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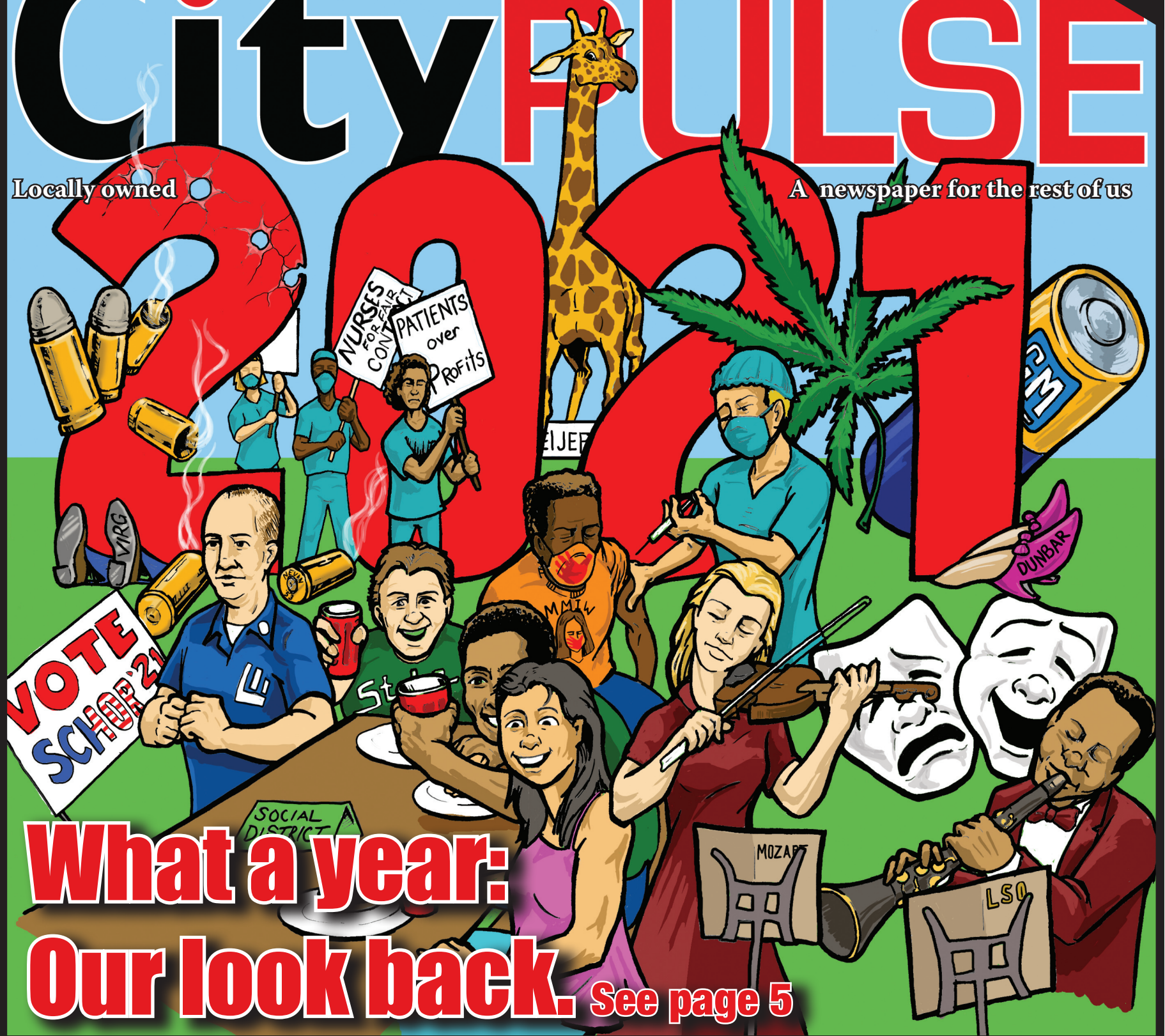
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**What a year:  
Our look back.** See page 5

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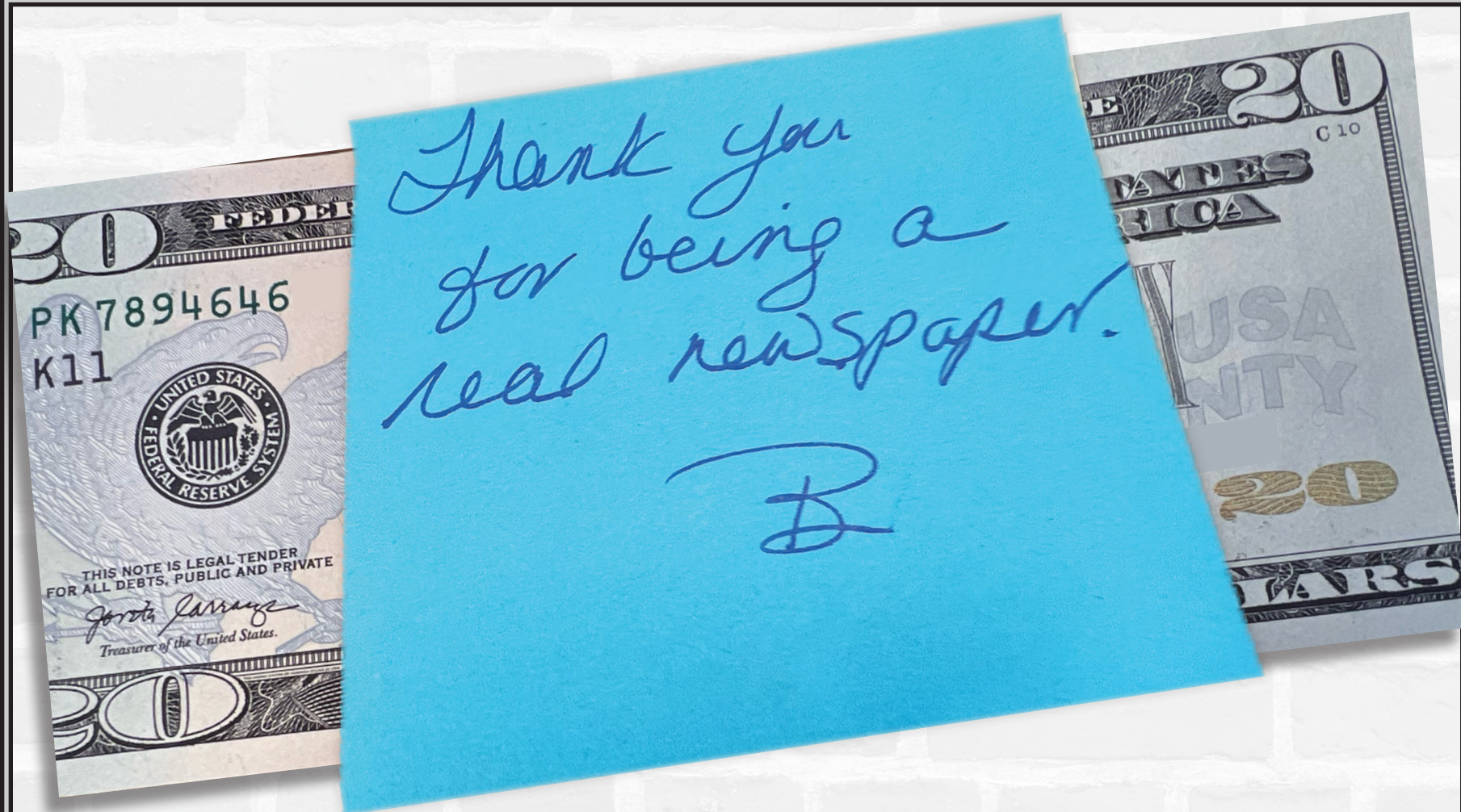
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**Cover  
Art**

Illustration by Nevin Speerbrecker

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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# What made the biggest headlines in Lansing this year?

By KYLE KAMINSKI

## 1. Homicide rates climbed (again) in Greater Lansing.

More than 100 people took a bullet this year in Lansing as record-breaking levels of gun violence continued to soar — resulting in at least 24 people killed in 2021, up from 21 homicides tracked city-wide in 2020, according to the the Lansing Police Department. (For a look at the victims, see P. 10.)

All told, Lansing police have counted 45 homicides, 112 non-fatal shootings and more than 1,000 gunshot reports over the last two years. City officials have pointed the blame largely toward an influx of illegal firearms, with at least 1,200 guns seized since 2019.



Courtesy

Michael Lynn Jr. offered classes for concealed pistol licenses to any resident turning 21 years old this year.

Authorities also suspect that most of the violence has been tied to a subsection of the population: young Black men turning from fists to bullets in personal disputes, often in retaliation for other criminal behavior.

In response, Mayor Andy Schor announced plans to hire five more officers (and another social worker) at the Police Department as quickly as possible. Newly installed Police Chief Ellery Sosebee has also strategically ramped up police patrols in certain neighborhoods.

Schor also launched a gun violence task force in June and has since rolled out several grant-funding opportunities to help create more afterschool activities. City officials have formed partnerships with school district officials, opened up community centers and pledged more than \$250,000 toward a gun violence intervention program in 2022.

Nonprofit organizations and local faith-based organizations have been hard at work to launch community-focused solutions that include direct mentorship with troubled teenagers. Lansing's



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor and other top city officials announced plans in June to ramp up grant funding for nonprofit organizations while rates of gun violence continued to soar over the summer in the Capital City.

congresswoman, Elissa Slotkin, introduced legislation to make it a federal crime not to secure weapons properly. Slotkin also represents Oxford, site of the high school shooting last month allegedly carried out by a 15-year-old who authorities say easily obtained the handgun at home.

Still, many local residents are heading into the new year frustrated over what some have labeled as a lack of meaningful, equitable, short-term solutions to curbing violence in Lansing.



# 2021 Year in Review

## 2. The pandemic dragged on for another year.

Michigan tracked about 1 million more COVID-19 cases in 2021 — bringing the state-wide total to about 1.5 million cases reported since the pandemic arrived in the state about two years ago. Ingham, Clinton and Eaton counties have tracked a total of about 65,000 cases and 1,000 coronavirus-related deaths, with about 700 of those deaths reported in 2021.

All told, the coronavirus now marks the deadliest pandemic in American history, with about 815,000 people killed nationwide from the virus compared to about 675,000 during the 1918 influenza pandemic.

A limited vaccine rollout in January helped to fight the spread of the virus while state mandates on masks and social distancing were lifted and bars and restaurants reopened in March — allowing some businesses to narrowly cling to life after a year of state shutdowns.

City officials also caused a stir in January after Mayor Andy Schor and Councilmen Peter Spadafore



Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail received a vaccine ahead of this year's flu season.

and Brandon Betz got their shots before they were technically eligible to have received them. That controversy quickly fizzled out after supplies caught up with demand.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in federal, state and local grant funds also continued to flow to individuals and businesses to help them weather the economic

storm created by the pandemic.

Schor triggered another local controversy in November after he decided to briefly lift a requirement that face masks be worn at City Hall before reversing himself about a week later.

As of this month, about 6.3 million residents (about 63% of Michigan's population) have been vaccinated. Most cases tracked in the last several months have been among the unvaccinated.

Still, medical experts have predicted a continued uphill battle against the virus following the recent emergence of the omicron COVID-19 variant, which was first spotted in the country Dec. 1 and detected in Ingham County two weeks later. That variant — which may be more contagious than other forms of the virus — now reportedly accounts for most cases nationwide.

A new pill manufactured by Pfizer received FDA authorization this month and reportedly serves as an effective, in-home treatment for those who test positive for the virus. State officials hope it will help alleviate a burden on health care workers and hospitals as caseloads continue to rise.

## 3. Lansing Mayor Andy Schor secured a second term.

Although there wasn't much turnover this year, election season in Lansing dominated the news.

By about 5,000 votes, Lansing Mayor Andy Schor defeated Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar at the polls in November, garnering about 64% of the city's vote and securing a second term as mayor.

The race proved to be a tense one — with Dunbar, at times, harshly criticizing the mayor for his past missteps related to racial equity reforms and Dunbar facing multiple unproven accusations of sexual harassment and claims that she had used the “N-word” in conversation.

Outside of the mayoral race, incumbent City

Council members also reigned supreme. Council members Peter Spadafore, Jeremy Garza and Brian Jackson each fended off their challengers. And City Clerk Chris Swope also sailed into another term unopposed in the General Election.

The only new face to take the dais next year at Lansing City Hall is Jeff Brown, who is set to fill the at-large seat that was abandoned by Dunbar when she decided to launch her failed mayoral campaign against Schor. Brown was elected even though many specifics about his background remain a mystery — including what he does to earn a living. Court records show that Brown ran several unsuccessful home healthcare businesses and ultimately filed for bankruptcy in 2015, apparently costing his ex-employees tens of thousands of dollars in wages that were left unpaid.

All told, the results marked a roundabout win for the political establishment in Lansing. Dunbar and Council candidates Claretta Duckett-Freeman and Oprah Revish had formed an alliance ahead of the election called “The Crew,” which then billed itself as the “progressive” alternative to the existing roster



Brown



Todd Heywood/City Pulse

Mayor Andy Schor makes his victory speech at his election night party at the Lansing Brewing Co.

of city leaders — one that supposedly represented an equitable shift to government that planned to focus more heavily on the needs of disenfranchised residents. The Crew also called for reducing funding to the Lansing Police Department, a conceptual policy that failed to gain any real traction at City Hall in the last year.



Political mail attacking Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar hit mailboxes in October.



# 2021 Year in Review

## 4. Racial equity remained a focal point.

George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis in 2020 helped to ignite a social uprising against institutional racism, police brutality and the disproportionate rate at which police have systematically targeted and killed people of color. And more than a year later, racial equity remains a priority.

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor — whose administration has faced its own allegations of racism — dedicated \$300,000 this year to a permanent “equity committee,” earmarking most of the cash for employee training, assessing the racial landscape in Lansing and soliciting community input as longer-term plans unfolded. The City Council also approved a resolution committing the city to continue to “reimagine policing” to address the root causes of crime.

Still, the results of an “environmental scan” showed that a significant portion of city employees have concerns over inequitable employment opportunities and work-related practices based on race as well as biological sex. Staff also reported inequities over how grievances were handled. Only about 7% of employees said they were satisfied with city efforts to bolster diversity.

At the county level, Prosecuting Attorney Carol Siemon shook up many law enforcement officials as



**Committee of the Whole**  
July 26th, 2021

Human Resources Director Linda Sanchez-Gazella and Paul Elam, of the Michigan Public Health Institute, present a staff survey on racial equity to the City Council.

well as Schor in June when she announced policy changes designed to reverse the disproportionate rate in which people of color interact with the local criminal justice system. One change directed her staff to deny warrant requests for possession of drugs, stolen property and firearms during traffic stops initiated by cops solely for minor, unrelated infractions. Siemon said that police have been known to use those stops as “fishing expeditions,” which disproportionately target

Black people.

The other policy shift dictated that those arrested for crimes that involve guns will no longer be charged with a separate two-year felony count for possession of a firearm in commission of a crime — except only in “the most extreme circumstances,” according to the revised policy. Statistics showed that about 80% of those sentenced for that crime in Ingham County are Black.

Law enforcement officials countywide, led by Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth, and Schor have pushed back against the changes, but Siemon has refused to budge, insisting that the policy shifts will help curb inherent racial discrimination while allowing prosecutors to focus on more severe criminal charges and police investigations.

Siemon, for her part, has also used several startling statistics to defend the recent changes. Among them: Since 2019, Black people in Ingham County have been about five times more likely than white people to have had criminal charges requested against them by police. Black people in the county are also seven times more likely to face a felony charge than white people.

## 5. Developers pushed through the pandemic.

Dozens of businesses have closed — either permanently or temporarily — since the COVID-19 pandemic struck Greater Lansing in 2020 and lingered into 2021. But that still hasn't stopped local developers from advancing several significant construction projects throughout the year.

The nonprofit Community Foundation broke ground on the first “universally accessible” playground in the tricity area at Adado Riverfront Park on the west bank of the Grand River. Across the river, Detroit Rising Development is still working to transform the old City Market building into the Lansing Shuffleboard & Social Club, inspired by the Detroit Shipping Co.

Pat Gillespie put the former Sears building, near Frandor Shopping Center, up for redevelopment and plans to transform the old Clara's Restaurant into a Starbucks coffee shop. The city is also still trying to entice Emergent BioSolutions to build a large manufacturing facility on a vacant 34-acre Dewitt Township property near the Capital Region International



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Developer Eric Hanna (left) speaks to a contractor on the roof of the former Temple Club in Old Town.

Airport.

As part of Meridian Township's mixed-use “Village of Okemos” project, the long-vacant Travelers Club International Restaurant & Tuba Museum building was demolished this year, as well as the former home of Bottoms Up Lingerie and Okemos Ace Hardware, to make room for new development plans. Trader Joe's also announced plans to build a highly anticipated grocery store in East Lansing.

Construction is underway to transform the former

Bethlehem Temple Church in Old Town into an office space and 31 middle-income apartments. Its developers bought the Old Town Diner too. The Masonic Temple on Capitol Avenue was also sold this year by WMU-Cooley Law School.

Child and Family Charities announced plans to consolidate services and move into the western half of McLaren Greater Lansing's Greenlawn campus while the healthcare system continued to hammer together its massive new campus near the western edge of Michigan State University.

Out-of-state developers also pitched plans to renovate the shuttered West Junior High School into a three-story apartment building. And Mayor Andy Schor cut the ribbon at an upgraded Turner Mini Park in Old Town at the corner of Turner Street and Cesar E. Chavez Avenue.

The biggest cherry on Lansing's development cake this year, however, was from General Motors, which proposed building a \$2.5 billion battery cell production plant for electric vehicles in Delta Township that could create 1,700 new jobs through 2026. GM is expected to decide next month. City and state officials are still courting the automaker with tax incentives.



# 2021 Year in Review

## 6. Women were heard – and their alleged abusers were canceled.

Former Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero bowed out of an early bid to run against Schor for mayor this year after multiple women accused him of sexual harassment and unwanted touching. One woman told City Pulse that she was groped by the former mayor in 2010. Another woman said that Bernero made unwanted sexual phone calls to her in 2004 while he was a state senator.



Bucholz

Those accusations came to a head in October after Bernero paid out \$4,500

to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit filed against him this year by former mayoral aide Liz Hart. Bernero has since largely receded from any public-facing political or professional responsibilities in Lansing.

Lansing political consultant TJ Bucholz and his firm Vanguard Public Affairs also made headlines following allegations of sexual harassment from more than a dozen former employees. Several former staffers told City Pulse about a hostile and toxic day-to-day work environment there, with an unpredictable man at the helm who only made the situation worse.

Bucholz — who was once described by Sen. Curtis Hertel as “the best spin doctor in Lansing” — has since closed his firm, moved out of his downtown offices and vanished from public life.

Political mailers labeled former Mayor Virg Bernero as “America’s Horniest Mayor.”

## LOOK WHO’S BANKROLLING...

### AMERICA'S HORNIEST MAYOR!



**KRIS NICHOLOFF, CEO AND LOBBYIST: \$1,000**  
**ELIZABETH JONES, DTM STUDENT RENTALS: \$2,000**  
**PAUL FRICK, D.C. CONSULTANT: \$1,000**  
**JOSEPH MANZELLA II, DIRECTOR, QUICKEN LOANS: \$1,000**  
**SAGAR SETHI, CEO, HOUSING: \$1,000**  
**KEVIN SCOTT, FAST FOOD ENTREPRENEUR: \$1,000**  
**JANE HOURANI, HOMEMAKER: \$1,000**  
**WILLIAM DEMMER, CEO, DEMMER CORP.: \$1,000**  
**MICHAEL MARKS, CEO, E.T. MACKENZIE: \$1,000**

**EARDMENT MACKENZIE, CHAIRMAN, E.T. MACKENZIE: \$2,100**  
**EDGER HARDEN, CEO, CAPITOL NATIONAL BANK: \$500**  
**STEVE CALVERLEY, CEO, MAPLEGROVE PROPERTY MGMT.: \$500**  
**VAN MARTIN, CEO, MARTIN COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES: \$1,000**  
**KRISTIN CARLTON, OWNER, CLEAN CLEANING LLC: \$1,500**  
**AMANDA SHAMON, UNEMPLOYED: \$1,500**  
**PAUL BROWN, REALTOR, KELLER WILLIAMS: \$2,100**

Source: Virg Bernero for Lansing 2020 campaign finance report, ingham.org

(WATCH THIS SPACE IN JULY FOR A COMPLETE LIST!)

**EXCLUSIVE: BERNERO FACES SEXUAL HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS**  
 Survivor: former three-term mayor 'still a danger to women' in 2021  
 City Pulse, 1/18/21

**Report: Former Lansing mayor faces sexual harassment allegations**  
 Criticism mounts against Bernero over sexual harassment claims  
 WOOD-TV, 5/4/21

Paid for by Michigan Debrae Bette, PO Box 14222, Lansing, MI 48901

## 7. Nurses took a stand at Sparrow Hospital.

A new three-year contract between Sparrow Health System and its 2,200-member Professional Employee Council was reached in December, averting the possibility of a strike following several months of tense contract



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Nurses gather for an “informational picket” outside of Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.

negotiations that led to a picket at the hospital in November.

The new contract reportedly includes a 20% wage increase for average bedside nurses over the next three years, as well as no increases in staff healthcare premiums or reduction in sick days.

In the months leading up to the new collective bargaining agreement, nurses and union leaders had voiced concerns to City Pulse over the administration’s unwillingness to offer a “fair” contract amid an already stressful working environment at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.

Hundreds of employees crowded the sidewalks near the hospital for an “informational picket” while the negotiations continued. Nurses also voted to authorize the union to declare a strike — a move that was ultimately unnecessary after both sides worked out a mutually agreeable plan.



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Katie Pontifex and Kevin Glaza lead the Professional Employee Council at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.



# 2021 Year in Review

## 8. Lansing Councilman Brandon Betz had a rough year.

City Councilman Brandon Betz faced a deluge of public criticism — including hundreds of calls for his resignation — after he sent a series of profane text messages this year in which he labeled Michael Lynn Jr., the former co-leader of the Lansing chapter of Black Lives Matter, a “dickbag troll who no one listens to” and a “weak ass bitch” who only wanted more political clout.

Lynn had asked Betz to stop sending him text messages, but Betz kept going, later telling Lynn that he doesn’t “represent assholes.” So, Lynn decided to send the messages to news outlets.

After headlines surfaced and public criticism started to flow, Betz and his wife departed to Alaska to “take care of personal affairs.” In the meantime, he was formally censured by the Council, fired from his job at the Michigan League for Public Policy and widely criticized by several local political groups — including the Ingham County Democratic Party.

In an August reversal, Betz turned his back on

the socialist agenda that helped to get him elected and abandoned his plans to seek a reduction to the Lansing Police Department budget. And despite calling for Mayor Andy Schor’s resignation for almost a year, Betz decided to break any remaining political ties with Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar and endorse Schor for reelection.

Betz also went on to label Black Lives Matter, among other groups as “niche” organizations run by a “small group of activists” that don’t necessarily represent the best interests of the city. His roller-coaster ride of a first term also took on some new momentum last month when local attorney Elizabeth Abdnour filed recall petition language with the county’s Election Commission.

That three-member panel denied the language, but Abdnour has since filed an appeal. Circuit Court Judge Clinton Canady is set to decide next month on whether Abdnour can begin circulating the peti-



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

City Councilman Brandon Betz speaks at City Hall next to Michael Lynn Jr.

tion against Betz for a special election that could be set for as early as May.

## 9. Lansing’s marijuana industry was rocked by a statewide recall.

A massive statewide recall of marijuana forced just about every pot shop in Greater Lansing — and hundreds more across Michigan — to pull

thousands of products from their shelves in November due to concerns over inaccurate test results from a lab in Lansing and Bay City.

The recall was originally estimated to have impacted more than 50,000 lbs. of cannabis products sold at more than 500 provisioning centers across Michigan, specifically on flower that was tested by Viridis Laboratories in Lansing and Bay City between Aug. 10 and Nov. 16.

Portions of the recall have since been lifted on products that were tested in Viridis’ Bay City laboratory, but some local economic damage was unavoidable. Todd Welch, the chief operating officer at Viridis, told City Pulse in May that his labo-

ratories provided testing services for more than 250,000 pounds of licensed cannabis products annually — about 70% of the state market.

The state has fought to uphold the recall in court. Still, an unknown quantity of initially recalled marijuana that had failed testing for unacceptably high levels of mold, yeast or fungi has reportedly been released for sale by the state’s Marijuana Regulatory Agency under a judge’s order.

Despite the recall hiccup, the marijuana industry in Greater Lansing still boomed in 2021. Lansing has now granted preliminary licensure to the maximum number of growers and retailers allowed under ordinance. Pincanna opened in East Lansing. Local Roots Cannabis Co. opened in Laingsburg. And Meridian Township is still tinkering with an ordinance to allow for pot shops.



Courtesy

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



# 2021 Year in Review

## 10. All eyes were on the State Capitol in January.

Following a tumultuous presidential election, detachments of dozens of Michigan State Police troops and several rows of National Guard Humvees converged on the State Capitol building on Jan. 18 in anticipation of a large and potentially violent post-inauguration protest in Lansing.

Cops marched with bulletproof vests and wooden batons, tear gas canisters tucked into their bags. A police heli-

copter circled overhead for most of the afternoon. Sharpshooters were stationed on nearby rooftops. City Pulse even supplied its reporters with gas masks that day.

The striking show of military and police force in Lansing may have prevented political violence from breaking out locally in the wake of the Jan. 6 insurrectionist riots — or it could've been largely unnecessary. Only about three dozen demonstrators actually showed up to the scene.

## Lansing homicide victims in 2021

The following list of homicide victims in Lansing this year includes information from published obituaries and other online resources when available.

**1/6/21 — Darrell “Dee” Gaines, 37,** phlebotomist and military veteran. “Dedicated and loving brother, caregiver, guardian, and protector to his younger sister ... . His love for family and friends was color blind and knew no boundaries. He loved children and like the Pied Piper would be found surrounded by every little person in the room singing his name, ‘Uncle Dee, Uncle Dee.’”



**2/8/21 — Melissa Murray, 33.**

**2/13/21 — Thomas Collins III, 25.** Holt and Eaton Rapids high school athlete and father of two who was a state champion wrestler and also excelled at competitive go-karting.



**3/21/21 — Lecann Hawkins, 23.**

**3/31/21 — Darrell “Dee” Smith, 16.** A Sexton High School student and member of the marching band, he “loved to skateboard, write music, build things, and was just a jack of all trades. His beautiful bright smile would light up our lives and will forever be imprinted on our hearts.”



**4/11/21 — Adrien Price, 20.** “A funny, fun loving big kid. He was always joking around and playing pranks on family and friends. He was passionate about music and enjoyed writing his own music as well.”

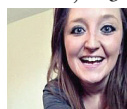


**4/21/21 — Larry Fields, 60.** From a go-fund-me page on his behalf: “Larry was warm-hearted, very energetic, and family first. He was surrounded by the family before his unfortunate passing, and he will be greatly missed. Larry has been participating in the Special Olympics almost his entire life.”

**5/1/21 — Harley Owens, 39.** “He was an artist at heart and loved drawing, poetry and music. As he grew he turned all of this into a passion for body art and always looked forward to his next tattoo.”



**5/1/21 — Kelsey Coon-Lennon, 29.** “Kelsey was a bright light, a bold, vibrant and an adventurous woman that was always finding the humor in life.” Among her survivors is her son, Desmond.



**5/5/21 — Corey Dalton, 28.**

**5/16/21 — Kian Miller Jr., 22.**

**5/16/21 — Timothy Minor, 23.** “Whodee,” who had attended Everett High School, “was a fun-loving smart kid with a big heart who loved his family. ... A jokester. You definitely needed thick skin. Whodee would roast anybody.”



**5/14/21 — Damon Johnson, 19.** A member of Mind, Body, and Soul Outreach Ministries, “he enjoyed playing basketball, video games; he also loved to swim and shop. Damon loved spending time with his family and friends. He had a passion for music at a young age. Damon loved being in the studio recording.”



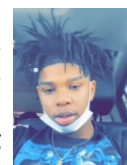
**6/14/21 — Marshawn Beard, 16.**

## Honorable Mentions:

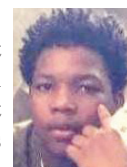
There was a lot more news in 2021: Halloween was canceled at six elementary schools in East Lansing; Lansing City Councilman Peter Spadafore stuck around for another year as the Council president; former Chief 30th Circuit Judge William “Wild Bill” Collette was accused of repeatedly harassing and bullying his former female benchmates after he admitted to pulling another woman's hair in an Okemos restaurant over the summer — an incident that has since led to assault charges; crews finished clearing out an encampment of homeless people near the corner of Larch and Saginaw streets known as the “Back 40”; bus drivers at CATA hashed out a new union contract following more than a year of negotiations; Shawn Deprez, the first woman battalion chief at the Lansing Fire Department, alleged that she was sexually assaulted by a superior and subjected to unchecked harassment; Okemos Schools finally dropped its “Chieftain” mascot in favor of something less offensive; emails revealed an undercover police operation at a local sex club; a leak flooded out three floors at City Hall; neighbors complained and

local cops tried harder than ever to crack down on speeding and reckless driving in Lansing; City Councilman Brian Jackson worked to repeal several dated and obsolete city ordinances; Michael Lynn Jr. was fired from the Lansing Fire Department after he shared former Police Chief Daryl Green's personal cell phone number with thousands of people on Facebook; Ingham County Treasurer Eric Schertz announced plans to retire; print circulation at the Lansing State Journal plummeted to an all-time low; Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar helped lead the city into at least \$2 million in savings after negotiating a new contract for the Lansing Lugnuts to play at a newly improved version of Jackson Field; newly formed social districts allowed local residents to take to-go cocktails from several Lansing bars and enjoy them on the sidewalk; Lansing Township leaned on another assessment for taxpayers to help save itself from a potential bankruptcy; an East Lansing real estate developer lost a defamation lawsuit he filed against East Lansing Info; repairs were ordered at Rivershell Apartments following code violations; and the entire city was captivated by a giraffe statue at a gas station.

**6/16/21 — Jemaris Leek Jr., 17.** An ascending senior at Everett, he was a scholar and athlete with recruitment letters from many schools. He “loved to travel, taking pictures, laughing, making others laugh, and walking up to people introducing himself by saying, ‘Hi, my name is Jemaris; what's your name?’”



**7/5/21 — Cashad Pops, 19.** “He had an insatiable thirst for fun and adventure in life. Cashad took great pride in his two daughters Calaysia and Sa'Riyah and loved nothing more than spending time with them.”

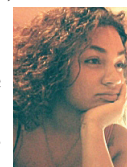


**8/15/21 — Ardis Davis, 24.** “Ardis demonstrated many talents but his main one was his love for music. Whenever he rapped it was illuminating and powerful. The cadence of his voice was purely musical and straight-to-the-point. Ardis went from writing his lyrics to performing them in the clouds.”



**8/18/21 — Victor Clayborn, 27.**

**9/16/21 — Alexis Brown, 24.** A home health aide, she “enjoyed spending time with her children, family, and friends. Like her mother, Alexis was a social butterfly. She made friends wherever she



went. Alexis was a kind, loving soul with a heart of gold.”

**9/16/21 — Michelle Roper, 46.** A licensed practical nurse, wife and parent to three, she “was loved by the residents and staff because she was kind and considerate. She loved working, spending time with her family and friends. Michelle was ... our social butterfly.”

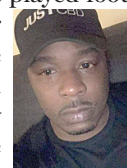


**9/20/21 — Anthony “Trae” Davis III, 17.** A standout football player at Waverly, where he was a senior, he was “known for his beautiful smile and compassion for others. He enjoyed spending time with his family and friends, especially his siblings. Trae always strived to do his best.”

**10/22/21 — Noah Sisung, 18.** He worked with his father at Sisung Construction. “Noah came into this world and lived exactly as he would have it, on his own terms. He loved life and was taken from us too soon.”



**10/25/21 — Elton Johnson, 34.** A 2006 sexton grad where he played football and basketball, “Jr touched the community; he always had a smile for you and would go out of his way to make others smile. He was a loving son, brother,



See Homicides, Page 11



# 2021 Year in Review

## In memoriam

### A tribute to the those we lost in 2021

**Olivia Letts**, who died Feb. 1 at 93, was the first Black teacher in the Lansing School District, where she worked for integration. She was married to Richard 'Dick' Letts, a Lansing area civil rights icon who died in 1997. They helped led the fight against race-based discrimination locally. Letts served on many different community boards. She was promoted to various leadership positions in the school district, including principal of Lansing's Post Oak Elementary School. She also obtained two post-graduate degrees from Michigan State University in administration and curriculum. Her death was recognized by the school district, the Lansing Branch of the NAACP and three separate churches. Mayor Andy Schor also honored Letts by declaring Feb. 8 a holiday in her honor. Letts also helped form the organization LINKS for African American women in leadership.



Letts

**Kelly Rossman-McKinney** died Nov. 9 at 67 from cancer. She helped found the powerhouse public relations firm Truscott Rossman with John Truscott, former spokesman for former Gov. John Engler. When she died, she was the communications Director of Attorney



Rossman-McKinney

General of Michigan. She was also a force to be reckoned with, tangling with leaders in all parties — including with former State Sen. and Eaton County Sheriff Rick Jones. She publicly challenged Jones' policy chops in 2012, and Jones then responded by calling her a "hooker." She, along with Nessel, tried unsuccessfully to mount a petition drive in 2016 to amend Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes. Rossman McKinney ran unsuccessfully as a Democrat in 2018 against Republican Tom Barrett for Eaton County's 24th Senate District. A professional comic in her early days, she referred to herself as an "ovarian Rotarian" when she became one of the first women admitted to the Lansing club.

**Carmen Decker**, who died Jan. 30 at 97, was a powerful force on Lansing's stages, particularly at the old BoarsHead Theatre. She graduated from Knox College and won a master's degree from University of Iowa. Decker did stints off-Broadway and elsewhere; in Lansing, she was a secretary at the State Capitol. She won awards for her work locally and on Chicago stages.



Decker

**Richard Halik** died Dec. 11 at 78. He was superintendent of the Lansing School District from 1985 to 2000 after serving as a teacher, principal and administrator. Halik attended Lansing Community College and Western Michigan University as an undergrad and earned a master's and doctorate degrees from Michigan State University. He was the first person to be awarded a Distinguished Alumni Award from LCC. And after leaving the school district, he advised schools nationally on policy and administration. Halik also served on the boards of the Lansing Boys and Girls Club, the Woldumar Nature Center and several other local nonprofit groups.



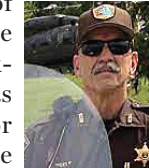
Halik

**E. Paul Rathbun** died Aug. 21 at 60. Rathbun was a leading voice in the city's business and philanthropy communities. He ran his family business, Rathbun Insurance, after graduating from Ferris State University. Under his leadership, the business sponsored numerous festivals and events in the Lansing region. He also served on the board of a host of civic organizations, including as president of the Lansing Jaycees and as board member of Ele's Place.



Rathbun

**Daniel Southwell**, who died Sept. 27 at 66, retired as chief of the Grand Ledge Police Department after working his way up. He was also an investigator for the state Office of the Attorney General. In 2005, Southwell helped found the Blue Light Players, a performance group that raises money for the families of fallen and seriously injured law enforcement officers.



Southwell

**Susan Pigg** died Feb. 21 at 62. Pigg was the former executive director of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. She also worked for the state Department of Transportation, Eaton County and MSU Extension in Ingham County. In her freetime, Pigg spent her hours supporting her children's activities at Okemos High School, as well as volunteering with St. Martha's Church. She was also an active member of a breast cancer survivor support group.



Pigg

**Dail "Doc" Patterson**, who died Oct. 21 at 84, founded the Patterson Veterinary Clinic in Mason. He was a 1963 graduate of MSU's School of Veterinary Medicine.



Patterson

The **Rev. Ilona Sabo Shuler** died Sept. 28 at 72. Shuler was a leading voice for reconciliation between LGBTQ people and people of



Shuler

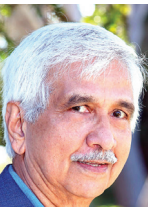
faith. During her 12-year ministry at Williamston Methodist Church, the congregation became the first reconciling church in Michigan — meaning LGBTQ affirming. She left the ministry in 1994 and became a real estate agent.

**Rajiv Ranjan Das** died July 6 at 62. Das was an immigrant from India who studied business at Michigan State University. He served as the chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Bharatiya Temple of Lansing. Das was also a cyber security expert for Plante Moran.



Das

**Vidyahdar S. "Atma" Mandrekar** died on June 23 at age 82. An accomplished mathematician, he was a professor at MSU with hundreds of professional publications under his belt — and six books. Mandrekar was also a department chairman and a leader on MSU's campus.



Mandrekar

**Angelo James Vlahakis**, died April 1 at 93, owned the fabled Jim's Tiffany Restaurant. Just two blocks from the Capitol on Michigan Avenue, the eatery served as a weigh station for politicians, lobbyists and journalists for 40 years.



Valhakis

Vlahakis was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and Michigan National Guard. He also founded Lansing's R.E. Olds Museum.

**James Swindlehurst** died Thursday (Dec. 24) of COVID complications. He was a paramedic working with Mercy Ambulance Service, which covers Clinton County. He contracted the virus, his wife said in interviews, while on the job. He was hospitalized Dec. 10. Mercy announced his death on Facebook on Christmas Eve, noting that he was passionate about the DeWitt and Bath communities.



Swindlehurst

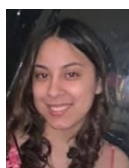
— **TODD HEYWOOD**

## Homicides

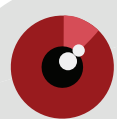
from page 10

father, cousin, nephew, uncle, and friend.

**12/10/21 — Arianna Delacruz**, 17. A junior at Eastern, she "was creative and artistic. Arianna loved artwork and doing hair. Most of all she loved spending time with all of her family."







## SORE Editor's choice 2021

There sure are a lot of ugly properties in Greater Lansing — so many that we found it difficult to narrow it down to just one Eye Sore of the Year for 2021. Instead, we created a variety pack.



### Marvin Gardens Apartments

It bears the same name as one of the ritziest sets of property on a standard Monopoly game board, but this apartment complex near the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Cavanaugh Road in South Lansing still desperately needs some work to live up to its name.

Several windows are shattered and boarded up. The parking lot is crumbling. Deck railings are broken. Roofs appear to be sinking. Trash has piled up outside. We can only imagine the inside.

The kicker: A car reportedly crashed into the side of one of the buildings several months ago. Fortunately, nobody was injured. Unfortunately, management has yet to complete the repairs.



### 820 W. Miller Road

This unkempt plaza at the corner of Washington and Miller roads was the former home of Binni's Bar and Grill. After more than 50 emergency calls there over two years, it was labeled a nuisance and had its liquor license yanked — sounding the death knell for the bar in 2018.

And over the last few years, it has only sat there vacant for garbage to

pile up outside.

Although the property was sold at a foreclosure auction this year, the new owner will still have to spend time replacing shattered windows and boarded-up doors, scrubbing off spray paint, repairing the siding and repaving the entire parking lot. The interior will need plenty of work too.



### Larry Hutchinson's campaign signs

Mayoral candidate Larry Hutchinson ran an eccentric and controversial campaign that provided a fun layer of entertainment and comic relief to this year's city election cycle. Unfortunately, Hutchinson's political aspirations also came along with a ton of litter scattered across the city.

Hand-painted posters and printed signs with Hutchinson's mugshot are still plastered on dozens of street signs, electrical poles and other public land across Lansing. He told City Pulse that he decided not to take them down because he's now running for governor.

Feel free to rip them down. City officials consider signs in the public right-of-way to be litter.



### Garno Property Management

We thought about omitting the Garno Property Management building from this listing because it was also featured this year in the Top of the Town contest as Lansing's least visually attractive building. But even during the holidays, we managed to find it in our hearts to rag Garno one more time for his "Make Lansing Great Again" signage and other conservative-themed banners.

# REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI



### East Lansing closes parks to kill deer

Several parks in East Lansing will be periodically closed weekday nights through March 31 to enable highly trained sharpshooters to kill off an unspecified number of deer that have overpopulated the city. Barricades and signs will be posted at park entrances.

### Cops investigate 'suspicious death'

A 61-year-old Lansing man was found dead in his apartment building on the 200 block of West Jolly Road from an apparent gunshot wound in the early morning hours of Wednesday (Dec. 22). The Lansing Police Department, which recovered a firearm at the scene, have not ruled out suicide, though the incident has been deemed "suspicious." Those with information can call 517-483-4600.

### Nonprofits take over Teen Challenge Center

A group of local nonprofits — the Advancement Corp. and MI Just Cause — have taken over the former Teen Challenge Center on Willow Street in Lansing with plans to turn it into a 50-person shelter to assist men with life skills and mentorship support, according to media reports. The building has been closed since 2017. Officials there reportedly hope that the provision of more supportive services for at-risk teenagers in the city will lead to a reduction in gun violence.

### GM shuts down Delta Twp. plant

All employees at the automotive assembly plant in Delta Township will have an extended holiday vacation this year after GM announced plans to shut down the facility until late January. The three-week operational pause — one of several shutdowns set for 2022



— will allow the automaker to upgrade its production equipment, reportedly to help build GMC Acadia SUVs.

### Man killed in crash on US-127

An unidentified 33-year-old man was killed after he crashed his car into a median on northbound US-127 near Dunckel Road about 3:30 p.m. Dec. 21. Four children were listed in "stable" condition. The investigation is ongoing. Information can be reported to 517-483-4600.

### Customer tips \$1,000 at Okemos deli

The staff at Stateside Deli & Restaurant — for the second year in a row — will split a \$1,000 holiday tip that was dropped off by a generous customer, reports the Lansing State Journal. The cash was divided evenly among its 18 staffers, which provided about \$55 to each employee.

### Inauguration ceremony set in Lansing

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor, City Clerk Chris Swope and newly elected At-Large City Councilman Jeffrey Brown are scheduled to be sworn in for four-year terms at a ceremony at 11 a.m. New Year's Day at Lansing City Hall. See it at [youtube.com/cityoflansingmichigan](https://youtube.com/cityoflansingmichigan).



Schor

### Former state staffer jailed for embezzlement

Joseph Pettit, of Lansing, was sentenced to a year behind bars after he was convicted of embezzling more than \$800,000 from the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy. Pettit reportedly diverted funds for mineral well drilling.

### McLaren Foundation spreads holiday cheer

Nearly 50 local organizations teamed up to participate in the McLaren Greater Lansing Foundation's annual community tree program this year. Each group received a 3-foot artificial tree from the foundation and worked together to decorate and shop for items to share with a charity, family or individual. This year, trees and gifts were donated to about 20 different recipients — including Child & Family Charities, Operation Santa and Advent House Lansing.

"Eyesore of the Week" is our look at some of the seedier properties in Lansing. It rotates with Eye Candy of the Week and Eye for Design. Have a suggestion? Email [eye@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:eye@lansingcitypulse.com) or call it in at 517-999-6715.



# 2021: Of heroes and zeros

Ah yes, we remember those first few days of 2021: The unbridled optimism that came from removing a metastasizing tumor from the White House; the near jubilation, at least among Democrats, that our long national nightmare was finally coming to an end.

We were sure that the election of a sane, stable elder statesman would usher in a return to reason and rationality. We brimmed with confidence that President Biden would make short work of the COVID-19 pandemic by systematically vaccinating a nation weary of lockdowns and masks, alleviating the gut-wrenching fear that one of our loved ones would be the next to die.

With Nancy Pelosi at the wheel in the House and a breakable tie in the Senate, we entertained grand delusions that the return of one-party rule would erase the awful stains of the previous administration, undoing the carnage left behind after four years of living hell.

It took less than a week for our optimism to completely implode, scattered on the ground like so many shards of a broken window, our sense of safety and security torn apart yet again by an attempted insurrection that didn't succeed in destroying our democracy but did manage to demolish any illusion that our national sanity would return any time soon.

Then came the mass murders. Ten dead in San Jose. Ten more in Boulder. Nine in Indy. Four in Oxford. And another 265 fatalities in no fewer than 70 mass killings scattered across one of the deadliest years in U.S. history. We note that in Australia, a civilized democracy not unlike our own, the last mass shooting was 25 years ago. That incident so shocked the conscience of the Aussie nation that private ownership of firearms was largely ended. There have been no mass shootings since. You're welcome to draw your own conclusions.

Closer to home, it was another record-busting year of murder and mayhem in Lansing, with far too many young people dying due to senseless gun violence. Local leaders responded with a cornucopia of proposed solutions, none of which offer much hope in the short term, but all of which have the potential to put a dent in the killings over the long term. Law enforcement officials blamed an influx of illegal guns, but we think the causes run much deeper than the easy availability of firearms. Lansing's epidemic of violence is rooted, we think, in the deep despair and boiling anger that springs from a pandemic that has left those on the lowest economic rungs gasping for air and multiplied the misery of broken families for whom hope remains an illusion and violence is a cry — nay a scream — for help.

On a positive note, we heard just enough good news to keep us from being completely despondent. Although it's not quite a done deal, General Motors' proposed multibillion-dollar investment in a new Delta Township battery plant is a major coup, signaling that the Lansing region might just continue to be a major hub of the global automotive industry for decades to come. It's a welcome



## The CP Edit

### Opinion

and pointed rebuttal to Ford's recent abandonment of Michigan for the red hills of Kentucky, where the Blue Oval won't be bothered by the trifling demands of pesky labor unions seeking fair wages and working conditions for their members.

We were buoyed, too, by a handful of heroes, powerful women who showed us that a combination of enlightened leadership and true grit can still make a positive difference in the world. Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail led the charge, showing teeth when she needed to make a point, but otherwise methodically pressing forward amid the doubters and death threats to protect the health of our community by any means necessary.

Ingham County Prosecuting Attorney Carol Siemon, too, reminded us that a few carefully considered actions always speak louder than the thousands of empty words uttered by so many of her peers in public service. Siemon bravely enacted a series of policy changes that aim to reduce systemic racial biases in our criminal justice system. As thanks for her courage, she has endured blistering criticism from none other than Mayor Andy Schor, whose sudden, election-fueled slant to the right all but revokes his claim to being a liberal Democrat, putting him in the same league as Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth, who

struggles to convincingly play the role of a privileged white man who gives a damn about Black people.

We'll limit our 2021 zeroes to just one, though. While there are many who richly deserve the dishonor, our Biggest Loser of the Year Award goes to the Republican Michigan Legislature, which managed to do almost nothing worthy of even the faintest praise, while creating even more havoc by all but endorsing the D.C. insurrection, perpetuating the Big Lie that the presidential election was stolen, encouraging their supporters to deny both science and personal responsibility in the face of a deadly virus, attacking and ultimately revoking some of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's emergency powers, and launching a full-scale assault against our right to vote. It was easily the most shameful year of Republican so-called leadership in recent memory.

And now, 12 months after it began, here we are, standing on the verge of yet another new year, amid a seemingly perpetual pandemic, barreling headlong toward mid-term elections that likely will hand the reins of Congress back to Republican reactionaries, and foreshadowing the triumphant return of the Orange Plague two years from now.

Nonetheless, and against our better judgment, we're still calling our glass half full — of what, we're not quite sure — but it's got us sufficiently intoxicated to throw caution to the wind and wish each and every one of you a Happy New Year.

Please, 2022, don't make us regret those words.

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

**2.) Write a guest column.** Contact Berl Schwartz for more information: [publisher@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto: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.)



# In 2021, social turmoil crowded out academics in public schools

By **DEDRIA HUMPHRIES BARKER**  
**OPINION**

In education, the time for taking stock is June. That's the end of the academic year. Time for final examinations. Report cards. Graduations and diplomas.



Barker

Academics is why schools exist.

But let's be asynchronistic. Let's look at schools over the calendar year 2021, now ending. This year schools won a huge amount of attention. The kind of attention my Greatest Generation father promised his children from time to time. He meant punishment. Likewise in the year gone by, attention the schools received was mainly about social turmoil.

Not limited to storefronts, the year 2021 plastered NOW HIRING signs on the schools. The State of Michigan asked an estimated 35K educators with valid teaching certificates, and "tens of thousands" of educators with expired certificates to return to class. With a less than a 10 percent response, the Michigan Department of Education had no better luck hiring than a fast food restaurant.

The teacher shortage is the end result of decades of educator abuse. The classroom became a jail when administrative positions became a

separate classification of employment where for the most part doctorate degrees in administration prevailed over writing and arithmetic credentials and experience. Aspirations of teachers to help to run their districts were reduced to virtually nothing as schools became businesses. Then educators got dumped on publicly, as Republicans sought to dismantle the Michigan Education Association.

For hiring to pick up, the state must eat some crow and show classroom professionals respect.

Tests hold students responsible, but the pressure of the COVID-19 pandemic caused the Michigan Education Department to ask the U.S. Education Department to waive the school accountability test and Summative Learning assessment tests. In April, The U.S. Education Department waived the School Accountability test, but ordered the summative learning test to be given. That was a good move. Knowing how much learning COVID destroyed is as important as the social drama it caused.

In 2021, people were more involved with public education. Across America, they turned out in droves at school board meetings to discuss Critical Race Theory. That would have been impressive if people had known anything about the graduate school level theory that American institutions are riddled with racism. But they didn't. In Michigan, people stormed the Grand Ledge school board meeting, stopping the vote to hire the new superintendent to demand that Critical Race Theory not be taught. Texas even passed a law to stop teaching it. These claims fabricated problems.

In September, a reminder of the emperor-has-no-



clothes fable came when Lansing schools updated the dress code for young female students. I think administrators fell asleep in history class.

Since the 1960s chants of "Burn The Bra," efforts to control young women through their fashions have backfired. Today's young women know they have the right to defend themselves and protect their bodies. Shunning code language, they plainly say, "Get your hand off my booty." They are bigger, stronger and more able to defend themselves. They feel their sexual power, and defend it. They talk about what is really happening: oppression & misogyny. Don't worry, admin. These women students know what's up. And, they know how to put it down.

October brought Halloween, but not to four of East Lansing's six elementary schools. These principals banning Halloween actually got K.O.-ed in this round of the religious, cultural, racial and ethnic diversity fight.

November brought municipal elections in Michigan, amid general apathy in the City of Lansing. I wasn't for the incumbent mayor, Andy Schor. His first-term actions characterized him as the worst kind of student: the one who does things at the last min-

ute, creating problems in his wake. Apparently Lansing voters — the conscientious but skimpy 21 percent who participated — disagreed. Schor won a second term, with a grade of D+.

The Read by Grade Three law empowered classroom teachers to determine which students needed more instruction with reading and could hold them back. COVID-19 made this very important as attendance on screens wavered. The 2016 law said a student not reading to grade level by the third grade would be retained in grade three. But a fudge factor, the Good Cause Exemption, meant parents could reverse the teacher's decision.

Michigan Department of Education lobbyist Martin Ackley said the department does not know how many such exemptions exist. What could be a good cause for allowing a student to go forward in school without knowing how to read at grade level? Fact is, the lack of academic success keeps the school-to-prison pipeline flowing. Any parent that would file for an exemption should be locked up.

For the most part, parents are a problem, some educators say. That was clear in Oakland County where the Oxford High School mass shooting played out with the shooter's parents egging him on.

Shopping from the NRA gift catalog, Jennifer Crumbley bought a handgun for her distressed 15-year-old son. Neither she nor her husband James locked it up. They poo-pooed the teacher's alarm about their son researching ammunition on his phone in class and creating a drawing with "blood everywhere."

After a showdown in the principal's office, Mom texted her son, "I'm not mad at you. You have to learn not to get caught."

Thank you, Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald for charging the Crumbleys with involuntary manslaughter in the shooting deaths of four students. It's past time that parents were held responsible for being irresponsible. Let's continue that in the new year.

(Longtime journalist and educator Dedria Humphries Barker, of Lansing, is the author of "Mother of Orphans: The True and Curious Story of Irish Alice, A Colored Man's Widow." Her opinion column appears monthly on the last Wednesday.)

## STATE OF MICHIGAN INGHAM COUNTY PROBATE COURT NOTICE TO CREDITORS Decedent's Estate Case No. 21-1155-DE

Estate of Carol Michelle Oberg. Date of birth: 07/26/1954.

**TO ALL CREDITORS:  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:** The decedent, Carol Michelle Oberg, died 07/05/2021. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Ian Oberg, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

December 23, 2021  
Kimberly L. Savage P68267  
1483 Haslett Road  
Haslett, MI 48840  
(517) 515-5000

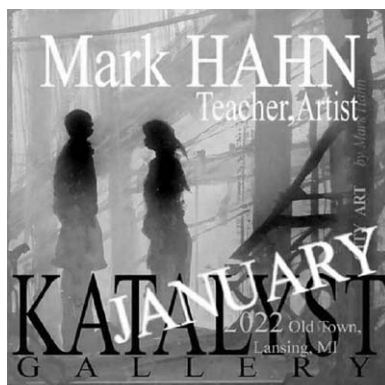
Ian Oberg  
808 Clark St.  
Lansing, MI 48906  
(517) 214-0797

CP#21-279

## STATE OF MICHIGAN Motion and Verification for Alternate Services Case No. 21-3013-DO

Reynaldo Flores, 514 E. Maple St., Lansing, MI 48906 vs Flor Elizabeth Flores, 749 N. Larch, Lansing, MI 48906. 1. Service of process upon Flor Elizabeth Flores cannot be reasonably made as otherwise provided in MCR 2.105, as shown in the following verification of process server. 2. Defendant's last known home and business addresses are 749 N. Larch, Lansing, MI 48906. b. I do not know the defendant's current home address. I have made the following efforts to ascertain the current address: Facebook Messenger. 3. I request the court order service by alternate means. I declare the statements above are true to the best of my information, knowledge and belief. 12-14-21 Reynaldo Flores, 514 E. Maple St., Lansing, MI 48906

CP#21-278





# There's no 'right' or 'left' split on the Lansing City Council



Washington

## OPINION

*(Jody Washington is the former Lansing City Councilwoman from Ward 1. This is reprinted with permission from Facebook.)*

The City Pulse attacks again! The City Pulse always targeted me from my first announcement of running for council. They have never let up on Carol Wood. Their biggest dig about a candidate is to say Carol Wood, Jody Washington or Adam Hussain likes them. The newest attack is Jeff Brown. If it weren't him, it would be somebody else. I get that they are trying to discredit him. I know there are some personal leanings against him by one CP writer, but why does this narrative continue election after election if their candidate does not win. After all, they are continuously supporting and forgiving Betz, even after all of his outrageous actions and comments. And I am always in wonder when they talk about the progressive leanings and the conservative leanings, and the two sides on council. It is ridiculous, and it is time people end that narrative. Council votes lockstep nearly 100% of the time. I particularly like this:

"Regardless of Brown's true political leanings, many Lansing insiders — including Councilman Brian Jackson — said they expect the Council to lean more conservative in Dunbar's absence." (Who are the Lansing Insiders?) Is this a secret elite group?)

I am not sure what CP views as progressive and conservative. The city government is basically about public safety, roads, and parks. Is having a balanced budget conservative? Is working for public safety progressive? Council does not have the power to turn this city into a land of whatever it is the CP is looking for. At the end of the day council ensures the budget is balanced, and there is very little wiggle room in that budget.

They list me as a conservative. Not sure what that means. I am the council person that wrote the resolution to rid the city of St. Petersburg, Russia as a sister city due to their atrocities against the LGBTQ community. I am the council person that wrote the resolution for the BWL to have 20% renewables by 2020—they surpassed that 20%. I am the council person that worked hard to have a meaningful tribute to Cesar E. Chavez by getting a portion of

Grand River Avenue renamed. This was important to the Latin-X community. I am the council person that got the ordinance dealing with drug paraphernalia changed, so that Lansing could have a meaningful needle exchange and protect the health of those with addiction problems. I, along with Councilwoman Wood, started the Diversity Ad Hoc Committee. We are the ones that updated the Human Rights Ordinance and actually put a process in place to file complaints and have them reviewed. I am the Council person that fought the 20% increase for council when over 50% of our children were living under the poverty line. (It was one of the progressives that fought for that 20% because they wanted more money.) I could go on and on and on about the "progressive" issues that the City Pulse "conservatives" have brought forward. This doesn't even account for all of the social issues and assistance the "conservatives" have taken up and paid for out of their own pockets without ever mentioning it or trying to make a splash about it in the media. Even off council, I spend most of my free time working with the homeless, fighting the system on their behalf, and helping to scaffold them to do better, while I clean the toilets at the Outreach and serve dinners at the mission. But, even with that, the City Pulse could do nothing more than make a snarky comment about me trying to help those living in tents. (I think what they are really talking about is having unregulated marijuana in the City of Lansing.)

There is no right side and left side on the Council. The narrative needs to end. This type of constant divisiveness does nothing more than tear at the very fiber of our city, and it shows. Most people here are just trying to make it through the day. I would hope that at some point the City Pulse would stop the "editorials" that rip people apart for absolutely no purpose and get on with reporting objective news. I rarely read the City Pulse any more because I find it has become a weapon for the purposes of advertising for the City Pulse. I like the people at the City Pulse. Kyle Kaminski helped me so much when I needed medicinal marijuana for my mom. I respect Berl Schwartz's intelligence and have had some great conversations with him. Todd Heywood used to be a very good friend. I just don't like unnecessary divisiveness and blanketed hatred.

These are my thoughts for the day.

# My Top 10 memorable moments of 2021

Yes, I know how subjective these lists are.

I'll label this list my 2021 memorable moments of state government and politics because it's unchallenge-

able. Who can question what I felt was memorable, but me?



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

## Opinion

**1. Jan. 6.** The U.S. Capitol riots signaled the time protests and free speech went too far, crossing the line into violence and vandalism. In Lansing, a 6-foot-high fence was built around the Capitol and the Romney Building's ground floor windows were bordered up.

Michigan Republican Party Co-chairwoman Meshawn Maddock and gubernatorial hopeful Ryan Kelley were among the Michigan Republicans tied to the event.

**2. Sept. 14.** After playing footsie with his gubernatorial campaign rollout over the summer, former Detroit Police Chief James Craig's kickoff press conference was overtaken by protesters. Craig needed to move the event to another location, sparking conversations about whether the commotion was a set-up to generate more media attention around Craig's general campaign theme that liberal protesters are out of control. Whether this was ingenious planning or dumb luck, we'll probably never know.

**3. April 6.** Rep. Jewell Jones is found at the side of Interstate 96 with a female passenger vomiting and her pants down. Jones' pants were also partially down as he tried to talk his way out of possible criminal charges for drunk driving, among other things. Despite being an auxiliary officer himself, Jones didn't follow the directions of authorities and found himself getting tackled, cuffed and thrown into a squad car.

**4. Feb. 10.** A day after the Hillsdale County Republican Party publicized hidden video taken of Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey referring to the Jan. 6 riots as a "hoax," Shirkey tried to explain to Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II over a hot mic that the FBI would identify an unidentified person responsible for the event in "the next couple of weeks." Shirkey ended up going dark with the press for several months as Republicans internally questioned if the Senate majority leader was right for the job.

**5. May 12.** Gov. Gretchen Whitmer conceded that she visited her ailing father in Florida when out-of-state or

extraneous travel was frowned upon out of concern about spreading the coronavirus. She took a private jet and paid for part of the four-day journey out of her campaign account, giving rise to the oft-used political slogan, "Rules for Thee, but not for me."

**6. March 25.** Speaking before a combative North Oakland County Republican Party gathering, Michigan Republican Party Chairman Ron Weiser refers to the governor, secretary of state and attorney general as "the three witches" a gender-charged label that drew outrage from the political left, giving Democrats and progressive group rhetorical and fundraising tinder for the rest of the year.

**7. June 22.** After 15 months of restrictions on movement and public gatherings as a way to control the spread of COVID-19, Whitmer announced the end of all state public health orders dealing with broad restrictions on impacting the general public. The announcement came before Michigan hit its 70% vaccination goal. At this point, any further restrictions were up to county health departments and school boards.

**8. Sept. 14.** State Rep. Steve Marino was hit with a personal protection order by former romantic interest Rep. Mari Manoogian. Threatening text messages surfaced showing Marino writing that he hoped her car exploded with her in it. Months later, the PPO was lifted after a judge found that explosive, volatile text messages didn't run one way in this relationship.

**9. April 29.** Former Department of Health and Human Services Director Robert Gordon told the House Oversight Committee that the governor had asked him to leave his position, citing a desire to "go in a different direction." While it was reported Whitmer had broomed him in favor of someone who would support rolling back COVID-era restrictions, Gordon's testimony was the first hard proof of this change in the administration's direction.

**10. Nov. 9.** Kelly Rossman-McKinney, Lansing's most effective public relations professional for more than two decades, died at 67 after a roughly 18-month battle with cancer. Rossman-McKinney was the heart and social center of the capital community and a trailblazer for female professionals in state government circles.

*(Email Kyle Melinn of the Capitol news service MIRS at melinnk@gmail.com.)*



# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## The great Lansing culture comeback of 2021

A year of getting back to what we love

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Several of the multiple intertwining facets of Lansing's arts and cultural scene managed to come back in quite a big way in 2021. While the worsening pandemic news throughout December proves we still have a frustratingly long way to go before the pandemic can be declared over, those who were vaccinated, took proper precautions when necessary and were otherwise not immunocompromised, had a lot to enjoy this past year if they wanted to get out of the house.

The early months of the year, before the vaccine was rolled out, were still quiet. Most every big New Year's celebration was livestreamed and through much of spring any significant event was entirely virtual one way or another. The pandemic ravaged many local establishments. The iconic Pinball Pete's very nearly found itself on the chopping block. A viral January fundraising campaign kept the neon lights glowing at East Lansing's only video arcade. Also receiving a widely shared local crowdfunding campaign in the wake of pandemic damage was The Avenue Café, which had to keep its doors closed until March.

One awesome art highlight early in the year came in the form of the Broad Museum's excellent exhibit on the drawings of Lansing-born automobile artist Michael Burton, the first African American to design cars for Ford. "Interstates of Mind" ran until August and was a touching tribute to an important local figure. The Broad also launched "Seeds of Resistance," which recollected the fascinating Beal Seed Viability Experiment that first began in 1879.

Another exhibit at MSU in March was "Beyond the Black Panther: Visions of Afrofuturism in American Comics." The exhibit was a deep dive into the world of Black comics and their overarching themes and influence on popular culture.

In March, Lansing author and

horror hound Jenn Carpenter opened a new headquarters for her vast variety of true crime and paranormal output, including novels, tours and an entire festival. The Screamatorium has made a splash in REO Town and has brought in people from around the state and across the Midwest to the historic Lansing neighborhood.

The biggest story in April was the confusion surrounding Mac's Bar. Originally the expectation was for the shuttered bar and music venue to return as a full-fledged sport's bar, one without the same propensity to host live music. After much public anguish on social media in response to the news, owner Chuck Mannino clarified that Mac's Bar was actually becoming a pizza place that would absorb the neighboring building for additional space and still host concerts, albeit in a smaller capacity. Mac's Bar has since been draped with white paint, but its original pitch-black coat still peaks through, serving as a subtle visual reminder of what the legendary Lansing music venue once was.

Another music venue that was confirmed to be no more in 2021 was the Loft. It went on a long-term shutdown in 2020 and its Facebook page posted an announcement that it was closing for good, but this post was swiftly deleted, causing some confusion about the Loft's future. In July, we were introduced to the Studio at 414, which will utilize the former Loft's building to host events like wedding receptions and stand-up comedy nights. Live music is in the cards, but not nearly on the same scale as the Loft at its peak.

As the vaccine rollout began, concerts began to make their summer return. After more than year of zero gigs, the Avenue Café hosted an emotional homecoming of sorts for Lansing's local



Courtesy

Lansing artist Brian Whitfield's new mural that celebrates the culture of Lansing was completed in October at the Allen Neighborhood Center.

indie music scene with a raucous July concert that featured performances by Jeremy Porter, Hunky Newcomers and Foxgrave. This was followed up with a series of weekly concerts featuring local bands from all genres that held steady through the remainder of the year. The summer also marked the return of Lansing JazzFest, Ten Pound Fiddle, Common Ground, weekly shows at Urban Beat and concerts hosted by the MSU College of Music. Being able to finally return to a venue with friends and enjoy a band performing live music actually in the flesh was a long overdue moment of ecstatic joy for countless people across Lansing.

Summer also marked the return of Arts Night Out in Old Town. The site of people gathering to enjoy the hard work of local artisans and dine on food from mom-and-pop restaurants on a warm summer night was in such strong contrast to 2020, one might have wondered if they had accidentally slipped into a different dimension.

Lansing Symphony Orchestra announced in February that it was canceling the remainder of its 2021 season, and it was uncertain if there would be a single LSO show this year altogether. Classical music lovers were disappointed, but come October the symphony returned to play for more than 1,000 people.

While the Capital City Film Festival

was not able to host its proper 10-year anniversary celebration with its largest edition yet, as was originally planned in 2020, it still managed to have a presence in 2021. Director Dominic Cochran helped organize several weekend drive-in screenings that were a perfect throwback to one of the coolest old-school methods of enjoying a flick. Meanwhile, the East Lansing Film Festival was able to bring back its in-person screenings with a lineup of films that were shown at Studio C! in Okemos.

At the tail end of the year, there were some big announcements. One was the transition of operations of LCC's 89.7 radio station from the college to the Michigan Radio network. A coalition of local arts figures couldn't convince LCC to turn the frequency into a community-led station and now if you tune in to 89.7, well, you'll hear exactly what you'd hear on 91.7. Community produced content is expected to launch in January. Another shakeup was the news that the Lansing Art Gallery was moving into the Knapp's Centre.

The year provided a satisfying taste of what we missed in 2020, which makes it all the more vital that the pandemic is not ignored. Should things continue to worsen, a return to the shutdowns of last year might not be out of the ballpark.



# The best books I read in 2021

By **BILL CASTANIER**

It's always tough to narrow down my best books of the year, but "Firekeeper's Daughter," by Angeline Boulley, an enrolled member of the Sault Tribe, is at the top of my list. Ostensibly a young adult thriller-mystery, Boulley's book is the coming-of-age story for a young Native American woman who is searching for her way in life. Boulley doesn't hit you over the head with tribal and reservation lore, but gently weaves it into the storyline. Look out for a movie to be made from this terrific book.

"Day of Days," by John Smolens, showcases his tremendous writing talent as he retells the story of the Bath School bombing, one of the nation's most deadly acts of school terrorism, through the eyes of several fictional characters. Smolens is one of my favorite authors of historical fiction and his penchant for research is well displayed here.

"Harlem Shuffle," by Pulitzer Prize winner Colson Whitehead, and "Deacon King Kong," by National Book Award winner James McBride, center on small-time hustlers in Black communities. Both books are deeply layered and, in some instances, leave us cheering for the bad guys who have their own sense of moral justice.

"Frank Sinatra Has a Cold," by Gay Talese, pairs one of the most remarkable pieces from the New Journalism movement with photographs of America's heartbreaker, Frank Sinatra. For those who follow New Journalism, you will be thrilled to revisit this amazing piece of longform journalism.

Although it has been available on the web for years, it takes on a new and much more textually rich form in this coffee table book. Talese was assigned to do a long profile piece on the heart-throb Sinatra for Esquire magazine. When he arrives for the interview, Sinatra has a cold and is not willing to talk. Not to be deterred, Talese uses his deep pocketed expense account to hang around and interviews hangers-on and Sinatra's friends.

Janis Joplin's "Days & Summers" is a high-end recreation of her own scrapbook, which she kept while fighting her way to the top. There are dozens of books written on the life and times of Joplin, but nothing comes close to "Days & Summers," which gives deep insight into the psyche of this troubled superstar. The scrapbook con-

tains letters to her family, especially her sister Laura, and facsimiles of posters, fliers and news clippings from old gigs.

"Dead of Winter," by Stephen Mack Jones, is the third book in the highly acclaimed mystery-thriller series.

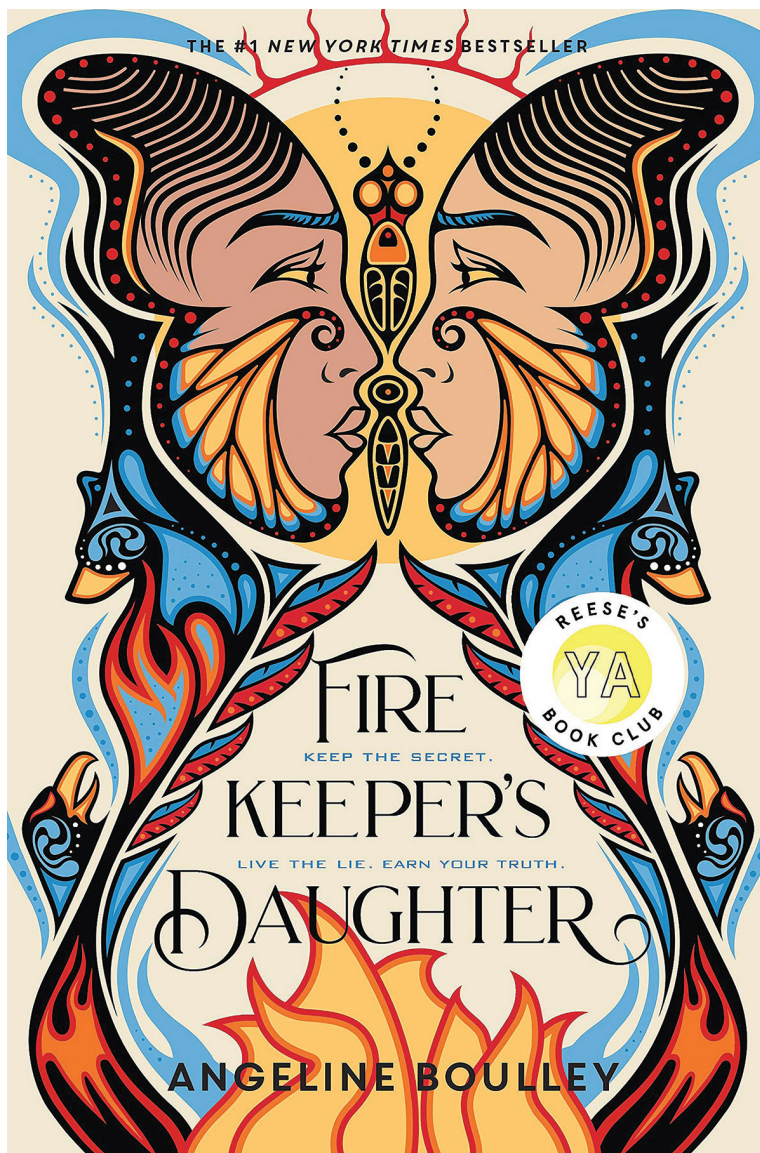
Jones is a former ad executive whose name will be familiar to many Lansing residents, since he grew up on Lansing's west side in the '50s and '60s. "Dead of Winter" follows an ex-Detroit cop as he tries to navigate the city's tough streets and, in some small way, restore

justice for the city's beleaguered residents. Reader's warning: the book has many violent scenes. Watch out for a movie based on this inner-city thriller.

"The Dockporter: A Mackinac Island Novel," by Dave McVeigh and Jim Bolone, is a self-published gem that features likeable guys who serve as porters during the island's summer season, carrying precarious loads of luggage from the ferry to various hotels. Set in the late-'80s, the dock porters are tip hustling guys who carry unimageable loads of luggage for the island's tourists. That's the fun part, and the book weaves in summer love gone awry. Conflict arises when a greedy developer emerges with plans to turn the island into a more attractive tourist destination, complete with a casino and hold-onto-your-hat automobiles. This is the most fun and heart-warming book I've read this year.

"Early Morning Riser," by Katherine Heiny, is a charming love story featuring a young school teacher and a lothario woodworker who meet up in Boyne City. This book could've easily devolved into a campy love story, but the author, who summered in Boyne City at a family cottage, has the ability to create memorable moments that are unexpected and carry a strong moral message.

"Long Road to the Circus," by Betsy Bird, with illustrations by award-winning illustrator David Small, is another young adult novel set in the '20s and revolves around a young girl's search for meaning in a small town in southern Michigan. The girl, who is unconventional and doesn't want the same old life for her future, begins surreptitiously training with a former circus performer to ride an ostrich. The book is filled with circus lore and the dreams of a young girl to move beyond her small hometown.



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# Local theater 2021: A year of ovations and tears

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

The 2021 area theater season had some yang, but it was mostly a whole lotta yin.

There were positive reopenings and there were many negatives, like Zoom-only productions and losing icons. In January, local theater legend Carmen Decker died at 97. In March, the multi-talented Thomas “Tommy” Gomez died from a heart attack at 55. Both were beloved and mourned by the theater community.

A February Zoom production full of positives was Riverwalk’s “A Doll’s House.” Director Brian Farnham made

separately taped homes seem connected. Rachel Daugherty’s “Nora” in 2-D still made the Henrik Ibsen character come alive.

Riverwalk’s October main stage return with “Doubt” was the company’s biggest triumph of 2021. Seeing a strong cast well directed on a detailed set again was a powerful experience.

“Our members and patrons moved safely and slowly in 2021 from fully online productions to outdoor cabarets and thankfully, to in-person shows in the fall,” said Jeff Magnuson, president of Riverwalk’s board of directors. “Our community is resourceful, creative, safe

and has proven that the performing arts will persevere.”

Ixion Ensemble took live theater outside in April. “Dreams” was presented in the Sharp Park amphitheater. Six plays with dream-inspired themes were chosen from over 400 submissions.

In August, 16 monologues from Ixion’s “Wheel Writer’s Group” were performed in the park. Local authors teamed with 12 actors to showcase short scripts that act as snapshots of life.

At its new home inside the Lansing Mall, Ixion presented its relevant “The Skeleton Crew” in November. The switch from the Robin Theatre offered



David Winkelstern

“Evita” takes over the marquee at The LeBowsky Center for Performing Arts in Owosso.

more stage, backstage and patron space.

Jeff Croff, Ixion’s artistic director, said he’d remember the willingness of actors and audiences to make performances possible last year. “Even if the venue was outdoors and the rehearsals were done online, everyone was committed to sharing the experience of live theater,” he said.

Williamston Theatre reopened in November with a five-week run of “This Wonderful Life.” John Lepard reprised his marvelous, one-man retelling of the classic “It’s a Wonderful Life” movie. With minimal props and setting, Lepard cleverly mimicked all the principals to standing ovations.

Lepard remembers the incredible love he felt on the stage for Williamston’s reopening. “I had a hard time keeping my emotions in check for that performance,” he said.

Michigan State University’s Department of Theatre spent most of the year making creative virtual presentations. That included February podcasts that offered acting coaching and an “Audio Anthology” that sounded like radio shows of the past.

A highlight was November’s live production of “Wendy and the Neckbeards.” Being able to see a large cast on stage with stunning production values was a treat.

Stephen D. Benedetto, the department’s chairman, admitted that 2021 was a year of uncertainty for MSU. “The creativity that comes from our students as we learned together how to work within safety protocols has been admirable and inspiring,” Benedetto said. “Masks have not stopped the exchange of energy between our students and patrons.”

Mandatory masks and virtual shows don’t work well for a dinner theater.

## Happy New Year from All Star Mechanical



We can  
create change  
together by not  
giving in  
to the  
misinformation.  
Use your voice.  
#Don'LookUp



# Favorite Things

## Remembering your Favorite Things of 2021

*City Pulse's weekly Favorite Things column provides an opportunity for people to open up about their most treasured possessions. From little knick-knacks to heirlooms, you never really know what to expect from Favorite Things. Here are some of the most interesting things that people shared with City Pulse in 2021.*

### Jaime Bozack's Conan O'Brien mug

"The party was wrapping up and I saw Conan sitting there. It was my last day as an intern, so I decided to say something to him. I had two glasses of wine, so I was feeling confident. I went up to him, put my hand on his shoulder and said, 'I just want to let you know that this has been an amazing experience. I never thought I would get to where I'm at and you're my favorite person.' Conan said, 'I'm just a guy like everybody else.' I was like, 'Yeah, you know, you are.' Then he said, 'No I'm just kidding, you should be begging me for a job right now.' I improvised, and I'm usually never this smooth, but I picked my drink back up, walked away, came back and said, 'Hi,



I'm Jaime. Can I please have a job?' He laughed really hard and said, 'I can tell you're very funny. Maybe someday I'll be working for you.'

"That interaction changed my life."

### Sirnico William's skateboard

"I got my first board when I was 11. It was left in our front yard when I lived in Detroit. It was an old red board of some sort from Target or Meijer. It was Scooby-Doo brand, I remember that specifically. My grandpa, who lived in Lansing while I still lived in Detroit, would pick me up and take me to the skate park in Lansing. I took to the locals pretty well. I'd skate around and make friends. The majority of my time learning was spent trying to pop ollies and watching skate videos and mimicking what they did."



### Crystal Mioner's mother's frying pan

"I definitely feel like there is a lineage within the item. It was hard for me to conceptualize what my favorite thing is. I don't assign too much value to most material possessions. I DJ, so I thought, 'Should I say my record player, or a record?' I thought about

what I actually use in my everyday life; what has utility to me. I ended up choosing the pan, possibly because I don't think about it at all, because it's always there and present.

"That's also kind of true about family, we can take it for granted. We can forget about how their presence impacts us and how much we rely on it, until it's not there anymore. I recalled the history of the pan — my mom got it from her mom right before I was born. I've always had it and it's really special to me."

### Eric Newcombe's brother's guitar

"My brother would always do things on the fly, and he bought the guitar and began learning it. It's kind of intense, but my brother eventually went to jail for a year over paraphernalia. About a week after he was released, he passed away due to an overdose. When I talked to his wife, I said there was one thing I wanted and



that was his guitar. She granted that wish and handed it down to me. It's been in my possession ever since.

"I kind of want to learn the songs he was learning, just so I could say, 'Hey I completed this for you.' One day, I want to pick up where he left off."

### Matt Gregory and his mannequin Becky

"It moves around, I use it to screw with people. I'll put it in my roommates' bedrooms when they're not home. Right now, it sits just past the top of the stairs. When you turn the corner, it's right there looking at you. It psyches people out all the time."



"My ex-girlfriend hated Becky. She threatened several times that if it wound up in our bedroom again, she would leave me. She hated dolls. When she came home and Becky was in a different spot and nobody else was home, she got really scared. She hated that thing so much."

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

## Theater

from page 18

Starlight didn't reopen until November. "We finally got to finish 'The Lion in Winter' after being shut down for 20 months," said Starlight artistic director Linda Granger. "It turned out to be a beautiful show in a perfect venue."

Starlight Dinner Theatre moved from a Waverly school to the First Christian Church. Its high ceiling and wood timbers added authenticity to the set, which was stored in a garage for months. Kevin Burnham and Tanya Canaday-Burnham gave star-quality performances as the King and Queen.

"If the desire and determination is there, you can prevail," Granger said.

What Chad Swan-Badgero, Peppermint Creek Theatre's artistic director, remembered most about 2021 are two productions. One was the haunting, virtual production "Holocaust

Cantata: Songs from the Camps," which was shown in spring. The other was this month's "All is Calm" — the true story of the 1914 Christmas truce during World War I — performed live at four venues.

"In both cases, I was moved by the way theater and music told the story of those who had experienced extraordinary events from our history," Swan-Badgero said.

A memorable Peppermint Creek YouTube show was "Let Us Breathe," where five local Black voices provided compelling personal experiences. It fit Peppermint Creek's goal of addressing vital issues and raising awareness.

The Lebowsky Center for Performing Arts' "Evita" in October was the year's most dazzling production. With formidable singing, dancing and a two-story set, the complicated musical was an antonym for Zoom. The cast was superb and Megan Meyer shined as Evita.

"They dealt with the COVID protocols and somehow managed to learn the hardest and highest score I've ever heard on our stage," said Julie Wenzlick, wife

of set builder Dan Wenzlick.

Lansing Community College's November production "Intimate Apparel" is my favorite memory in the outgoing year's theater. Detailed props and costumes — and terrific performances — after months of limited productions were a delight.

What LCC Performing Arts coordinator Paige Tufford-Dunckel remembers most about LCC's season was August's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" — its first in-person show after the 2020 shutdown.

"The creative team was so geeked to be back in front of a live audience after almost two years," she said. "The energy was amazing. It almost brought me to tears when I gave that first curtain speech welcoming everyone back."



Kevin Burnham as King Henry II (right) and Tanya Canaday-Burnham as Queen Eleanor in Starlight Dinner Theatre's "The Lion in Winter."

Courtesy



# I smoked a lot of weed this year. These are the products that stood out.

One columnist's totally biased guide to the dankest pot in Greater Lansing

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Over the last two years, this weekly column has afforded me the opportunity to sample hundreds of different cannabis products from every pot shop in Greater Lansing. Most of them have been good. Some have been great. But only a few products have been truly outstanding.

So, for the second year, I present: The ultimate annual listing of some of the best cannabis products in Lansterdam — in no particular order, based entirely on personal preference and curated through hundreds of tedious hours conducting highly scientific sampling procedures, mostly while lounging around in sweatpants, watching Netflix and munching on some Doritos.



## Lume — Blueberry Crumble Lightning Roll

My jaw dropped when I first saw the \$65 price tag on these luxurious pre-rolled joints from Lume. Unless you live over on the snazzy side of Moores River Drive, these are probably best suited only for special occasions — like a birthday joint. But if you're willing to splurge, get ready for a masterclass in getting high. They're the best joints I've ever had the pleasure of smoking.

Filled with premium indica Blueberry Crumble, coated in sticky THC distillate and then rolled in a heavy layer of Orange Cream kief, these delectably sweet tasting joints represent the trifecta of dessert-like cannabis concoctions. They also have a mind-numbing THC content of 44.9%.

P.S. My birthday is Nov. 11.  
**Skymint x DNA Genetics — Chocolope Wax**

It was a big deal when Skymint announced a collaboration last year with Amsterdam-based DNA Genetics and rolled out seven of the most widely sought, potent and internationally acclaimed cannabis strains available in Greater Lansing. I featured the Clementine strain in last year's guide, and Top of the Town voters followed



**Lansterdam  
in Review:  
Editor's Choice 2021**



up in November by naming it the best sativa.

This year, I found a new personal favorite in the same lineup: Chocolope. The crossbreed between Chocolate Thai and Cannalope Haze won the High Times Cannabis Cup in 2007 and is widely known as a potent sativa. And in concentrated form, those energizing and uplifting effects are exacerbated tenfold with a very potent cerebral high that doesn't fog up the brain.

## Pure Options — Rainbow Belts

This strain is exclusive to Pure Options. And it's clear why they want to keep it for themselves. The first harvest dropped in April at nearly 25% THC, and it's been a crowd favorite ever since.

A bouquet of tropical fruity scents — citrus, grape, papaya — bursts from the jar, interwoven with spicier, lavender-like floral notes. The buds were incredibly dense and shimmered chartrreuse with crystalline trichomes under the light. Don't let the candylike name and aromas fool you, however. Its tangy and complex flavor profile carried much more spice than fruit.

The effects also come on very quickly. Just a few tokes led me to an hour-long wave of relaxation under the sun — making this a great strain for someone dealing with anxiety or pain.



## High Life Farms — Royal Chocolate Bar (Blueberry Cheesecake)

Regular readers of this column know I don't drop this word too often, but

this is truly the best cannabis-infused chocolate I've ever tasted. I'm a bit biased because cheesecake is my all-time favorite dessert, but I'd probably buy these chocolate bars even if they didn't get me high.

That said: This chocolate got me incredibly high.

Decadently creamy white chocolate (apparently dyed purple) was blended with natural blueberry cheesecake flavors. The underside was coated in a crunchy, salty, pretzel-like crust. The ingredients are simple and the \$20 bar divided nicely into 20 bite-sized (5 mg THC) pieces — perfect for dosing at whatever specific level suits your needs. For me, it was the whole bar.

High Life Nuggies are also worth a mention too. These crunchy bite-sized pretzel cores were absolutely loaded with peanut butter and dipped in THC-infused chocolate. They're also lightly dusted in salt for that penultimate combination of salty and sweet — another top-notch edible.



## Redemption Cannabis — Goo Berry Vape Carts

The cannabis wizards at Redemption may have truly perfected their recipe for dank vaporizer cartridges earlier this year — namely by removing THC distillate as an ingredient altogether.

Most vaporizer cartridges are filled with distillate, which typically involves processing and isolating THC from the cheapest and least potent parts of the marijuana plant. Live resin, however, is produced by freezing the flower immediately to retain more of the character, flavors and aromatic profiles of the original strain. As a result, the high is often much more potent.

The best part? These cartridges actually taste like real weed, not artificially flavored bullshit.

Gooberry is another indica-dominant hybrid perhaps best suited for spending a rainy day inside the house. It has a sweet and spicy flavor profile with obvious notes of blueberry and pine. For me, this fruity and spicy strain was the perfect companion to binge watching Netflix all year long.



## Pincanna — The Smallz

This column has also served as a guide for finding the cheapest pot shops in town. The current mark to beat: \$99 ounces from Pincanna, the closest dispensary to Michigan State University.

The Smallz is one of the lowest tier product lines at Pincanna, an in-house brand created specifically to house its smaller sized buds and harvests that fall below the desired THC threshold. Top shelf products are branded under different lineups, like Radicle Genetics. But don't discount the brand just because it's from the bottom of Pincanna's barrel. This isn't shake.

The Blackberry Kush is an indica-dominant cross between Afghani and Blackberry, known for its relaxing effects that tend to soothe the body just as much as the mind. The dark green buds were dense and layered with trichomes. Some even had a purple hue. Despite the fruity name, I detected far more earthy and cheesy notes than any sort of berry aroma coming from this bag. And for being the cheapest weed in town, one joint still got me comfortably high for the evening.

*Kyle Kaminski is City Pulse's managing editor and a cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Editor & Publisher Magazine has also labeled him as "arguably, the state's authority on everything you need to know about cannabis." Have a suggestion for a cannabis product? Email [kyle@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:kyle@lansingcitypulse.com).*



### Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

**"Something Strange"--it's their calling.**

by Matt Jones

**Across**

1 "The Lord of the Rings" army members

5 Hosp. employee

8 "First Blood" figure

13 Spring's opposite, in tides

14 "I'm onto your scheme, forwards and backwards!"

15 "The Miracle Worker" subject

16 Vesuvius's Sicilian counterpart

17 Mix-and-match

19 City where the Demon Deacons play home games

21 Wine bouquet

22 "SNL" cast member who plays Dionne Warwick

26 Strong longing

27 Okra unit

29 Grammy winner Erykah

30 Prepare eggs, in a way

32 Title words preceding "Cooking," "Painting," and "Missing Out"

33 Prokofiev orchestral work often played at children's concerts

38 Angelic instruments

39 Slander counterpart

40 Fabric or liquid finisher?

41 Acronym for a drone-like robotic unit used for underwater research

42 Far from outgoing

45 Reason for optimism

50 Lauder of cosmetics fame

52 Movie (with a 2021 sequel) that features the characters in the circles

54 Burpee item that may

yield a bunch

57 Can't pay up

58 Perfect examples

59 Bollywood actress Aishwarya \_\_\_\_

60 Get higher

61 "The Silence of the Lambs" director Jonathan

62 Causes of some EMT calls

63 Piano layout

**Down**

1 Like many downtown streets, directionally

2 Leave some work?

3 "1812 Overture" sound effect

4 Hiccup, for example

5 Totally unhinged

6 Did with minimal effort, so to speak

7 Disclaimer for some seasoning blends

8 Get more InStyle, e.g.

9 Game scheduled for December 29, 2021 (Ducks vs. Sooners)

10 Orioles' org.

11 Actress Powley of "The King of Staten Island"

12 \_\_\_\_-lda (Tater Tots maker)

15 Potter's appliance

18 Chinese dumpling, or a 2018 Pixar short named for one

20 Becomes narrower

23 "Banana Boat Song" shout

24 Object of devotion

25 Hand-warming tube

28 Plant gametes

30 Restore from brainwashing

31 The "bad" cholesterol, for short

32 Valet in P.G. Wodehouse novels

33 "\_\_\_\_ Lap" (1983 racehorse film set in Australia)

34 "I'm hungry enough to \_\_\_\_ horse!"

35 Hall of Fame QB Aikman

36 Edge that sits on a car wheel

37 "And Just Like That ..." network

42 Cartoon kid who says "What the deuce?"

43 Doctrinal rejection

44 Affirmative votes

46 Violin aperture shaped like a curvy letter

47 Red-\_\_\_\_ (cinnamon candies)

48 CIA forerunner during WWII

49 Prefix with dactyl

51 Long-legged bird

53 Big name in gluten-free bread

54 El \_\_\_\_ (Spanish national hero)

55 Suffix with lime

56 "Orange Crush" band

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Answers on page 23

### SUDOKU

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

### Beginner

**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 23

### Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezsný    Dec. 29, 2021 - Jan. 4, 2022

**ARIES (March 21–April 19):** Historians disagree about the legacy of Jimmie Carter, who was President of the United States from 1977 to 1981. Was he effective or not? Opinions differ. But there's no ambiguity about a project he pursued after his presidency. He led a global effort to eliminate a pernicious disease caused by the guinea worm parasite. When Carter began his work, 3.5 million people per year suffered from the parasite's debilitating effects. Today, there are close to zero victims. Will 2022 bring an equivalent boon to your life, Aries? The banishment of an old bugaboo? A monumental healing? I suspect so.

**TAURUS (April 20–May 20):** In 2022, I hope you will express more praise than ever before. I hope you'll be a beacon of support and inspiration for the people you care for. The astrological omens suggest this could be a record-breaking year for the blessings you bestow. Don't underestimate your power to heal and instigate beneficial transformations. Yes, of course, it's a kind and generous strategy for you to carry out. But it will also lead to unforeseen rewards that will support and inspire and heal you.

**GEMINI (May 21–June 20):** If you search Google, you'll be told that the longest biography ever written is the 24-volume set about British political leader Winston Churchill. But my research shows there's an even more extensive biography: about Japan's Emperor Hirohito, who lived from 1901 to 1989. His story consists of 61 volumes. In the spirit of these expansive tales, and in accordance with 2022's astrological aspects, I encourage you to create an abundance of noteworthy events that will deserve inclusion in your biography. Make this the year that warrants the longest and most interesting chapter in that masterpiece.

**CANCER (June 21–July 22):** One of the 20th century's most famous works of art was "Fountain". It was scandalous when it appeared in 1917, since it consisted entirely of a white porcelain urinal. Marcel Duchamp, the artist who presented it, was a critic of the art market and loved mocking conventional thought. Years later, however, evidence emerged suggesting that "Fountain" may not have been Duchamp's idea—that in fact he "borrowed" it from Cancerian artist and poet Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. There's still disagreement among art scholars about what the facts are. But if definitive proof ever arrives that von Freytag-Loringhoven was the originator, it will be in 2022. This will be the year many Cancerians finally get the credit they deserve.

**LEO (July 23–Aug. 22):** Author Carson McCullers wrote the novel "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter". Early in the story, the character named Mick Kelly has a crisis of yearning. McCullers describes it: "The feeling was a whole lot worse than being hungry for any dinner, yet it was like that. I want—I want—I want—was all that she could think about—but just what this real want was she did not know." If you have ever had experiences resembling Mick's, Leo, 2022 will be your year to fix that glitch in your passion. You will receive substantial assistance from life whenever you work on the intention to clarify and define the specific longings that are most essential to you.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22):** After careful research, I have concluded that one of your important missions in 2022 will be to embody a perspective articulated by poet Rand Howells: "If I could have but one wish granted, it would be to live in a universe like this one at a time like the present with friends like the ones I have now and be myself." In other words, Virgo, I'm encouraging you to do whatever's necessary to love your life exactly as it is—without comparing it unfavorably to anyone else's life or to some imaginary life you don't actually have.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22):** If your quest for spiritual enlightenment doesn't enhance your ability to witness and heal the suffering of others, then it's fake enlightenment. If your quest for enlightenment encourages you to imagine that

expressing personal freedom exempts you from caring for the well-being of your fellow humans, it's fake. If your quest for enlightenment allows you to ignore racism, bigotry, plutocracy, misogyny, and LGBTQIA-phobia, it's fake. Everything I just said about enlightenment is equally true about your quest for personal success. If it doesn't involve serving others, it's meaningless. In this spirit, Libra, and in accordance with the astrological omens, I invite you to make 2022 the year you take your compassion and empathy to the highest level ever.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21):** Two mating rabbits could theoretically engender 11 million relatives within a year's time. Although I suspect that in 2022 you will be as metaphorically fertile as those two hypothetical rabbits, I'm hoping you'll aim more for quality than quantity. To get started, identify two projects you could pursue in the coming months that will elicit your most liberated creativity. Write a vow in which you state your intention to be intensely focused as you express your fecundity.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21):** A blogger named Soracities writes, "The more I read, the more I feel that a good mark of an intelligent book is simply that the author is having fun with it." Sagittarian author George Saunders adds that at its best, "Literature is a form of fondness-for-life. It is love for life taking a verbal form." I will expand these analyses to evaluate everything that humans make and do. In my opinion, the supreme sign of intelligence and value is whether the creators had fun and felt love in doing it. My proposal to you, Sagittarius, is to evaluate your experiences in that spirit. If you are doing things with meager amounts of fun and love, what can you do in 2022 to raise the fun and love quotient?

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19):** Microbiologist Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin in 1928. It was later described as "the single greatest victory ever achieved over disease"—an antidote to dangerous infections caused by bacteria. But there's more to the story. Fleming's strain of penicillin could only be produced in tiny amounts—not nearly enough to become a widespread medicine. It wasn't until 1943 that a different strain of penicillin was found—one that could be mass-produced. The genius who made this possible was Mary Hunt, a humble researcher without a college degree. By 1944, the new drug was saving thousands of lives. I mention Hunt because she's a good role model for you in 2022. I believe you'll have chances to improve on the work of others, generating excellent results. You may also improve on work you've done in the past.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18):** Catherine Pugh wrote a series of children's books collectively known as "Healthy Holly". Later, when she became mayor of the city of Baltimore, she carried out a scheme to sell 100,000 copies to hospitals and schools that did business with the city. Uh-oh. Corruption! She was forced to resign from her office and was arrested. I'd love for you to be aggressive and imaginative in promoting yourself in 2022, but only if you can find ethical ways to do so. I'd love for you to make money from doing what you do best, but always with high integrity and impeccability.

**PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20):** Piscean Vaslav Nijinsky is regarded by many as the 20th century's most brilliant dancer. He had a robust relationship with beauty, and I want you to know about it. Hopefully, this will inspire you to enjoy prolonged periods of Beauty Worship in 2022. To do so will be good for your health. Memorize this passage from Nijinsky: "Beauty is God. God is beauty with feeling. Beauty is in feeling. I love beauty because I feel it and therefore understand it. I flaunt my beauty. I feel love for beauty."

Go to [RealAstrology.com](http://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.

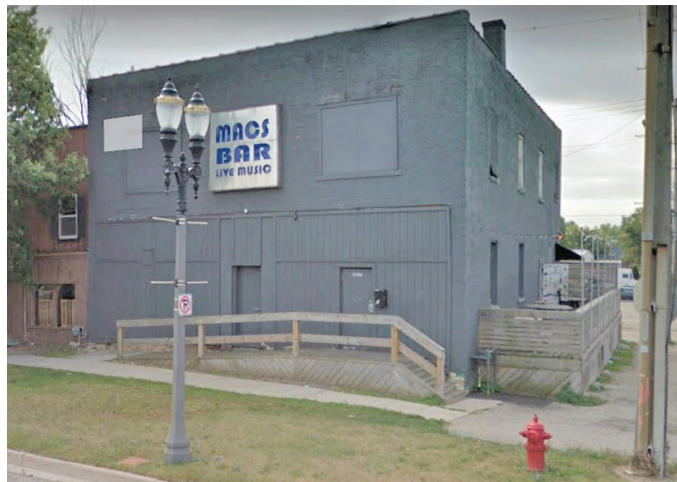


# TURN IT DOWN!

**Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene**

BY RICH TUPICA

LOOKING BACK ON 2021: THE LOFT PERMANENTLY CLOSES, MAC'S BAR CLOSES FOR RENOVATIONS



In the past year, The Loft was shuttered for good, meanwhile Mac's Bar is set to re-open with a fully renovated interior. Shown above, local outfit Crystal Drive performs at Mac's bar in November 2018. (Courtesy photos)

## Lansing music scene suffers losses and uncertainties amid pandemic

While some local music venues bravely soldiered on throughout 2021 — like The Avenue Café, The Green Door, The Robin Theatre and UrbanBeat — some other classic Lansing venues have either disappeared or are reworking their operations. Here are a couple of big changes that have already left a sizable dent in the scene.

### **R.I.P. The Loft (2010-2021) 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing**

For starters, The Loft, which opened in February 2010, officially announced its permanent closure back in August. This came after months of inactivity and speculation about the once thriving music venue. Home to a vast spectrum of musical genres, The Loft had a capacity of 500 and hosted everything from big-name acts to nights packed with local talent — including many bills hosted by the once-busy Fusion Shows concert-promotion company.

One night could be a sold-out Danny Brown show, followed by packed evenings with Esham, Frontier Ruckus or The Used. In the Summer of 2016, the Insane Clown Posse were banned from the spacious second-floor room after flooding the joint with over 1,200 liters of Faygo soda. Shenanigans aside, from its inception, The Loft always stayed focused on its initial goal: being a music venue, nothing more.

"It's not a restaurant or a sports bar," manager Jerome White told City Pulse soon after it opened. "There is no confusing what this room is — it's a room for live entertainment."

Of course, The Loft was shuttered following months of closure due to COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, The Loft's calendar remained stacked. This obviously was not an isolated incident, either. From Los Angeles to New York City, a shockingly long list of music-centered clubs, some legendary rooms, never recouped from months of inactivity and financial losses. Today, the space once occupied by The Loft is now the home of The Studio at 414. While some music happens at this venture, it's by no means a traditional rock club. Musical artists can rent the space for shows, but it's also being billed as "Downtown Lansing's premier wedding, event and banquet space."

In short, Lansing lost one of its go-to hotspots for live entertainment. It's too early to tell the long-term effects this might have on the music community as a whole, but it surely makes it harder to bring mid-level talent to the area, which also takes away the opportunity for local artists to open those well-attended concerts.

### **Mac's Bar (closed for renovations) 2700 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing**

Back in April, after being closed for renovations, rumors swirled that Mac's Bar (Lansing's CBGB-like watering hole) was indeed being fully revamped. Since the room no doubt had seen better days, the much-needed facelift was not the issue. Locals were upset about the murmurs that music was getting axed from the equation. The fast-spreading word was, in short, that Mac's was revamping into a run-of-the-mill sports bar and it would no longer be a hub for punk, metal, rock, rap and folkies looking for a stage. A social media backlash, and many "RIP Mac's Bar" posts ensued.

Then, after media across the area picked up on the rumors, Mac's Bar owner Chuck Mannino told City Pulse that rumors circulating online were exaggerated. "We are renovating the bar and we've gutted it," he said at the time. "It needs a facelift. It has for a long time. We are going back to the building itself. It will have exposed brick walls."

In a new statement to City Pulse, made last week, Mannino said he is waiting for contractors to finish the job. "Mac's will reopen just as soon as they are done," he said. "Hopefully this spring!"

Beyond that, Mannino further clarified the extent of the work happening inside the two-story brick structure. "The place

has undergone a much needed clean up," he said. "All of the old drywall is gone, the grimy drop ceiling, too. I've swapped for timeless materials: stone, wood and metal. "We're also building a new bar using reclaimed doors from Detroit."

The renovation, which started last fall, includes attaching the old law building next door to Mac's, which Mannino purchased. That space is reserved for a Detroit-style pizza joint and will be connected to the bar via a lengthy walkway. Construction aside, the bar's owner also updated City Pulse on the music situation

"The stage will be smaller — a door leading to an outside patio will be on that back wall now," Mannino said. "I feel the music will be local and regional independent acts of any and all genres. The vibe as always will be fun."

With that said, only time will tell if Mac's Bar remain an instrumental force in the music scene. From mid-1990s shows with legendary Lansing bands like Bantam Rooster, to packed nights throughout the 2000s, with countless legendary bands, the old dirty floors of Mac's Bar once held the DNA of countless local and touring bands. Will the newly refurbished space retain that gritty magic? Again, only time will tell.



# OUT on the TOWN

## Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

Events must be entered through the calendar at [lansingcitypulse.com](http://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.

### LIVE + LOCAL

**B&I Bar**  
5247 Old Lansing Rd., Lansing  
**Avon Bomb**  
Friday, Dec. 31, 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m.

**The Green Door**  
2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

**New Years Eve Bash -Atomic Annie**  
Friday, Dec. 31

**Urban Beat**  
1213 Turner St., Lansing  
**Artist's Umbrella:**  
**December Solace**  
Thursday, Dec. 30, 7 p.m.

### Wednesday, December 29

**A Not So Silent Auction** - Join the Umoja House to help raise funds for house repairs, furnishings, and our free pantry. 7-9 p.m. East House, 324 Regent St., Lansing. 517-667-8178.

**Light and Shadow** - Michigan Landscapes by Brandt MacLean. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saper Galleries and Custom Framing, 433 Albert Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-0815.

**Marvelous Machines** - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org).

**Roller Derby Basic Skills Boot Camp** - Orientation & loaner gear fitting. 4-9 p.m. Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing.

**Threads of Wisdom: Lucid Dreaming and Astral Work** - in-person or Zoom. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St, Ste 7, Lansing. 517-657-5800.

### Thursday, December 30

**Geology Rocks** - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org).

**Jazz at the Blue Owl** - Elden Kelly and Gregg Hil. 6-8 p.m. The Blue Owl in ReoTown, 1149 S. Washington, Lansing. 517-999-4695.

**Stitch 'N Bitch** - Bring your yarn or thread for a casual evening of fiber arts and chit-chat. 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center Street, Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540.

### Friday, December 31

**New Years Eve Contra and Square Dance** - Community potluck 6:30-7:45. 8 p.m.-12 a.m. Dewitt Township Community Center, 16101 Brook Rd, Lansing. [tenpoundfiddle.org](http://tenpoundfiddle.org).

**New Year's Eve Science** - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org).

**Winter Take-Home Crafts @ GLADL** - Instructions on [gladl.org/curiousgladl](http://gladl.org/curiousgladl). 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

### Saturday, January 1

**"The Art of the Common Good: Civil Dialogue and Public Discourse - How We Tear Down the Wall"** - 1-2:30 p.m. via Zoom. St Therese Church, 102 W Randolph St, Lansing. 517-487-3749. [sttherese.org](http://sttherese.org).

**Battle of the Books Kickoff Kits** - The Grand Ledge Area District Library and Delta Township District Library present Battle of the Books 2022. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

### Monday, January 3

**Comedy Night** - 9-11:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-2506. [crunchyseastlansing.com](http://crunchyseastlansing.com).

### Tuesday, January 4

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

**Sporcle Live! Trivia** - Are you a trivia buff? We will have two games starting at 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-2506. [crunchyseastlansing.com](http://crunchyseastlansing.com).

## New Year's Eve Events Guide

### Thursday, Dec. 30

**4 p.m.**  
**Youth Block Party**  
**The Fledge**  
**1300 Eureka St., Lansing**  
**Facebook.com/thefledge**  
This block party geared toward teenagers features food, dancing, karaoke, a photo booth, haircuts and even a motivational speaker. New Year's Eve with the Sea Cruisers

### Friday, Dec. 31

**5:30 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.**  
**People's Kitchen**  
**New Year's Eve Dinner**  
**2722 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing**  
**Facebook.com/peopleskitchen-lansing**  
People's Kitchen is ringing in the New Year with a delicious multi-course meal and bottles of champagne. Call ahead to make reservations, starts at \$85.

### Friday, Dec. 31

**7 p.m.**  
**Green Door New Year's Eve Bash**  
**2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing**  
**Facebook.com/thegreendoorlive**  
Rock band Atomic Annie will be playing at the Green Door's annual New Year's Eve party. Good Truckin' will be providing food until 11 p.m.

### Friday, Dec. 31

**8 p.m.**  
**Michigan Princess Riverboat**  
**Grand River Park, Lansing**  
**Facebook.com/princessriverboat**  
Ring in the New Year on the Michigan Princess Riverboat, which includes live music by the Sea Cruisers. There will also be a full prime rib buffet with dessert.

### Friday, Dec. 31

**8 p.m.**  
**Roarin' 20s New Year's Eve Bash at Lansing Brewing Co.**  
**518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing**  
**Facebook.com/lansingbrewing**  
Lansing Brewing Co. is hosting a New Year's Eve party with specialty drinks and an art deco aesthetic.

### Friday, Dec. 31

**10 p.m. to 1 a.m.**  
**Zap Zone Unlimited Game Night**  
**936 Mall Dr. E, Lansing**  
**Facebook.com/zapzone**  
Zap Zone is offering a special \$35 unlimited pass deal on New Year's Eve

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 21

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

From Pg. 21

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



# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

### Looking back at a year jampacked with new restaurants

By SKYLER ASHLEY

After the quagmire of 2020 and the suffocating shutdowns that were undeniably tough on the restaurant industry, 2021 offered some levity and normalcy. A swathe of new restaurants, cafes and other good grub joints came to Greater Lansing and have found success, earning their place and recognition among old favorites from local foodies.

In February, **517 Coffee Co.**, a local coffee roaster that made its name on the farmers market circuit, open its very first brick and mortar location on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. It was a longtime coming for owner James Defrees, who started the company seven years ago in his basement.

The spring saw an unusual influx of crab-themed restaurants. If you were craving seafood boils, you had a lot of options to choose from as Lansing was introduced to **The Tangy Crab**, **The Ocean Crab**, **King Crab** and **Crazy Crab**. Why the crab explosion? Your guess is as good as ours.

Springtime also saw the emergence of a new food truck on the south side of Lansing, **Smoke and Soul**. It also gifted us with the return of **For Crêpe Sake**, which reopened in East Lansing after its original downtown Lansing location shuttered in 2020. But the biggest arrival during the post-winter thaw was certainly **Babe's Corner**. Founded by Aharon Hebert and Will Green, the co-owners of the popular food truck **Bango's**, Babe's Corner helps fill a gap in downtown Lansing with its gourmet



Courtesy

A fresh sub sandwich from Babe's Corner, a restaurant that held its grand opening in 2021.

sandwiches and soft-serve ice cream creations.

On top of Babe's Corner, downtown Lansing had several other significant grand openings: **Salt Rock Brewing Co.**, **Sidecar Slider Bar** and the **Middle Village Micro Market** all cut their ribbons in 2021. Sidecar Slider Bar occupied its space at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Cedar Street for several months before finally opening its doors. Salt Rock Brewing Co. joins fellow breweries and distilleries **Michigraain Distillery**, **Lansing Brewing Co.** and **American Fifth Spirits**. Middle Village Micro Market will bring downtown

some interesting new food and merchandise, as it hosts several local artisan vendors at any given time.

East Lansing also received its fair share of new places to enjoy. **PappaRoti**, an international chain of restaurants originally founded in Malaysia, opened up on Trowbridge Road, and **Aloha Cookin'**, a new joint focused on Hawaiian cuisine, set up shop on Albert Street. **That's What Cheese Said**, which is a great name, is serving all sorts of cheese-based dishes from its new digs on Grand River Road. The MSU campus also got a new place to enjoy fruit juices and smoothies with the debut of the

juice bar **Clean Juice**.

Other restaurants of note to open in 2021 here in Greater Lansing include **Mr. Corned Beef**, **Lefty's Cheesesteaks**, the **Good Truckin' Diner Market**, **MexiTreats**, **D.P. Dough**, **Sonia's Soul Food**, **Zyara Grill** and **Ohana Sushi**.

Of course, all the exciting new openings had to be balanced out with some unfortunate closures. This year saw **Champion's Sports Bar and Grill**, **Leo's Outpost** on Pennsylvania Avenue and **Spartan Hall of Fame Café**. Eateries that aren't closing, but changed ownership, include **Detroit Frankie's**, **The Peanut Shop** and **DeLuca's**.

## The thickest cocoa for New Year's Eve

By ARI LeVAUX

The hot cocoa in my life had never been acceptable. It was always too thin and runny. Too much like liquid, and I didn't want liquid. I wanted a dense chocolate cloud in which to lose my sense of direction. To my great joy and greater girth, I finally solved the mystery of how to manifest this vision into reality. My thick hot chocolate is everything I yearned for.

The body of this drinkable soufflé comes from whole eggs. I start by fol-



lowing the example of the Viennese, who famously add egg yolk to their cocoa to create a decadently smooth, glossy brown emulsion. But unlike the

Austrians, I don't neglect the whites. Rather, I beat them stiff and then whisk the stiff whites into my cocoa.

Unlike whipped cream and other culinary foams, stiff whites won't dissolve in heat. Their enduring density comes from the egg white proteins, aligned by the action of the whisk into fiber-like structures that persist in the chocolatey brew. The egg whites make the cocoa so thick and so puffy it's like drinking a chocolate cloud as the chocolate cloud drinks you.

On New Year's Eve, doctor the drinking chocolate with Kahlua. The following morning — New Year's Day — add some of this puffy cocoa foam to a cup of coffee, where it will float like professionally steamed milk. Without mixing with the coffee, the cocoa will still manage to hitch a ride in each sip. As a pair of stimulants, coffee and chocolate act greater than the sum of the parts, because the theobromine in chocolate and caffeine in

See Cocoa, Page 25



# Cocoa

from page 24

coffee are mutually enhancing, as you stare piercingly into the blank canvas that is the year to come.

When hot cocoa can be simultaneously so thick and so silky, anything is possible. So be firm with your principles, flexible with your expectations, and perfect with your hot cocoa, and you will crush 2022.

## Heavenly, Earthy, Perfect Cocoa

Here is my recipe for the thickest, fluffiest and most satisfying hot cocoa on the planet. It's your shield against the cold dark days to come. And you can make as much as you want, without a prescription.

2 tablespoons butter

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup semi sweet chips

1 tablespoon vanilla

2 cups milk

3 tablespoons cocoa powder

2 tablespoons sugar

1 cup heavy cream

Pinch nutmeg (optional)

2 eggs

On low heat, melt the butter. Add the vanilla and chocolate chips and mix together without letting anything stick or burn. Add the cocoa powder and stir it in, quickly followed by about half of milk to dissolve any lumps and prevent burning. When it's smooth, add the cream, nutmeg and the rest of the milk. Slowly bring the cocoa to a sim-

mer, whisking constantly.

Separate the eggs, putting the yolks and whites into separate mixing bowls. As the cocoa heats, gently add a teaspoon of cocoa to the yolks, stirring vigorously. Do this again and again until the temperature rises. This tempers the yolks, making them heat resistant, so we don't end up with scrambled eggs in our cocoa. Add the hot, tempered yolks to the pot of hot cocoa. Stir it in well. Turn off the heat.

While the cocoa cools, use a whisk to beat the egg whites stiff.

If you aren't immunocompromised or otherwise wary of undercooked eggs, you can scoop some of those stiff whites into a cup and pour the cocoa over them, stirring in as much or little as you wish. The bland flavor of the egg whites makes for a fun contrast with the cocoa, and you can eat it with a spoon. Alternatively, let the cocoa cool to room temperature. Fold in the whites and gently reheat, whisking in the whites until perfectly smooth and thick as wet cement. No matter how you serve it, you'll need a spoon to finish the job.

To float some of this foam on coffee, spoon some into a cup and pour the coffee into it. Then drink your coffee through the cocoa, as you would sip your brew with any nutritious breakfast.

(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.)



Ari LeVaux's special hot cocoa blend.

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