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November 24 - 30, 2021

CityPULSE

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2021 Holiday Gift & Events Guide

See page 17

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A friend recently inquired about the health of City Pulse. When I told him it's doing well, he said, "So how come you keep asking for donations?"

Good question.

The answer: because we want to do better.

And indeed we are, thanks to help from our readers.

This week's print edition — our holiday gift and events guide — is a great example. Two years ago, it was 36 pages. This year it's 44. (Last year we skipped the guide because of the pandemic.)

Those extra eight pages are possible mostly because of contributions. To be specific, we expanded the gift guide, hired a freelance to do it rather than strapping it on an already pressed staff and added space to carry the local portion of the second annual Broad College guide to gifts from MSU alumni-owned businesses. Thank you. Our printer thanks you too.

Every week, your contributions are helping us provide more content. Almost



weekly, for example, we are able to include freelance reporting by Todd Heywood, one of the area's most experienced reporters. Our weekly editorials are another example of content made possible by your donations. They are written for the most part by freelancers with in-depth knowledge of our community. This year, we added a monthly column by local writer and educator Dedria Humphries Barker. The list goes on.

We are delighted that the community has stepped up. While advertising pays most of the bills, donations make a real difference. In general, they have added, conservatively speaking (which I seldom speak), at least a 10% bigger paper — and easily more than 10% better, in my estimation.

With your help, those numbers will keep growing. So, we hope you will avail yourself of the envelope addressed to City Pulse that you should find in this week's



paper. A check in any amount will be appreciated.

With no animosity intended toward our main print competitor, City Pulse is clearly playing a bigger and bigger role in keeping the community informed of important local news, both in print and increasingly online. We are delighted to fill that niche. And grateful that our readers recognize the importance of keeping City Pulse vibrant and growing. As we approach Thanksgiving, we at City Pulse thank you.

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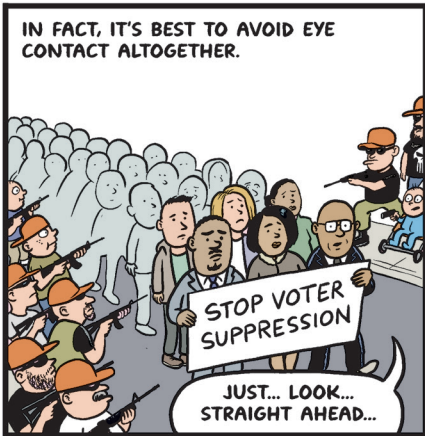
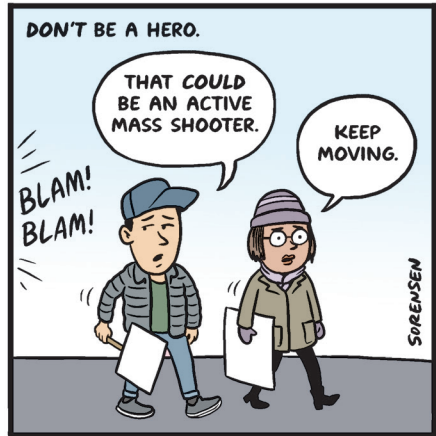
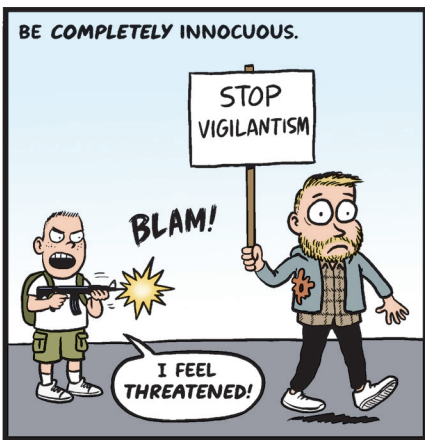
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Give a clone for Christmas



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Flash in the Pan: Two new holiday sides



**Cover
Art**

Photo by Skyler Ashley

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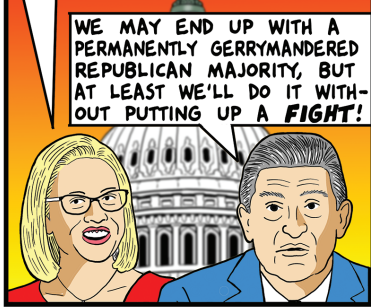
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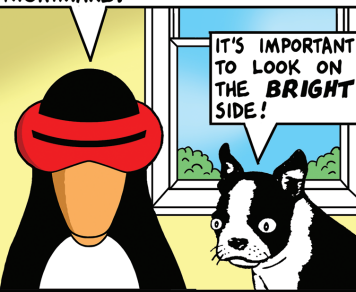
**THINGS TO BE
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3) WHATEVER HAPPENS, THE FILI-BUSTER WILL BE SAFE!
WHAT GOOD IS DEMOCRACY IF WE DON'T PRESERVE THIS SACRED RULE OF THE SENATE, WHICH IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE CONSTITUTION AND HAS ONLY EXISTED IN ITS PRESENT FORM SINCE THE 1970'S?



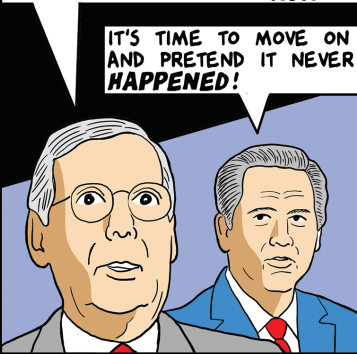
1) DONALD TRUMP IS NOT CURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. I MEAN, IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT HE WILL BE **AGAIN!** BUT AT LEAST WE'VE GOT A TEMPORARY REPRIEVE BEFORE WE ARE CON-DEMNED TO REPEAT AN EVEN MORE TERRIBLE VERSION OF THAT HELLISH NIGHTMARE!



4) THE PLANET IS NOT YET UN-INHABITABLE!
IF WE DON'T TAKE DRASTIC ACTION SOON, IT'S PROBABLY JUST A MATTER OF TIME! BUT **THAT'S** A PROBLEM FOR ANOTHER DAY!



2) THE ATTEMPT TO OVERTURN THE RESULTS OF AN ELECTION THROUGH MOB VIOLENCE FAILED, THIS TIME. I'M SURE EVERYONE HAS LEARNED THEIR LESSON AND WILL NEVER TRY ANYTHING LIKE THAT **AGAIN!**



5) SOON WE'LL BE ABLE TO LEAVE OUR WORRIES BEHIND AND ESCAPE INTO THE METAVERSE! EVERYTHING IS SO MUCH MORE PLEASANT IN **HERE!**



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PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

Massive marijuana recall empties shelves at Lansing pot shops

State regulators probe Lansing cannabis lab over botched test results

Thousands of pounds of marijuana with an estimated market value of nearly \$230 million are stuck in regulatory limbo after state officials ordered a sweeping product recall last week on all medical and recreational weed that was tested since August by a laboratory based in Lansing.

The company, Viridis Laboratories, announced Tuesday it is suing the state over the recall.

The precise size of the statewide cannabis crackdown remains unknown, largely because of the sheer enormity of its impact — estimated to be the single largest marijuana recall in state history, affecting at least 64,000 pounds of pot sold at more than 400 dispensaries across Michigan, according to the company's suit.

But with nearly every licensed provisioning center in Greater Lansing forced to pull products from their shelves last week, some local retailers have described the situation as a "nightmare."

"It's difficult. This is probably the toughest thing we've gone through since we've opened," explained Tom James, owner of Homegrown Cannabis Co. in south Lansing. "Our flower inventory is just totally devastated right now, and we're working very hard to figure out solutions, but this will be a mess for a while. We were using that lab for just about everything over here."

James estimated that about 70% of his inventory was cleared from his store on Pennsylvania Avenue last week as a result of the recall. He's now offering refunds to hundreds of customers.

Budtenders at First Class Cannabis Co. — who labeled the recall as a "nightmare" on Friday — were scrambling to double check every bag of pot that went out the door the morning after the recall was announced. Operators there said they pulled as much as 60% of its products last week.

Officials at Pure Options, one of Lansing's largest cannabis companies with four local dispensaries, also esti-



COURTESY

Between two facilities in Lansing and Bay City, staff at Viridis Laboratories provide testing services for the majority of the recreational and medical adult-use marijuana harvested in Michigan.

mated that up to half of its products were hit by the recall last week, triggering rushed replacement orders.

"It's tough. It looks like just about every shop got hit at some point — some more than others," said Ryan Hosler, director of retail operations at Pure Options. "Some vendors had their entire inventories wiped out. Luckily for us, we strive to carry a wide variety of products, so it didn't completely devastate us. We're also working to get a rush delivery to expand our inventory."

State officials haven't released much information about what triggered the recall, except a vague attribution in a press release last week to "inaccurate and/or unreliable" test results for all cannabis tested by Viridis Laboratories in Lansing and Bay City between Aug. 10 and Nov. 16.

"Consumers with weakened immune systems or lung disease are at the highest risk for health-related incidents such as aspergillosis, which can impact lung function, if these potentially harmful products are consumed," according to a press release sent last Thursday.

The recall does not impact inhalable concentrates like vape cartridges, live resin and distillate.

An MRA spokesman declined to elaborate about concerns at Viridis while a state investigation at the Lansing and

Bay City laboratories continues this week, though the warning about the fungal infection aspergillosis suggests there are concerns about mold in the recalled products.

But because that company has largely monopolized the state's legally required market for cannabis testing services, some estimates suggest that up to 70% of the marijuana tested for medical and recreational sales in Michigan from over the last three months have been pulled from retail shelves to either be retested for microbial contamination or destroyed.

Todd Welch, the chief operating officer of Viridis Laboratories, told City Pulse in May that his Lansing and Bay City locations provided testing services for more than 250,000 pounds of licensed cannabis products annually. He also said the company was responsible for testing about 67% of all of the recreational and medical weed sold in the state of Michigan over the last five years.

A former Michigan State Police employee, Welch runs the laboratory alongside two other police veterans, former MSP toxicologist Michelle Glinn and Greg Michaud, who kept watch over eight crime labs as director of the forensic science division before he became a trooper and retired as a cap-

tain. In total, Viridis operates at least 15,000 square feet of laboratory space with at least 40 employees. Welch had also voiced plans for continued expansion over the summer.

Welch spent about an hour with this reporter in May, touting the extreme precautions that the laboratory supposedly takes to ensure its cannabis products remain free of contamination and ensure that test results are accurate — the exact problems identified last week by the state agency.

In a statement issued on Friday, Michaud stood behind the reliability of test results at Viridis Laboratories — which he labeled as "the highest accredited cannabis testing facility in the state." He also said he strongly disagreed with the state's recent decision to order a recall.

"The health and safety of patients and adult-use cannabis consumers is our top priority," Michaud said, also noting that Viridis has been "fully cooperating" with state regulators amid the ongoing investigation. "We pride ourselves on using the safest, most accurate testing methods, and we hold ourselves to the highest standards developed through our founders' expertise and decades of experience in forensic science and toxicology at the Michigan State Police."

On Tuesday, however, Viridis filed a lawsuit against the Michigan Regulatory Agency over the recall and labeled the state's actions as "unjustified, prejudiced and retaliatory" in its complaint. David Russell, an attorney representing the company, also described the recall as "the latest and most egregious action" amid a "prolonged campaign of harassment aimed at Viridis."

"There is no public health or safety risk justifying the recall at all, and we respectfully request the court to provide relief to Viridis and bring accountability and oversight to an agency that has far exceeded its authority," added Kevin Blair, another attorney representing Viridis Laboratories.

The lawsuit contends that state regulators overstepped their authority in "shutting down" both of Viridis' labs without following procedures that

Recall

from page 5

allow licensees an opportunity to argue the case. It also claims that the MRA had “problematically involved Viridis’ competitors in its investigation” — a claim that was echoed by one of those competitors, PSI Labs, in a press release last week.

An MRA spokesman declined to comment on Tuesday about the pending litigation.

In the meantime, Viridis Laboratories has offered to retest all affected products free of charge, but state officials also wouldn’t confirm whether the lab is actually able to continue providing those services. In response to that question, a spokesman for the MRA would only ambiguously note that state regulators are “working with the licensee to resolve testing issues.”

No illnesses tied to the affected products have been reported by state officials, though symptoms of aspergillosis (like coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath) usually take time to develop. For now, the products are essentially considered untested and cannot be sold until they are retested for aspergillus, salmonella, STEC, total coliforms, total yeast and mold. Some local retailers expected those tests to be finished before the end of the month — which could theoretically lead to all recalled products being put back on the shelves before December.

While the lawsuit and state investigation into the testing issues continues, those who bought recalled products may return them to the dispensary where they bought them for disposal — but they won’t necessarily be entitled to a refund. Nothing in state law requires them to be issued, though officials at Attorney General Dana Nessel’s office encouraged retailers to provide them.

Concerns also linger over which segments of the cannabis supply chain could feel the biggest financial pinch — especially if thousands of pounds of pot are destroyed under a state order.

In a recent episode of Jazz Cabbage Cafe, Grosse Pointe Farms cannabis attorney Paul Tylanda said that hundreds of pot companies will likely soon be “testing the elasticity” of their product liability insurance packages — with plenty of potential litigation yet to be hashed out.

Michaud was cited in an investigation by the weed site Leafly in 2016 that found that officials at a Michigan State Police crime lab had quietly altered the way that confiscated samples of marijuana were labeled, which allowed prosecutors to threaten a felony synthetic THC charge against at least one medical patient who actually had a naturally derived cannabis concentrate.

Records published in that investigation showed that state scientists disagreed with Michaud over that controversial laboratory policy, which ultimately led to an 18-month legal battle

for one Michigan man who briefly lost custody of his 4-year-old son before his case was dismissed.

A federal lawsuit filed against the Michigan State Police over the incident was also dismissed.

Michaud didn’t respond to questions about his track record with MSP.

Employees at Pleasantrees and Pincanna in East Lansing also said they removed dozens of products from their menus last week due to the recall, namely those from third-party brands.

Added Rob Nusbaum, founding partner at Pincanna: “We made a decision a long time ago not to test exclusively with any single lab. We never keep our eggs in one basket in any situation.”

The staff at Cannaisseur, Edgewood Wellness, Local Roots Cannabis Co. and Lume also cited mild disruptions to their cannabis supply chain, but no

large-scale setbacks for business. Other local retailers affected by the recall include Bazonzoes, Gage, JARS, Pure Canna, Skymint, Botanical Co., and Oz Cannabis — none of which responded to questions from City Pulse.

Added Dave Egerton, laboratory director at competing Jackson-based Infinite Chemical Analysis Labs: “The reverberations of this will likely continue to be felt for several months, and serves as an important reminder of why this industry exists. We are all here to provide safe and effective products to Michigan consumers. Whether or not a product passes or fails to meet these criteria must be dictated by the product itself — not which lab performs the analysis.”

— KYLE KAMINSKI

Citing economic growth, Councilman wants to allow many more pot businesses locally

An ordinance amendment from City Councilman Brandon Betz could expand the cannabis industry in Lansing next year by eliminating the cap on the number of marijuana growing facilities, microbusinesses and consumption lounges that are allowed to open within city limits.

An ordinance passed by the City Council in 2019 allows for a maximum of 75 cannabis cultivation facilities in Lansing, with a built-in clause that reduced that limit to 55 facilities through attrition beginning this year. As of this week, 73 cultivation facilities were still growing and open for business — leaving no room for any additional companies to open within the city of Lansing.

Betz’ proposal, which is set to be introduced to the city Planning Board soon, would eliminate that cap on cultivation facilities and allow for an infinite number of growing operations to open in the city — just as long as they’re licensed by the city clerk and the state. The board next meets Dec. 7. Betz said he didn’t expect the measure to be referred to a Council committee till 2022.

“The real impetus for this is that we only have so many years before the federal legalization of cannabis, at which point the market is going to open up for nationwide economic competition,” Betz told City Pulse. “This is a pro-business approach that will open the door to more economic investment and allow Lansing to be much more competitive and welcoming to new businesses.”

The ordinance also allows for one cannabis consumption lounge and mar-

ijuana micro-business in each of the city’s four wards. None have yet opened for business.

Betz’ ordinance shift would allow for up to 50 licensed consumption lounges and microbusinesses across the city. The proposal would also erase language that prohibits microbusinesses from commercially zoned areas — allowing them to open on busier, commercial strips rather than just far-flung industrial land.

“I don’t want so much gatekeeping in the cannabis industry,” Betz explained. “These extreme limits could be sending the wrong message. I want people to know that Lansing is open for business, that we’re not going to stand in the way of allowing this industry to keep on growing.”

A microbusiness license allows for smaller-scale entrepreneurs to grow, harvest and process up to 150 of their own marijuana plants that can also be sold directly to customers on site. Betz said that allowing for more of them in Lansing could open the door to more small businesses — especially for the local “moms and pops” of the weed world without corporate cash to burn.

Betz’ proposal would not adjust the limitless cap on licenses for processing facilities, safety compliance labs or transportation companies. It also will not expand the city’s existing 28-shop limit on provisioning centers — an intentional decision that Betz labeled as a “political move.”

— KYLE KAMINSKI

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED MINUTES

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING WAS HELD AT THE TOWNSHIP OFFICES LOCATED AT 3209 WEST MICHIGAN AVENUE, LANSING, MICHIGAN ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Hayes, Clerk Sanders, Treasurer McKenzie
Trustees: Harris, Brewer, Ruiz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Broughton
ALSO PRESENT: Michael Gresens, Attorney

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD:

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Hayes.

Minutes of the regular meeting held on October 26, 2021 and the special meeting held on October 27, 2021 approved.

Agenda approved as presented.

Resolution to approve Police and Fire Special Assessment Roll untabled.

Adopted Resolution 21-29: Resolution to Confirm the Police and Fire Protection Special Assessment Roll as amended.

Adopted Resolution 21-27: MERS Retiree Health Funding Vehicle Resolution.

Adopted Resolution 21-28: Resolution Establishing Authorized Signatories for MERS Contracts and Service Credit Purchase Approvals as amended.

Adopted Resolution 21-26: Resolution to Certify At Large Drain Millage for the 2021 Tax Rolls.

Approved repair of driveway approach at Fire Station 52 and authorized Supervisor Hayes to execute the contract with Bees.

Approved entering into Executive Session for pending litigation – Eastwood LLC v Charter Township of Lansing, Case # 21-0624-CB.

Approved returning to Regular session.

Claims approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor
Maggie Sanders, Clerk

CP#21-255

State database collects details on 500K COVID-19 patients

Conservative lawyer flags concern about potential privacy breach

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has collected into a permanent database the names of more than 500,000 residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 — in addition to untold thousands of their close contacts — since the pandemic struck last March.

An HHS spokesman confirmed those statistics last week. None of those who appear in the registry have provided their consent for the data to be collected. Few are aware it even exists. And according to state officials, the data could be kept anywhere between 30 years and forever.

That data collection was revealed by state officials to City Pulse last month while opponents of public health measures to control the coronavirus continued to pressure local elected bodies — particularly school boards — to loosen restrictions such as masking and social distancing.

Outrage over actions taken by public health authorities was stoked in recent weeks after a parent in Ottawa county circulated a quarantine notice sent to the household of a close contact of someone infected with COVID-19. Such letters have become a regular occurrence with public health officials as a way to put people on notice that they may face health-related restrictions.

Failing to follow those restrictions could result in additional (and rare) actions by health officials — including up to six months of civil confinement for treatment and isolation of infectious

Chelsea Wuth, a state HHS spokeswoman, said the database that hosts Michigan's COVID-19 data is the state's Michigan Disease Surveillance System. It's an online database where hospitals, labs and physicians are required to report one of 77 infections or diseases in their patients. Those include exotic and potentially terror-related infections like the plague, anthrax and tularemia to commonplace infections like chicken pox, shingles and influenza.

The reporting system was implemented as part of a 1978 rewrite of the state Public Health Act, designed to allow health officials to identify outbreaks and epidemics within their ser-

vice areas.

It is just one part of a complicated net of laws that empower public health officials to take actions to protect the public's health — one that has also seen some opposition in the era of COVID-19.

Conservative lawyer David Kallman, who represented business owners who fought

COVID-19 restrictions last year like Royal Scot Bowling, said he was troubled by the potential for breaches of privacy with the system, and the lack of consent by those in the database.



Kallman

"The potential for abuse is really quite breathtaking," he said. "They say they aren't doing anything wrong with it, but I think this current pandemic has left a lot of us saying, 'We're not trusting the government to be noble.'"

Wuth said that details about each coronavirus infection are submitted to the state through the surveillance system. Reporting agencies or physicians must enter the patient's name, their address, contact information and date of birth or age. Local health officials then follow up with those with COVID-19 for an interview — which allows the health officials to determine where that person had been in the days leading to the infection and identify locations where they may have exposed others. It also collects contact information for those with likely exposures.

All of that data collected in the disease investigation is filed under the notes for the original positive case. For instance: "John" tested positive for COVID. Disease investigators from the local health department learn John was in close contact with Jane and Fred. He also spent two days before becoming symptomatic at a local bar without wearing a face mask. Jane, Fred and the local bar would all be listed as subentries within John's larger case file within the database.

All Michiganians who has ever received a call from a contact tracer have their names in the database too.

Public health officials speaking on background have defended the retention of the COVID-19 data of those infected or exposed as a prudent public health measure. They noted that the data could be used to follow up with those infected in order to determine if there are longer term consequences of infection from a novel virus like COVID — or potentially to seek genetic or other data that might explain why some people could be exposed but have not been infected.

Wuth said Michigan is not tracking a condition known as "Long-Haulers COVID-19," which affects as many as 30% of people infected and includes long-term symptoms like exhaustion, depression, anxiety, circulatory issues, lung issues and more. She said the state was relying on the University of Michigan's Long COVID Clinic to review and evaluate that data.

All of the data collected is provided without a patient's consent, and no individuals have a right to remove their names, contact information or how they might have come in close contact with COVID-19 — just like people can't remove their names and data from other state databases.

Collection of private medical data has been a flashpoint in Michigan.

In 2018, activists and privacy advocates raised alarms when state health officials announced a plan to use genomic data from those living with HIV to develop clusters of closely related infections and then target people in those clusters for increased contact by health officials.

Unknown to most people living with HIV, not only is their original HIV positive result reported to the state, but all lab results regarding the infection are also reported to the state, creating a deep dataset to know who is, and who is not, engaging in treatment efforts or prevention and care. The Positive Women's Coalition and other national organizations have called for a moratorium on the use of genomic data from HIV tests, citing concerns over privacy issues, among others.

Wuth said the state has no plan to use genomic studies of coronavirus for public health contact tracing. Instead, that data — if it is performed — would help the state advise on which variants of the virus are circulating in the community, as well as advise medical

officials on which versions of monoclonal antibodies might be more effective against different variants of the virus.

The genetic tests for COVID-19,



Tennis

Wuth said, have no

"clinical use" at this point, so the results are not typically shared with a treating physician or the patient. However, the genetic sequence is stripped of personally identifiable information and shared with the CDC and other researchers.

Ingham County Commissioner Todd Tennis is one of tens of thousands of residents who has been called by a contact tracer working for health officials to inform him that he had potential exposure to COVID-19. He said having his data in the state's database doesn't bother him at all.

"I think it serves as a reminder that this virus is still there. It's still killing people and there are ways to prevent getting sick. That's what public health should be doing," Tennis added.

— TODD HEYWOOD

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This year's State Capitol Christmas tree is a definite Eye Candy, per the oohs and aahs of the spectators and participants at the Silver Bells 5K in downtown Lansing over the weekend. The 63-foot spruce tree chosen for the grounds of the State Capitol was donated by Carla Fletcher and her family. It grew on her property in Marenisco in Gogebic County, which is on the westernmost tip of the Upper Peninsula, bordering Wisconsin. The tree was harvested in late October and driven down to Lansing — a trip of approximately 500 miles. Spruce trees are a popular choice for Christmas because of the spruce's pyramidal shape and strong boughs for hanging heavy ornaments. Even during the day, the lights on this year's tree at the Capitol pop against the ever-green branches, looking like colorful confetti sprinkles. If you want to consider a spruce, keep your pets away from it because the sharp needles of some spruce trees can be dangerous if ingested. On the upside, though, some think the same needles deter cats from climbing it. According to MSU Extension, Gogebic County is home to White, Black and Norway spruce trees. This is the second Capitol Christmas tree to come from Gogebic County and the 24th from the Upper Peninsula.

— CARRIE SAMPSON

"Eye Candy of the Week" is our look at some of the nicer properties in Lansing. It rotates with Eyesore of the Week and Eye for Design. If you have a suggestion, please e-mail eye@lansingcitypulse.com or call Berl Schwartz at 999-5061.

REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS

By KYLE KAMINSKI



Lansing Township approves assessment

Homeowners will be stuck with higher tax bills next month — and for the next three years — under a special assessment designed to boost funding for police and fire services that township trustees approved. The assessment adds \$4.57 million to winter tax bills over three years.

Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more coverage.



Sparrow union members authorize strike

The Professional Employee Council at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing — which represents about 2,200 employees — announced that 96% of the staff who participated in a recent unionwide vote have authorized its negotiating team to call a strike "if necessary," according to a release. A strike could be called "at any time," officials said. A 10-day notice would be provided to administrators and hospital staff before a walkout.

Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more coverage.



Schor reverses himself on mask mandate

After facing criticism last week for relaxing the universal mask mandate at Lansing City Hall, Mayor Andy Schor has decided to reinstate an order that requires all city employees and visitors — regardless of their COVID-19 vaccination status — to wear a mask while inside the building.

Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more coverage.

Recall petition refiled against Betz

Another recall petition targeting Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz was filed with the Ingham County Election Commission — this time by local attorney Liz Abdnour — after commissioners voted to reject the last version of a similar proposal. A clarity hearing designed for the Commission to review the petition language has been set for 3 p.m. Monday (Dec. 6).

Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more coverage.



Betz

Whitmer: Time for the third jab

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is encouraging all residents ages 18 and up who have received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago to schedule booster shots this week. She also called on parents to get children vaccinated as caseloads continue to surge across Michigan, this week making the state one of the worst coronavirus hotspots in the nation. The state also reported its first major influenza outbreak this year at the University of Michigan.



Whitmer

Audit: Billions overpaid in unemployment

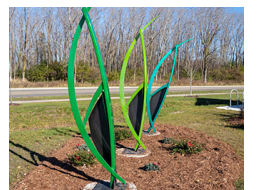
A federal audit found that the state Unemployment Insurance Agency overpaid about \$3.9 billion in unemployment benefits to nearly 350,000 people who were later found ineligible — money that likely will not be recouped because the improper payments were the UIA's fault, MIRS reports.

Shuffleboard Club to open next summer

After facing delays tied to the pandemic, developers plan to open the Lansing Shuffleboard and Social Club by next summer at the former Lansing City Market building on the Grand River, reports the Lansing State Journal. The project — which promises not to be "your grandad's shuffleboard" — is accepting applications for eight restaurants that are set to move into the space, along with two bars, shuffleboard courts and plenty of room to socialize.

New sculpture in Meridian Township

A new contemporary art sculpture titled "SOW" was dedicated at the farmers market in Meridian Township. The permanent installation from artist Dane Porter was inspired by nature, growth and fresh produce and was funded in part by a \$10,000 grant from the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, which has invested \$270,000 since 2012 on 36 art projects in Greater Lansing.



East Lansing needs help spending

East Lansing residents have been invited to share input on how the city should blow through about \$12.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds by Dec. 31, 2026. Visit survey.monkey.com/r/EastLansingARPA to fill out the city's survey by Dec. 10. The city also needs volunteers to serve on several advisory boards and commissions — which will also likely play a role in dictating how that cash is spent. Visit cityofeastlansing.com for more details.

Cops probe student death at MSU

The East Lansing Police Department is awaiting the results of an autopsy to shed more light on what led to the death of an unnamed student who was found "unresponsive and not breathing" early Saturday morning on the 400 block of Stoddard Avenue. Three other people were also found "passed out" at the scene. Cops said too much alcohol could have played a role.

Unmasking Mayor Schor

Mayor Andy Schor's post-reelection honeymoon is off to a stumbling start, thanks to his ill-considered decision to lift the City Hall COVID-19 mask mandate despite skyrocketing cases in Lansing and across the state. After catching hell from Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail and others, Schor reversed himself, but the damage was done. When a presumptively Democratic elected official makes a decision we'd expect from a Republican, we have to wonder who or what is guiding the mayor's decision-making process? After joining forces with Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wiggelsworth and his platoon of rural law enforcement officials to oppose racial justice reforms in the county's criminal justice system, Schor's first significant policy move after being easily elected to a second term this month was to align himself once again with rural small towns like Dimondale, Grand Ledge and Mason in casting aside basic COVID precautions. Are we witnessing a mayoral shift toward the right side of the political spectrum? And by right, we don't mean correct. One possible explanation may be found in Schor's recent hiring of Scott Bean as his new communications director. A long-time Republican staffer in the Michigan Legislature before heading to the Grassroots Midwest political consulting firm (which ran Schor's reelection campaign), we have to wonder if Bean is using his newfound influence to orchestrate a shift in the mayor's political leanings and alliances. Time will tell.



Lansing loses a legend

The untimely passing of Michigan public relations legend Kelly Rossman-McKinney leaves a hole in the heart of many here in Lansing and across the state. A bonafide trailblazer in the PR profession, Rossman-McKinney was a tough cookie who cut a wide swath through Lansing's testosterone-driven political scene, reminding the good old boys every step of the way that a strong woman doesn't take crap from anyone. We hope that one of her favorite acronyms — standing for Boys I'm Taking Charge Here — is inscribed on whatever memorial the family has planned. We often agreed with her, but even when we didn't we respected the



The CP Edit

Opinion

hell out of her strategic acumen, her passion for mentoring young people — especially women — in politics and public relations, her generosity and deep commitment to serving her community, and her kindness toward this publication. RIP, Kelly.

Testing snafu causes cannabis chaos

Last week, the Michigan Marijuana Regulatory Agency announced the recall of an estimated \$200 million worth of cannabis products over allegedly faulty test results from Viridis Laboratories, the leading cannabis testing lab in the state. Viridis denies it has done anything wrong. The recall has thrown Michigan's commercial cannabis industry into a tailspin, leaving dispensary owners scrambling to replace stock they can no longer sell. The ironies of this sad situation are several: One is that Viridis is run by former Michigan State Police laboratory chief Greg Michaud, which leaves us wondering that if the state is correct, what about the integrity of test results generated by MSP labs on his watch. The other irony is that this debacle comes on the heels of Big Canna's effort to pull the rug out from under cannabis caregivers over concerns for the safety of their untested products. Viridis has countered by suing the state. Presumably the multitude of cannabis dispensaries that are now stuck with tens of millions of dollars in products they can't sell will get together to file a lawsuit against Michaud and his colleagues to recover their losses. Meanwhile, the Marijuana Regulatory Agency should examine whether reform is needed to require dispensaries and grow businesses not to put so much of its testing in one pot, so to speak. Recalls may be inevitable, but they needn't be massive if testing is spread out more.



Sparrow health professionals deserve support

Like most Americans, we're deeply grateful for the frontline health care workers who have carried on their shoulders the impossible burdens of the COVID-19

pandemic for far longer than any of us imagined would be necessary. That's why it is surprising to us that Sparrow Health System has allowed their relationship with their frontline patient care staff to deteriorate so completely that the 2,200 members of the Professional Employee Council this week voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike "if needed" to win key contract concessions from the hospital system. Although we're not privy to the full details of the labor dispute, we support the health care professionals and think it would behoove Sparrow administrators to work out a mutually acceptable contract sooner rather than later that acknowledges and rewards the vital role their front line staff have played — and continue to play — during the pandemic.



Gratitude

Tomorrow's Thanksgiving festivities focus on stuffing our gullets with as much holiday fare as possible, leaving many of us in a tryptophan-induced couch coma while we try to avert our eyes from the annual Detroit Lions football debacle against whomever they happen to be playing. But we're also focused on the gratitude we feel every day for our friends and loved ones, and for the continued support of our readers and advertisers who make it possible for City Pulse to do what we do best. Wishing you and yours peace, health and happiness in this holiday season.

Have something to say about a local issue or an item that appeared in our pages? Now you have two ways to sound off:

1.) Write a letter to the editor:

• E-mail: letters@lansingcitypulse.com • Snail mail: City Pulse, 1905 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48912 • Fax: (517) 371-5800 • At lansingcitypulse.com

2.) Write a guest column. Contact Berl Schwartz for more information: publisher@lansingcitypulse.com or (517) 999-5061. (Please include your name, address and telephone number so we can reach you. Keep letters to 250 words or fewer. City Pulse reserves the right to edit letters and columns.)

Many GOP contenders for governor — few with cash or experience

If Michigan has ever had 12 major-party candidates running for governor in one election cycle, I can't find it.

Yet, here we are, 252 days until Republican



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

OPINION

Party voters decide who will face Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in the 2022 election and the

GOP have an even dozen people who have filed paperwork to raise money for a gubernatorial run.

And there may be more. Perry Johnson, for example, a successful Southeast Michigan business executive, is still rumored to be giving the race a look. Who knows?

This race, at this point, is wide open. Former Detroit Police Chief James Craig came out of the Mackinac Republican Leadership Conference in September as the perceived frontrunner, but he and his general consultant, John Yob, split this week.

Yob — who helped a guy named Rick Snyder become governor — doesn't exactly have a history of abandoning or getting kicked off a winning ship.

Kalamazoo area chiropractor Garrett Soldano has amassed an impressive grassroots network that will keep him relevant to the end, but whether he can reach enough people will be his issue.

Former Southeast Michigan car dealership owner Kevin Rinke kicked off his run this week with a nifty television ad featuring a GTO and a Yugo. He pledged to throw around \$10 million in this race, which instantly makes him a viable candidate. But he has no grassroots support and zero history with the Republican Party.

Tudor Dixon is great with the media and is on the obscure national conservative TV shows, but she's spinning her tires on fundraising and needs a jolt of cash to get her name out there.

You combine the strengths of all four of those candidates together and you have a winning candidate.

But you don't. Instead, the R's have more candidates.

Donna Brandenburg, Mike Brown, Ryan Kelley and Ralph Rebrant. All four are running what would be competitive state legislative race.

Brandenburg, a West Michigan businesswoman, dropped \$40,000 to get her campaign going. Her pro-Trump, America First schtick sells in rural

Michigan. Same with Ryan Kelley, a West Michigan Realtor and conservative activist.

While photographs show Kelley pretty ramped up Jan. 6 outside the nation's Capitol, Kelley doesn't come across as half-cocked one-on-one. He's sincere, engaging and is generating some interest. He's raised about \$80,000 as of last month. If he were running for the right open state Senate seat, Kelley would be competitive.

Same with Michigan State Police Capt. Mike Brown or Rebrant. They are generating some support, but both of their campaigns remind me of Jim Hines' run in 2018. They have some money to launch a run for governor, but not nearly enough to win one.

They don't have Rick Snyder money. And they certainly don't have Dick DeVos money.

Like Kelley, Brown or Rebrant would be very winnable legislative candidates in the right district. Neither have the juice to run for governor.

Evan Space, Austin Change, Bob Scott. Articia Bomer. God bless their hearts.

All of these well intentioned folks would struggle to win a township trustee race. None of them have raised two nickels, figuratively speaking. If they have any support, I'm not aware of it.

There's no Betsy DeVos here. No Ronna Romney McDaniel. There's not even a prominent Republican legislator like former Speaker Lee Chatfield or Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey doing anything.

In fact, the only person of the 12 who has been elected to anything before is Capt. Mike. He won a couple terms on the county commission back in the day.

What does that tell you? There's a lot of interest in running for the top political job from a lot of people who don't know a lot about politics.

Those who do know something about politics want nothing to do with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the mountain of money she's accumulating.

This smells a lot like a messy Republican primary with no clear frontrunner emerging in the foreseeable future.

At this point, it's something Whitmer and the Democrats can be thankful for this week of Thanksgiving.

(Kyle Melinn Melinn of the Capitol news service MIRS can be emailed at melinnky@gmail.com.)

LETTERS to the editor

Don't disrupt Medicare Advantage

Working as a family physician, I understand the importance of quality care — from childhood on through retirement. As a senior myself, I also know the outsized health needs that older individuals in my community face.

Seniors need to find health care coverage programs that offer them quality coverage and benefits, but at an affordable price. Luckily, through my lengthy career in the healthcare field, I have become familiar with the variety of options senior patients can choose from when deciding on their health care coverage.

While there are a number of coverage plans available, only one program — Medicare Advantage — fully meets the needs of senior patients. That's why I knew that as soon as I was eligible for a Medicare Advantage plan, I was going to enroll.

Medicare Advantage is far and away the best option for senior health care, as it provides extensive benefits to patients without asking them to bear the brunt of high costs. The financial security that Medicare Advantage allows is crucial, because many seniors live on fixed or limited incomes after retiring, and unexpected health costs can have a big impact on their finances.

With capped out-of-pocket costs and low premiums, seniors rest assured knowing they will be able to afford the care that they need. And the care is not just affordable, but robust as well. From in-home care services to prescription drug coverage, Medicare Advantage is a one stop shop meeting all the health needs seniors have.

Particularly in retirement, seniors are not interested in experiencing abrupt change, and the stability of Medicare Advantage is one of the reasons the program is so well regarded by the community. Should there

be cuts made to the funding of Medicare Advantage, unintended consequences could occur that disrupt the coordination of benefits and care for patients.

The last thing that the nearly 1 million Michigan seniors enrolled in Medicare Advantage want is to see a program they rely on changed.

I encourage Senator Peters, Senator Stabenow, and Representative Slotkin to recognize the immense benefit that this program has provided to the senior community, here in Michigan and across the country. Protecting this program is critical to ensuring seniors have access to quality, affordable health care.

Dr. David Neff

(The writer is a family physician from Okemos and CEO of RediCare Okemos & Grand River Family Care.)

Treat dead deer humanely

I saw Bath's buck pole on TV and it sickened me. I think the reporters knew it would repulse the viewers. I understand we need hunters to keep the deer population down for the safety of drivers, but that has nothing to do with displaying for public view the dead bodies of these beautiful, harmless creatures. Hunters place food out for hungry animals, stay hidden and kill them when they come to eat. Why do they call their dead bodies trophies? Or they kill them with arrows and the deer slowly and painfully bleed to death. Why is that heroic? The least we can do is treat them with dignity after they're dead. My friend in Pennsylvania — a big deer hunting state — said that he has never heard of anything so barbaric. He said they often hang them by the hunting cabins, but not display them for public view. We need township board members who will put an end to this disgusting, heartbreaking practice which makes our town look like it's home to a bunch of hillbillies.

**Judy Hood
Bath**

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It's time to give teachers, and nurses, reasons to show up

By **DEDRIA HUMPHRIES BARKER**
OPINION

One day when I was the lead faculty of the Lansing Community College Writing Program, I was hanging around in the department lobby area where, at the administrative assistant's desk, a group of students demanded to see the department's chairperson. They should have been in class, but there was no class because their professor was absent, again.



Barker

I had heard something about that earlier in the semester.

First, the professor was regularly absent for one of the two weekly classes. Students were giddy about that early in the semester because who doesn't like the gift of time? In that way K-12 students in the Waverly School District may have enjoyed being off last week when their school closed due to no substitute teachers to replace those out sick.

But with the end of the semester swiftly approaching, those college students wanted instruction. Panic at maybe not passing the class and having to repeat it during the next semester caused those students to understand their teacher's absence was a big problem. Their problem. And now the problem of educator shortages is being experienced all over the United States, and especially in Michigan.

Unlike in Waverly, the lack of substitute teachers in Lansing Public Schools is no day off. I hear that the administration combines classes, making one teacher responsible for twice as many students. Where there are enough teachers, CNN reports, some American districts are extending the normal two-day Thanksgiving holiday to a week-long vacation. Mental health days, they call it. But these students are lucky. At least they are continuing the discipline of being in school. The Detroit Free Press reports that some districts across the state don't have enough bus drivers to bring students to school.

Teacher shortages are so bad that the State of Michigan launched the Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educator program to encourage "tens of thousands" of former educators with expired teaching certificates to come back to the classroom. Eleven hundred responded. Under the Welcome Back program, the state Department of Education approached 35,000 edu-

cators with valid certificates to return. More than 2,000 completed a survey, and about 1,000 gave the state their email addresses so school districts could contact them. Most veteran teachers who had been there and done that took a pass.

This is a situation straight out of Douglas Turner Ward's award-winning play, "Day of Absence." Ward's play is set in the 1960s in a Southern town where African Americans ghosted the white people, i.e. disappeared, for a day. They were protesting being limited to jobs of cooking, cleaning, garbage pick-up, driving, caring for babies and old people. That's clear because as the play unfolds, the white people don't know how, nor want, to do any of that. During the play, the white people decide the Black people left because they are lazy. This is acted out by Black actors in white face.

Our shortage of essential workers is attributed to many factors. It's not because people aren't trained to do the work. We were working before the pandemic, but COVID makes it difficult for educators to continue to tolerate the historical failure to fix public education. I'm talking in particular about preventing mass shootings by going after guns, favoring charter and religious schools at the expense of public schools, and bringing poor kids up to speed by increasing taxpayer support. That's the shortage crises stalwart education professionals just aren't feeling anymore.

Other essential workers have also learned that not only is their work humble, but it is so so unappreciated and undercompensated. Many workers essential to our future are college-educated professionals who want to serve our society. What they get in return is appreciation that is "phoned-in." That means it's not sincere. Consider the plight of nurses.

Just last year, during the first wave of the disease, the refrain was "essential workers, we love you." But this week, The New York Times' COVID infection tracking map shows Michigan growing more red. That means climbing COVID infections. In Grand Rapids, Spectrum Health is rationing medical care and turning hospital hallways into hospital rooms to care for sick people who are mostly unvaccinated.

In Lansing, Sparrow Hospital nurses who have withstood the rage of COVID are negotiating for a new contract. The nurses picketed this month on the sidewalk in the cold. Their demands?

Limiting the number of patients assigned to an individual nurse's care to the number set in their last contract. They also want a wage raise.

Is that too much to ask for? Apparently it is, because the health professionals contract was allowed to expire in October. It sounds like business as usual, and that's outrageous.

Sparrow nurses have voted to allow their union to call a strike. If it happens, that would not be good for any of us, but it would make the point of the real meaning of "essential." Just to be clear, essential workers, like nurses and teachers, do the work necessary for society to function.

Those jobs are hard enough to do without being mocked and harassed. Parents second-guess educators when they should be asking questions. And listening. And helping in the schools,



assisting teachers with students who need extra help or someone to listen to them read. And advocating for school millages. Instead, too many people try to hold the clock back with, for instance, protests about Critical Race Theory, which is not a K-12 subject matter.

State Supt. Michael F. Rice drew the state Board of Education's attention to the shortage crises earlier this month. His suggestion to fix the problem with various financial incentives, including paid college tuition for future teachers, is worth pursuing, but stopped far short of a suggestion on my Twitter (@dedria_hb) feed.

A mother whose kids were abruptly dismissed to home at the start of the pandemic tweeted, "It's been 3 weeks, two days and 45 minutes since I started home schooling, and I think teachers should make one billion dollars a year."

(Dedria Humphries Barker is the author of a book about education for girls, "Mother of Orphans: The True and Curious Story of Irish Alice, A Colored Man's Widow." Her opinion column appears on the last Wednesday of each month.)

Thank you, Lansing!

We're so excited to have been voted Top of the Town! We inside the firm know about the great things we're doing (and working towards), but we'd be lying if we said we didn't crave the external validation too. So thank you!

And be sure to keep your eyes peeled for what we've got coming next. We love being top of the town, but we're aspiring to be top of the entire state as we work towards shaping a better justice system for every Michigander.

-Coontz Law





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ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Masaki Takahashi and building a powerful poetry culture in Lansing

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Masaki Takahashi began his long odyssey into the world of poetry thanks to his budding interest in the art form as an “angsty teenager.”

Many years later, he now leads his own poetry workshop and has helped grow and maintain The Poetry Room, a series of live mixed-poetry events that has brought acclaimed national poets to Lansing while helping young local poets find their creative niche and voice.

Takahashi, 35, was first drawn into poetry and the more aggressive slam poetry through hip-hop artists such as Jin Au-Yeung, better known by his stage name, MC Jin — the first Asian-American rapper to be signed to a major label after he joined DMX’s Ruff Ryders imprint. “The creative outlet that it provided really helped me navigate through my emotions and what was happening in my life. That made me fall in love with writing,” Takahashi said. “At a young age, I was most attracted to hip-hop. The person I was most inspired by, Jin, was a freestyle battler.”

Poetry and hip-hop lyricism remain vital vectors for Takahashi to express himself artistically and emotionally. He wrote a poem in 2020, “An Ode to MC Jin Ending in Response to the Chinese Virus Outbreak,” crediting the rapper with giving him the confidence to stand up against anti-Asian prejudice. The Asian-American slam poet Beau Sia was also important in drawing Takahashi into the life of a poet.

He developed his own chops as a writer and poet not through conventional means such as a four-year university degree program, but through ravenously consuming literature and studying his under-the-radar local poet friends, such as former Lansing Poet Laureate Dennis Hinrichsen.

“Dennis had this thing where I had to finish at least one book every single week,” Takahashi said. “It’s very



Courtesy

Masaki Takahashi at an outdoor poetry reading event.

much true that you have to read a lot to be good at this and understand what poetry is.”

Takahashi began passing down his own passion for poetry and slam poetry when he founded The Poetry Room in 2017. He discussed wanting to start up a live poetry event series with his friend Dylan Rogers, owner of the Robin Theatre in REO Town. Rogers was very enthusiastic and immediately supportive of the concept. Rogers helped grow The Poetry Room from a creative seed inside Takahashi’s mind into an actual reality to be shared with the city. In addition to his desire to expose more people in Lansing to poetry, Takahashi said he also wanted The Poetry Room to be a platform for poets to hone their literary skills.

Takahashi declared 2017 his favorite year.

“When you don’t know what you’re doing, it’s the purest thing ever. It was the most fun of times,” Takahashi said. “Dylan Rogers has the winning formula. He’s over there coaching me and being my friend.”

Though Takahashi hosts The Poetry Room himself, with occasional guest hosts, for the first couple of years in its existence he was joined onstage by Grace Carras, his co-host and partner. Carras was a member of Michigan State University’s slam poetry team, which has competed in national competitions such as the College Unions Poetry Slam Invitational. Takahashi kept a more intense spirit with his presence as a host, while Carras was more soft-spoken, giving the two a fascinating dynamic and chemistry as The

Poetry Room co-hosts.

“That dynamic worked beautifully for us. We were very much different people but we made it work for years. She’s since graduated and doing her own thing now and I appreciate that,” Takahashi said.

The Poetry Room really took off in 2020 thanks to the opportunities it provided Takahashi in bringing in bigger national poets using connections he had developed throughout his time spent and involvement in the poetry community. As the pandemic prevented poets from going on speaking tours, there were free to do virtual events, like Takahashi’s online incarnation of The Poetry Room powered through Zoom conference calls.

“We were able to bring in a lot of national talent that weren’t really touring,” Takahashi said. “I had a lot of connections to certain people that we wouldn’t usually get, especially considering that we didn’t have any money.”

Notable poets that Takahashi helped bring aboard to perform with The Poetry Room virtually over the course of the coronavirus shutdown include: Neil Hilborn, a viral star who’s raked in hundreds of millions of views across social media with his electric and emotive poetry readings, Brenna Twohy, a published author and two-time Portland City Slam champion, Megan Falley, another viral poet who has toured the world and leads the popular Poems That Don’t Suck creative writing workshop. Of course, another of Takahashi’s featured poets was one of his earliest influences, slam poetry pioneer Beau Sia.

“I love them all. Brenna Twohy is my poet crush. She was so kind and we’re very much still friends today.

Megan Falley is a huge advocate in

my life still, and Neil Hilborn was probably one of the most generous people ever,” Takahashi said. “Beau Sia’s work in creating the popularity of slam poetry is undeniable. We were able to share that with people. He was very generous with his time with us.”

Takahashi still has big plans for The Poetry Room, which he recently solidified as an official 501(c)3 non-profit. His last live event was a guest appearance at the MSU Museum’s STEAM Engine Slam Poetry Slam. The next official live Poetry Room gathering is scheduled for early-December.

“We’re creating an environment for the slam culture and we’re creating fans. I still keep in touch with the high school students that have done The Poetry Room,” Takahashi said. “It’s cathartic for some people. It’s the power of telling your own story before anybody tells it for you. That’s a powerful thing, dictating your own story in front of an audience.”



Courtesy

Masaki Takahashi (right) and former Poetry Room co-host Grace Carras onstage at The Robin Theatre.

The Poetry Room
Next event coming
early-December
For more info and
announcements, visit:
[Facebook.com/
ThePoetryRoom](https://www.facebook.com/ThePoetryRoom)

Seven dank stocking stuffers for the family pothead — and more

Former caregivers offer unique strains as holiday season approaches

By KYLE KAMINSKI

This week’s paper is filled with all sorts of unique gift ideas for the upcoming holiday season. Unfortunately, very few of those featured gifts were designed to get you mind-numbingly high.

But fear not, Lansing potheads. I made sure we reserved plenty of space for this week’s Lansterdam column to assemble a special stoner gift guide — including several products that I had to painstakingly sample last weekend just to make sure they were good.



Lansterdam in Review: 2021 Gift Guide

All the flower strains featured in this guide came from Local Roots Cannabis Co. — which was voted as Greater Lansing’s best provisioning center in this year’s City Pulse/Fox News 47 Top of the Town contest.

The kicker: Each of these pot brands are also run by former medical marijuana caregivers, all of whom deserve some credit for laying the foundation of Michigan’s licensed cannabis industry.

Michigrown — GMOG (Flower)
Price: \$15/g

THC: 24.2%

This strain was grown about two miles from Lake Michigan at Michigrown’s cultivation facility in Muskegon, which prides itself in zeroing in on the biology and chemistry behind the plants in order to ensure each strain showcases its “full genetic potential,” according to its website.

These perfectly trimmed buds were dense, light green and totally layered with frosty dusting of trichomes, which shimmered yellow under a magnifying glass between pinkish-orange pistils. They also had a bright, floral aro-



ma — like a skunky sort of lavender brushed with rosemary — and a spicy (yet smooth) flavor profile to match pine, parsley and the sweetest touch of skunk.

GMOG is crossbred with Legend OG, which supposedly carries relaxing indica-leaning effects. I found this strain to be perfectly balanced — enough energy and euphoria to happily go about your daily business and also just enough relaxation to still kick back and watch TV on the couch.

Real Leaf Solutions — Mac N’ Cheese (Flower)
Price: \$10/g
THC: 18.2%

Kalkaska’s Real Leaf Solutions has developed a reputation for growing some of the state’s most unique and sought-after strains, and its latest batch of Mac N’ Cheese is certainly one of them. These large, fluffy buds had a pungently pleasant skunky, piney and cheesy sort of smell that carried over into an incredibly tart flavor profile with bright hints of mango and lemongrass. A few hits gave way to a mentally uplifting but physically sedating type of high that seemed to lean toward the indica rather than the sativa side of the typical effects spectrum. I found this strain to be a perfect pairing with some video games to unwind after work on Friday.

Redemption Cannabis Co. — Forbidden Jelly (Flower)
Price: \$38/3.5g
THC: 19.9%

This strain is the result of a partnership announced this year between two brands owned by former caregivers Redemption Cannabis Co. and Driven Grow. The duo announced plans in June to roll out some rare and highly sought strains in Lansing, and they kept their promise.

This indica-dominant hybrid is a cross between Jelly Breath and Forbidden Fruit — and it might be the most pleasantly fragrant weed I’ve ever had the pleasure of smoking. These



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See Pot gifts, Page 15

Pot gifts

from page 14

dense, plum-colored buds smelled like a dessert bouquet of blackberries, cherries and grapes. That sweetness carries through on the taste with earthy, musky undertones and a touch of diesel.

One joint left me zoning out on my phone with a dumb smile on my face for most of the night. Be warned: The euphoria induced by this strain also comes with a major case of the munchies.

Fresh Coast Extracts — Lilac Diesel (Vape)

Price:
\$25/0.5g
THC: 81.3%

Fresh Coast Extracts — a close partner of Real Leaf Solutions in Kalkaska — is a



grassroots collective of caregivers whose stated mission reads, in part, to “inspire incredible moments.” If that includes getting people high off high-quality vape pens, then mission accomplished.

Ethos Genetics bred the balanced hybrid strain used to create these half-gram live resin cartridges, which are jam-packed with an odd combination of sharp, chemical diesel notes and sweet, fruity berry flavors — along with a spicy overtone that’s accented by sour citrus and pine.

Just a few puffs is enough to get the job done. That 81.3% THC percentage is not a typo, folks.

Like the last three flower strains, you can also find these carts at Local Roots in Laingsburg.

Presto! — THC Gummies (Edible)

Price: \$12
THC: 100 mg

Lake Orion-based Glorious Cannabis Co. is expanding into Greater Lansing this month with a new lineup of THC-infused



gummies that are set to hit the shelves any day at several retailers, including Bazonzoes, Jars, Homegrown Cannabis Co. and Gage Cannabis Co. in Lansing.

Presto! — its subsidiary brand — has been known primarily for its vaporizer cartridges since they hit the Michigan market in 2018. This week marks its grand entrance into the edible market

Pure Options — Kush Mints & Watermelon Zkittles (Clone)

Why only give someone a bag of weed when you can give them the whole plant?

Lansing-based Pure Options is breaking new ground this week as the first pot shop in Michigan to sell plants for those who want to grow their own marijuana at home. Beginning at 9 a.m. on Friday (Nov. 26) the first 200 customers who buy \$50 in select Pure Options products will receive a coupon for a free clone plant of the highly coveted Kush Mints or Watermelon Zkittles strains.

And beginning on Monday (Nov. 29), sales will open to the public at pureclones.com.

“We are not threatened by people growing their own cannabis plants. In fact, we welcome this new avenue for our customers,” Pure Options founder Sam Usman Jr. said in a press release.

These sound like great gifts for the DIY crowd and the real cannabis enthusiasts in the family. It’s also the gift that keeps giving — just wait until those clones are ready for harvest next year.



with a wide array of flavors like blue raspberry, blood orange, fruit punch, strawberry lemonade, watermelon and root beer. I managed to get my hands on some free samples late last week.

Even though a half-bag left me comfortably stoned for the better part of Sunday afternoon, it’s the flavor that stood out with these THC-infused treats. Many edibles have a bitter aftertaste or obvious marijuana undertones, but these soft, sugar-coated triangles were delectably tangy and fruity sweet. My favorite was the “punch drunk potion,” which tasted just like Hawaiian Punch.

Kyle Kaminski is City Pulse’s managing editor and cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Every week, Kaminski samples some of the best cannabis products available in Greater Lansing, gets real high and writes about them.

Favorite Things

Jon Herrmann and his Neumann U-87 microphone

Jon Herrmann is an audio engineer who has recorded projects across all genres. He also performs across town with the popular cover band Starfarm, which recently won several awards in City Pulse/Fox News 47 Top of the Town contest.

My favorite thing is a Neumann U-87 microphone. I suppose you would expect a bassist to have their favorite object be something musical. That’s something else that I do besides play bass, I record and work in studios. The Neumann is a universally applicable item across different genres, it’s my Holy Grail of microphones.

This microphone is great with vocals and acoustic guitars; it’s great with pianos and lots of different stringed instruments. That’s mostly what I’ve used it for, vocals and stringed instruments.

I got my hands on the microphone back in 2010. I used to run a recording studio in Dimondale, and the first project I used this microphone on was for a Michigan State University jazz trumpet player named Anthony Stanco; we recorded a jazz album of his. I used the Neumann as a drum-room microphone in this instance, as we didn’t have vocals for that project.

As a bass player, I’ve played a lot of different genres. But I’ve had the fortune of being on the other side of the glass, and I’ve used this microphone with bands ranging from Irish folk to classical and I’ve used with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra and the MSU Professors of Jazz. It’s gotten a lot of well-rounded use.

The engineers that design these



epic microphones have a certain sound that they’re going for in their mind. They’re able to, with circuitry and electronics, sort of enhance the source of whatever sound you want to record. Without sounding too nerdy, every source of audio has certain frequency responses. To make that audio sound its best, you must depend on whatever tool you’re using to capture the source of it, whether it’s a voice or an instrument.

My Neumann U-87 has allowed me to be more well-rounded as a musician. As just a performer, you can be somewhat limited to specific ways of making income. But if you want to do music for a living, I’ve found that being diverse is the key. Having tools that help you do that is essential.

Interview edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley. If you have a suggestion for Favorite Things, please email Skyler@Lansingcitypulse.com



Marijuana and familial emotions explored in 'Smoke'

By **BILL CASTANIER**

While growing up, most middle schoolers are told by their parents to wear their boots and not to forget their gloves. Williamston-based author Darcy Woods recalls her father adding one more piece of advice: "Don't tell the dog shit."

Once you see the creative dust jacket of Woods' new young adult novel, "Smoke," you'll know she's talking about McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog who visited elementary and middle school across the nation beginning in the '80s as part of the national effort to deter crime and keep kids off drugs.

The title, "Smoke," is spelled out with a ground-up marijuana leaf and a burning hand-rolled joint. Off to right, a tagline reads: "The stakes have never been higher."

Woods new book follows 16-year-old Honor Augustine, who begins growing and selling weed to keep her family business from going under water. My no means is Augustine a stoner, rather; she is a successful high school student who goes about her daily life knowing

her father grows and smokes weed to self-medicate against the effects of PTSD.

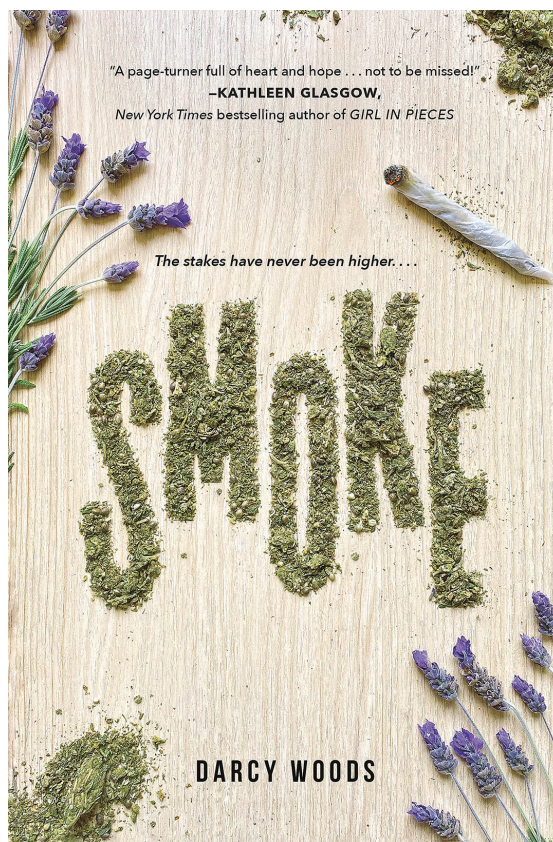
When faced with breaking the law or saving her family, Honor begins planting and cultivating in an era when growing and possession were still against the law, which makes for some stressful, dangerous times and offers many great thrills.

After receiving acclaim for her first young adult novel, Woods said she wanted to up her writing and try something a little trickier to handle.

"I was a big fan of the television series 'Weeds.' Everyone tells you, 'Write what you know,'" Woods said.

Woods was diagnosed with PTSD and certainly knows a thing or two about marijuana and family dynamics.

"I'm a veteran; my dad's a veteran and he's been smoking and growing weed for 50 years," Woods said. "I decided to tie the two together. I never knew my dad any differently. While writing, I was so mindful of not sensationalizing mar-



ijuana use."

While researching the book, Woods spoke with a DEA agent and prosecutor, along with an industry "higher-up" at mega weed retailer Skymint to help get the details right. She also took a deep dive into how marijuana is grown its various strains and their impact.

"I wanted to give the readers all the information

and describe the totality of the circumstances, but I didn't want to go down the rabbit hole and bog down the book with too much detail," she said. "The book focuses more on a father-daughter relationship, and the steps a good girl will take to keep her family together when their whole existence is at risk. It really puts a different spin on what it means to be a teen growing up."

Subconsciously, telling her story must have been bouncing around in Woods' head for some time. "I actually wrote a handwritten paper at 16 about the morality of marijuana, and made a

case for legalizing it," she said.

"In the book, I'm not encouraging teens to grow marijuana. Growing is a way to represent multi-generational trauma. The book is technically shelved as young adult, but adults can easily read it," said Woods, who uses THC gummies to overcome insomnia due to her PTSD.

Woods said she grappled with the topic and the morality of marijuana consumption while writing the book. "It is still seen as illicit. For me, writing the book was equivalent to global streaking and putting it all out there," she said.

While writing the book, Woods said she would check in with her dad about the content. "The book is so personal. I wanted to get it right," she said.

Although not ready to totally abandon writing for young adult readers, Woods said she has an idea that would pivot her toward historical fiction. Woods is not quite ready to reveal the plotline, but it would spin off from some of the concepts in "Smoke."

It will be easy for Woods to keep the plot line secret. After all, she went through grade school, middle school and high school keeping a secret that would've put her father in prison.

For certain, in recent years books for young adults have gotten more edgier, with covers that would make readers of "Lolita" blush. Very few, if any, of those young adult novels have a burning joint on the cover — Ole' McGruff would not approve. Most of the young adult readers who will snag the book off the shelf will likely think it's no big deal. One way or another, today's teens and preteens see beyond the jacket.

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Holiday Gift Guide

On and off the Avenue

A selective
gift guide
that keeps it
local

By ERIN HAGEN

Holiday gift giving can be overwhelming and tedious. But hopefully with some guidance and creative parameters it can be fun and less laborious. There are some real gems in the Lansing area that I have found that are off the beaten path. And what better way to spend your money for the people you care about than to put it back into our wonderful community. Sure, it can be easy to sit in your comfy clothes and shop online, and I am sucked into this too, but when you find these lovely retailers online and in brick-and-mortar stores, you'll be pleasantly surprised at what is out there.

For this year's holiday gift guide, I went on a deep dive to find talented artisans from the Lansing area that sell online.

1 **Patten Place**, founded in East Lansing, was brought to life out of years of dressing around bad weather. Sara Gillespie and Leigh Ann Warner said, "Enough is enough." These East Lansing ladies just knew there was a better way to dress up in bad weather. The idea for a reimagined galosh came on a dreary November morning with a forecast changing from rain to sleet. After three years, the Patten Place Shoe Cover was brought to the market. Their stylish, lightweight bootie can be worn over high heels to protect them from the elements. An online boutique, Patten Place sells the Patten Shoe Cover along with a collection of luxe weather accessories. You are sure to find a gift for someone.

Erin Hagen is a personal shopper and stylist. A graduate of Michigan State University, she lives in East Lansing with her husband and three children.



2 Maureen Abood is a local food blogger, writer and cook from the Lansing area. Maureen's blog is called Rose Water & Orange Blossoms. Once there you can find delicious free Lebanese recipes and access to her cookbook and her online shop. At maureenaboodmarket.com you will find countless gift ideas for the food lover in your life. My personal favorite is The Smooth Hummus Kit. For \$48 the kit includes tahini, sumac, chickpeas and olive oil and instructions. All wrapped up in a sweet box with beautiful labels and makes a wonderful presentation. There are so many other unique gifts on her site, you will want to spend some time checking it out.

3 For the art lovers in your life, let me introduce you to Emily Frushour of Dewitt, who is a mid-Michigan artist specializing in vibrant geographic-based watercolors. She founded **37prime** after being inspired by her work as a graphic designer and children's art teacher. Her work embodies the spirit of beloved landmarks, homes and lakes. Custom orders are always welcome. You can view her work in retail stores and pop-up shops throughout Michigan and you can find her entire collection on Etsy, if you like to shop from the comfort of your home.

4 Through the pandemic, successful businesses pivoted. Those that had a great pivot are coming out of the pandemic at full strength. A great example of this is **Red Cedar Spirits** in East Lansing. New to 2020, bars and Red Cedar Spirits were allowed to offer "To Go" cocktails for customers who wanted craft cocktails in the comfort of their homes. They have a fun and vast collection of



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made to order fresh concoctions. My personal favorites are the Lavender Bees Knees and the Gold Rush, a lovely mix of bourbon, lemon and honey. They offer gift boxes and fun glassware, like the glencairn glasses, with their attractive bottled craft cocktails.

A good place to go that has a large selection of local artists is the **Lansing Art Gallery**. Perusing through this fun and eclectic collection downtown is a great way to entertain your left brain and do some Christmas shopping. I love their sock creatures gifts. It's a box filled with pieces and parts for someone to create their own original creation. For \$12 the kit includes a patterned sock, yarn, glue, eyes, felt, pom poms and instructions with a link to a video. They are fun for the whole family, and for \$12 you can get one for everyone for family night.

If you have any science geeks in your life — I say that with affection because I am one — you are sure to find something for them at **Quark!**, on Grand River Avenue in East Lansing. Renee Leone has curated a collection of science-related items of every sort. She has jewelry, tote bags, tees, bone china from England and much much more. The day I was there, I was split between an algebraic placemat to help my son learn algebra and a pin that an artist created from human brain scans of different mental states. The pins are brightly colored and a subtle statement for a lapel to support mental health.

Sometimes there are people in your life who appear to have everything and can be very difficult to shop for, but who doesn't need chocolates and treats? Everyone loves a beautiful box of Belgian chocolate, if you love chocolate. Then you have to check out **Park Lake Creamery** in Bath. During the summer, it is a bustling coffee and ice cream parlor with chocolates. In the winter, it is a full-service online

operation, but they still are open for all of your take-out needs! It specializes in beautiful handmade chocolates made from the finest ingredients. Its very special Cherry Cordial is made from Luxardo Italian cherries and fine Belgian chocolate. For \$40 the Cherry Cordials are elegantly packaged in a set of nine, for the chocolate connoisseur in your life.

If you want to get lost in the holiday spirit and wander around and shop, be sure to hit Old Town and specifically **Bradly's Home and Garden**. Bradley has a wide array of gifts to choose from, from art to baby gifts and any kind of kitchen accessory to sofas. Not only will you have a wonderful shopping experience, but Bradley's friendly helpful staff does design consultations and personal shopping experiences. With a little heads-up, owner Bradley Rakowski can put together a gift or basket for you and all you have to do is pick it up. It's shopping made simple! You will definitely find something for someone, including you.

As a last-minute shopper, I always think I will have more time than I do. So when I find myself in those moments, one of my go to shops for a hostess or baby shower gift, I love to swing through **Central Pharmacy** in East Lansing. A great gift this time of year is a wellness basket filled with goodies to make it through cold and flu season. And this pharmacy gift store has everything you need for that. A cute basket with some vitamin C, Zinc, cough drops, vitamin D and hand sanitizer. This seems so incredibly practical and it is the perfect give because frankly no one wants to get sick. So it's a great gift!

Sometimes an experience gift is the way to go, so **Lansing Brewing Co.** has come up with a Date Night on Ice Package. This fun box comes with an LBC cooler filled with your favorite LBC canned beer, two koozies and a soft plush blanket for two for a perfect winter night. You could also include an LBC gift card to throw in and finish off a perfect night. LBC also has a unique gift for the whiskey lover in your life. The set includes two mugs, four cooling

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The red holiday ornaments on Washington Square make for a popular selfie spot at Silver Bells in the City.

Skyler Ashley/City Pulse



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stones, two coasters and a fifth of Hard Nose Amber Cream or Rye Whiskey.

11 Besides knowledgeable budtenders who can help you with products for your giftees, **Pure Options** in Frandor has a gift shop with a large selection of tees and hoodies and bags for those of you just looking for some fun stocking stuffers.

12 Some little hidden gems that are off the beaten path are shops on Etsy but based in Lansing. This is a forum where artisans can sell their works and get their name out in the public without a storefront. One of these darling shops is **Lauren Bertsch's** Etsy shop. Lauren started out making fun fabric hair ties and belts, but she has now expanded her business to include hats, bags, headbands, tops and handmade scarves. Another Etsy shop that is based in East Lansing is **All Dyed Up**, which offers an array of different types of tie dyed clothes. It mostly focuses on sweats, which teenagers love and this fall it has come out with Michigan State and University of Michigan gear that is hand dyed and made locally. Another fabulous Etsy shop right out of Okemos is **Jessie Blume Bags**. She mixes leather and fabrics for a one of kind bag. For the fall she came out with a fun selection of Michigan State clutches. Mostly her bags are crossbodies with leather on top and fun creative patterns and fabrics on the bottom. She also has a collection of mini bags that retail for \$25. You can find all these wonderful artists by their names on Instagram and Etsy.

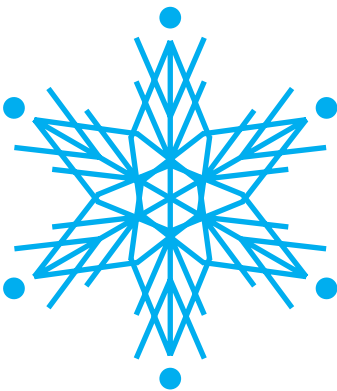
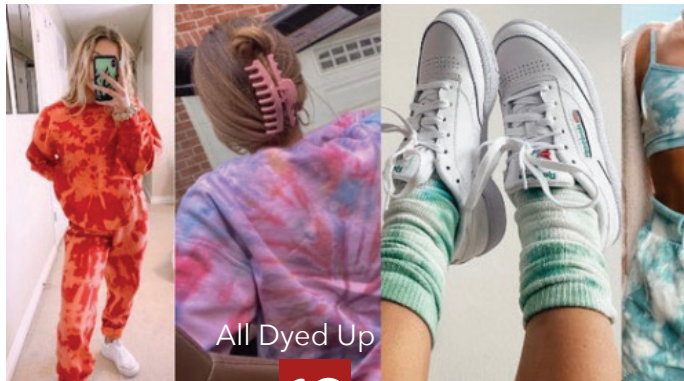
13 A flower subscription is the gift that keeps on giving. For any occasion you

can contact **Sparrow Bloom**, right here in Lansing and have it deliver flowers weekly or biweekly from July through September. Not only do they do subscriptions, they offer custom orders, event florals, wedding and holiday planters and wreaths. Every Friday Kait and Becca offer “grab and go” bouquets for the weekend with whatever they have available. This fun little business is new to our community, starting last year.

14 Sometimes the best thing is giving people something they would never buy themselves. That is my favorite gift to give — it’s like you’re spoiling them and getting something that would normally be so decadent. What better way to do this than with a beautiful cheesecake from **Mr. Leslie's Cheesecakes**. You can sample any of Marcus Leslie's exquisite creations at several places, including Capital City Market and Strange Matter Coffee. Scrolling on his webpage will make your mouth water. You will be the sparkle in everyone's eye where you bring one of his beautiful creations. My top two are the peach cobbler and banana pudding cheesecake. He even offers a gluten-free option.

Sadly, Lansing has lost all our toy stores in town, but if you are in Mason or willing to drive there, you will find **Kean's**. My kids love this trip. Inside this block-long store, you'll find toys and an old-fashioned candy counter. Instantly when you walk in you can feel the history and it is so nostalgic. Beyond the candy they have clothing fabric, gourmet foods and gifts of all sorts. Come for a gift and leave having an experience. Kean's has had its roots in Mason since 1928 when it opened as a five-and-dime. To this day it is still run by the Kean family and maintains its wonderful charm.

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16 For the man in your life, an easy one-stop shop for everything a man could need for any occasion is **Kositchek's**. Your guy can head in for a complete leveling up, with a haircut and a personalized shopping experience like no other. The staff, including owner David Kositchek, can help you with a hand-made suit or custom tailoring for a suit on a rack. There are also smaller gift options for fun stocking stuffers like a wide selection of socks, pocket squares and even a little jewelry store.

17 Last-minute shopping is what many people love to do, my husband included. For such people, there are a few great places to check out in downtown Lansing. One is **A Novel Concept** on Washington Square. This darling little book store specializes in new and gently used rare and unusual books. It's an adventure for the voracious reader in your life. Founded by two women who love to read, they have created a welcome space for people to come by and shred their passion for books. Then

18 just directly east on Michigan is **Young Brothers & Daley**, a large brick building that specializes in fireplaces and tile but has a gift shop put together by a creative soul. It features a large variety of Michigan State University pieces, tons of fun outdoor accessories for a BBQ and Christmas decorations that are unique and whimsical.

When I was asked to write this article, I took it as an opportunity to revisit this beautiful community I live in. I had so much fun stumbling into toy stores, book stores and gift shops that I had never even heard of. It was a journey in my

own city. I recommend we all get out there and do the same, especially now and through the holidays. To keep these gems alive and vibrant, we need to patronize them so that that money goes back into our community. That's how we can all take care of each other.

Happy holidays!



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Holiday Gift Guide



Support your local Spartan: Gift ideas from MSU grads

For the second year, the Broad College and Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation at Michigan State University have created a gift guide, this time featuring 17 Spartan-owned Michigan businesses to support this holiday season. Among them are these businesses in Greater Lansing. To view the entire statewide gift guide, see <https://broad.msu.edu/news/17-spartan-owned-michigan-businesses-to-support-this-holiday-season>.



Eudaimonia Juice Co.

Are you a Lansing resident looking for a gift that's tasty and healthy? Look no further than Eudaimonia Juice Co. Founded by marketing research master's student Tarek Chawich, Eudaimonia Juice Co. aims to provide fresh, organic cold-pressed juices for you to be happy, healthy and prosperous.

The juice company's core values revolve around sustainability, innovation, high-quality ingredients and serving the Lansing community. They rely on local, raw and organic produce, and for those in the area, they deliver the juice straight to your door.

Eudaimonia — which is a term coined by Aristotle meaning human flourishing — which launched this year, has seen rapid growth through online subscriptions and farmer's markets. In December, Chawich will launch a new venture, Château Coffee Co., to help further grow Eudaimonia Juice Co. label or collab products.



TWIN Eyewear

The glasses we wear tell the world who we are. Finding the right pair means expressing your identity by means of an impeccable iconic accessory.

When shopping for someone obsessed with stylish lenses, cast your view on TWIN Eyewear,

an online retailer of eyeglasses and sunglasses. Founded by M.S. in business analytics candidate, Raghunath Reddy Koilakonda, TWIN Eyewear is fun, fashion and personal. The company also has a clear focus on giving back: with every pair you purchase, TWIN will help give sight to a person in need. One for one.

TWIN is on a mission to prove that glasses can be more than just a medical device. They can be an extension of your personality, your mood and interests. They are on a journey to become the go-to personalized eyewear brand by creating glasses that people are excited about wearing.

The approach encompasses a high-quality production process, exploration of the most innovative trends and solid and distinctive values embedded in every new pair of glasses.



Human Base Apparel

Looking for the perfect performance undergarment? Human Base Apparel has got you covered. This women-owned company is on a mission to create apparel that acts to simulate natural body balance when under the fluctuating environments and stressors of hard work for men and women.

When Lauren Aitch (B.A. advertising '09, M.A. public relations '10), managing partner of Human Base Apparel, designed a custom suit for MSU women's basketball head coach Suzy Merchant, the genius of Human Base Apparel was conceived. As a member of MSU's team from 2005 to 2010, Aitch was inspired to help her coach address a lifelong problem of sweating through her garments while on the sidelines.

Today, Human Base Apparel's base layers feature a patented design that provides maximum sweat, odor and stain protection for people in athletics, entertainment, law enforcement, business and healthcare settings. Since its inception in 2011, Human Base Apparel has been at the forefront of developing technologically driven wearable products designed to improve performance and impact the company's bottom line.

Cravings Popcorn

For many, popcorn reminds us of good times with friends and family. That's the motto of Lansing-based Cravings Popcorn.

Led by founder Chad Jordan (B.A. social science '03), Cravings Popcorn is a small batch craft gourmet popcorn company. Cravings prides itself on creating top-notch gluten-free and nut-free



popcorn flavors.

Get your hands on one of the gift tin varieties or sink your teeth into some delectable gourmet creations — everything from Buffalo Cheddar Cheese and Hot Kansas City White Cheddar to Pumpkin Spiced Cheesecake Drizzle to Egg Nog Butter Rum Chocolate Drizzle.

At Cravings, they create the popcorn so you can make people happy.



Jordan



VEG-N

If you're gifting someone with a plant-based diet, it might also be time to explore the menu at VEG-N, the first and only plant-based drive-thru establishment in the state of Michigan.

VEG-N is an American classics eatery that provides customers with a unique harmony of flavor, convenience and hospitality. They take pride in consistently serving up smiles and a delicious vegan menu with items like chick-n sandwiches and chili cheese fries to everyone from lifelong vegans to open-minded meat-eaters alike.

Jonathan Ristola (B.S. mechanical engineering '18, M.J. intellectual property law '20) and Christabelle Dozeman (B.A. communication '17) know first-hand that a plant-based lifestyle has countless lasting benefits. In an effort to share this experience with the rest of the



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Spartan gifts

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world, and take direct action on climate change, they started VEG-N as a food truck in 2019 and relaunched as a drive-thru venture in Lansing last February.

Don't miss their special holiday gift options like gift cards, vegan cookie boxes, and VEG-N apparel.



CAPNOS

Struggling to quit vaping or smoking? Know someone who is? CAPNOS is on a mission to prevent lung diseases and save lives.

Founder Brendan Wang, a supply chain management senior, and co-founder Jake Roach, finance senior, both struggled with vaping. They are helping other people who aim to quit vaping or smoking succeed by addressing the behavioral addiction. They created the patent pending CAPNOS Zero, a flavored, pressurized air inhaler. With each hit, a valve pops open to create a deep-hit sensation that feels like vaping, but with no smoke, nicotine, nor charge; it's just flavored air!

After two years of product development, CAPNOS launched this September, selling out 400 CAPNOS Zeros to customers globally within 10 days. Many customers report the Zero being "extremely effective" toward satisfying oral fixations, reducing vape usage and for stress relief.

Support CAPNOS in their next launch this November and join them on their journey to put a cap... on vaping.

The Cut cookbook



Share some culinary joy with The Cut cookbook, created and tested by environmental economics and management junior Madison Marsh. This book is meant to be simplistic and straightforward to encourage people to be more adventurous in the kitchen.

Marsh believes cooking is a social practice that brings people together. Whether you want comfort food, tasty vegan and vegetarian recipes, healthy ideas, or easy-to-make recipes, her cookbook has

it all. Each recipe in the cookbook has a section for notes, so foodies can make these recipes their own and change what they want.

Don't be afraid to try new things, experiment with the recipes and share the joy of cooking with others. Ultimately, Marsh hopes her book will help you find a passion for cooking!

leahmonet

Consider spreading cheer and purpose this year. leahmonet is a cause-based business designed to positively empower and inspire people through the product lines and their support of the leahmonet Philanthropist Foundation.



When you purchase something Ellis from the collections under the brand, you'll directly support philanthropic initiatives that provide those in need with opportunities to aspire, persevere and find justice. The common thread through the lines created by social science senior Leah Monet Ellis is the unmet need for understanding, support and resources related to mental wellness from birth through adulthood.

Leahmonet's brand culture is one of love, compassion and empowerment. The products — including customized notebooks for students with ADHD and OCD, handmade jewelry and clothing (coming soon) to destigmatize mental health issues — give people the power to express their voices in the chorus of support for individuals and families facing adversity.



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MSU Press

Give the unique gift of Michigan-based stories or books published and distributed by MSU Press this year! A wide variety of books are available — from beautiful coffee-table books filled with vibrant art to stories that explore the depths of the Great Lakes, you're sure to find something for the Spartan or Michigan history enthusiast in your life. Visit our online gift store to view some of our most popular titles, including "Twelve Twenty-five," the true story of the locomotive featured in the beloved holiday classic The Polar Express.



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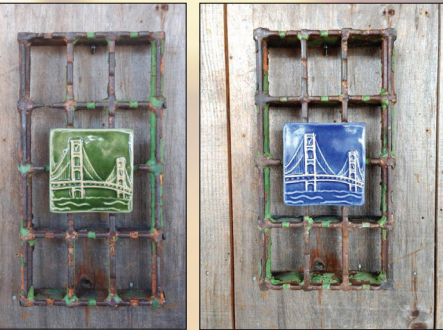


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Holiday Gift Guide



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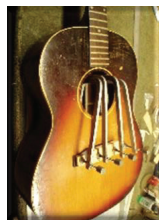
It's always important to keep track of your health! Take your loved ones to Mid-Michigan Ear Nose and Throat to get proper and comfortable treatment.

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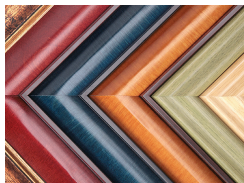
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Holiday Events Guide

With Silver Bells in the City behind us, the holiday festivities in Greater Lansing are officially underway. Here are several fun ways coming up in the next few weeks to get into the spirit of the season:

Nov. 24 to Dec. 26 Wonderland of Lights

Potter Park Zoo
1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing
Stroll through the Potter Park Zoo in the winter air with a lovely display of glowing lights.



Every Sunday through December

REO Town Jolly Holiday Market
REO Town Marketplace
1027 S. Washington Ave., Lansing
The shops at REO Town Marketplace are collaborating for a festive flea market that will surely offer great gifts for your friends and family.

November 28

Abrams Planetarium Holiday Show
Abrams Planetarium
755 Science Road, East Lansing
8 p.m.
The Abrams Planetarium is putting on dazzling laser show featuring many classic holiday motifs. If you're looking for a holiday celebration that's truly out of this world, this is it.



December 1

Suits and the City Holiday Gala
La Fille Gallery
336 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Hors d'oeuvres provided by local eateries and beverages provided by Harmon Insurance Group.



December 4

East Lansing Winter Glow
Downtown East Lansing
2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
East Lansing's winter tradition continues in 2021 with horse-pulled carriage rides, ice-carving, visits with Santa Claus and all other sorts of yuletide activities that are fun for all ages.

Holiday Market Extravaganza
Meridian Mall
1982 W. Grand River Road, Okemos
10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
The Meridian Mall will be transformed into the North Pole's best shopping center as different vendors gather to put on a holiday marketplace selling a variety of artisan crafted gifts.

December 5

Hope for the Holidays at Lansing Brewing Co.
518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing
4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Lansing Brewing Co. is hosting a party where attendees will make their own custom holiday planter, with proceeds benefitting the American Cancer Society.



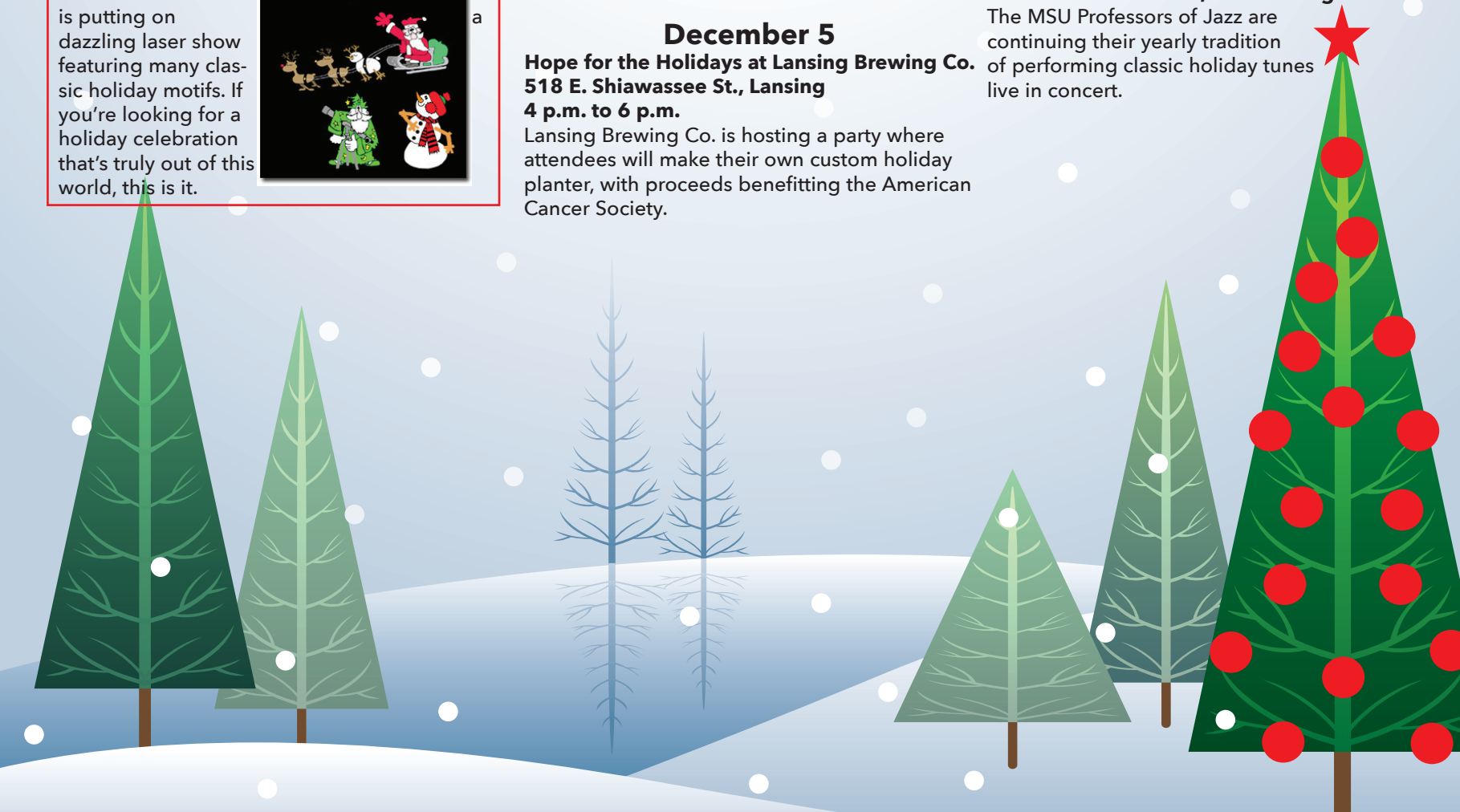
December 5

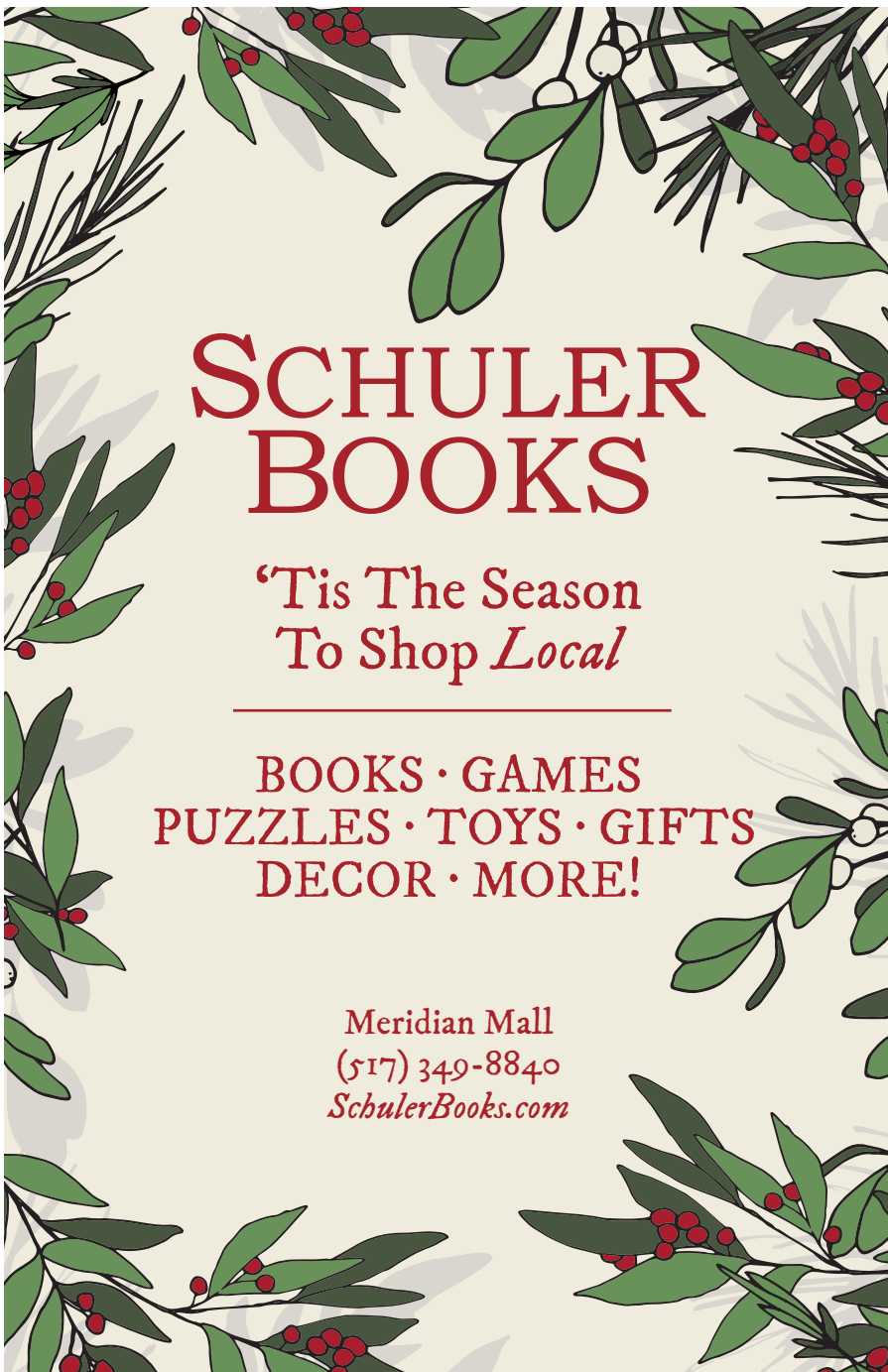
How-to Holiday Festival
Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
How-to Holiday is annual winter celebration that goes over the finer aspects of the holiday season. How do you wrap a gift perfectly? How do you pick out the right gift? If you're looking to master the stress that Christmastime can bring, this is the place.

December 11

Christmas Fair at the Lansing Mall
Lansing Mall
5330 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing
11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Looking to get your Christmas shopping done in one go? The Christmas Fair at the Lansing Mall will create a holiday bazaar that will have plenty of gifts to choose from.

"A Jazzy Little Christmas" at MSU
7:30 p.m.
Fairchild Theatre
542 Auditorium Road, East Lansing
The MSU Professors of Jazz are continuing their yearly tradition of performing classic holiday tunes live in concert.






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A friend recently inquired about the health of City Pulse. When I told him it's doing well, he said, "So how come you keep asking for donations?"

Good question.

The answer: because we want to do better.

And indeed we are, thanks to help from our readers.

This week's print edition — our holiday gift and events guide — is a great example. Two years ago, it was 36 pages. This year it's 44. (Last year we skipped the guide because of the pandemic.)

Those extra eight pages are possible mostly because of contributions. To be specific, we expanded the gift guide, hired a freelance to do it rather than strapping it on an already pressed staff and added space to carry the local portion of the second annual Broad College guide to gifts from MSU alumni-owned businesses. Thank you. Our printer thanks you too.

Every week, your contributions are helping us provide more content. Almost



weekly, for example, we are able to include freelance reporting by Todd Heywood, one of the area's most experienced reporters. Our weekly editorials are another example of content made possible by your donations. They are written for the most part by freelancers with in-depth knowledge of our community. This year, we added a monthly column by local writer and educator Dedria Humphries Barker. The list goes on.

We are delighted that the community has stepped up. While advertising pays most of the bills, donations make a real difference. In general, they have added, conservatively speaking (which I seldom speak), at least a 10% bigger paper — and easily more than 10% better, in my estimation.

With your help, those numbers will keep growing. So, we hope you will avail yourself of the envelope addressed to City Pulse that you should find in this week's

paper. A check in any amount will be appreciated.

With no animosity intended toward our main print competitor, City Pulse is clearly playing a bigger and bigger role in keeping the community informed of important local news, both in print and increasingly online. We are delighted to fill that niche. And grateful that our readers recognize the importance of keeping City Pulse vibrant and growing. As we approach Thanksgiving, we at City Pulse thank you.



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The Micarelli treatment

Lansing Symphony mind-melds with guest soloist

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

It didn't take long to get the feeling that something extraordinary was about to happen at the second Lansing Symphony concert. (The concert was Nov. 12, but this review is based on the previous night's final rehearsal, owing to the reviewer's age, health and COVID caution.) Early in the Sibelius violin concerto, soloist Lucia Micarelli whipsawed a slashing, double-stopped melody, producing two notes at once — a low-pitched tone that slid under the stage like a cobra and a higher pitched tone that coiled into the air like molten silver. The strings instantly responded with a visceral tremor, as if they were physically reacting to the Micarelli treatment. That tremor was the first sign that an intimate rapport between soloist and orchestra was being forged, an intimacy that continued through the whole concerto.

Review

A bit further into the first movement, Micarelli dug into a commanding yet tender solo passage, her instrument groaning with deep resonance in the low register and slashing upward into the highest realms as cleanly as a razor. This time, the energized orchestra responded with more than a tremor. Utterances and reverberations rumbled forth from the cellos and basses. Most often, the woodwinds were the first section to respond to Micarelli's solo passages, matching her timbres and fluidity so closely you could barely follow the handoffs.

The stage was set for Micarelli to take on the weight of the whole concerto in a long cadenza, unique in the repertoire, that goes well beyond the usual showing off to tackle the work's Big Statement, all by herself. She took on the job with such command and tenderness that you could hear a phantom orchestra playing inside her mercurial, authoritative solo lines. After that, horns added a golden glow to the next orchestral swell and the music got even better.

Micarelli is a charismatic performer and a TV star (HBO's "Treme") as well as an accomplished classical violinist. This is a good place to insert an eyewitness description of Micarelli's rock-star effect on the Lansing audience at Friday night's concert from a spy, local music lover Bob Wilks, who reports:

"At the end of the first movement, there was silence, but something electric in the air — a hesitation as though



Courtesy

Featured soloist Lucia Micarelli was captivating and electric at her performance with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra.

the audience was thinking, 'We don't want you to get the impression that we're a hick town that doesn't know we're not supposed to clap until the end of the piece, but damn, that was good.' Then somebody yelled out, 'Woo Hoo!' and the audience burst into applause. Lucia Micarelli smiled, and I think, under their masks, the maestro and the orchestra were smiling too."

My spy reported applause after the idyllic slow movement, too, and no wonder. Micarelli's flowing lines embodied both the light and the shadows that fall on the best day ever, when everything unfolds perfectly, from the pink in the sky at sunrise to the last guttering candle. Melodies just seemed to drop from her, straight and true, unforced and with no evident exertion. After a lifetime of study, preparation and practice, she has clearly reached the point where she can let herself be completely in the moment, and the orchestra was totally locked in to her spirit of spontaneity.

After the Big Statement and the Perfect Day, how do you wrap up a symphony/concerto of such epic proportions? Plenty of composers have faced this problem, and nearly all of them, even stern old Sibelius, have resorted to a tried-and-true formula: Get on the dance floor. At times, the huge scale of the finale suggested a ponderous polka of walruses in waistcoats, but what's wrong with that? As the third and final movement whirled to a frenzy, Micarelli found herself moving with the orchestra, nodding her head as if to say, "That's what I'm talking about."

The concert opened with American composer Jessie Montgomery's "Strum," in which principal cellist JinHyun Kim's heartfelt solo lines served as an anchor point for an intricate, multi-layered web of vibrations woven by the strings alone. The music's impact was way out of proportion to its brief length. Pivoting, merging and diverging with seamless grace, the LSO strings etched every layer with limpid clarity and wicked momentum, all the way to a powerful (and tricky) climactic acceleration. The other major work on Friday's slate, Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 4, began with a tilting and bending of vast slabs of sound, raw material that coalesced into muscular melodies supported by Parthenon-scaled columns of chords. If you reconcile yourself to Schumann's almost Dad-ly rhetorical scheme, it's impressive stuff. (He likes to say everything twice, quietly the first time, then loud, as if to say, "I mean it this time, buster!") At one point, the music built to a blustering climax that turned out to be a fake-out, dropping suddenly into a noble, exquisite lament, clothed in wisps of gossamer violin flutters. The second movement was almost like a physics experiment, an elemental exercise in force and counterforce. Maestro Timothy Muffitt wrung every possible thrill out of the fantastic build-up to the third movement, in which more vast columns up-thrusted before your ears, supporting a writhing entablature of melodies and countermelodies struggling like Hercules to sum it all up.



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Williamston's 'Wonderful Life' is ovation-worthy

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

In Williamston Theatre's "This Wonderful Life" John Lepard voices respectable Jimmy Stewart imitations. He also does his best to sound like Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore and Beulah Bondi.

Review

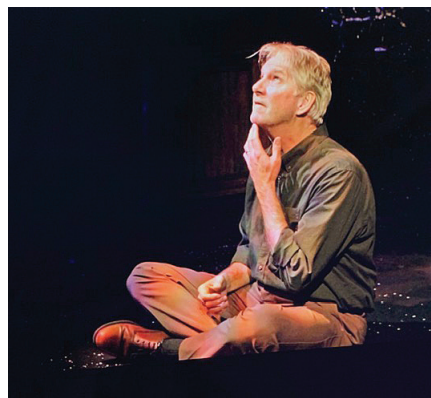
As the sole cast member in the Steve Murray play based on the beloved "It's a Wonderful Life" movie, Lepard mimics the speech and mannerisms of Stewart's character, George Bailey. He also shifts into memorable characters like Reed's Mary Hatch, Barrymore's Mr. Potter and Bondi's Mrs. Bailey.

Lepard skillfully portrays all the principals from the 1946 Christmas classic. He cleverly brings Uncle Billy, Bert, Ernie, Violet, Clarence — and many more — to life in a 75-minute retelling of the story.

With no costumes, minimal props, and a simple set, Lepard masterfully shifts quickly between roles. His facial expressions, gestures and physicality are enough to nail the images and personalities of very different characters at a breakneck speed.

The ease, clarity and consistency of Lepard's transformations are fascinating to watch. He has an impressive ability to duplicate the multiple voices of conversations from the Frank Capra movie. Occasional recorded character voices that sound like actual movie clips are all Lepard.

With humor and seemingly off-the-cuff remarks, Lepard keeps us engaged and interested in a well-known tale of



David Winkelstern/City Pulse

John Lepard puts on a spectacular one-man show in Williamston Theatre's "This Wonderful Life."

a good-hearted man on the brink of suicide who has a miraculous intervention. Quips directed to the nearly 50 in attendance on opening night broke the fourth wall and drew us into

the show even more.

Tony Caselli's direction keeps the images and action flowing — even prop rearranging doesn't interrupt the dialogue.

Special lighting by Dustin D. Miller and on-point sound effects by Quintessa Gallinat help keep "This Wonderful Life" lively. Throughout the production, our imaginations are stimulated by projections and realistic noises.

Bartley H. Bauer's set includes the obligatory loose stair post knob, a staircase and moveable desk that Lepard adapts to enact scene after scene from the familiar film. Despite the physical and voiced demands of the play, Lepard never gets winded.

After marveling at his stamina, when Lepard received a standing ovation after the emotional ending of "This Wonderful Life," it was I who was breathless.

Tom Heideman broadcasts for the love of music

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

When Tom Heideman records his radio show, he does not use overdubs. "Tunes With Tom" is broadcast live from his kitchen, usually with a cat roaming nearby. "I am in my pajamas most of the time," he said. His neighbor mentioned stations she listened to on the internet — many that played independent artists. "Like most musicians, I was looking for airplay. So, I looked into it and found countless stations."

Belter Radio was the first to play his folk music. "I've made four albums and two singles of original music," Heideman said. He's known for his many local live performances. "I've been playing in coffee shops for years," he said.

After connecting with Belter Radio, the soft-spoken Heideman became a frequent chat room visitor. "I casually mentioned that I thought it would be fun to do a show of my own. They told me, 'Sure, any time.'"

After COVID forced shutdowns in 2020, he was let go from Marshall

Music in Frandor — a job he had held for 20 years.

"I had plenty of free time, so we made it happen. I have no formal DJ experience but I'm having fun," Heideman said. "I set up the show ahead of time. I just introduce the tunes and ramble on a bit and off we go. My wife, Mary Koenigsknecht, helps with a fun remark from time to time."

They married in 1996 and became the Tom & Mary duo.

"We've played festivals, coffee shops, restaurants and produced and performed in countless fundraisers for the Riverwalk Theatre," Heideman said.

Heideman, 66, grew up in Kalamazoo and moved to Lansing in the early-'80s. From 1985 to 1987, he performed in Otsu through Lansing Community College's Japan Adventure program.

Beside featuring one or two of his songs on a "Tunes With Tom" broadcast, a Tom & Mary recording might also be included. "Mary and I sing tunes from the '60s and '70s, plus my original songs," Heideman said.

There is no set format for the two-hour program. Its themes are just as casual as his voice.



David Winkelstern/City Pulse

Tom Heideman broadcasts his online radio show, "Tunes With Tom," from his home.

"A usual show may include groups I grew up with: The Beatles, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash, Mo Town and Carole King, and indie artists in the folk-rock vein. I've been known to play some jazz and show tunes as well," Heideman said.

Belter-Radio only asks that no more than three songs by any one artist be played during the "Tunes With Tom" show. Alastair and Sylvia Peaston started the niche station in 2010 out-

side of Edinburgh, Scotland. It can be heard worldwide by anyone with internet access. Graham Barnes and Karen Jary are part of the all-volunteer staff that works from home.

Jary, also known by her nickname, Kazzar, was Heideman's main teacher to be a DJ. "I downloaded the system I have to use and Kazzar walked me through it. This took a long time because I'm a technical dope," he said.

Lots of independent songwriters submit material to Belter Radio. "It gets a couple thousand a week," Heideman said. The station has a humungous audio library of obscure and recognized recordings that he can select songs to play from.

Heideman is playing more original music from independent songwriters. Just as he was given a break, Heideman is spotlighting musicians not heard on mainstream radio. He regularly includes Lansing area players on "Tunes With Tom."

Wanda Degen, Root Doctor, Bart Moore, Betty Baxter, The Dangling Particples, Donny Brown, Jackalope, Mighty Medicine, Kay Rinker-O'Neil, Jacque Baldori and other local artists have been featured. "I'm always looking for new music," he said.

In the end, there is no pay for his hard efforts.

"We do it for the love of music," Heideman said.

Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"A Lot of Back and Forth"—here are a few examples.

by Matt Jones

Across

1 Regular doofus

6 Spits some bars

10 Noun's modifier (abbr.)

13 "The Crown" crown

14 ____ Parker (fashion brand)

15 1998 figure skating gold medalist Kulik

16 Deodorant brand

17 Contestant who may show up seemingly out of nowhere

19 Facts and figures about a flat paddleboat?

21 Noteworthy span

22 Mississauga's prov.

23 "The Orville" creator MacFarlane

24 Prognosticator

26 "The Matrix Resurrections" star

30 French Polynesia's capital

33 1950s French president Rene

34 Long stories about a "M*A*S*H" character's featured instrumental breaks?

38 Quickly

39 Sanctifies, in a way

40 Big name in violins and jet skis

43 "Strange" prefix

44 Physiques

46 "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" star Simu

47 Suffix after potent or caliph

50 Prescribe city-wide anxiety medication?

55 Dinosaur with large

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thumb spikes

Sidewinder, e.g.

Attendee

Davidson of "SNL"

Word before workings

'21 World Series champs

River in World War I headlines

Megan Three Stallion song about which

Weird AI tweeted: "Just listened to this. Not a very faithful cover version, if you ask me."

Down

Lacking new ideas

Job offerer

Early earwig?

Brendon of Panic! at the Disco

One who doesn't take defeat well

Identify with

Page-____ (calendar brand)

Falafel holders

Quest participant

Ski resort near Salt Lake City

Gossip

Toronto team, casually

Completed, in Hollywood parlance

90 degrees from norte

Genuflection joints

"Don't sweat it!"

"Mad TV" cast member Paul (the only openly gay cast member at the time)

Train station figs.

Admin's domain, for short

"Que ____?" (Spanish greeting)

Savage of "MythBusters"

His items were too big, hard, and hot

Jamie Foxx's Oscar film

Specialty of Emo Phillips or Milton Jones

16-bit hedgehog

Her backing group is The Banshees

Triceratops feature

It's written for commercials

Polygon's count

"Oh what the hell, I'll just crush him like ____" (Mr. Burns quote)

"Oh Myyy!" memoirist George

Apply

Latvia's capital

Awards distinction for Audrey Hepburn

Tank filler

Show of hands

Paquin of "The Piano"

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Answers on page 40

SUDOKU

Intermediate

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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.

Answers on page 40

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezsný

November 24-30, 2021

ARIES (March 21–April 19):

Aries author Chris Brogan says, "Don't settle. Don't finish crappy books. If you don't like the menu, leave the restaurant. If you're not on the right path, get off it." That's the best possible counsel for you to hear, in my astrological opinion. As an Aries, you're already inclined to live by that philosophy. But now and then, like now, you need a forceful nudge in that direction. So please, Aries, go in pursuit of what you want, not what you partially want. Associate with the very best, most invigorating influences, not the mediocre kind.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20):

Author Kurt Vonnegut wrote wistfully, "I still catch myself feeling sad about things that don't matter anymore." If similar things are running wild in your head, dear Taurus, the coming weeks will be a favorable time to banish them. You will have extra power to purge outdated emotions and reclaim at least some of the wild innocence that is your birthright. PS: There's nothing wrong with feeling sad. In fact, feeling sad can be healthy. But it's important to feel sad for the right reasons. Getting clear about that is your second assignment.

GEMINI (May 21–June 20):

"I'll walk forever with stories inside me that the people I love the most can never hear." So says the main character in Gemini author Michelle Hodkin's novel *The Evolution of Mara Dyer*. If that heart-rending statement has resonance with your own personal experience, I have good news: The coming weeks will be a favorable time to transform the situation. I believe you can figure out how to share key stories and feelings that have been hard to reveal before now. Be alert for unexpected opportunities and not-at-all-obvious breakthroughs.

CANCER (June 21–July 22):

A study of people in 24 countries concluded that during the pandemic, over 80 percent of the population have taken action to improve their health. Are you in that group? Whether or not you are, the coming weeks will be a favorable time to go further in establishing robust self-care. The astrological omens suggest you'll find it easier than usual to commit to good new habits. Rather than trying to do too much, I suggest you take no more than three steps. Even starting with just one might be wise. Top three: eating excellent food, having fun while exercising right, and getting all the deep sleep you need.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22):

Leo-born scholar Edith Hamilton loved to study ancient Greek civilization. She wrote, "To rejoice in life, to find the world beautiful and delightful to live in, was a mark of the Greek spirit which distinguished it from all that had gone before." One sign of Greece's devotion to joie de vivre was its love of play. "The Greeks were the first people in the world to play," Hamilton exulted, "and they played on a great scale. All over Greece, there were games"—for athletes, dancers, musicians, and other performers. Spirited competition was an essential element of their celebration of play, as was the pursuit of fun for its own sake. In resonance with your astrological omens, Leo, I propose you regard ancient Greece as your spiritual home for the next five weeks.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22):

Virgo singer-songwriter Florence Welch of the band Florence and the Machine told an interviewer why she wrote "Hunger." She said, "I looked for love in things that were not love." What were those things? According to her song, they included taking drugs and performing on stage. Earlier in Florence's life, as a teenager, "love was a kind of emptiness" she experienced through her eating disorder. What about you, Virgo? Have you looked for love in things that weren't love? Are you doing that right now? The coming weeks will be a good time to get straight with yourself about this issue. I suggest you ask for help from your higher self. Formulate a strong intention that in the future, you will look for love in things that can genuinely offer you love.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22):

There's a Grateful Dead song, with lyrics written by John Perry Barlow, that says, "You ain't gonna learn what you

don't want to know." I propose you make that your featured advice for the next two weeks. I hope you will be inspired by it to figure out what truths you might be trying hard not to know. In so doing, you will make yourself available to learn those truths. As a result, you'll be led on a healing journey you didn't know you needed to take. The process might sound uncomfortable, but I suspect it will ultimately be pleasurable.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21):

Scorpio author and philosopher Albert Camus was a good thinker. At age 44, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature—the second-youngest recipient ever. And yet he made this curious statement: "Thoughts are never honest. Emotions are." He regarded thoughts as "refined and muddy"—the result of people continually tinkering with their inner dialog so as to come up with partially true statements designed to serve their self-image rather than reflect authentic ideas. Emotions, on the other hand, emerge spontaneously and are hard to hide, according to Camus. They come straight from the depths. In accordance with astrological potentials, Scorpio, I urge you to keep these meditations at the forefront of your awareness in the coming weeks. See if you can be more skeptical about your thoughts and more trusting in your emotions.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21):

Poet Renée Ashley describes what she's attracted to: "I'm drawn to what flutters nebulously at the edges, at the corner of my eye—just outside my certain sight. I want to share in what I am routinely denied or only suspect exists. I long for a glimpse of what is beginning to occur." Although I don't think that's a suitable perspective for you to cultivate all the time, Sagittarius, I suspect it might be appealing and useful for you in the coming weeks. Fresh possibilities will be coalescing. New storylines will be incubating. Be alert for the oncoming delights of the unknown.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19):

What could you do to diminish your suffering? Your next assignment is to take two specific steps to begin that process. You're in a phase of your astrological cycle when you're more likely than usual to see what's necessary to salve your wounds and fix what's broken. Take maximum advantage of this opportunity! I proclaim this next chapter of your life to be titled "In Quest of the Maximum Cure." Have fun with this project, dear Capricorn. Treat it as a mandate to be imaginative and explore interesting possibilities.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18):

"It is a fault to wish to be understood before we have made ourselves clear to ourselves," wrote my favorite Aquarian philosopher, Simone Weil. I agree. It's advice I regularly use myself. If you want to be seen and appreciated for who you really are, you should make it your priority to see and appreciate yourself for who you really are. The coming weeks will be a favorable time to make progress in this noble project. Start this way: Write a list of the five qualities about yourself that you love best.

PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20):

Nigerian author Ben Okri, born under the sign of Pisces, praises our heroic instinct to rise above the forces of chaos. He writes, "The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love, and to be greater than our suffering." You've been doing a lot of that excellent work throughout 2021, dear Pisces. And I expect that you'll be climaxing this chapter of your life story sometime soon. Thanks for being such a resourceful and resilient champion. You have bravely faced but also risen above the sometimes-messy challenges of plain old everyday life. You have inspired many of us to stay devoted to our heart's desires.

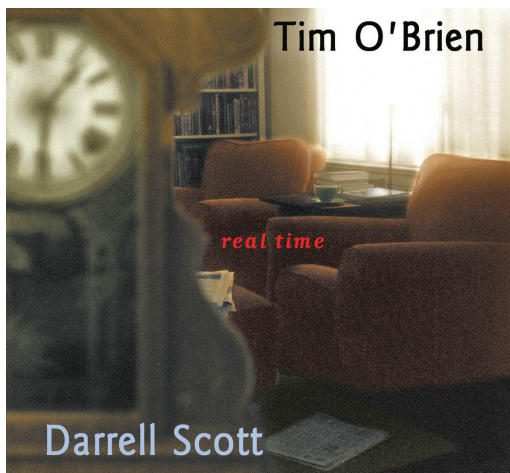
Go to RealAstrology.com to check out Rob Brezsný's EXPANDED WEEKLY AUDIO HOROSCOPES and DAILY TEXT MESSAGE HOROSCOPES. The audio horoscopes are also available by phone at 1-877-873-4888 or 1-900-950-7700.

TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

LIFE CHANGING ALBUMS: JEN SYGIT TALKS "REAL TIME" BY
TIM O'BRIEN & DARRELL SCOTT



Jen Sygit discovered Tim O'Brien & Darrell Scott's "Real Time" the year it was released, 2005. (Courtesy photos)

Lansing folk fixture tells how a 'field recording'-style LP inspired her music

Over the course of four albums, and countless shows, Jen Sygit has become a beloved fixture in the Michigan folk scene.

With a distinct Americana sound that's rooted in tradition, but funneled through her own contemporary style, the Lansing-based troubadour's songs always paint a vivid sonic picture. Her latest release, 2018's "It's About Time," won Best Americana Song at the Independent Music Awards that year in New York City. Beyond that, Sygit also performs with the all-female string band Stella!, which is releasing its second album in February.

Here, Sygit talks up Tim O'Brien & Darrell Scott's "Real Time" LP. She discovered the 2005 album when it was first issued, back when she was 26-years old. Here's what she had to say.

How would you describe "Real Time" to someone who has never heard it before?

Jen Sygit: It's two lesser-known heavy hitters of the folk-Americana-bluegrass world who made a stripped-down live album that's packed with soulful harmony, hot licks and interesting, complex arrangements. I've been lucky enough to meet both Darrell and Tim at various festivals over the years. Darrell has a couple of my records.

What initially lead you to "Real

Time"?

I discovered this album during my stint as an employee at Elderly Instruments. Back in the day, staff was allowed to "check out" used and promotional CDs from the books and records department. This was a pretty amazing resource for a budding songwriter like myself to have access to — a perk which I, of course, exploited to the best of my ability. I probably borrowed the promotional copy of "Real Time" every night for a month before eventually purchasing my own copy. The audiophile in me reveled at having instant, and sometimes even advanced, access to the latest folk roots and niche genre releases: Bluegrass, Celtic, Cajun, old time, Delta blues, Western swing, and all that. Part of why I love "Real Time" is that it successfully draws inspiration from a diverse range of regional influences.

So, is it safe to say the album had an immediate impact on you?

Yes, this album had a large and fairly immediate impact on me. I was already aware of Darrell Scott and Tim O'Brien as solo artists. Both had performed occasional free "in-store" concerts from the showroom of Elderly and both blew me away with their writing, singing and musicianship. Needless to say, I was stoked to hear a release featuring the two luminaries together.

What aspect of the album touches you the most? The Lyrics? Instrumentation?

There isn't an aspect of this album I find lacking. Both Scott and O'Brien are quadruple threats in the music biz. They perform, sing, write and record with the best in the industry. O'Brien has two Grammys under his belt. Scott won Americana Music Association's "Song of the Year" in 2007, and recently was a member of Robert Plant's Band of Joy. Just a sampling of the artists who have covered Scott's and O'Brien's tunes over the years include: Faith Hill, Garth Brooks, Brad Paisley, Keb Mo, Kathy Mattea, Patty Loveless, Guy Clark, Alan Jackson, and The Dixie Chicks. The Dixie Chicks actually cover two songs from "Real Time" on their 2002 release "Home."

Aside from the songs, what do you think about the production of "Real Time"?

While the songwriting on the record is certainly strong, perhaps the most impressive feature of the recording is the fact that the aptly named "Real Time" was recorded "field recording" style. It was recorded live in Darrell Scott's living room. Stripped down arrangements. No overdubs. No pitch correction. No other musicians. Just two amazing artists making music in a room and the mastery they demon-

strate across a wide array of instruments is certainly impressive. If you listen closely, you can actually hear them set down and pick up different instruments on the lighthearted closing track "Second Mouse."

Hearing the click of the instruments being picked up and set down is about as close to a mistake as the album offers. Despite being a raw recording, there is no imperfection to be found here — even to a discerning ear. Their harmonies are tight, pitch-perfect and seamlessly weave in and out of each other in a complex and interesting way.

In what way has this album directly affected your life, or musical style?

I definitely took away a love of the raw, live recording from listening to this album. It requires a certain amount of skill to be able to put several humans in a room and record a tune live without fixes. I feel very lucky to work with musicians of the caliber needed to achieve this. My third album "So Long Pollyanna" was recorded live "field recording style" in two different living rooms. We used pillows and tipped over furniture for sound baffling. A couple layers were added via overdubs, but the main tracks were largely untouched. We recorded that album in three days. I was proud of that.

OUT_{on the}TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

Events must be entered through the calendar at lansingcitypulse.com. Deadline is 5 p.m. Wednesdays for the following week's issue. Charges may apply for paid events to appear in print. If you need assistance, please call Suzi at (517) 999-6704.

Small Business Saturday in Lansing

Saturday, Nov. 27

Several locations across town

Visit Facebook.com/DowntownLansing for a list of participating businesses

A coalition of Greater Lansing stores and restaurants are uniting to participate in Small Business Saturday, a larger national celebration designed to pump support into your favorite locally owned restaurants and retailers.

There are loads of special deals to be had for customers that stop into shop on Saturday — including special dine-in options at restaurants, along with gift certificates and other limited time offer discounts available at stores. Downtown Lansing Inc. is promoting the event on social media using the hashtag #ShopSmall, and you can join in by using the hashtag on your Facebook, Instagram or Twitter posts.

For a full list of participating businesses and restaurants, visit Facebook.com/DowntownLansing.



LIVE + LOCAL

Green Door

2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

Double Shot

Wednesday, Nov. 24

Fat Boy & Jive Turkey

Friday, Nov. 26 8:30pm

Miranda & the M-80s

Saturday, Nov. 27 8:30pm

of the Web, 809 Center St., #7, Lansing. weaversoftheweb.org

Michigan Made | Holiday Art

Exhibition - through Dec. 23. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center, 119 N. Washington Sq., Lansing. lansingartgallery.org.

Thursday, November 25

Community Thanksgiving Meal - Join Cristo Rey Community Center at our Annual Thanksgiving Meal! 12-2 p.m. Cristo Rey Community Center, 1717 N High St, Lansing. cristoreycommunity.org

Nutcracker - Children's Ballet Theatre presents their annual Nutcracker as a virtual performance at 5 p.m. Info and tickets at cbtdance.org

Friday, November 26

20th Annual Lighted Parade & Mason Holiday Celebration - 6-7:30 p.m. Downtown Mason.

27th Annual Wonderland of Lights - It's time for this year's annual Wonderland of Lights! Through Dec. 31. 5 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing.

Jolly Holiday Market - Unique holiday shopping. - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S Washington, Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

Nutcracker - Children's Ballet Theatre annual Nutcracker performance at Grand Ledge High School auditorium, 820 Spring St., Grand Ledge. 7 p.m. Tickets at cbtdance.org

Peanut Barrel (Dan Dan Solo) - 8 p.m. The Peanut Barrel, 521 E Grand River Rd, East Lansing. bandsintown.com.

TGIF Weekly Friday Dance - 7 p.m. Hawk Hollow Golf Banquet Center, 15101 Chandler Rd., Bath. 734-604-5095. tgifdance.com.

Saturday, November 27

Drum Circle - Bring your drums and instruments or even dancing feet for some rhythmic fun! 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center St., #7, Lansing. 517-974-5540.

Holiday Surprise Take-Home Craft and Used Book Sale - Stop in at the library during the "Shop Small" event. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. gladl.org

Jolly Holiday Market -Unique holiday shopping. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S Washington, Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

Wednesday, November 24

Allen Farmers Market - 3-6 p.m. 2100 E Michigan Avenue, Lansing.

Book on Every Bed – Children's Book Drive - Drop off 10 a.m.-9 p.m. through Dec. 13. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. gladl.org

Threads of Wisdom: Manifestation - in-person or Zoom for a discussion of Manifestation. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Weavers

Events

from page 38

Nutcracker - Children's Ballet Theatre annual Nutcracker performance at Grand Ledge High School auditorium, 820 Spring St., Grand Ledge. 1 p.m. Tickets at cbtdance.org

Sunday, November 28

Jolly Holiday Market -Unique holiday shopping. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S Washington, Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

Nutcracker - Children's Ballet Theatre annual Nutcracker performance at Grand Ledge High School auditorium, 820 Spring St., Grand Ledge. 1 p.m. Tickets at cbtdance.org

Monday, November 29

Comedy Night - 9-11:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-2506. crunchyseastlansing.com.

Jump Into Reading - Join Ms. Anna at the Playground of Dreams (Pavilion 2) for stories, songs, and activities. 11-11:30 a.m. Playground of Dreams, 100 Howe Dr., Eaton Rapids. eradi.org.

Delivery Driver

City Pulse is looking for a **Newspaper Delivery Driver** for Wednesday morning deliveries. Pay is per stop and mileage and you are paid same day. Must have reliable vehicle, current driver's license, good driving record and proof of insurance. To apply or get more info. call Suzi Smith at 517-999-6704 or email: suzi@lansingcitypulse.com.

CityPULSE

Tuesday, November 30

Board Game Meet Up - Ages 18 & up. 6:30 - 10:30 p.m. Spare Time Bowling Alley, 3101 E Grand River, Lansing.

Family Storytime - for 1-6 year olds. 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St.

Sporcle Live! Trivia - 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. crunchyseastlansing.com.

Youth Arts Alliance Maker Space Workshop - 90 minute Maker Space workshop. 7-8:30 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 36

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 36

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



FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

The sides of December

By **ARI LeVAUX**

Making a side dish for a holiday get together is a rite of the season, and one for which we should be grateful. Because if you aren't making the sides, you might be roasting some poor bird, or a soy-based approximation of some poor bird.

A side dish is less work than a main event that nonetheless offers a back door to glory. The beast-roaster has more at stake, and more to lose. The right side dish can sweep in like a dark horse and steal the show.

Here are not one but two side dishes to double your options, or your odds, at potluck dominance — depending on your inclinations. One of these dishes is no less than perfect (and I do mean perfect) oven-baked potatoes. These potatoes are the perfect combination of crispy brown exterior and smoky, puffy insides — like tater tots but made with chunks of whole potato.

The other side dish du jour is a colorful salad of ancient grains and pomegranate seeds. Each of these recipes can stand alone and will easily fulfill your obligation as a dinner party guest. But if you want to climb a little further up the holiday tree of glory, you can toss side number one into number two, thus combining the



potatoes into the grain salad. Then you have a little bit of everything, all at once, like a true Christmas sweater of side dishes.

Uncommonly Good Potatoes

My son paid his highest compliment to these potatoes, calling them “restaurant fries.” He’s not wrong. There is chemistry involved, as the potatoes are parboiled with baking powder and salt, which makes them irresistible when subsequently baked.

*1 gallon water
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons salt
2 pounds of potatoes, cut into inch-chunks
1/3 cup olive oil
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 more teaspoon salt*

Heat the water on high with the salt and baking soda. When it boils, add the potatoes and boil them for 20 minutes. Drain the potatoes and spread



Ari LeVaux

(Left) LeVaux's Uncommonly Good Potatoes and (right) Ancient Grain Salad.

them on a baking sheet. Let them steam and dry while the oven preheats to 425. Add the olive oil and spices. Stir everything around to coat evenly. Bake for 15 minutes. Test, and unless irresistibly browned, spread out on the pan and pop back in the oven another five to 10 minutes until puffy.

Ancient Grain Salad

The grains in this dish should be chewy but not jaw-testing or crunchy. I use spelt here because it's relatively soft after a reasonable amount of cooking. Farro fits the bill as well if you can get it. Kamut needs a tad more cooking but is also great in this salad.

I use a pressure cooker, which shaves a lot of time off. If you don't have one, set aside a few hours of cooking until the grains are soft enough to use.

*2 cups farro/spelt/kamut
1 tablespoon beef-flavored Better than Bouillon or similar high-end substitute
5 cups water
1 medium onion, minced
3 tablespoons oil
1/2 cup crumbled feta
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Seeds of 1/2 pomegranate*

*1 orange or red bell pepper, diced
1 cup pecan halves, toasted five or so minutes in a hot pan
1/2 cup chopped cilantro, arugula, parsley or other green leaves*

Add the spelt, water and stock to an Instant Pot or similar pressure cooker. Cook for 20 minutes. When the valve drops open, drain the spelt but keep the stock for later.

Sauté the onions in the oil on medium heat until they are translucent, about 10 minutes. Add the drained spelt, crumbled feta, cider vinegar, lemon juice and a cup of the leftover stock to a pan with a tight-fitting lid. Stir it together and cook on low for about 20 minutes with the lid on so the grains can absorb a little more and soften. When the excess water has left the pot, let the grain cool to room temperature.

When ready to serve, toss in the diced peppers, pomegranate seeds, pecans and greens. And, if you wish, those perfect potatoes from the other side.

(Flash in the Pan is food writer Ari LeVaux's weekly recipe column. It runs in about 100 newspapers nationwide, nourishing food sections large and small with complete protein for the belly brain.)

Appetizers

WANT YOUR RESTAURANT LISTED? CALL 517-999-5064



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5000 N. Grand River Ave
Lansing
(517) 321-3852
FB: @AirportTavernandSteakhouse

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Social Sloth gets the food and ambiance right

By **GABRIELLE LAWRENCE**

Since Mediteran (the original, not the amazing and recently reopened Café Mediteran) closed its doors downtown a number of years ago, a very specific void has existed. I want to find myself in a café where I don't understand all of the words on the menu, where I can sip a dark, thick espresso paired with an achingly decadent dessert, and where the décor is charmingly off-kilter, a far cry from the quotidian fake plants and wicker baskets that you find in every whitewashed chain restaurant.

Social Sloth Café, after an inauspicious mid-pandemic opening day, has molded itself into downtown's newest iteration of that European experience. One recent morning found me lingering over a plate of a thick wedge of feta, smothered in olive oil. It was an atypical start to a weekday made even more special because I shared the meal with Mr. She Ate. I had my own mid-pandemic opening day as I switched law firms, and now I spend my days practicing at the Loomis Law Firm and wondering how soon I can rush the few blocks down Washington Square to treat myself to a tahini brownie from Social Sloth.

A word about the brownies: unexpected. More words about the brownies — they are deeply fudgy and chocolatey, and I think I'm so obsessed with them because the tahini swirled on top is the perfect complement to the sweetness of the chocolate. I've started picking one up every Wednesday afternoon, before I log on and e-teach an Estate Planning class to Cooley Law School students. The brownie is the perfect weekly indulgence that I look forward to on these increasingly wintry Wednesday afternoons.

Aside from the creamy, smooth feta on my breakfast plate, I also loved the sliced tomato and cucumber, hard-boiled egg, ramekins of stewed tomato and blueberry jam. The basket of toasted sourdough smelled incredible and — although I don't generally like to fill up on bread when there's cheese to be had — tasted even better. It's been a long time since we have been able to safely travel overseas and this breakfast made me nostalgic for those days.

On a lunch visit, I tried the pide zucchini. Pide is a long, oval-shaped flatbread stuffed with toppings of your choosing, and Social Sloth offers a few different varieties. The bread was toast-



Lawrence

ed and crisp, and the cheese broiled to be just bubbly. Paired with a bit of perfectly pickled red cabbage, the two went together like Aaron Rodgers and conspiracy theories.

During another lunch visit I tried the manti, which is Turkish ravioli. Everything at Social Sloth is made in-house, and these perfect pillows are filled with seasoned ground beef and sauced with yogurt and melted butter. A few days later I grabbed Saturday sandwiches to share with my mother, and the thinly sliced pickle nestled between slices of the incredible, toasted sourdough and layered with melted cheese made for a perfect combination.

Do I have criticisms? They're not open for dinner. I have so many memories of lingering over dinner at Mediteran, and I have high hopes that when supply chain issues are smoothed; when staffing isn't such a challenge that Social Sloth will enter the dinner scene — if the proprietors choose to do so. I am thankful that they are one of the few businesses downtown where I even had the option of getting a Saturday lunch, and it wasn't lost on me that the café was packed to the gills as I waited for my sandwiches.

During our breakfast visit, Mr. She Ate and I watched a man walk in with a large bakery box from Zingerman's. He was a visitor from Ann Arbor; he explained and was meeting a friend who was driving in from Grand Rapids. Social Sloth's reputation had preceded them, and the friends chose a charming and unique midpoint to meet for breakfast and pastries.

One more memory and I'll let Mediteran rest in heavenly peace: Do any other Lanstronauts remember the completely over the top, wall-to-wall Christmas decorations that were featured every year? I'm getting similar decorating vibes from Social Sloth, and I'm excited to continue my weekly jaunts down the block and see what blossoms this holiday season.

By **BRYAN BEVERLY**

I've traveled through Europe and have always found the teahouses and coffee shops to be one of my favorite aspects of my visits. There's a certain cozy and fragrant ambiance



Beverly

with an air of clandestine activity, or maybe I've just watched too many spy films. A visit to Social Sloth Café & Bakery evokes many of these same elements but with some of the area's best pastries.

The Turkish influence on the menu and service are a welcome addition to Lansing's culinary landscape, and the downtown breakfast and lunch crowd are privy to an absolute gem.

At Social Sloth, timing can be everything. The menu rotates daily, and those who regularly patronize the café seem to have a better handle on the rhythm of which items are available than some-

one like me who ventured in for the first time.

Social Sloth offers two chef specials. You can get a pide — a Turkish

flatbread with cheese, zucchini, or ground beef, or you can order a manti, which is Turkish ravioli with ground beef and garlic yogurt, which comes with the optional köfte — Turkish meatballs with rice and mint yogurt. It all depends on when you visit.

During one visit, I had the zucchini pide, which had a delicate balance of flavors — the cheese, parsley and veggies melded together symphonically. No component overpowered another, and I can't wait to try some of the other versions. On another visit, I had the köfte — a ground meat dish that is found in many Mediterranean cuisines and can be often described as oblong meatballs. The combination of cumin, thyme and pepper was great, but when combined with the spicy mint yogurt the flavor

crescendo to even higher levels. Another savory treat is the sucuk — a breakfast sausage that is reminiscent of chorizo, but smokier. The savory lunch specials are no doubt a hit because if you don't get to Social Sloth early enough, they will run out of your favorites and your guess is as good as mine as to what day it returns.

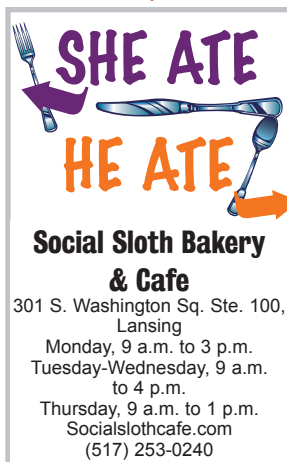
One can't visit a Turkish café without imbibing in some Turkish tea. Luckily for me, I visited the café on some quintessential Michigan fall days and found yet another example of rotating charm. For my first visit, I ordered a lovely healing honeysuckle tea, which seemed to soothe both my tastebuds and my spirit. It was aromatic but in a calming way. The pumpkin tea my companion ordered had a strong pumpkin flavor but not in the typical pumpkin spice latte overly spicy way. This was more along the lines of a delicate pumpkin bisque but in tea fashion. The following visit, I tried the honey tea, which was good but less noteworthy than the others.

While the lunch and breakfast fare are delightful, the zenith of this shop is its baked goods. This includes borek — a spinach pie where the pastry is the star and the light spinach filling is the supporting cast and pogaça — a ground beef-filled pocket pie. Both will be a part of any of my subsequent visits as they were somehow not greasy but instead delicious and flaky. The gluten-free almond cookie had a light nutty touch and was sweeter than I expected. The tahini cookie with chocolate and walnuts was a tantalizing bite. The Turkish bagel, known as simit, was fantastic and less malty than more well-known bagel variations.

Meals in Europe are often more about the experience than just the food. The leisure and ambiance are critical components of a meal out and Social Sloth capitalizes on these sentiments. There's even a stand where you can purchase some handmade Turkish-influenced jewelry and art. Social Sloth is inviting and the food is delicious, but they also want you to take your time and savor the moment.

Best Bite

Without hesitation, the Turkish éclair was my favorite at Social Sloth. The pastry was as light as many of the other delicacies, but that cream filling is what dreams are made of. Garnished with pistachios, the ganache-like chocolate was reminiscent of some of the best wedding cakes I've had over the years.



Courtesy

A cup of tea and baklava from Social Sloth.

Cheesesteaks, sliders and wings invade Lansing

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Greater Lansing foodies have a lot to be excited for as Lansing continues to build on the momentum of its recent wave of restaurant openings and announcements. Two spots from established Michigan-based franchises are ready for you to check out today.

Lefty's Cheesesteaks is a fast expanding Michigan chain of sandwich shops launched in 2012 that has made its mark on the state with its take on the classic Philadelphia cheesesteak. The chain also offers a number of burgers and hoagie-style sandwiches that can be loaded to the brim with your preferred meats and veggies.

Craving a new location for some



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Lansing is also receiving another transplant from Detroit to get excited for, the **Detroit Wing Co.** The wing restaurant, which was established in 2015 and has since received high marks from critics and frequently pops up on lists ranking the best hot wings available in Michigan, announced on its Facebook page that it is scheduled to open up a new joint in Lansing. It will be located on South Cedar Street next to Tropical Smoothie.

Meanwhile, the chaotic world of **Mr. Taco**, an old beloved Lansing Mexican restaurant that was recently

revived and has since had difficulties maintaining stable business hours, might have some added drama coming its way. Construction spotted next to the local taco spot on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard has been confirmed to be the future site of another **Taco Bell**.



Courtesy

A hoagie with a side of wings and fries from Lefty's Cheesesteaks.

Sidcar Slider Bar is also known for its unique interior decorations, which feature a vintage motor-

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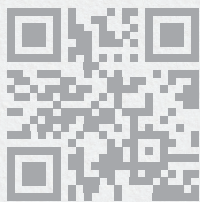
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