated to drinking. This year, St. Patrick's Day falls on a Saturday; the next time it happens—2018—we'll probably be able to teleport to a bar on the moon for last call. Which will be great for all those future college seniors who are only just starting high school this year, but as for 2012 we'll have to keep our feet on the ground and stick to local establishments. So this year, take solace in the knowledge that if you want to spend an entire day drinking (and spilling) green beer, you don't have to lie to your boss this year to get away with it.

CATA provides safe travel alternatives for Saturday's festivities

By ALLISON M. BERRYMAN

CATA's increased services will make traditional Saint Patrick's Day bar hopping safer for Lansing residents.

"We're gearing up to provide a fun, smart and safe travel option for those who are celebrating on Saturday," said Laurie Robinson, director of marketing for CATA.

The Entertainment Express trolley service will run two hours early on Saturday at 5:30 p.m., and will travel its regular route between downtown Lansing to downtown East Lansing until 2:30 a.m. Each trolley

will travel to and from Washington Square and M.A.C and Albert, stopping at 23 designated Entertainment Express spots along the route.

"Extending CATA's Entertainment Express service hours on St. Patrick's Day is designed to get as many people off the streets as possible to ensure safe travels for everyone within the communities we serve."

In addition to the extension of Entertainment Express service on Saturday, CATA's Routes 1 and 26 will also extend their hours of operation, until 1:25 a.m. and 3 a.m. respectively.

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BEGGARS BANQUET. Opening at 7 a.m. for full bar and menu. Green beer & Irish whiskey. 7 a.m.-Midnight. 218 Abbott Road, East Lansing. (517) 351-4540.

THE BLACK ROSE. Live entertainment, food and drink specials, corned beef sliders, green eggs and green beer. 3 p.m.-2 a.m. 101 S. Washington Square, Lansing.

BONNIE'S PLACE. Drink specials, green Jell-O shots and corned beef and cabbage. 11 a.m.-11 p.m. 415 E. Saginaw St., Lansing. (517) 482-4404.

BRANNIGAN BROTHERS. DJ playing dance music and drink specials. 9 p.m. 210 S. Washington Square, Lansing. (517) 702-8001.

GLADDAGH IRISH PUB. Opening at 7 a.m., free prizes, drink specials and DJ. 2900 Towne Centre Blvd., Lansing. (517) 484-2523.

COLONIAL BAR & GRILLE. Drink specials all week-end. Featuring Haphazard and corned beef and cabbage. 10 a.m.-2 a.m. 3425 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing. (517) 882-6132.

CONNEXIONS COMEDY CLUB. Mike Stanley, comedian and writer. Featuring green beer and a leprechaun available for picture taking. 8 and

10:30 p.m. \$15. 2900 North E. St., Lansing. (517) 374-HAHA.

CRUNCHY'S. Opening at 7 a.m. and featuring green beer. 7 a.m.-2 a.m. 254 W. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. (517) 351-2506.

DAGWOOD'S TAVERN. Drink specials including Irish car bombs, Guinness, Jameson and corned beef dinner available. 11 a.m.-Midnight. 2803 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. (517) 374-0390.

DUBLIN SQUARE. Opening at 6 a.m. Featuring an Irish breakfast. 6 a.m.-2 a.m. 327 Abbot Road, East Lansing. (517) 351-2222.

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KELLY'S DOWNTOWN. Live entertainment, green beer and food and drink specials. 220 S. Washington Square, Lansing. (517) 708-2007.

THE LOFT. St. Patrick's Day rage, with green beer and music by DJ Rob Perry, DJ INOV8, Cognac Pee Machine and more. 6 p.m. \$8. 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. www.theloftlansing.com.

MAC'S BAR. Featuring Black Jake and The Carnies. 9 p.m. \$5. 2700 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 484-6795.

MBC LANSING. Classic Irish food, green beer and Irish music. 9 a.m.-2 a.m. 402 S. Washington Square., Lansing. (517) 977-1349.

MORIARTY'S PUB. Corned beef and cabbage, Irish stew, great draft selection and live music. Featuring Guinness, Harp and Smithwicks on tap. 10 a.m.-2 a.m. 802 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 485-5287.

NUTHOUSE SPORTS GRILL. Green beer \$3, Irish car bombs, Jameson, dirty girl scout cookies and green Jell-O shots. 10 a.m. 420 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 484-6887.

PT. O'MALLEY'S. Open for free breakfast with entry and green beer. 7 a.m.-2 a.m. 210 Abbott Road, East Lansing. (517) 332-2959.

RUM RUNNERS. Entertainment all day long, green beer and drink specials. 11 a.m.-2 a.m. 601 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 482-4949.

SPIRAL DANCE BAR. A "Kiss Me I'm Irish" party featuring music and videos spun by DJ John Cruz. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. 1247 Center St., Lansing. (517) 371-3221.

TAVERN ON THE SQUARE. Food specials, \$3 green beer, drink specials, entertainment starting at 2 p.m. 10 a.m.-2 a.m. 206 S. Washington Square, Lansing. (517) 374-5555.

TIN CAN. The Big Deck will be heated, DJs will be spinning all day long on The Big Deck, Shamrock & Lucky Charms pudding shots and drink specials. 11 a.m.-2 a.m. 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 202-1079.

TROPPO. Drink specials and a St. Patrick's Day feast. Noon-Midnight. \$18. 111 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 371-4000.

TURNER-DODGE HOUSE & HERITAGE CENTER. Irish Tea; celebrate St. Patrick's Day with good friends, tea and treats. 3 p.m. \$8. 100 E. North Street, Lansing. (517) 483-4220.

UNICORN TAVERN. Frog and the Beeftones will be playing. 9 p.m. 327 E. Grand River Ave., Lansing. (517) 485-9910.

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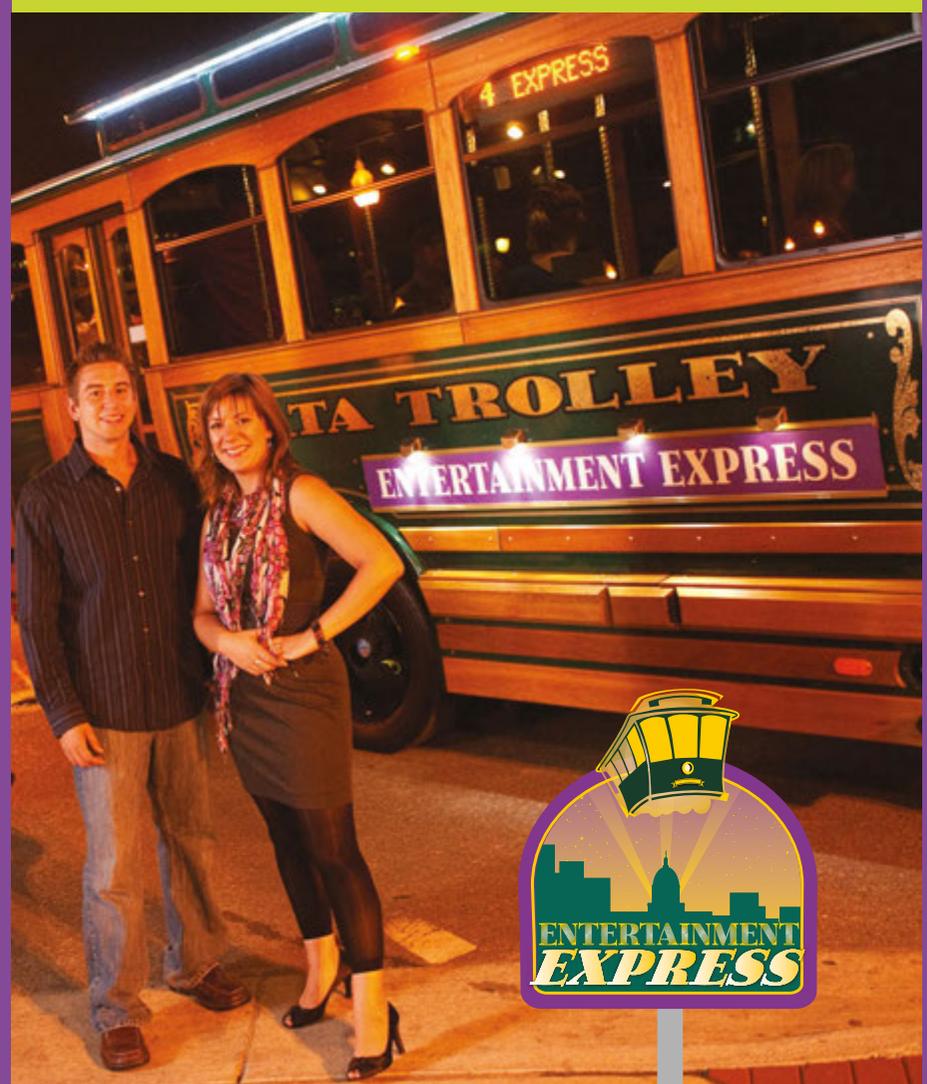
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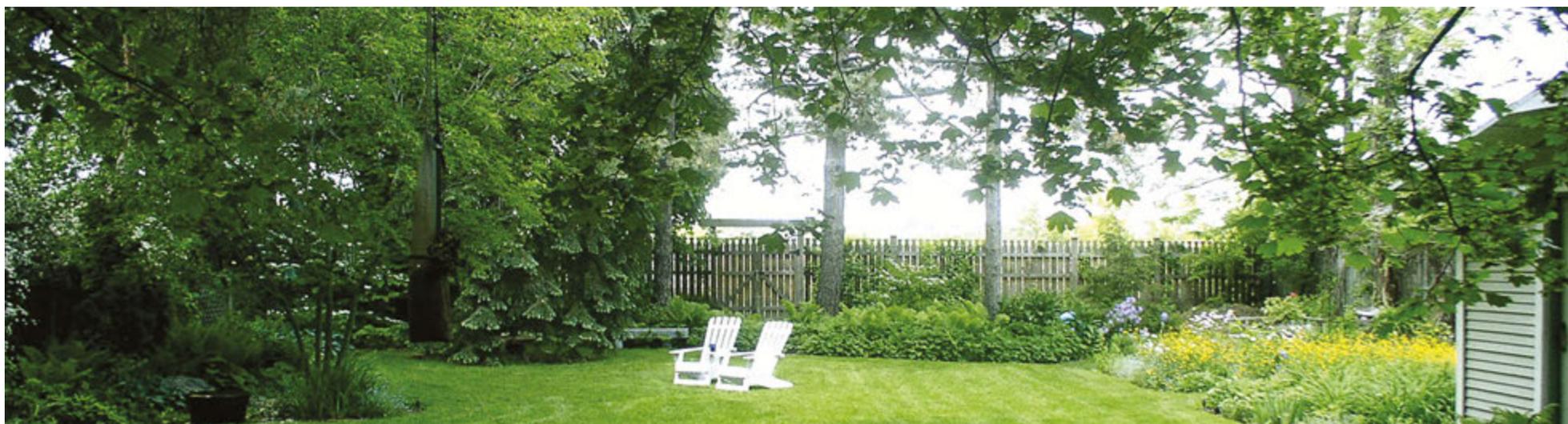
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Garden Dreams

A bouquet of gardeners share their styles, hopes and delights

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Last week, Dan Crow picked his way through the wind-blasted garden that surrounds his home in Perry. “It looks like a disaster,” Crow said. “This is the ugliest time of year. Everything’s beat up. Yesterday there were two trees down — a Serbian spruce and a pine.”

It sounds like a back-breaking mess. So why is Crow smiling?

That’s easy. He is a gardener.

Gardeners are crazy. They can’t wait to bend over and lift things. They love worms, dirt, sweat and bugs. They embrace work and like it even better when nature fights them back.

In other words, they have a clue or two about life that civilians could learn from.

“Change is good in the garden,” Crow said. “You can always incorporate something new and different into it. It’s good for the soul.”

Every year, Crow and his partner, Jim Fasel, fill their five acres with flowers, tulip trees, conifers and huge sprays of ornamental grasses. The evergreens have held the field alone since fall, but some didn’t survive the winds of March.

The pair are used to it. Their gardens nestle in a forest of Scotch pine and red pine planted in the 1930s. Neither species is long-lived. “We lose 10 or 15 a year, but that opens space for us to plant new things,” Crow said.

Crow has been gardening for as long as he can remember. By the time he left his mother’s house in Dearborn to go to college, he had ripped out her whole lawn and converted it to garden. He was the chief gardener at the Michigan governor’s residence for 15 years.

Now he owns his own landscaping business, Outdoor Expressions, in East Lansing. He keeps up with cutting-hedge trends like the umbrella garden he’s putting

together for this weekend’s Lansing Home and Garden show at the MSU pavilion. The show is the biggest in the state, a March tide-over for pale Michiganders starved for lush garden sights and smells.

All gardeners, from the apartment dweller with two pots on the porch to pros like Crow, know that gardening escalates. Compared to the average backyard putterer, Crow is far down the garden path of madness. Crow’s display at the garden show will be full of perennials and flowers, forced into bloom, and another recent enthusiasm, rustic “dry stack” stone walls and bridges that hold together with no mortar.

“Just like like Roman aqueducts,” Crow said. “It all depends on the keystone.”

Last week, as the weather warmed up, his business phone started to ring in earnest. It’s a sign of the season. In March, garden dreams are already ripe.

Music by other means

You won’t find a fence, a wall, or a straight line of any kind in the gardens surrounding Mary Alice Stollak’s East Lansing home.

“A straight line stunts beauty,” she said. “Even along sidewalks, I make sure the gardens flow.”

Stollak retired in 2009 after 16 years as the director of the MSU Children’s Chorus. Her garden, nurtured over 30 years, is music by other means. She pronounces “verdant” “vare-dent,” the same way you say “Verdi.”

“Notes never stand still,” she said. “One of the most important things in music is phrasing. A phrase always moves forward. Even long held notes have to have energy.”

She thinks of gardening the same way.

“The lines of the garden have to move forward. They have to have energy.”



Courtesy Photo

Daniel Crow and Jim Fasel have filled their five acres near Perry with perennials, ornamental trees, sculpture and grasses, against a backdrop of red and Scotch pine.

Last week, she peeked through the snow flurries into her garden and a cluster of low, pale blooms peeked back at her. Hellebore, the harbinger of spring, was back.

Stollak grew up in suburban

Milwaukee and learned gardening from her father, an artist and the first person to warn her away from straight lines. She and her two brothers are still avid gardeners.

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Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse
 Domingo "D.J." Castillo, a second grader at Bingham Elementary, was studying in concentration as he harvested lettuce Thursday at the Hunter Park Garden House.



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She started her music training at a southside Milwaukee liberal arts school near her home with beautifully kept grounds and the garden-y name of Alverno College.

Even before she went to Alverno, she detoured through the grounds while walking to and from grade school to bask in the gardens and sculpture.

She still thinks of her garden as a sanctuary. Most of her garden is hidden from the street.

"Once we create something of beauty, both in music and our surrounding environment, it becomes a spiritual oasis," she said.

Her East Lansing home has gardens on all sides, so there are a lot of shade plants like ferns and hostas. Instead of straight fences, a graceful curtain of evergreens — mostly hemlocks and Norwegian pine — loom as a backdrop. She rarely cuts them back. Stollak is much less of a control freak in the garden than in the rehearsal room.

"The electric hedge trimmer has removed all sense of grace and beauty from evergreens," she said. "They need to move, to flow."

One of her favorites is a 4-foot tall campanula. "I allow my hostas to get huge and verdant," she said. "Oak-leaf

hydrangeas have become very, very big. When they're in bloom, they are glorious."

Variegated ground cover catches the sunlight in different visual chords. A crescendo of color wells upward from perennial beds, with lots of clematis (a climber) and a climbing rose. A walkway meanders through ferns and wildflowers. "It's always a work in progress. It just seems to happen," she said. Her computer spreadsheet, with alphabetical listing of about 70 shrubs and plants, is less a planning tool than a document of her passions, like a musical recording.

There are two activities in which Stollak loses herself completely: rehearsals and gardening. Her husband, Gary, has to remind her to eat. "Hours could go by and I would have no idea," she said.

In spring, she might put in seven or eight hours in the garden. Sooner or later, a wooden bench — a gift from the MSU Children's Choir for her retirement — begins to beckon.

"That's where I get some of my best ideas," she said. "I look around and I have a creative moment: 'Oh, that would be lovely there.'"

Hoop dreams

The east side's all-season hub of garden things is the Hunter Park GardenHouse in Hunter Park on Kalamazoo Street.

"It's going to be a crazy jungle in here in August," program manager Rita O'Brien

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said with a grin. “You’re going to see tomatoes trellised up to the ceiling, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant.” Two outside gardens, including a children’s garden, will be in full bloom.

Going to be? The place is already mildly crazy, and it’s only mid-March. This is a hoop house, where passive solar energy pushes the growing season throughout the Michigan winter.

Last week, two kinds of kale towered over O’Brien, crowning a lavish array of fresh greens. “The winter was so warm the kale looks like palm trees,” O’Brien said. The lettuce is big and juicy. The collard greens are coming up as thick and fast as money from a Zimbabwe printing press.

Thursday, a group of visiting students from Bingham Elementary School helped harvest 10 pounds of greens. They skimmed a generous amount for a communal salad at the picnic table.

Much of the crop goes to help keep the hoop house operating. Last week, O’Brien sold a load of greens to Fork in the Road restaurant.

Soon the bins will be cleared and seeded for the summer season. Tomato seedlings, broccoli and onion sprouts are already waiting in starter planters sprawled over large tables. Slots for membership in the hoop house CSA, or Community Supported Agriculture group, are expected to go fast.

The hoop house is a constant hub of programs, from gardener certification classes to yoga to school visits. On Sundays, gardeners get together to compare notes and share garden dreams.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Last week, kale was towering over Rita O’Brien, program manager at the Hunter Park Garden House. This month, the beds of greens will be converted to tomatoes, eggplants and other summer veggies.

“Season extension is a big topic these days,” O’Brien said. This year, there are worm composting bins, brick paths to help older folks make their way around the beds, and a giant rainwater catchment system. Last week, Girl Scouts filled and seeded overhead baskets with lettuce mix and festooned the hoop house with potential salad.

Painting pictures

Beth Monteith and her husband of 28 years, Gary Novak, have worked out an interesting formula for marital harmony in the gardens surrounding their west side home.

“We both have strong opinions,” Monteith said. “Rather than constantly negotiate, we each just take a side. He does the left side, I do the right.”

When they’re both working in the garden, they stay in their respective

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plots, admiring each other's work from a distance.

"We both paint our pictures for each other," she said. "If we tried to paint together on the same canvas, we'd end up with mud."

Monteith was in California when I talked with her last week. Just for fun, I called Novak, who is here in Lansing, to see if they had their story straight. I should have known.

"Gardening is like doing a painting," he began. "You don't want somebody looking over your shoulder and saying, 'Put more red in.' It's a personal thing. Each of us has our own canvas."

To add zest, they have a "winner of the month."

"Sometimes it's a draw," Monteith said.

Their gardening rhythms are different, too. Monteith prefers low-level, constant activity.

"I rest a little bit, just a little, until I'm ready to go again," she said.

Novak treats the garden more like a home improvement project. "I go there once a month and plow through it," he said. "I won't pull a weed unless I can do all of it at once. It's like some people do physical exercise."

Monteith grows vegetables and bright flowers, while Novak has the shadier side of the garden. "Hers is lively and bright and mine is more subtle and natural," he said.

"Mine looks more like a riot going on," Monteith said. "Give everybody a chance."

Their west side house was built in 1884. Soon after it was moved to Vine Street from Michigan Avenue in the 1920s, much of the plant structure, from hostas to buttercups to day lilies, was established.

Novak, a landscape architect, has made lasting changes his wife admires (from afar).

"It's so lovely to look at his garden. He's got a double-file viburnum that he's nurtured and trimmed into these gorgeous horizontal branches." The bush is studded with white flowers that spray outward like the Death Star slowly exploding.

"He looks at perennials with a long-term eye and develops their characteristics," she said. "I'm much more about how it's going to look this year."

Monteith loves to handle "thugs" invasive plants like menarda (bee balm) that relish elbowing their neighbors aside.

"Bring me the thugs," she said. "When I taught school, I was the person they would send those kids to that nobody else could work with."

It was hard to say whether she was talking about kids or menarda. "You have



Courtesy Photo

Beth Monteith and Gary Novak, married 28 years, agree that the backyard of their westside Lansing home is their "favorite room in the house," but they steer clear of each other's designated gardening areas.

to keep your eye on 'em and trim 'em back," she said. "You don't end up in trouble if you stay attentive."

Monteith will return to Lansing this week with packets of lettuce seeds purchased out West.

"You can put in lettuce and kale really early," she said. "I'll be turning soil, taking a look at everything. I dream of the

fragrance of the soil."

Monteith and Novak agree that the backyard is their favorite room in the house.

"We eat in the yard all the time in the summer," Monteith said. "We have candlelight croquet. You lose points if you knock a candle out."

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Manage vs. control

Like many people, Ben Graham sits at a computer all day making a living. Being a graphic designer is fun, but there's more to life than pushing pixels.

"It's great to put that down and work with fertile dirt and organic things for an hour or so every day," Graham said. "I still work with color and texture. It's an aesthetic pursuit, much like my career, but the medium is totally different."

Graham lives on Tecumseh River Road on the northwest side of Lansing. He's only three miles from downtown, but he looks across the street through his garden to Tecumseh Park and the Grand River. Deer often pick their way through the woods behind his house.

His house sits on two and a half city lots, and he's converted about a third of his land into garden.

When he started shaping the garden six years ago, he moved tons of dirt, by wheelbarrow, to make a suitable area.

"It's a passion and a hobby, to get myself out of the studio, get outside and deal with soil," he said.

Gardens can shelter, conceal or invite. Graham's garden does all those things. Most nights, he eats in the garden and enjoys the screen it provides from the street. When he's in the mood, he works out front and schmoozes with passers-by.

"It's a conversation starter," he said. "People who live five blocks down the street stop and we become acquaintances because of that."

Graham worked with vegetable gardens as a college student and later got hooked on the endless variety (and work-generating potential) of annuals. By now, he has built three gardens at various houses where he's lived, but the Tecumseh River garden, six

years old, is the most elaborate.

Some gardeners can't step outside without bending over and fussing, but most of the time Graham spends in the garden is pure relaxation. He'll take a 15-minute break from work during the day to watch butterflies and tree frogs cavort among the flowers and grasses.

Perennials anchor the garden, enhanced by a yearly pageant of changing annuals. Most years, Graham extends the garden according to a master plan mapped out in his head.

"There's some aspects of an English garden, but most of it's more free-form," he said.

Graham is partial to ornamental grasses — because of their height, texture and color — and canna lilies with their exotic flowers. "They're very impressive and large — six, seven feet tall — with huge, burgundy colored leaves," he said. "It has a very vibrant but subtle flower that attracts hummingbirds."

Graham also likes milkweed, home plant of the Monarch butterfly, although many people rip it out as a weed. Like all gardeners, he is always watching his levels on the control-freak scale. With living stuff, you can't push your God streak too far, but you can't throw up your hands, either. "I manage the garden rather than control it," he said.

Unlike some gardeners, Graham doesn't fight late fall by covering plants up from the frost.

"By that time it's ready to go," he said.

Floodplain fantasia

Tomato, onion, pepper and eggplant seedlings cover every flat surface of Jared Talaga's east side Lansing apartment. He has 40 trays with thousands of plants.

"I don't really have much living space anymore," he said.

The tomatoes Talaga canned last year have just run out, but he's not planning on eating

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Courtesy Photo

The expanding garden at Ben Graham's home in northwest Lansing mixes the rigor of an English garden with free form ideas mapped out in the owner's head.



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Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

AmeriCorps volunteer Jared Talaga and two partners are converting a rubble-strewn parcel of land on the east side into Floodplain Farms. Last week, Talaga visited the site with his dog, Charlie, to see how the brush clearing was coming along.

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all that produce. Talaga is an AmeriCorps volunteer with the Ingham County Land Bank and a recent MSU graduate in urban and regional planning.

Talaga's garden dreams are ambitious. Last year, he joined two other volunteers to start Floodplain Farms, a small, two-acre farm on Lansing's east side, on South Francis Street. His farming partners are Neal Valley, an AmeriCorps volunteer at the South Lansing Community Development Association, and MSU horticulture grad Jackie Cosner. They, too, are surrounded by flats of seedlings at home.

There is a daunting job ahead of them. For years, the vacant lot in the shadow of I-496 has been a dumping ground for neighbors' yard waste. An epic round of brush clearing has begun, but there's a long way to go. They cleared a fraction of the parcel and planted garlic in the fall, but this will be the garden's first full year.

Last week, Talaga looked over the uneven sod and windblown flotsam, but saw something else.

"There will be an acre of tilled area, with nice rows, with huge tomatoes and peppers," he said. "We'll have a water catchment system and solar passive greenhouses."

Floodplain Farms really does sit in a

floodplain, so it can't be developed. Talaga is working with the Ingham County Land Bank and the city of Lansing for a five-year lease at the princely sum of \$10 a year.

"We don't see making money the first few years, but we want to expand to Lansing restaurants, especially since they have become interested in serving local foods," Talaga said.

They also plan to start up educational programs and join the burgeoning complex of urban farms and hoop houses in the surrounding Urandale neighborhood. In all, 36 city parcels have been converted to community gardens there.

"We can farm in the city and educate people, too," Talaga said. "Those are two things we love."

Talaga and his partners are picking up compost from five Lansing restaurants to put in the soil. It's fun to imagine that many molecules from last year's meals at Fork in the Road will likely make it into next year's.

The early activity has already sparked interest among neighbors. A man next door invited them to use a plot of land he owned, next to the farm. Another neighbor offered the use of his water hookup.

In a few weeks, Talaga will get his apartment back and the seedlings will be in the ground.

"I'm ready for a nice heirloom tomato I can just pop off the vine and eat right there. I can't remember what a good tomato tastes like."

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Q: When I got married, I was a slim 6'2", but I've gained a lot of weight. My wife gained about 20 pounds but recently lost that and more. I've been as high as 265, but I'm now at 238 and losing about a pound a week, which isn't fast enough for my wife. When I contemplate going on a stricter diet, what comes to mind is feeling angry, tired, and hungry at my high-stress job. My wife said that I obviously love food more than her, and that if I won't lose weight for her, maybe I'll do it for our boys. She considers me self-centered and narcissistic because I'm not losing enough weight, and I consider her self-centered and narcissistic for framing every argument in terms of what she wants and isn't getting. What do you think? Does being overweight mean you don't love your significant other?

—Fatso

A: Some women just can't appreciate their husband's collections: comic books, shot glasses, broken-down cars, chins.

There's your wife, wagging a carrot stick at you, telling you that if you loved her you'd be surviving on iceberg lettuce sandwiches or going on the Drink Your Own Urine Diet — whatever it takes to drop flab fast. Probably because weight loss seems easier for her, she assumes you're lazy and self-indulgent. She's now trying to guilt-ivate you into losing weight ("Picture your children fatherless...Doritobreath"), which is more helpful than voicing the other thing she's probably thinking: "I don't want to have sex with you; I want to harpoon you."

Chances are, the problem isn't that your diet isn't "strict enough" — as in, you should be sniffing celery sticks instead of eating them — but that you've been following the obesity-causing dietary "science" promoted by the government

and much of the medical establishment. The "weight loss" diet they advise — high-carb, low-fat — is actually a weight-gain diet. Also, as Dr. Mary Dan Eades, co-author of "The Protein Power Lifeplan," writes, "Study after study has shown the low fat diet to be a failure in treating obesity, in solving diabetes, in reducing blood pressure or in decreasing heart disease risk."

Investigative science journalist Gary Taubes spent more than a decade digging through the body of research on diet. As he writes in "Why We Get Fat," the evidence shows that it is carbohydrates — from sugar, flour, easily digested starchy vegetables like potatoes, and juice and beer — that cause the insulin secretion that puts on fat. So, if you want to drop pounds — and not just one a week but like they're stones falling off a truck — eat low-carb/high-fat foods like cheeseburgers. Even bacon cheeseburgers. (Just see that you feed the bun to the pigeons.)

Unfortunately, it seems your love handles have become resentment handles. Some of the ill will between you may melt away as you lose the gut that Ding Dongs and Mountain Dew built, but it points to a bad pattern. You don't win marital arguments by clinging to how right you are and how wrong your spouse is; you win by working together to make things as right as you can for both of you ("us first" instead of "me first"). Some problems aren't solvable, but you'll be more able to shrug off an impasse if you're consistently putting yourselves in each other's place. That's the spirit that keeps you from striking out in revenge — for example, by insisting you're on the Zone diet (but not mentioning that it's the zone from the outermost wall of Dunkin' Donuts to the outermost wall of Cinnabon).

Q: I'm trying to start a relationship with a woman, but I can't stop thinking about my last girlfriend. I want a family (eventually), so I couldn't marry her. She already has two children, which is a dealbreaker for me, and has

other baggage: debt and baby daddy drama. But, we developed a deep love, and I'm having a hard time getting over her.

—Stuck

A: It was the best of times, it was the best of times. And it's called selective remembering. Your mental projector keeps playing this loop of your ex trying on lingerie. There are never any misty shots of the repo man or your ex emerging from the mist to chase the baby daddy with a big cleaver. And where are the little mind movies of her children? Or as you call them, "dealbreakers," not "dealbenders." Keeping this woman as your fantasy girlfriend will be a wedge between you and any woman you're with in real life. To move on, harness the power of negative thinking. Sure, go ahead and indulge. Take that walk down memory lane with your ex. Just be sure you ask the cameraman to pull out to reveal the stroller you're pushing with some other guy's screaming kids in it.

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To read more of Amy's advice and guidance, please visit our Web site at www.lansingcitypulse.com

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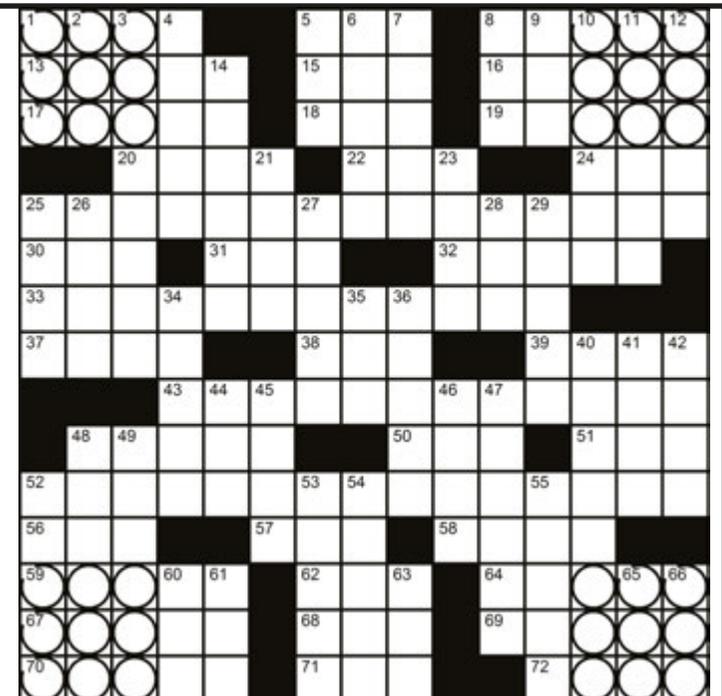
Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Corner Squares"
— 4x3x3.
by Matt Jones

Across

- 1 Gordie on the ice
- 5 Circus performance
- 8 Mo-rons
- 13 "Give it ____, will ya?"
- 15 "____ Day" (hip-hop single of 1993)
- 16 Threepio's buddy
- 17 Spring chicken
- 18 "Lost" actor Daniel ____ Kim
- 19 Overwhelmingly
- 20 Airline reservation
- 22 Calligraphy need
- 24 Suffix for McCarthy
- 25 Clue for the northwest corner
- 30 Assistance
- 31 Actor Gulager of TV westerns
- 32 Wipe out
- 33 Clue for the southwest corner



- ball games
- 67 "The Absinthe Drinker" painter
- 68 Sport-____, aka "SUV"
- 69 Current World Chess Champion Viswanathan ____
- 70 Bizarre
- 71 Late Pink Floyd member ____ Barrett
- 72 Each
- 9 Like a crooked smile
- 10 Exclamation after trying on old clothes, maybe
- 11 Perfectly
- 12 More miffed
- 14 Simple roofing material
- 21 Register tray
- 23 "Hooked on Classics" record company in old TV ads
- 25 Explorer Vasco da ____
- 26 Iran's currency
- 27 ____ York (NYC, to some residents)
- 28 Former Notre Dame coach Parseghian
- 29 They're half the diameter
- 34 Makes do
- 35 ____-T-Pops ("the lolipop with the loop")
- 36 Camera effect
- 40 Guide to getting around a mall
- 41 Get wind of
- 42 Punta del ____, Uruguay
- 44 Started the pilot
- 45 "Orinoco Flow (Sail Away)" singer
- 46 Field judges
- 47 Barton of "The O.C."
- 48 "Ed Wood" Oscar winner Martin
- 49 Statement of denial
- 52 II ____ (cathedral of Florence)
- 53 Toyota hybrid
- 54 Like some threats
- 55 Actress Elg of "Les Girls" (hidden in MAIN-TAINABLE)
- 60 Always, in poetry
- 61 Hwy.
- 63 Large British ref. book
- 65 "Walking on Thin Ice" songwriter Yoko
- 66 Bipolar disorder, for short

Down

- 1 Bale stuff
- 2 Gold, to Pizarro
- 3 Wistful beginning of some stories
- 4 Cosmetics business-woman Lauder
- 5 Contribute (to)
- 6 Jenny of diet plans
- 7 Frigid temperature range
- 40 Guide to getting around a mall
- 8 File folder feature

City Pulse Classifieds

Interested in placing a classified ad in City Pulse?
Call (517) 999-5066 or email adcopy@lansingcitypulse.com

Computer/IT: Information Technologist III in East Lansing, MI: Works as a BASIS team member supporting a production SAP HR/Payroll system and training less experienced basis team members; assists with understanding the business processes and how the application supports the business processes and applies this knowledge to best solve problems; assists with understanding configuration dependencies and interrelationships. Bachelor's in Computer Science, Information Systems, or related IT field + 5 yrs. exp. In any IT related occupation. Experience must include SAP Basis administration, maintenance and implementation of SAP HR; Technical lead on a BASIS team; Working with Oracle database. To apply for this posting, please go to www.jobs.msu.edu, posting #5899. MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. MSU is committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. The University actively encourages applications and/or nominations of women, persons of color, veterans and persons with disabilities.

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to work on site at our non-profit organization on a full-time schedule. Must have great communication skills and able to work some week-ends and late hours. Must have reliable transportation and able to work with minimum supervision. Fax resume to (989) 723-1225 or email to cmo@mstrp.com

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OUT on the TOWN

Listings deadline is 5 p.m. the THURSDAY BEFORE publication. Paid classes will be listed in print at the cost of one enrollment (maximum \$20). Please submit them to the events calendar at www.lansingcitypulse.com. If you need help, please call Jessica at (517) 999-5069. E-mail information to calendar@lansingcitypulse.com.

March 16



Courtesy Photo

A pair of pianists

Some sisters are closer than others, but few spend as much time together as twins Christina and Michelle Naughton, a couple of acclaimed classical pianists who travel the world together. The 23-year-old sisters hail from Madison, Wis., where they made early appearances with the Madison Symphony Orchestra and the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. But sibling rivalry was never part of the picture — at least onstage. “The only place we ever got competitive was on the tennis court,” Christina told *The Capital Times* in 2010. “To have your best friend and twin sister beside you, it means a lot.” 8 p.m. Friday, March 16, Cobb Great Hall, Wharton Center. \$28 (\$15 for students with ID). (800) WHARTON, or www.whartoncenter.com

Wednesday, March 14

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Meditation. For beginners and experienced. 7-9 p.m. FREE. Vietnamese Buddhist Temple, 3015 S. Washington Square, Lansing. (517) 351-5866.

Community Yoga. Power yoga class. 6:30-8 p.m. FREE. Just B Yoga, 106 Island Ave., Lansing. (517) 488-5260.

Drop-in figure drawing. Easels and drawing boards provided, bring other supplies. 7:30-10 p.m. \$5, \$3 students. Kresge Art Museum, located at Physics and Auditorium roads, MSU Campus, East Lansing. (517) 337-1170.

Knee High Naturalist. Ages 2-5 for a playgroup featuring a different nature theme each week. 1-2 p.m. \$5. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave., Lansing. (517) 483-4224.

Hate Groups. What is a hate group? 6-7 p.m. FREE. Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ, 125 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing. (517) 484-7434.

Celebrating Women. A panel discussion on women as community builders. 6-8 p.m. FREE. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing. www.niagarafoundation.org/michigan.

Jazz in Cuba. “Jazz and Identity in Cuba: Bobby Carcassés’s 50-Year Music Career.” Room 201. 3 p.m. FREE. International Center, 450 Administration Bldg., East Lansing. www.music.msu.edu/events.

EVENTS

Overeaters Anonymous. 7 p.m. FREE. Grand Ledge Baptist Church, 1120 W. Willow Hwy., Grand Ledge. (517) 256-6954.

Practice Your English. Speaking and listening to

See Out on the Town, Page 30

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Sunday Soup

This Sunday, the group Mid-Michigan Salsa is hosting an event for dancers of all levels — whether you’re new to salsa dancing or an expert spinner. There will be classes for beginner and intermediate dancers starting at 5:30 p.m., followed by a performance by local professionals. This event doubles as a fundraiser for the American Heart Association. Mid-Michigan Salsa is a nonprofit, community-based organization that was created to spread awareness about the area’s growing salsa dancing community. Perspective 2, 319 E. Grand River Ave., Old Town Lansing. 5:30 to 10 p.m. \$10 at the door. For more information, (517) 749-0922, or midmichigansalsa.org.



Courtesy Photo

March 18



Courtesy Photo

March 17 & 18

Flapjacks that raise funds

Anybody that visits Fenner Nature Center this weekend is in for something sweet. Fenner will feature a pancake supper to raise funds for the center’s operations. Although the event is competing with St. Patrick’s Day, it will include live entertainment, food and drinks, beer, wine, pancakes and maple syrup. To keep the evening lively, the Missouri Ramblers, a local bluegrass and mountain music band, will provide music. All day Saturday and Sunday Fenner will also have activities such as tapping a tree, sugarbush sap boiling demonstration, maple sugar candy making, face painting, crafts on display, winter bird and tree identification walks and much more. Pancake dinner Saturday, March 17, 4-7 p.m. \$30 includes maple syrup and beverage, \$25 includes beverage, \$5 kids 2-12, FREE under 2 years old. Maple Syrup festival activities Saturday & Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. FREE. www.mynaturecenter.org.

Michigan then and music now

Paul Bunyan knew a thing or two more than the modern Michigander about living off the land. This Saturday, Woldumar Nature Center hosts “a day of living history” at the Moon Family Cabin. Guests can explore pioneer life through touring the cabin and watching demonstrations from blacksmiths hard at work. The following day, the Mid-Michigan Bluegrass Association will create a down-home atmosphere with their monthly concert. All musicians can join in with their own instruments. Saturday, March 17, 11 a.m.- 3 p.m. \$4, FREE members. Sunday, March 18, 2-6 p.m. \$4, \$2 seniors. Woldumar Nature Center, 5739 Old Lansing Road, Lansing. (517) 332-0030. www.woldumar.org.

March 17 & 18

TURNIT DOWN

A SURVEY OF LANSING'S MUSICAL LANDSCAPE

BY RICH TUPICA

'THE FIDDLE' SERVES UP ST. PATTY'S FOOD AND TUNES

For those looking to start St. Patrick's Day celebrations a day early, the Ten Pound Fiddle concert series is offering up authentic homemade food and genuine Irish tunes by Detroit's Finvarra's Wren on Friday. The Fiddle is serving up two hearty homemade chowders, fresh cornbread, rolls and desserts, beginning at 6:30 p.m.; an hour later, Finvarra's Wren will play two sets of Celtic tunes. Finvarra's Wren is an acclaimed Irish quartet that makes "the kind of music you'd only hear on the west coast of Ireland." The group's concerts are stocked with musical tradition and no lack of performance energy.

Friday March 16 @ Ten Pound Fiddle — Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner St., Lansing, all ages, doors at 6 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m., show at 7:30 p.m., \$25 for ticket combo, limited tickets.

TWANGY ST. PATTY'S DAY AT MAC'S

Who says St. Patrick's Day has to be all about Irish music? This Saturday Mac's Bar is all about rugged American-style rocking. Black Jake & the Carnies, an Ypsilanti-based band, headlines the night, delivering ferocious murder ballads and foreboding tales to the beat of an old-time string band. The septet's blend of Americana, bluegrass and punk (dubbed "crabgrass") sets a disorderly pace for original songs about evil creatures and banjo-pickin' demons. The band features Black Jake (banjo, vocals), Joe Cooter (bass), Gus (fiddle), Zach Pollock (mandolin), Billy LaLonde (drums/washboard), and JC Miller (accordion). Warming up the stage are two



Courtesy Photo

Black Jake & the Carnies

Lansing-based roots-rock bands Flatfoot and The Leper Colony. Word is Flatfoot is completing work on a new studio album due out sometime this year on Bermuda Mohawk Productions.

Saturday, March 17 @ Mac's Bar, 2700 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, 18 and over, \$5 door, 9 p.m.

DJ ROBERT PERRY SPINS ON ST. PATTY'S

For those who prefer some bangin' beats along with their green beer, The Loft may be the spot on Saturday. Area DJs will spin throughout the night, including Robert Perry, iNoV8, Cognac Pee Machine, DJ Sizl, Scoops Houdini, Team Tyrant and more. The night, dubbed "St. Patrick's Day Rage," includes specials on both green beer and Jameson.

Saturday, March 17 @ The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, \$8 for 18 to 20, \$6 for 21 and over, Doors 6 p.m.

ST. PATTY'S DAY METAL MASSACRE

Since opening, Blackened Moon Concert Hall has stuck pretty close to its metal roots, and this St. Patrick's Day is no different. On Saturday, the venue/metal merchandise store has a huge roster of devil-horn-ready metal in store. Taking the stage are All Ends Black, Hillside Barrier, Cat Tongue Grip, Hokori, Dead Against, As Empires Decay, The Severed Process and Blacken the Skyline. All Ends Black is a Lansing metal band that's been rocking since 2007. The five-piece group features Adam Ray (vocals), Doug Horstman (guitar), Chris Doerr (drums), Josh Knechtges (guitar) and Andy Taylor (bass). Fans of Pantera or Lamb of God-style

metal may want to check the band out at www.reverbnation.com/allendsblack.

Saturday, March 17 @ Blackened Moon Concert Hall, 3208 S. Martin Luther King Blvd., Lansing, 18 and over, \$7 at door, 5 p.m. to 2 a.m.

'KISS ME I'M IRISH' AT SPIRAL

Shakin' your groove thang won't be a hard feat Saturday at Spiral's "Kiss Me I'm Irish" event, thanks to DJ John Cruz, who will be spinning the hottest tracks. For those who are feeling lucky on St. Patty's Day, look no further than the "Shake It For the Green" contest at midnight for a chance to win prizes.

Saturday, March 17 @ Spiral Dance Bar, 1247 Center St., Lansing, 18 and over welcome, 21 and over FREE before 11 p.m. Event runs 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

DETROIT/NASHVILLE DOUBLE-BILL AT PUMP HOUSE



Courtesy Photo

Dooop and the Inside Outlaws

For those looking to recover from the dreaded green-beer hangover (or those who simply want to enjoy some quality alt-country music), check out the Pump House in East Lansing on Sunday evening. A Detroit/Nashville double-bill features Dooop and the Inside Outlaws, along with Ned Van Go. The working-class roots of Michigan-based singer/songwriter Don "Dooop" Duprie are evident in his rockin' country tunes. Meanwhile, Nashville's Ned

Van Go rocks with simple, blue-collar energy while telling stories of factory work, racism and love.

Sunday, March 18 @ Pump House, 368 Orchard St., East Lansing, all ages, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

SONGWriters VIKING MOSES, JOSHUA BARTON AT (SCENE)



Courtesy Photo

Joshua Barton of Viking Moses

(SCENE) MetroSpace hosts an evening of music March 21. It features two touring singer/songwriters, Viking Moses and Mother McKenzie. Also performing a solo-acoustic set is local musician Joshua Barton (member of Fields of Industry). Brendon Massei (a.k.a. Viking Moses), has received press from MTV for being an integral part of the emerging DIY house-show circuit and his relentless touring ethics. Wyatt McKenzie (a.k.a. Mother McKenzie) is a Las Vegas songwriter who has drawn comparisons to Leonard Cohen and Elliot Smith.

Wednesday, March 21 @ (SCENE) MetroSpace, 110 Charles St., East Lansing. All ages. \$6 cover, doors open at 7 p.m.; music at 8 p.m.

UPCOMING SHOW?

POST IT AT

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/TURNITDOWN

LIVE AND LOCAL

To be listed in Live and Local, e-mail your information to liveandlocal@lansingcitypulse.com by Thursday of the week before publication.

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Colonial Bar, 3425 S. MLK Jr. Blvd.		DJ, 9 p.m.	Haphazard, 9 p.m.	Haphazard, 9 p.m.
Brannigan Brothers, 210 S. Washington Square		Jammin' DJs, 9 p.m.	Jammin' DJs, 9 p.m.	Jammin' DJs, 9 p.m.
Crunchy's, 254 W. Grand River Ave.	Mighty Medicine, 10 p.m.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.
The Exchange, 314 E. Michigan Ave.	The Pork Chop Express, 9 p.m.	Tryst Thursdays, 8:30 p.m.	Summer of Sol, 9 p.m.	Summer of Sol, 9 p.m.
The Firm, 227 S. Washington Square		DnW Sound DJs, 9 p.m.	Various DJs, 9 p.m.	DJ Donnie D, 9 p.m.
Grand Café/Sir Pizza, 201 E. Grand River Ave.	Driver & Rider Show, 7 p.m.	Kathy Ford Band, 7 p.m.	Karaoke, 7 p.m.	Aimcriers, 8 p.m.
Green Door, 2005 E. Michigan Ave.	Stan Budzynski & 3rd Degree, 9:30 p.m.	Big Willy, 9:30 p.m.	Smooth Daddy, 9:30 p.m.	Mix Pack, 9 a.m.
The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave.		Burton's Garden, 9 p.m.	Jonesday, 8 p.m.	DJ Rob Perry, 6 p.m.
Mac's Bar, 2700 E. Michigan Ave.	Gingerfest, 9 p.m.	Ford Theatre Reunion, 9 p.m.	Anybody Killa, 5 & 10 p.m.	Black Jake & the Carnies, 9 p.m.
Moriarty's Pub, 802 E. Michigan Ave.	Rob Kladja Open Mic, 9 p.m.		The Lash, 10 p.m.	The Lash, 10 p.m.
Rick's American Cafe, 224 Abbott Road		DJ Dan, 10:30 p.m.		
Rookies, 16460 S. US 27	Sea Cruisers, 7-10 p.m.	Water Pong DJ with Ryan, 9 p.m.	Karaoke with Bob, 9 p.m.	Karaoke with Bob, 9 p.m.
Rum Runners, 601 East Michigan Ave.	Open Mic Night, 9 p.m.	Dueling Pianos & DJ, 9 p.m.	Dueling Pianos & DJ, 7 p.m.	Dueling Pianos & DJ, 7 p.m.
Whiskey Barrel Saloon, 410 S. Clippert St.		DJ, 9 p.m.	Brian Lorente & The Usual Suspects, 9 p.m.	Brian Lorente & The Usual Suspects, 9 p.m.
Unicorn Tavern, 327 E. Grand River Ave.		Frog & the Beeftones, 9 p.m.	Frog & the Beeftones, 9 p.m.	Frog & the Beeftones, 9 p.m.
621, 621 E. Michigan Ave.	Phil Denny, 8 p.m.	Brandon Marceal, 8:30 p.m.	DJ Blu, 9 p.m.	DJ Cutt-Nice, 9 p.m.

Sunday Open Jam with Bad Gravy, 9:30 p.m., Green Door; Karaoke, 9 p.m. Drag Queens Gone Wild, 11 p.m., Spiral Dance Bar; DJ Mike, 9:30 p.m., LeRoy's Bar & Grill; Open Mic, 5 p.m., Ulli's Haus of Rock.
Monday Steppin' In It, 9:30 p.m., Green Door; Easy Babies funk trio, 10 p.m., The Exchange. Open-Mic Mondays, 6:30 p.m., Michigan Brewing Company-Lansing.
Tuesday Tommy Foster & Guitar Bob, 9 p.m., The Exchange; Neon Tuesday, 9 p.m., Mac's Bar. Jazz Tuesday Open Jam, 9 p.m., Stober's Bar, 812 E. Michigan Ave.

Out on the town

from page 28

English in a friendly, relaxing atmosphere. 7-8 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

Youth Service Corps. East side youth grow food, and develop leadership skills. Ages 11-17. 3:30-5:30 p.m. FREE. Hunter Park Community Garden House, 1400 block of E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. (517) 999-3910.

Scandinavian Society of Greater Lansing. A reelection of officers, DVD on vikings and potluck dinner. 2-5 p.m. FREE. Faith United Methodist Church, 4301 S. Waverly Road, Lansing. (517) 316-1394.

Baby Time. Books and songs for ages 2 years and younger. 10:30 a.m. FREE. Delta Township District Library, 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. (517) 321-4014 x3.

Comedy Open Mic Night. The best line-up and coming comics from all over Mid-Michigan. 8 p.m. \$8, \$4 with student ID. Connexions Comedy Club, 2900 North E. St., Lansing. (517) 374-HAHA.

MUSIC

Jazz Wednesdays. Live entertainment. 7-10 p.m. FREE. ENSO, 16800 Chandler Road, East Lansing. (517) 333-1656. www.enjoyenso.com.

Jazz Wednesdays. Featuring the Jeff Shoup Trio. 7-10 p.m. FREE. Gracies Place, 151 S. Putnam, Williamston. (517) 655-1100.

THEATER

"Chicago." Performed by Everett High School. 7 p.m. \$7. Mid Michigan Family Theatre, 440 Frandor Ave., Lansing. (517) 339-2145.

"Moulin Rouge: Royal Winnipeg Ballet." Love in early-1900s Paris. 7:30 p.m. \$35, \$32, \$25. Wharton Center, MSU Campus, East Lansing. (800) WHARTON. www.whartoncenter.com

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Lansing Area Science Fiction Association Meeting. New location. Informal dinner and lively conversation every week. 7 p.m. FREE. Buddies Grill, 2040 Aurelius Road, #13, Holt. (517) 402-4481.

Sir Ken Robinson. "Out of Our Minds" book discussion. 6 p.m. FREE. MSU Library, 100 Main Library, MSU Campus, East Lansing. (517) 884-6454.

Celebrating Philip Levine. Open mic poetry reading. 7:30 p.m. \$5, \$3 students. Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner St., Lansing. (517) 487-9549. (517) 267-0410.

Thursday, March 15

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Yoga XL. Learn to move with confidence. 7:15-8:15 p.m. \$8 suggested donation. Just B Yoga, 106 Island Ave., Lansing. (517) 488-5260.

Eating Disorders Anonymous Meeting. A group of people recovering from eating disorders who talk about recovery. 7 p.m. FREE. CADL Mason Library, 145 W. Ash St., Mason. (517) 899-3515.

Yoga Classes for Beginners. With Gaby Kende, yoga teacher and certified yoga therapist. 9:30-11 a.m. \$84 for 8 weeks. Center for Yoga, 1780 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. (517) 351-6640.

On Sustainability. Pam Matson will be giving the talk in Parlor C at the MSU Union. 1:30-3 p.m. FREE. MSU Union, MSU Campus, East Lansing. www.espp.msu.edu/news/calendar.php.

Herb Boxes Workshop. How to build herb boxes for your window or porch. 6-7:30 p.m. FREE. Southside Community Center, 5825 Wise Road, Lansing. (517) 374-5700.

EVENTS

Mike Stanley. A comedian and writer, high energy and cutthroat delivery. 8 p.m. \$8, \$4 with student ID. Connexions Comedy Club, 2900 North E. St., Lansing. (517) 374-HAHA.

Morning Storytime. All ages welcome for stories, songs, rhymes. 10:30 a.m. FREE. Delta Township District Library, 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. (517) 321-4014.

Karaoke. Every Thursday night with Atomic D. 9 p.m. LeRoy's Classic Bar and Grill, 1526 S. Cedar St., Lansing. (517) 482-0184.

Euchre. No partner needed. 6-9 p.m. \$1.50. Delta Township Enrichment Center, 4538 Elizabeth Road, Lansing. (517) 484-5600.

Mid-day Movies. Watch recent releases on the big screen. 2 p.m. FREE. CADL Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 367-6363. www.cadl.org.

Kids Time: Ages 5-11. Help east side youth grow food, develop leadership skills. 4:30-5:30 p.m. FREE. Hunter Park Community GardenHouse, 1400 block of E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. (517) 999-3910.

Bananagrams Night. Play the hot new timed word game. 7 p.m. FREE. Schuler Books and Music, 2820 Towne Centre Blvd., Lansing. (517) 316-7495.

IHM-St. Casimir School. Tour school and learn opportunities for new children. 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. FREE. Immaculate Heart of Mary - St. Casimir Catholic School, 3830 Rosemont Drive, Lansing. (517) 882-6631.

MSU Film Collective Series. Showing "Touki Bouki." 8-11 p.m., FREE. Wells Hall, MSU Campus, East Lansing. www.english.msu.edu/film.

Chipmunk Story Time. Children can join Chicory Chipmunk for "I Am Water." 10 a.m. \$3. Harris Nature

Center, 3998 Van Atta Road, Meridian Township. (517) 349-3866.

LCC Community Strategic Forum. RSVP to Adrienne Jenkins. 5:30-7 p.m. FREE. Foster Community Center, 200 N. Foster Ave., Lansing. (517) 483-1415. web.lcc.edu/strategy/forum/.

Gardner Potluck. Bring a dish to share. 6-8 p.m. FREE. Hunter Park Community GardenHouse, 1400 block of E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing.

MUSIC

Jazz Thursdays. Various artists featured each week. 6:30-9:30 p.m. FREE. Mumbai Cuisine, 340 Albert St., East Lansing. (517) 336-4150.

Dixon's Violin. Shows the beauty of doing something seemingly impossible. 8 p.m. \$10. Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner St., Lansing. (517) 332-5523.

Ricky & Nikki. Live music. 7-11 p.m. FREE. Ryan's Roadhouse, 902 E. State St., St. Johns. (989) 224-2550.

THEATER

"Chicago." 7 p.m. \$7. (Please See Details March 14)

"Becky's New Car." A comic cruise through the perils of middle-aged longing and regret. 7 p.m. \$14, \$12 seniors and students. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. (517) 482-5700.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Phil Cousineau. Presents "Wordcatcher," 7 p.m. FREE. Schuler Books and Music, 2820 Towne Centre Blvd., Lansing. (517) 316-7495.

Edmund John Messina Jr. Talk and Signing with author of "Dome City," 7 p.m. FREE. Schuler Books and Music, 1982 Grand River Ave., Okemos. (517) 349-8840. www.schulerbooks.com.

Friday, March 16

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Relics of the Big Bang. Emphasizes research currently underway at CERN. 8 p.m. \$3, \$2.50 students and seniors, \$2 kids. Abrams Planetarium, 400 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. (517) 355-4676.

Our Daily Work/Lives. Globalization, de-unionization, and declining labor standards in auto industry. 12:15-1:30 p.m. FREE. MSU Museum Auditorium, MSU Campus, East Lansing. www.museum.msu.edu.

Evolution in Action. Dr. Erik Goodman, on advances in understanding evolution. 12:30 p.m. FREE. MSU Radiology Auditorium, MSU Campus, East Lansing. (517) 349-3579.

Career Workshop. With career coach Jerry Jennings in defining a personal vision of success. RSVP. 10 a.m.-Noon, FREE. MICA Gallery, 1210 N. Turner St., Lansing. katie@lansingarts.org.

EVENTS

Mike Stanley. A comedian and writer originating

from Metro Detroit. High energy and cutthroat delivery. 8 & 10:30 p.m. \$12. Connexions Comedy Club, 2900 North E. St., Lansing. (517) 374-HAHA.

"On the Surface." An art exhibit featuring Robert Park, Steven Stradley and Deborah Wheeler. 6-9 p.m. FREE. (SCENE) Metrospace, 110 Charles St., East Lansing. (517) 319-6832.

Alcoholics Anonymous. Open meeting for family and friends with American Sign Language interpretation. 8 p.m. FREE. Alano Club East, 220 S. Howard St., Lansing. (517) 482-8957.

Storytime. Stories, rhymes and a craft for ages 2-5. 10:30-11:15 a.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

Bunny Day. Have your child's Easter photos done by photographer Diana Liang. 10 a.m. \$8. Play, 4972 Northwind Dr. East Lansing. (517) 708-8746.

Shuto Con 2012. Lansing's Annual Anime Convention, focusing on artists and the art of Interactive Cosplaying. 9 a.m. \$40. Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. www.shutocon.com.

LCC Community Strategic Forum. RSVP to Adrienne Jenkins. 8-9:30 a.m. FREE. Lansing Community College West Campus, corner of W. Mount Hope and Snow Roads, Lansing. (517) 483-1415.

"The Guard." Comedy about an Irish cop with a confrontational personality. 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. \$7, \$5 seniors, \$3 students. Wells Hall, MSU Campus, East Lansing. www.elff.com.

St. Patrick's Day Mixer. Hors d'oeuvres and green beer and The Pub Daddies. Greater Lansing Convention & Visitor Bureau, member mixer. 4-7 p.m. FREE (member mixer). Quality Suites Hotel, 901 Delta Commerce Drive, Lansing. (517) 377-1416.

MUSIC

Jazz Orchestra I. With guest artist Bobby Carcass. 7:30 p.m. \$10, \$8 seniors, FREE students. Demonstration Hall, MSU Campus, East Lansing. www.music.msu.edu/events.

Christina and Michelle Naughton. Identical twin pianists in concert. 8 p.m. \$28, MSU Student \$15. Wharton Center, MSU Campus, East Lansing. (517) 353-1982.

Applesseed Collective. An acoustic band featuring Celtic music. FREE. 7 p.m. FREE. Booksellers, 360 S. Jefferson St., Mason. (517) 483-1710.

Coffee House - Music. Music, discussion, food, games and fun. 7-9 p.m. FREE. Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ, 125 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing. (517) 484-7434. www.PilgrimUCC.com.

THEATER

"Chicago." 7 p.m. \$7. (Please See Details March 14)

"Becky's New Car." 8 p.m. \$14, \$12 seniors and students. (Please See Details March 15)

"Let's Murder Marsha." A mystery fan mistakenly believes she's the target of killers. 6:30 p.m.

See Out on the Town, Page 31



east main APARTMENTS

Pets welcome!

- 1 & 2 Bedroom start at \$570
- Downtown on the Grand River
- Free parking
- 4 blocks from Cooley/5 minutes from MSU
- Indoor bike racks
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ERASER-FREE SUDOKU

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MEDIUM

TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every row, column, and outlined 3-by-3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 exactly once. No guessing is required. The solution is unique.

To avoid erasing, pencil in your possible answers in the scratchpad space beneath the short line in each vacant square. For solving tips, visit www.SundayCrosswords.com

Answers on page 33

Out on the town

from page 30

Price varies. Starlight Dinner Theatre, Waverly East Intermediate, 3131 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 243-6040.

"Hairspray." Musical set in 1962 Baltimore. 7:30 p.m. \$10, \$5 students. East Lansing High School, 509 Burcham Drive, East Lansing. www.elps.k12.mi.us/theater.

Saturday, March 17

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Relics of the Big Bang. 8 p.m. \$3, \$2.50 student-seniors, \$2 kids. (Please See Details March 16)

Beginner Tai Chi. Can build strength and reduce stress. 8-9 a.m. \$8. Just B Yoga, 106 Island Ave., Lansing. (517) 488-5260.

Tai Chi in the Park. Meditation at 8:45 a.m. followed by Tai Chi. 9:30 a.m. FREE. Hunter Park Community GardenHouse, 1400 block of E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. Contact Bob Teachout (517) 272-9379.

Overeaters Anonymous. 9:30 a.m. FREE. Sparrow Professional Building, 1200 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 485-6003.

Parenting Group. Lecture and group discussion each week. 10-11 a.m. Call to Register. Women's Center of Greater Lansing, 1710 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 372-9163.

Face painting. Stop by before or after the Parade. 1-2 p.m. and 3-4 p.m. FREE. Ledge Craft Lane, 120 S. Bridge St., Grand Ledge. (517) 627-3795.

Breakfast with Bauer. A light breakfast and share your thoughts and opinions. 9-10 a.m. FREE. Gone Wired Cafe, 2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 373-0826.

Maple Syrup Festival. Tap a tree, Maple sugar, candy making demos and more. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. FREE. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave., Lansing. (517) 483-4224.

EVENTS

Mike Stanley. A comedian and writer originating from Metro Detroit. High energy and cutthroat delivery. Featuring green beer and a leprechaun available for picture taking. 8 & 10:30 p.m. \$15 Connections Comedy Club, 2900 North E. St., Lansing. (517) 374-HAHA.

Salsa Dancing. DJ Adrian "Ace" Lopez hosts Lansing's weekly salsa event. Singles welcome. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. \$5. Gregory's Bar and Grille, 2510 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing. (517) 323-7122.

Irish Tea. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with good friends, delicious tea, and tasty treats. 3 p.m. \$8 per person. Turner-Dodge House and Heritage Center, 100 E. North Street, Lansing. (517) 483-4220.

German Dinner/Dance. Traditional pork dinner with mashed potatoes and gravy, spaetzle, German bread and more. 5-11:30 p.m. \$9, \$4 kids, \$6 for dance. 5828 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing. (517) 882-6330.

Shuto Con 2012. 9 a.m. \$40. (Please See Details March 16)

Michigan Pioneers. Learn about life in the 1860s from live demonstrations and tours of the cabin. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$4 non-members, FREE members. Woldumar Nature Center, 5739 Old Lansing Road, Lansing. www.woldumar.org.

Campfire for St. Patrick's Day. Families can connect with nature, enjoy a campfire and look for signs of leprechauns. 7 p.m. \$7. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road, Meridian Township. (517) 349-3866.

Flapjacks for Fenner. A pancake supper to raise funds for Fenner. 4-7 p.m. \$25-30, \$5 kids. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave., Lansing. (517) 483-4224. www.mynaturecenter.org.

All About Soil. Learn the basics of soil preparation and maintenance. Register by calling. 12:30-2 p.m. \$5 donation. Allen Neighborhood Center, 1619 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. (517) 999-3910.

Girl Scout Gallery Day. A decade-by-decade look at Girl Scouting in Michigan history. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. FREE. Michigan Historical Museum, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. (517) 373-1359.

"The Guard." 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. \$7, \$5 seniors, \$3 students. (Please See Details March 16)

MUSIC

Spring Ring. The Lansing Area Ministry of Bells presents its 28th Annual Spring Ring. 4:30 p.m. FREE. Waverly High School, 160 Snow Road, Lansing. (517) 321-3221.

Scott Seth. Live music. 7-11 p.m. FREE. Blue Gill Grill, 1591 Lake Lansing Road, Haslett. (517) 339-4900.

Chip Christy. Live music. Noon-2 p.m. FREE. Potbelly's Sandwich Shop, 233 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. (517) 203-4278.

The Lash. Live music. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. FREE. Dublin Square Patio, 327 Abbott Road, East Lansing. (517) 351-2222. www.dublinsquare.net.

Avon Bomb. Live music. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Cover. Dublin Square Patio, 327 Abbott Road, East Lansing. (517) 351-2222. www.dublinsquare.net.

Nick May. Live music. 9:30 p.m.-Midnight. FREE. Courthouse Pub, 160 W. Maple St., Mason. (517) 676-6941.

Isolated Incident. Live music. 8 p.m.-Midnight. FREE. Brookshire Inn, 205 W. Church St., Williamston. (517) 655-4695.

THEATER

"Becky's New Car." 8 p.m. \$14, \$12 seniors and students. (Please See Details March 15)

"Chicago." 2 p.m. \$7. (Please See Details March 14)

"Let's Murder Marsha." 6:30 p.m. Price varies. (Please See Details March 16)

"Hairspray." 7:30 p.m. \$10, \$5 students. (Please See Details March 16)

Sunday, March 18

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Lansing Area Codependents Anonymous. Meets on the third floor. 2-3 p.m. FREE. CADL Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 367-6300. www.cadl.org.

Overeaters Anonymous. 2 p.m. FREE. Everybody Reads Books and Stuff, 2019 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 485-8789.

Relics of the Big Bang. 4 p.m. \$3, \$2.50 students and seniors, \$2 kids. (Please See Details March 16)

Gardener's Roundtable. Discuss various garden topics, seed catalogs and garden books. 12:30-1:30 p.m. FREE. Hunter Park Community GardenHouse, 1400 block of E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. (517) 999-3910.

Farm to Table: Composting. Turn waste into low-cost compost. 2 p.m. FREE. CADL Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 367-6363.

Breakfast. Serving up an all you can eat breakfast. 8 a.m.-Noon, \$7, \$4 kids under 12. Eagles Club, 835 High St., Williamston. (517) 655-6510.

Maple Syrup Festival. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. FREE. (Please See Details March 17)

EVENTS

Salsa Dancing. DJ Mojito spins salsa, merengue, bachata. 7 p.m.-Midnight, \$5 21, \$7 under 21. Fahrenheit Ultra Lounge, 6810 S. Cedar St., Lansing.

Occupy Meeting. Followed by general assembly. 5 p.m. FREE. Gone Wired Cafe, 2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 853-0550.

Alcoholics Anonymous. Closed meeting for those who desire to stop drinking, with American Sign Language interpretation. 9 a.m. FREE. Alano Club East,

NEW IN TOWN >> Great Clips



Alyssa Firth/City Pulse

By Alyssa Firth

Michigan State University students have a new spot for haircuts in between class. Great Clips' new location at 205 M.A.C. Avenue had a soft opening two weeks ago and has its grand opening Saturday.

"We're excited to be here. We've been waiting for this salon to go on campus for a long time," said district manager Cristy Lake.

This is the third location in the area: There is a Great Clips in Meridian Township at the Meridian Towne Centre on 4918 March Road and another at 2843 East Grand River Avenue in East Lansing.

"We have a really good return from our students down there at our other store (on Grand River), so we thought the closer to campus, the better it's going to get," Lake said.

Though they don't do color treatments, Great Clips offers haircuts, updos, beard trims, neck trims and conditioning treatments. Lake said

From left, East Lansing Great Clips store managers Erica Hart and Nicole Sherman meet with district manager Cristy Lake.

their biggest focus is getting customers in and out with little wait time.

"We basically specialize in haircuts so we can get people in the chair, and within 15 to 20 minutes, you're back out, but you look better than you did when you came in," Lake said.

One of the most popular features at the Grand River location has been phone check-ins, which Lake hopes students use when they go to their new location. Anyone with a smart phone can go to www.greatclips.com and a map will show the nearest Great Clips location. Customers can then in put their information, request a time when they

want to come in and find out an approximate wait time. The salon will be ready and waiting when the customer gets there.

"(We're) just catering to whatever the customer wants and treating them to the fact that they're in our salon," Lake said.

"They don't have to come here, but they chose to, so we want them to know that we really appreciate that." Miller said.

Great Clips

205 M.A.C. Ave., East Lansing
9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday
9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday
11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday
(517) 897-1499
www.greatclips.com

220 S. Howard St., Lansing. (517) 482-8957.

Capital Area Singles Dance. Meet new friends with door prizes. 6:30-10:30 p.m. \$8. Ramada, 7501 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing. (517) 819-0405.

Shuto Con 2012. 9 a.m. \$40. (Please See Details March 16)

Sunday Soup. A grassroots phenomenon where creative people get together. Noon-2 p.m. \$5. Scene Metrospace, 110 Charles St., East Lansing. (517) 319-6832.

"The Guard." 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. \$7, \$5 seniors, \$3 students. (Please See Details March 16)

MUSIC

Sharon Isbin. Multiple Grammy-winning guitarist in

concert. 7 p.m. \$35. Wharton Center, MSU Campus, East Lansing. (517) 432-2000.

Bluegrass. The Mid Michigan Bluegrass Association's monthly concert. 2-6 p.m. \$4, \$2 seniors. Woldumar Nature Center, 5739 Old Lansing Road, Lansing. www.woldumar.org.

Wake Up to Jazz Brunch. Featuring MSU Jazz Orchestra I led by Rodney Whitaker. Noon, \$65, \$15 per couple. Marriott, 300 Mac Ave., East Lansing. (517) 319-6927.

Organ Recital. Presented by the Greater Lansing Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. 4 p.m. FREE. Ascension Luther Church, 2789 Haslett Road, East Lansing. (517) 484-3596.

Out on the town

from page 31

THEATER

"Hairspray." Musical set in 1962 Baltimore. 2 p.m. \$10, \$5 students. (Please See Details March 16)
"Becky's New Car." 2 p.m. \$14, \$12 seniors and students. (Please See Details March 15)

Monday, March 19

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Divorced, Separated, Widowed Conversation Group. For those who have gone through loss and are ready to move on with their lives. 7:30 p.m. FREE. St. David's Episcopal Church, 1519 Elmwood Road, Lansing. (517) 323-2272.

GriefShare Seminar. DVD series, with support group discussion. 6:30-8 p.m. FREE. Grace United Methodist, 1900 Boston Blvd., Lansing. (517) 490-3218.
Overeaters Anonymous. 7 p.m. FREE. St. David's Episcopal Church, 1519 Elmwood Road, Lansing. (989) 587-4609. www.stdavidslansing.org.

Chronic Pain Support Group. For those experiencing any level of chronic physical pain. 4-5:30 p.m. FREE. Women's Center of Greater Lansing, 1710 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 372-9163.

Habits that Hurt. With Vicki Griffin, on lifestyle and stress, brain health and chronic disease. 6:15 p.m. FREE. Holt Seventh Day Adventist Fellowship, 5682 Holt Road, Holt. (517) 543-6978.

E-mail Basics. Set up your own e-mail account and learn and receive messages. 10 a.m. FREE. Haslett Library, 5670 School St., Haslett. (517) 339-2324.

Math & Reading Help. For adults, provided by Capital Area Literacy Coalition. 3 p.m. FREE. Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 672-4072. www.cadl.org.

Homework Help. Students from MSU will be available for personal tutoring for grades K-12. 5 p.m. FREE. Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 672-4072. www.cadl.org.

EVENTS

Euchre. Play euchre and meet new people. 6-9 p.m. \$1.50. Delta Township Enrichment Center, 4538 Elizabeth Road, Lansing. (517) 484-5600.

Social Bridge. Play bridge and socialize. 1-4 p.m.

\$1.50. Delta Township Enrichment Center, 4538 Elizabeth Road, Lansing. (517) 484-5600.

Monday Morning Movie. Get your film fix at the library. 10:30 a.m. FREE. Delta Township District Library, 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. (517) 321-4014 ext.4.

Clifford the Big Red Dog. Norman Bridwell's popular children's books will visit DDL. 4 p.m. FREE. Dewitt District Library, 13101 Schavey Road, DeWitt. (517) 669-3156. www.dewittlibrary.org.

Reading Month. Pick up a March is Reading Month calendar, complete activities for prizes. Noon. FREE. Foster Library, 200 N. Foster Ave., Lansing. (517) 485-5185.

Toddler Storytime. For ages 2-3 featuring stories, songs and crafts. 10:30 a.m. FREE. Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. (517) 347-2021.

Preschool Storytime. Stories, songs and crafts for ages 3-6. 2 p.m. FREE. Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. (517) 347-2021.

Hunger Games Craft Day. Make your own Mockingjay pin, based on the books and movie. 3 p.m. FREE. Leslie Library, 201 Pennsylvania St. Leslie. (517) 589-9400.

Kids Read to Dogs. Children can practice reading aloud to friendly dogs. 4 p.m. FREE. Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. (517) 347-2021.

Writers Discussion Group. For writers adults and mature teens, to share work and get feedback. 4:30 p.m. FREE. Stockbridge Library, 200 Wood St., Stockbridge. (517) 851-7810.

Sit 'N Knit. Knit, sew or crochet projects for the Heartland/Hospice Group. 6 p.m. FREE. Leslie Library, 201 Pennsylvania St. Leslie. (517) 589-9400.

MUSIC

Open-Mic Mondays. Sign up to play solo, duo, with your band. Spoken-Word acts welcome. 6:30-10:30 p.m. FREE. Michigan Brewing Company, 402 Washington Square, Lansing. (517) 977-1349.

Russian Gems. Includes Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich. 7:30 p.m. \$10, \$8 seniors. FREE students. MSU Music Building Auditorium, MSU Campus, East Lansing. www.music.msu.edu.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Writers Discussion Group. For writers adults and mature teens, to share work and get feedback. 4:30 p.m. FREE. Stockbridge Library, 200 Wood St., Stockbridge. (517) 851-7810.

Tuesday, March 20

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Schizophrenics Anonymous. A self-help support group for those affected by the disorder. 10 a.m. Room 215-F, Community Mental Health Building, 812 E. Jolly Road, Lansing. (517) 485-3775.

Yoga 40. For those in their 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond. 7:15 p.m. Suggested \$7. Just B Yoga, 106 Island Ave., Lansing. (517) 488-5260.

Take Off Pounds Sensibly. Anyone wanting to lose weight is welcome. 7 p.m. FREE to visit. Eaton Rapids Medical Center, 1500 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. Judy @ (517) 543-0786.

Schizophrenics Anonymous Self-help Support Group. For persons with schizophrenia and related disorders. 5:30 p.m. FREE. Sparrow Professional Building, 1200 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 485-3775.

Overeaters Anonymous. 7 p.m. FREE. Presbyterian Church of Okemos, 2258 Bennett Road, Okemos. (517) 505-0068.

Intro to Computers. Professionals from Career Quest teach the basics. 2:30-4 p.m. FREE. Capital Area Michigan Works, 2110 S. Cedar St., Lansing. (517) 492-5500.

On the Way To Wellness. Barb Geske provides nutrition and wellness coaching in a positive, informative format. 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. \$10. Presbyterian Church of Okemos, 2258 Bennett Road, Okemos. (517) 349-9536.

Computer Class. Learn excel. 7 p.m. FREE. Community of Christ, 1514 W. Miller Road, Lansing. (517) 882-3122.

Café Scientifique. A monthly science discussion group. 7 p.m. FREE. Schuler Books and Music, 2820 Towne Centre Blvd., Lansing. (517) 316-7495.

Farm to Table. On the Leslie Community Garden is a small, organic membership garden. 6:15 p.m. FREE. CADL Leslie Library, 201 Pennsylvania St., Leslie. (517) 589-9400.

Revitalizing Manufacturing. By economic demographer Kenneth Darga. 10:45 a.m. FREE. CADL Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 367-6300. www.cadl.org.

Laughter Yoga. With Kiran Gupta, a licensed clinical social worker. 5:30-6 p.m. FREE. Campus Village Center, 1151 Michigan Ave., East Lansing. (517) 775-4834.

Yoga for Well Being. With Amy Noren, trained in alignment based yoga. 6:30-8 p.m. \$10. Full Spectrum Family Medicine, 2025 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

Landscaping. Learn to design and maintain a native garden. 7 p.m. \$15. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road, Meridian Township. (517) 349-3866.

EVENTS

Morning Storytime. All ages welcome for stories, songs, rhymes, and fun. 10:30 a.m. FREE. Delta Township District Library, 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. (517) 321-4014.

Mid-day Movies. Watch recent releases on the big screen. 2 p.m. FREE. CADL Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 367-6363. www.cadl.org.

Game On. Play a variety of board and video games. 3-5 p.m. FREE. Delta Township District Library, 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. (517) 321-4014 x3.

Lansing Area Codependents Anonymous. 5:45-6:45 pm, FREE. Everybody Reads Books and Stuff, 2019 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. (517) 346-990

Compassionate Friends. For grieving parents. 7:30-9:30 p.m. FREE. Salvation Army Community Center, 701 W. Jolly Road, Lansing. (517) 351-6480.

MSU Recycling. With Michael Mitchner on MSU's comprehensive reuse and recycling programs. 12:10-12:50 p.m. FREE. MSU Library, 100 Main Library, MSU Campus, East Lansing. www.lib.msu.edu.

Kids Time: Ages 5-11. 4:30-5:30 p.m. FREE.

(Please See Details March 15)

Storytime. Stories, rhymes, songs and a craft for ages 2-5. 10:30-11:15 a.m. and 6:30-7:15 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

LCC Community Strategic Forum. RSVP to Adrienne Jenkins. 6:30-8 p.m. FREE. Eaton Rapids Public School, 912 Greyhound Drive, Eaton Rapids. (517) 483-1415.

Reading Month. Pick up a March is Reading Month calendar, complete activities for prizes. Noon. FREE. Foster Library, 200 N. Foster Ave., Lansing. (517) 485-5185.

Microsoft Basics. FREE. Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 672-4072. www.cadl.org.

Preschool Storytime. Stories, songs and crafts for ages 3-6. 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. FREE. Mason Library, 145 West Ash St., Mason. (517) 676-9088. Also at 10:30 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. (517) 347-2021. & at 10:30 a.m. Haslett Library, 5670 School St., Haslett. (517) 339-2324. At 11:15 a.m. Holt-Delhi Library, 2078 Aurelius Road, Holt. (517) 694-9351. At 11:15 a.m. Leslie Library, 201 Pennsylvania St. Leslie. (517) 589-9400.

Movers & Readers. Stories and fun for ages 1-3. 10:30 a.m. FREE. Holt-Delhi Library, 2078 Aurelius Road, Holt. (517) 694-9351. & at Dansville Library, 1379 E. Mason St., Dansville. (517) 623-6511.

Reading & Math Help. For adults, provided by the Capital Area Literacy Coalition. Noon. FREE. Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 672-4072. www.cadl.org.

Crafting. Join other crafters to share projects and learn from others. 1 p.m. FREE. Haslett Library, 5670 School St., Haslett. (517) 339-2324.

Spring Crafts. Make a craft to welcome spring. 3 p.m. FREE. Leslie Library, 201 Pennsylvania St. Leslie. (517) 589-9400.

MUSIC

Jazz Tuesdays. With Jeff Shoup Quartet, artists from the MSU Jazz Studies Department and the Mid-Michigan jazz community. 10 p.m.-1 a.m. FREE. Stober's Bar, 812 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Speaking Volumes Book Discussion. Discussion of adult fiction & non-fiction titles. This month: "The Language of Flowers," by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. Noon. FREE. Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing. (517) 672-4072. www.cadl.org.

Book Discussion. This month "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet," by Jamie Ford. 1 p.m. FREE. Williamston Library, 201 School St., Williamston. (517) 655-1191.

Wednesday, March 21

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Meditation. For beginners and experienced. 7-9 p.m. FREE. Vietnamese Buddhist Temple, 3015 S. Washington Square, Lansing. (517) 351-5866.

Community Yoga. Power yoga class. 6:30-8 p.m. FREE. Just B Yoga, 106 Island Ave., Lansing. (517) 488-5260.

Drop-in figure drawing. Easels and drawing boards provided, bring other supplies. 7:30-10 p.m. \$5, \$3 students. Kresge Art Museum, located at Physics and Auditorium roads, MSU Campus, East Lansing. (517) 337-1170.

Knee High Naturalist. Ages 2-5 for a playgroup featuring a different nature theme each week. 1-2 p.m. \$5. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave., Lansing. (517) 483-4224.

The American Chestnut. The Wild Ones Red Cedar Chapter meeting. 7 p.m. FREE. Fenner Nature Center,

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WLMI 92.9

And hear Berl Schwartz of City Pulse call Tim an Ignorant Slut – or worse! Every Wednesday at 8:30!



Joe Torok/City Pulse

Xiao China Grille & Lounge opened last spring in East Lansing.

Xiao finds the sweet spot

East Lansing eatery is all about fusion and funkiness

By JOE TOROK

Xiao China Grille & Lounge, located in a strip mall complex in East Lansing, defines itself through fusion.

The décor of Xiao (pronounced “shee-ow”) is trendy and funky with a touch of zen. Large lantern-like light fixtures and cloth panels hang along the ceiling, an enormous Buddha statue sits serenely despite the shrill flashing of ESPN at the bar and steady thump of club music, and plenty of dark reds and dark wood color a dining room lit so dimly I had a difficult time making out the features of my dining companion. Good news, I suppose, for wary blind-daters, but I prefer not to squint to see my meal.

Fusion is difficult to do well. When it comes to décor or plate presentation, the eyes can be charmed and seduced by novel combinations. The tongue, though, is a harsh mistress.

We started with the chicken lettuce wraps (\$7.49) which are a study in contrast. Full leaves of romaine fan out from a chicken and vegetable mixture punctuated with pineapple chunks and served in a deep fried shell. Perhaps it's a quibble, but our lettuce was still soaking wet when served, and although I was confident it was rinsed well, I didn't need a bath along with it.

The warm of the chicken contrasted nicely with the cool of the lettuce and the cold of the pineapple; it's just too bad the pineapple came from a can, adding nothing but stale sweetness. The chicken mix, too, had little depth of flavor, beginning at sweet and ending at sweet.

Our entrées suffered from similar saccharine fates.

The bento boxes looked fun, and sushi is always a favorite, so we tried the sushi and sashimi box (\$18.99). It came with shrimp and vegetable tempura and a teriyaki sauce that was nothing if not sweet. The tempura, which I like crispy, wasn't, and it had little flavor outside of the oil it was fried in. On the upside, it did hold

mushy vegetables together well.

The sushi didn't fare much better. My companion wondered if the tuna had taken a shower before hopping into our bento box, washing away most of its flavor. It had no depth whatsoever. And while the sushi rice looked like the real deal, once it got to the mouth it took on a minute rice quality and fell apart into separate grains — I like mine chewier and a tad gooier, something that blends better with the meaty texture of the fish.

We went with the crispy sesame chicken for our second entrée. Like the tempura, its name belied the finished product. The only texture came from the breast meat nuggets, and they were neither crispy nor tasty. And the pretty green stalks of broccoli that came with the meal? Flavored, generously, with water.

The sesame sauce could have saved the dish, and when there was an actual tang, it wasn't half bad. The problem, like most everything else we tried, was that the sauce played only a one-note tune. Like the chicken mix in the appetizer, it managed a semi-sweet identity with preciously little substance.

The sesame chicken was kind of like watching a cute little kitten doing something adorable on YouTube — fun at first sight, but it gets old fast. The only difference, in the end, is that I don't pay \$12.49 to watch that cat.

The dessert menu was filled with chocolate this and cheesecake that, which we could find just about anywhere, so we went with what looked like the most unique option: a mango mousse cake.

Mr. Mango, my companion suggested, must have taken a shower with Mr. Tuna, their flavors slowly swirling down the

Xiao China Grille & Lounge

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11 a.m.-midnight Friday and Saturday

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CADL talks focus on food

By **JOE TOROK**

Have you ever wanted an abundant supply of sweet, golden honey outside your back door? How about hoppy home-brewed ale in the basement?

For the next three months, the Capital Area District Library will host local experts to teach the community about making an impact on your own personal food supply chain.

Topics range from beekeeping and home brewing to patio container gardening and raising backyard chickens.

One of the goals of the series of presentations is to provide consumers with information about how food production and delivery have transformed into corporate, mono-agricultural systems over the last century.

The Purple Carrot food truck will present programs at two CADL locations next month, according to owner Nina Santucci. Santucci will conduct a cooking demon-

stration with co-owner Anthony Maiale using locally sourced ingredients; they will hold a conversation with attendees about the many ways purchasing local is important.

The Purple Carrot relies on nearly three dozen local suppliers for its ingredients, and Santucci says it's steps like those that will make a big difference down the road, both ecologically and economically.

"It keeps money circulating in the community," Santucci says, adding that her team's primary goal is to provide the freshest food possible.

On April 21, the Purple Carrot will park its food truck outside of CADL's downtown branch Santucci and Maiale will offer lunch before their presentation, beginning at noon.

For additional information, a listing of presenters and the corresponding book available for checkout, visit cadl.org/farm, or call (517) 367-6300.

foodfinder

Food Finder listings are rotated each week based on space. If you have an update for the listings, please e-mail food@lansingcitypulse.com.

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TROPPO — It's Social Hour every day from 3-6 p.m. at this American bistro; dinner selections include veal picatta, lamb chops and papardelle bolognese, featuring Italian sausage and homemade meatballs in meat gravy. 120 N. Washington Square, Lansing. 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday, 4-11

p.m. Saturday, Dinner served beginning at 4 p.m. each day. Closed Sundays. (517) 371-4000. www.tropo.org. FB, TO, RES, P, OM, Wi-Fi, \$\$\$

EASTERN TASTES

AI FUSION — East meets west and traditional meets trendy at this sit-down sushi bar and restaurant specializing in Asian favorites like Tapanyaki stir-fry. 2827 E. Grand River

Ave., East Lansing. 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday; 12 p.m.-11 p.m. Saturday; 12 p.m.-10 p.m. Sunday. (517) 853-3700. www.ai-fusion.com FB, WB, TO, RES, OM, Wi-Fi, \$\$-\$\$\$.

AKAGI SUSHI — This shop offers plenty of sushi, curry and noodle dishes and plenty of non-seafood entrées. 1754 Central Park Drive, Okemos Noon-8 p.m. Sunday; 11:30 a.m.-8:30

p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday; 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday. (517) 347-7333. WB, D, TO, RES. \$\$.

ANQI SUSHI EXPRESS

—This tiny shop on Allegan Street has brought downtown diners sushi, beef don, and udon soup. 111 E Allegan St., Lansing. 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Closed Saturday and Sunday. (517) 485-9688. www.anqisushi.com. OM, \$

Average price per person, not including drinks:
\$ Less than \$8 | \$\$ \$8 to \$14 | \$\$\$ \$14 to \$20 | \$\$\$\$ Over \$20

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Xiao

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drain. The dish was pretty, though, with a drizzle of citrus sauce that did have loads of flavor. But scraping up those precious bits of zing didn't do much for a cake that brimmed with sweetness. Even the crust, which my eyes told me was going to be firm and buttery, fell apart like the sweet, plain-flavored sponge cake that it was.

For me, fusion means amping up fla-

vors, mixing what's best in one dish with what's interesting in another, finding fun where no one has found it before. It's never tedious.

At Xiao, fusion seems to be an aesthetic concept for the eyes only. On our trip, the most distinctive flavors had been dutifully scrubbed out of the meals. Sweeteners filled the void.

While that doesn't result in a memorable culinary experience, I guess if you're trying to please as many people as possible in a culture addicted to sugar, it's probably not a bad way to go.

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Speaker Terry Lemerond is passionate about health and nutrition and has over 40 years of experience. He has helped thousands of people find a way to better health. For more information on Terry, see his website www.TerryTalksNutrition.com

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