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CityPULSE

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Tenth Birthday Banquet

MSU Broad Museum finds the right angle

see page 15

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FROM 8:30AM to 11:30AM FOR THE
2022 VIRTUAL ANNUAL EVENT**

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SUNDAY, MAY 15th, 2022 FROM
11:00AM to 12:00PM ON WILX**

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DR. BRENDA JONES-HARDEN *Children and Families Expert*

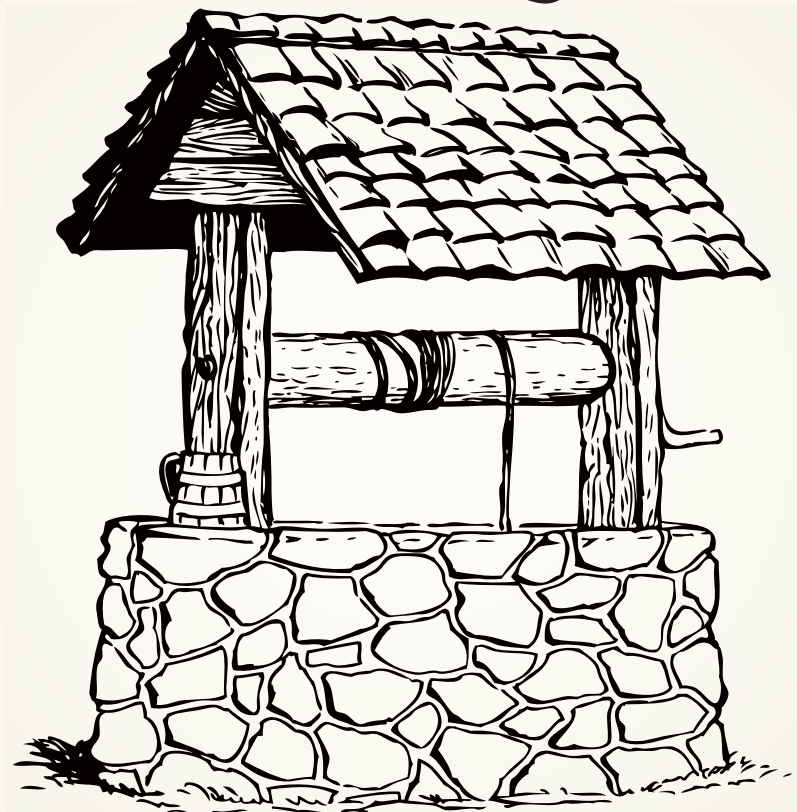


Dr. Brenda Jones-Harden is the Alison Richman Professor for Children and Families, at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. She directs the Prevention and Early Adversity Research Laboratory, where she and her research team examine the developmental and mental health needs of young children who have experienced early adversity and toxic stress, particularly those who have been maltreated, are in foster

care, or have experienced other forms of trauma. A particular focus is preventing maladaptive outcomes in these populations through early childhood programs. She has conducted numerous evaluations of such programs, including early care and education, home visiting services, parenting interventions, and infant mental health programs. Dr. Jones-Harden is a scientist-practitioner who uses research to improve the quality

and effectiveness of child and family services and to inform child and family policy, especially in the area of child welfare. She is currently the Vice President of the Board at Zero to Three, and serves on various federal, state, and local advisory boards. She received a PhD in developmental and clinical psychology from Yale University and a Master's in Social Work from New York University.

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Why a family took down their Confederate flag

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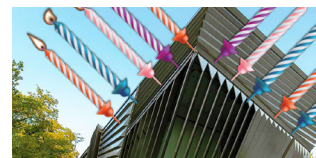
Meet the crew behind Lansing Facts

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Learn about some awesome new cannabis products

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Cover Art

By Skyler Ashley

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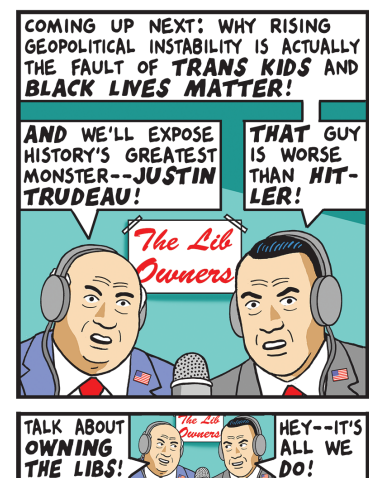
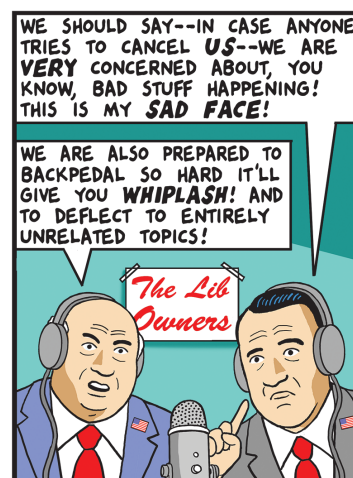
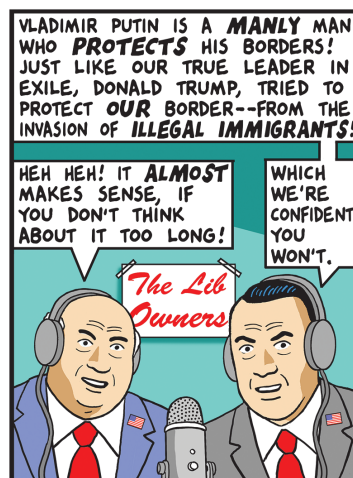
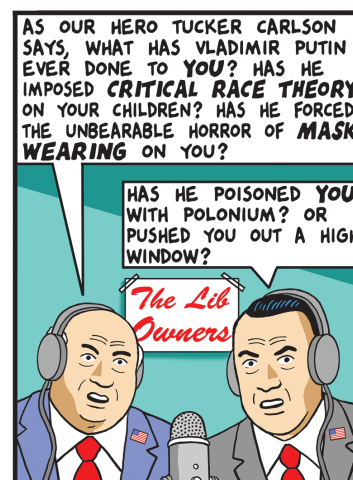
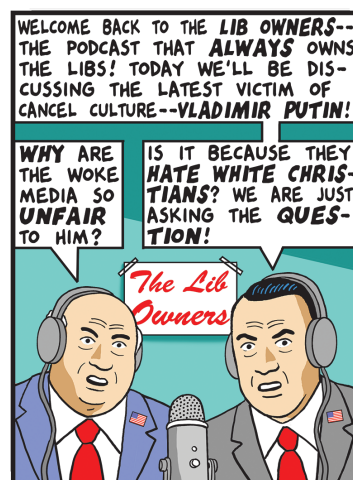
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

Nonprofit leader: 'No blame, just change' to curb gun violence

Commission (finally) picks nonprofit to launch Advance Peace initiative

Terrance Cooper doesn't want this story to be about Lansing's problems.

He'd rather not see more news coverage about rising levels of local gun violence — like about the 15-year-old boy who was hospitalized last month after being shot in front of a south Lansing liquor store, or the 16-year-old who took a bullet in the arm last week in Delta Township.

Cooper doesn't think that the city needs another reminder that at least 49 homicides (and 118 non-fatal shootings) have been reported here within the last 26 months. He also doesn't want to see another story about a local teen facing murder charges — like the 16-year-old Lansing boy who was charged last week in the recent shooting death of 17-year-old Allayah Walker-Travis.

Instead, Cooper said that he cofounded the nonprofit People Ready Activating Youth, or PRAY, in 2019 to focus exclusively on solutions. And with nearly \$300,000 in taxpayer cash earmarked to help PRAY mitigate gun violence this year, there are plenty still to be found.

"If you spend too much time on the wrong things, the problem that you're trying to fix is only going to get worse. This isn't about the problems. I'm about the work — and getting the work done," Cooper told City Pulse. "I'm not a talker. I don't like talking about problems. I like for people to see the actions, see the solutions and see the work, and we've been doing the work."

The Ingham County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously last week to pick PRAY as the local operator (at least through 2022) of a new three-year gun violence interruption initiative called Advance Peace. Cooper is PRAY's unpaid top executive.

Advance Peace was first introduced to the Lansing City Council in 2020 by the program's founder, Eastern High

School graduate DeVone Boggan, as a way to work directly with local at-risk teenagers and interrupt a cyclical and retaliatory cycle of gun violence in the city. Over the next year, PRAY is tasked with hiring up to six people and eventually recruiting a 25-person cohort of the city's most potentially lethal residents into the 18-month "fellowship" program.

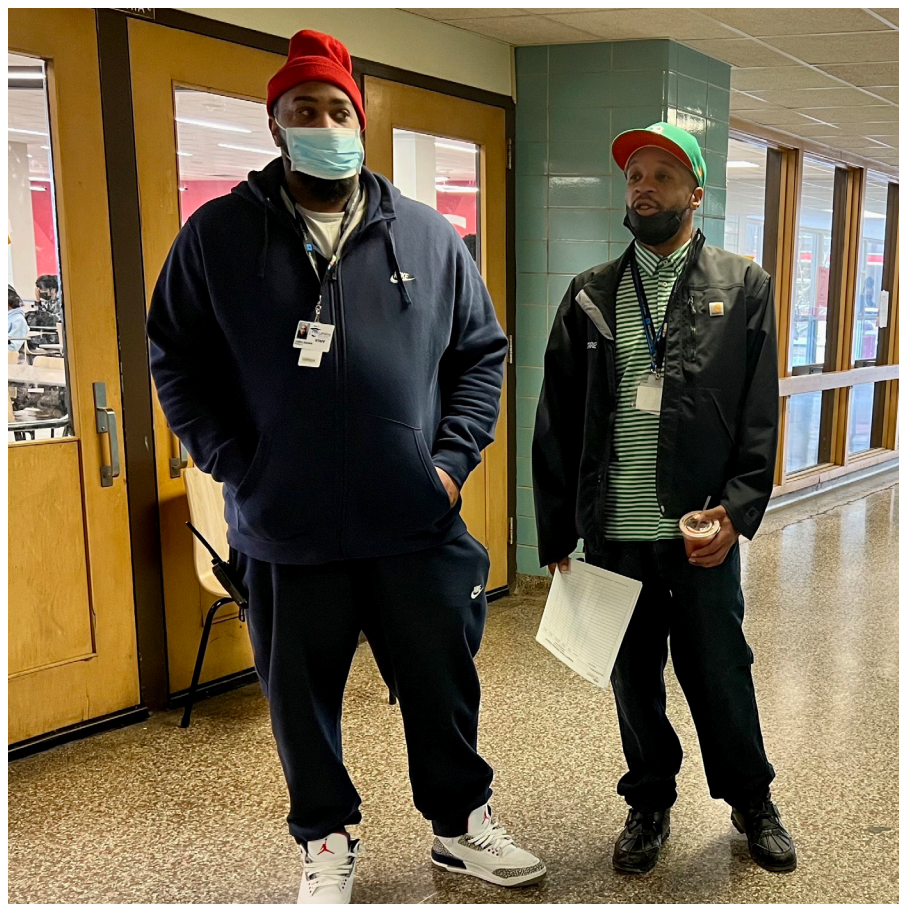
The nationally renowned initiative, by design, will employ ex-convicts known as "neighborhood change agents" who can build bonds with troublemakers and encourage them to participate in the initiative — which includes travel and educational opportunities, counseling and monthly stipends of up to \$1,000 for each participant. Funding for the program is split largely between the city and the county (alongside a few state grants) for a total of up to \$535,000 in 2022.

About \$280,000 of that cash can be used to reimburse PRAY for its payroll and operating costs. If all goes well, the contract can be renewed for two more years for an additional \$1.4 million.

Last week's commission vote marked the end of a protracted selection process — involving at least three other nonprofits — that was initially supposed to have ended about six months ago. Commissioners decided last year against an initial staff recommendation to pick The Village, another Lansing nonprofit, before it finally moved forward this year with a joint operating partnership between PRAY and Peckham Inc. Officials at Peckham pulled out of the deal last month and recommended PRAY for the full contract, which was awarded without a hitch.

Advance Peace representatives from California are expected to embark on a six-month training process with PRAY this month and further develop the program into next year, county officials said. Afterward, Cooper plans to assemble a team of 10 people who can continue to identify "clique leaders" in Lansing, whom he suspects to be responsible for catalyzing the local violence.

"I don't call these gangs. They're



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Terrance Cooper (right) and his colleague James Brown (left) keeping watch over students in the hallways before lunch at Everett High School.

cliques," Cooper added. "I was in a gang. I grew up in a gang. When you say that, there are rules. You just couldn't do certain stuff. There were certain people you couldn't touch. You had to get permission before you did things unless you were at war. These aren't gangs. It's more like different groups of friends who all grew up here together."

From there, it's simply about sitting down and talking with people — "building bridges" — and stepping up into a mentorship role that is too often missing from many local homes, he said.

"My plan is just to talk to the young people — as many of them as I can — and just touch base with them, reach out to them, talk to them," Cooper said. "Lansing is really small. Get 10 people together, and you can start to

reach different families and neighborhoods and groups. Then, you can really start to piece together this puzzle of how these different groups all interact together."

Trying to interrupt gun violence on the frontlines of a "warzone" like Lansing is a dangerous job — especially when you're not a cop and would rather not be associated with police, Cooper said. Building those genuine connections with "high-risk" teens before they decide to end their arguments with bullets can be delicate work. News crews and politicians tend to get in the way.

It's part of the reason Cooper declined to elaborate much further on the scope of his plans — and also why it took Cooper longer than two weeks to agree to an interview on the sub-

Peace

from page 5

ject.

“I really don’t want to give Advance Peace any airplay until it actually starts to do something for Lansing,” Cooper said. “We’re working on that gun violence stuff, but it can’t all be public. Once the guys who we’re dealing with find out that it’s public, they’ll stop sharing things. It takes away our opportunity to intervene. They’ll see the public part of this and they don’t want to deal.”

That lack of specific operational details, however, doesn’t mean that Cooper isn’t working, he explained. Gun violence prevention is only one small aspect of PRAY’s broad, community-centered approach to solving just about every other problem in Lansing.

“I don’t like talking about it. I like people to see the actions and see the work,” Cooper added.

In 2011, Cooper, 45, was convicted of armed robbery and felony, landing him behind bars for more than five years. Police reports were not immediately available, but Cooper said he robbed a man who owed him money near a south Lansing grocery store, which was captured on tape and reported to authorities.

The case, which was consolidated with counterfeiting and forgery charges in Eaton County, netted him a sentence of up to 25 years; Cooper was paroled after about five years in 2015.

Afterward, Cooper said he was set on turning his jailhouse notebooks filled with charitable ideas into reality. He said he helped to form The Village Lansing, then after the atmosphere there got far “too political” there, he decided to hang out his own nonprofit shingle as PRAY.

Over the last two years, the group has formed relationships with several other nonprofit organizations to organize citywide food distribution efforts, help the homeless and build a standing mentorship program at Everett High School. PRAY also helped raise \$2,600 for seven families whose apartments were ravaged in a fire at the Arbors at Georgetown apartments.

“There are a lot of moving pieces with PRAY and a lot of different ways we help Lansing,” Cooper said. “The biggest thing is that we can all get along. We never leave anyone out.”

He added: “I also want nothing to

do with politics. That’s when things can start to get messy.”

Cooper’s mentorship role at Everett made such a difference over the last year that Superintendent Ben Shuldinder said that he personally carved out a part-time support specialist job for him this year. It pays \$20 an hour and mostly involves babysitting hallways between classes, but more important, it offers Cooper the opportunity to build his teenager connections.

Cooper shook at least two dozen hands there last Friday and pounded another dozen fists; it seemed nearly every student — even those guided by “disciplinary escorts” — looked up to him. At lunch time, Cooper and The Village cofounder Aaron Blankenburg, another part-time Everett specialist, became the cafeteria DJs. They talked to students about everything from sports to fashion to some of their deeper troubles back home.

“We never waited on the county. We’ve been here doing the gun violence work now,” Cooper said. “The tools of Advance Peace — that brand and those resources — will be lovely when they come in, but we haven’t been waiting. We just needed to start caring more about our kids.”

He added: “The most basic way to do that is to stop looking for blame. We’ve all screwed up. Our generation dropped the ball, flat out, and that’s why I’m in the schools. I want to get at them from a younger age instead of waiting until they’re out there mixed up into some bad business.”

Eventually, Cooper hopes to rent out a downtown office space for PRAY that would also feature a cafe stocked with snacks and drinks, as well as a “fellowship” area for local teens. Everyone would be welcomed — especially those who need a safe place to just be themselves.

“You can’t wave a magic wand on gun violence. People are going to die,” Cooper said. “I don’t want people to think this is going away in a day. That’s magic Harry Potter shit, and I don’t do magic Harry Potter shit. I do real life. That all starts with showing these kids a better way.”

Cooper also has a new, solutions-focused motto for his nonprofit: “No blame. Just change.”

“That means we’re not blaming the mayor or the City Council. We’re not going to blame the police. We’re also not blaming the kids or the parents. We’re taking responsibility,” he said.

— KYLE KAMINSKI



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Terrance Cooper (left) introduces Lansing School District Superintendent Ben Shuldinder at a town hall meeting at Everett High School.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS East Lansing City Council

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearings to be held by the East Lansing City Council on **Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**, at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing:

1. Request from J.J. Investment Properties, LLC for site plan and special use permit to renovate the existing 3-story building at 251 W. Grand River Avenue from an office on the first floor and Class A multiple-family dwellings units on the upper floors to a Class B multiple-family dwelling for use as a fraternity with occupancy for 45 residents. The property is zoned B-1 (General Office Business District).
2. Request from Delta Psi Alumni Housing Corporation for site plan and special use permit to use the Class B multiple-family dwelling at 532 Ann Street for a fraternity with occupancy for no more than 15 residents. The property is zoned RM-32 (City Center Residential District).
3. Request from FPAW Michigan, LLC for a special use permit to open an adult use marihuana retail establishment at 1415 E. Michigan Avenue. The 4.6 acre property is zoned B-2 (Retail Sales Business District).

The public may attend and participate at all meetings in person. Additionally, members of the public may participate electronically in all meetings. Please contact the City Clerk or visit the City’s public meeting portal for electronic access information:

Jennifer Shuster – City Clerk
410 Abbot Road
East Lansing, MI 48823
jshuster@cityofeastlansing.com
<https://cityofeastlansing.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Materials related to the request are available for viewing at the Department of Planning, Building, and Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823 between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm or on the City’s website located at www.cityofeastlansing.com/currentapplications. Written comments may be sent prior to the public hearing to City Council, City of East Lansing, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, Michigan, 48823, or by email to council@cityofeastlansing.com

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon request received by the City seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring aids or services must contact the City Manager’s Office, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823, (517) 319-6920 (TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777) or via email at nmostel@cityofeastlansing.com.

This notice is posted in compliance with P.A. 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and published in compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, 2006 P.A. 110.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#22-059

Down with the Confederate flag, up with a Harley Davidson

Homeowner's son: 'Please express my apologies'

Even in rare sunshine, Susan "Sue" Chapman was not thrilled to be out in the cold on a Saturday in February at all.

That she had to go out there to change the Confederate flag she's flown above her southeast Lansing home for more than four decades pissed her off even more.

But she did it anyway, with tears in her eyes and the assistance of her sons.

Chapman was prompted to change her flag after Melik Brown, a videographer and radio host, decided it was time Lansing talk about the inappropriateness of flying Confederate flags.

Brown said he strives to put only joy into the world, but for years he would cringe when he passed Chapman's house.

For Brown, seeing the flag meant that the neighbors flying it probably didn't like him — and not for the content of his character. After all, the "stars and bars" is the flag flown by violent white supremacists and Brown is a Black man.

Last month, Brown photographed the home and posted it to Facebook, where it immediately received more than a hundred angry comments, a few threats, and the attention of City Pulse, which assigned a writer to go knock and find out: Who has the gall to fly a Confederate flag in Lansing?

After several attempts to contact the homeowner, Chapman finally called back.

Chapman said she had no idea there had ever been any conversations about her flag — or why anyone would take issue with it.

She said she has friends who are Black and no one in her house ever had "any problems with the blacks."

But she didn't want to talk about the meaning of her flag. "It has a meaning for me, and it is nothing hatred," Chapman said, attempting to end the discussion.

The following morning, Stacy Chapman called City Pulse from his home in Florida. He is Chapman's younger son and he wanted to talk about his parents, Sue and Charles "Chuck" Chapman.

He said they started flying that flag high above their bungalow not long after they purchased their home in 1975. It was before he was born.

To Chapman, the flag was his parents'



Melodee Mabbitt/City Pulse

Sue Chapman and her son Kirk swap out a Confederate flag for a Harley Davidson one at Sue Chapman's southeast Lansing home.

emblem and for them it had nothing to do with race. He said his parents flew it to signify their willingness to stand up to the government, to live freely and to enjoy their civil liberties. After all, it was the "rebel flag" and his parents were bikers.

The Chapmans lived together under their Confederate flag and raised him and brother Kirk.

Then on Aug. 8, 2002, at age 49, their father died under their Confederate flag at home surrounded by his wife and their sons.

The Chapmans have continued to fly the Confederate flag as a daily reminder of their husband and father, Stacy Chapman said.

He said his father worked hard every day alongside a beloved colleague, a Black man who came to Chapman's funeral along with 300 other people of all races.

He said his father was a simple man with a rebel flag, a love of Harley-Davidson motorcycles and neither of his parents were ever racist.

Still, the Confederate flag is associated with slavery, segregation, racism, white supremacist views and a whole lot of violence.

Since 2015, when Dylan Roof wrapped himself in the Confederate flag and murdered nine Black churchgoers, efforts to remove Confederate symbols on public land have increased and the Southern Poverty Law Center has been mapping and tracking those efforts.

Kimberly Probolus, an expert on Confederate monuments, said hate groups didn't transform the flag into a symbol of white supremacy.

"The argument that the flag represents heritage ignores the near-uni-

versal heritage of African Americans who were enslaved by millions in the South and later subjected to brutal oppression under the white resupremacist Jim Crow regime," Probolus said.

Stacy Chapman said he is aware that Confederate memorials are being re-

moved from public areas all over the South and he supports those efforts.

So, he sent his mother a new flag — a brown and orange Harley Davidson one. He also asked that an apology be extended to Brown and his family.

Sue Chapman, meanwhile, said she has not changed her mind: She and her late husband were never racists.

Chapman agreed to replace their flag with the Harley Davidson one because of her concern that continuing to fly something understood to be a hate symbol in front of her home could put her at risk of becoming a target of hate and violence herself.

Chapman said the new flag doesn't hold quite the same meaning. Her son called her and her late husband "rebels," and that will not change. She wants people to know that she hasn't been bullied and "you haven't won."

But since she can't change the world, she had to change her flag.

"You're welcome," she said.

— MELODEE MABBITT

PUBLIC NOTICE Step 7 of the 8-Step Process Final Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity In the 100-Year Floodplain DATE: March 2, 2022 CITY OF LANSING, MICHIGAN

To: All Interested Agencies, Groups, and Persons

Purpose: Notice and Public Explanation of Proposed Projects

This is to give notice that the City of Lansing under 24 CFR Part 58: Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection, has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 to determine the potential affect that its activities in the floodplain will have on the human environment for demolition under Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Since CDBG funds are being used for this project in the floodplain, the City of Lansing is completing an 8-step Environmental Review process. The proposed project is located at 616 S. Mifflin, Lansing, MI and is being proposed for demolition.

The City of Lansing has considered several alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial value if the structures were to be rebuilt in the floodplain. However, the best option is to acquire, demolish and keep the lot vacant with no plans for future development on the lot.

The City of Lansing has reevaluated the project in the floodplain and has determined that there are no other practicable alternatives but to demolish and keep vacant. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11988 are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments. This activity will have no significant impact on the environment for the following reason: The property at 616 S. Mifflin is located in a flood plain and being demolished with no future plans for development. Therefore, there is no disturbance to the area of the floodplain.

There are three primary purposes for this notice: First, people who may be affected by activities in the floodplain and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information about floodplain can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in the floodplain, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received at the City of Lansing during the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on or before March 17, 2022 at the following address: Doris Witherspoon, Senior Planner, Department of Planning & Neighborhood Development, 316 N. Capitol Avenue, Suite D-2, Lansing, MI 48933, Phone: 517-483-4063 or via e-mail at doris.witherspoon@lansingmi.gov.

CP#22-057

Vandalized Malcolm X marker to be replaced — and refreshed

Lansing childhood ‘critical’ to shaping civil rights icon, Rep. Anthony says

A small brigade of Trump supporters came to the state Capitol last year to trample on democracy — and they may have also vandalized Malcolm X’s homesite marker in Lansing.

Two days after the larger insurrectionist riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, lead tour guide Joy Gleason, of Greater Lansing Area Destination Tours, noticed that the marker designating the civil rights icon’s childhood home along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard had been destroyed.

The working theory: It was rammed

by a truck — perhaps driven by Trumpers, Gleason said.

The Lansing Police Department doesn’t have any record of the vandalism. A spokesman told City Pulse there was never a call for service reported at that location. The mystery continues.

Still, the sign is gone. And now State Rep. Sarah Anthony is working with local residents — and Malcolm X’s family — to erect a new marker to reflect the 16 years Malcolm X spent in Lansing.

“Community members affirmed my feeling that we needed to slow down and be sure that the language on the marker was still reflective of Malcolm and of his legacy,” Anthony said. “It was fine for the time, but now given so



Courtesy

This historic marker was damaged in January last year outside Regency Townhomes, 4705 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., in south Lansing. State Rep. Sarah Anthony, D-Lansing, is leading an effort to replace it.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING PARK BOARD MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Meeting will be held at Foster Community Center located at 200 N. Foster Avenue, on Wednesday, March 9 at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of receiving public input for the 2022 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant projects — 1624 E. Cavanaugh land acquisition, Brenke Fish Ladder Outdoor Venue and Clifford Park Pickleball courts. All interested persons are invited to attend this public meeting.

BRETT KASCHINSKE, DIRECTOR, PARKS AND RECREATION — 483-4042

CP#22-058

Women’s HERstory Month

If a woman is loud, she’s considered hysterical. If a man is loud, he’s considered assertive. I think about this a lot. The patriarchy is consumed with superiority, and has been a major stumbling block in our society, much like systemic racism. White supremacy and patriarchy go hand in hand. Historically, men have decided what is acceptable and what is not, women’s opinions were not even considered. While times have changed, the patriarchy still reigns, and although there has been some progress, a lot of work is left to be done. Men are not superior, I’d argue that men could learn so much more from a woman, than a woman from a man.

PAID FOR BY A BMF

many conversations around race relations, equity and inclusion, the family and I thought we could do a little better.”

The Michigan Historical Commission will review language for the marker on March 16. If approved, the new sign will be erected by Malcolm’s birthday on May 19, Anthony said.

Erected in 1975 at 4705 S. Martin Luther King Blvd., the state historical marker noted that Malcolm lived on the site in the 1930s and that his early life was “marked by the violent death of his father, the Rev. Earl Little, on the Michigan Avenue Streetcar tracks.” The marker also that “under severe economic stress the family was separated, and in 1937, Malcolm was sent to Mason.” It had also described the world-renowned civil rights leader’s life after Lansing.

Anthony said she is working with Malcolm’s daughter, Ilyasah Shabazz, and his niece, Deborah Jones.

“His time in Lansing is critical to who he became. Lansing is in his blood,” Anthony added.

MLK Jr. Boulevard isn’t the only place in Lansing where Malcolm X called home. When he was 4 years old, his father bought five plots of land on Grand River Avenue and Alfred Avenue in the Westmont subdivision, near the airport. At the time, only white people were permitted to live in that subdivision, so the company that owned it sued to remove them.

The court ruled to evict them, but before the family could move out, their home was burned down by the Black Legion, an organization of white supremacists active in Lansing.

The family then briefly lived on

Charles Street near the border of East Lansing while Little built the house on MLK Jr. The family moved there in 1930 and Malcolm enrolled in Pleasant Grove Elementary school. The next year, his father was killed.

Local cops formally declared his death a suicide, which resulted in the family’s insurance company refusing to pay out on the death. State welfare workers later declared Malcolm’s mother, Louise Little, mentally unstable and was placed by her doctor against her will into a psychiatric facility.

At 14, Malcolm was also accused by a teacher at West Junior High School of having put a tack on a chair, was expelled from the school district and then sent to a new foster home in Mason.

“How his mother was treated after his father passed away and split his family apart and institutionalized his mother — that all played a role in shaping his voice,” Anthony explained.

Anthony grew up in Regency Apartments, which were built on the site of Malcolm X’s old home.

She saw his marker every day. For her, ensuring a proper replacement is erected is personal.

“Even as a kid it felt odd that we weren’t uplifting Malcolm the same way we were with Martin Luther King,” Anthony said. “With this marker, I am on a bit of a mission to change that. We’re in a time right now when there is a yearning for real history. They’re yearning for honesty and real conversation. And a part of that has to start with us having a reckoning around Lansing’s role.”

— MELODEE MABBITT

ARTS NIGHT OUT

Absolute GALLERY
AND CUSTOM FRAMING

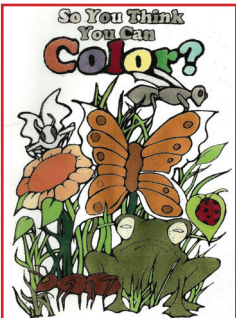
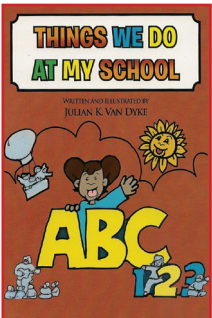
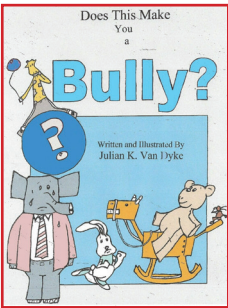
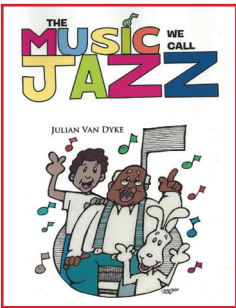
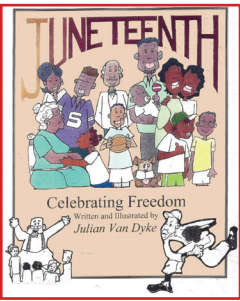
Friday, March 4, 2022, 5-8 p.m.

Arts Night Out provides artists a night to shine in Lansing’s Old Town district.

Absolute Gallery is pleased to host the multi-talented John Kroneman. John’s work spans the gamut from acrylic landscape paintings and portraits to dimensional mixed media collages. As if this isn’t enough, John also has a vision for photography.

John can also be found at area events performing original music as well as old classics.

Come meet John and witness his boundless talents at Absolute Gallery.



Meet Author and Artist Julian Van Dyke
Book Signing Event
Saturday, March 5, 2022, 12 - 4 p.m.

Julian Van Dyke will be showcasing his books that present subjects such as Jazz Music, Bullying and Juneteenth.

The audience for Julian’s books are elementary school age, but from personal experience, I learned a lot and enjoyed them.

Julian is a renaissance man with his multi-faceted talents ranging from playwright, author, actor, and artist. Julian is a “must meet” local “legend in my view” person.

Remember, you regret 100% of the opportunities you don’t take. Don’t regret missing this event!

REWIND

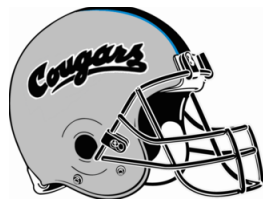
NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS

By KYLE KAMINSKI



Lansing fêtes Catholic footballers

State Rep. Sarah Anthony hosted a celebratory reception at the Capitol to celebrate the Lansing Catholic Central football team on its MHSAA state championship win. Players and their families were joined by Lansing Mayor Andy Schor for an honorary tribute and luncheon.



Masks off at Lansing City Hall

Mayor Andy Schor lifted a mandate that face masks be worn inside City Hall, triggering the Lansing City Council to follow suit by resuming with maskless meetings as of Monday (Feb. 28).

Brewery cancels MAGA mixer

Following a firestorm of online criticism and talks of boycotts, Lansing Brewing Co. decided against playing host late this month to a "MAGA Mixer" event that was organized by Republican lobbyists. The brewery initially defended its decision to allow the post-Trump rally shindig to continue, but then shied away the following day after "learning more" about the event.

East Lansing creates Black history classes

The East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education approved the addition of a Black American History course to the high school's optional elective offerings, reports the Lansing State Journal. The class, which will begin next spring, will reportedly include lessons on the slave trade and the civil rights movement, as well as examine achievements made by Black people through history.

Lansing teenager charged in shooting

An unidentified 16-year-old Lansing boy has been charged with open murder in the Feb. 16 shooting death of 17-year-old Allayah Walker-Travis on the 3500 block of Wainwright Avenue. Cops said an original 20-year-old suspect is still part of the investigation but not under arrest. The boy was being held at a juvenile detention facility this week as the criminal case proceeds.



Lansing banker gives from grave

Lansing Community College received a \$900,000 donation from the estate of Richard A. Sellers, an Eastern High School graduate who retired as a top executive at Comerica Bank and died in 2012. Sellers previously left an initial gift of \$100,000 to support student scholarships. The additional cash will help to keep those scholarships going indefinitely, college officials said.

No racism for Lansing soccer club

Lansing Common became an official member of the Anti-Racist Soccer Club, a coalition dedicated to reinforcing a commitment to combating racism in the Greater Lansing community. Team officials said it's more than a hollow commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The membership also comes along with a 10-point plan and opportunities for public engagement.

How can the government help seniors?

The Tri-County Office on Aging is conducting a survey with older adults and caregivers to better assess the availability of programs and services in Greater Lansing. The community

has been invited to share opinions, interests and needs related to issues like transportation, housing, daily needs and access to resources. Call 517-887-1348 or visit tcoa.org/documents to participate.

Pot shop eyes old car dealership

Ascend Wellness Holdings wants to open a new recreational marijuana dispensary inside the long-vacant Sawyers Pontiac dealership, 1415 E. Michigan Ave., in East Lansing, reports the Lansing State Journal. City officials granted a special use permit for the project last week. If the concept moves forward as planned, it would be Ascend's first retail location in Greater Lansing. The company reportedly has other retail locations in Detroit, Grand Rapids and Battle Creek.

Grace Boutique celebrates anniversary

The Old Town shop, which has helped dress people for everything from everyday wear to the most special events in their lives, celebrates 15 years in business this week. Almost everything will be 15% off all this week, culminating in a party from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday (March 6).

First patients arrive at McLaren

Clinicians at McLaren Greater Lansing's new \$600 million health care campus near Michigan State University began treating their first patients at the outpatient care center and Karmanos Cancer Institute. The hospital and emergency department will fully open on Sunday (March 6).

Gardner Elementary nabs top honors

The elementary school's Global Education program will receive a commemorative trophy and a new roadside sign honoring it for receiving a recent "Education Excellence Award" from the SET SEG Foundation. The distinction has been billed as "an incredible achievement" for the program because it was one of only 10 programs across Michigan that were selected for the top award.



Whitmer

Whitmer still fixing the damn roads

State construction workers started work on a \$67 million project that involves resurfacing 12.5 miles of pavement, improving drainage and installing guardrails and barrier walls on US-127 between the Jackson-Ingham County line and Cedar Street in Ingham County. Since Whitmer took office, the state has invested nearly \$4.75 billion to repair and replace 13,198 road miles.

Jackson named Meridian supervisor

Longtime Meridian Township Trustee Patricia Jackson was appointed as supervisor to replace former Township Supervisor Ronald Styka, who died last month after falling down at his home. Jackson's top priority now reportedly involves filling the two vacancies on the Board of Trustees.

Golden Harvest plans comeback

One of Lansing's all-time greatest breakfast joints is "in the process of figuring out regular hours and a menu" for the first time in two years, according to its Facebook page. The restaurant briefly reopened last week for late-night grilled cheese sandwiches but has since stayed closed.

Fruit bowl chain to launch in East Lansing

Lansing entrepreneur Diana Cannizzaro announced plans to open the state's first Playa Bowls restaurant in downtown East Lansing this summer, reports the Lansing State Journal. The New Jersey-based chain specializes in fruit bowls and smoothies and has more than 120 locations.

SORE

OF THE WEEK



Eye Sore: 1032 Oakland Ave., Lansing

The week's featured property is a bit of an economic mystery.

The owner, Fady Aibout, bought the place in 2012. Back then, it wasn't in too bad of shape.

But over the last decade, the place has declined sharply. Screens are tearing away from broken and boarded-up windows. There's a foot-long gap between the soffits and the roofline. Wood scraps, broken glass and other trash has piled up on all corners of the property. An uninventive line of silver graffiti is scrawled onto the eastern wall: "Thug Life North Side." But that's where the mystery begins: Aibout lives in Lansing. He has also paid taxes there for a decade. After the home was red-tagged as a "dangerous" structure in 2016, the city also started billing him monthly to "actively monitor" the site and shoo away unwanted guests. Aibout has paid those too. It's a bill that has cost him at least \$10,000, in addition to the property taxes — all while the home has sat there to decay without generating a single dime in rental revenue.

Aibout didn't return calls this week to explain his real estate strategy, so the mystery continues.

In the meantime, city officials have no plans to put the home up for demolition — partly because Aibout has kept current on his financial obligations and because the home doesn't pose an immediate risk to the local neighborhood. It's vacant, but not exactly on the verge of collapse.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

"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 or call it in at 517-999-6715.

Maybe Peffley is the problem

Lansing Board of Water & Light general manager Dick Peffley is starting to have some real problems on his hands, even though he refuses to look down and acknowledge that he's still holding them.

State environmental records released in January revealed that Peffley has known for nearly two years about dangerous chemical contamination leaking from the large toxic coal ash ponds that surround the Erickson Power Station in Delta Township — which for decades may have also poisoned nearby drinking water supplies feeding private wells and municipal systems.

High levels of lithium, boron, TDS and molybdenum have been leaching from the three ponds since 2020 and still neither BWL nor state regulators knows how long the problem has existed — though the plant, which is off Canal Road in Eaton County, has operated the ponds since 1974.

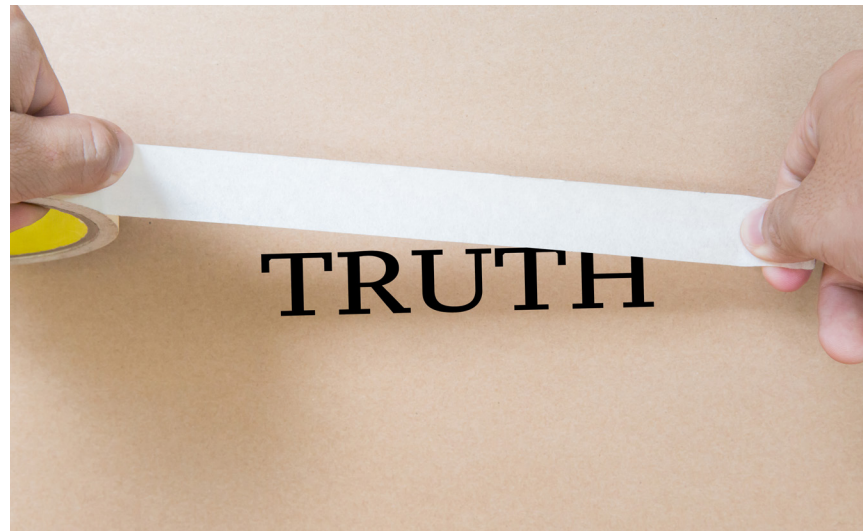
When City Pulse broke that news, Peffley and his PR team quickly jumped into action — except the damage control wasn't centered on assessing environmental and public health risks. Instead, it was about protecting BWL's public image.

And that's simply not the type of leadership we need at a publicly owned utility company.

In a January op-ed, Peffley attacked City Pulse's credibility for sounding the alarm about the potential for contaminated groundwater and drinking water supplies — even outright denying that drinking water could be contaminated despite experts who have suggested otherwise. The experts similarly poured cold water on BWL's latest contention that the pollution is occurring naturally.

Groundwater feeds drinking water supplies. At best, it was unclear then whether contaminated groundwater was reaching drinking water drawn by wells. Meanwhile, utility documents didn't show any plans to test drinking water and BWL spokeswoman Amy Adamy was too busy

building a media firewall around Peffley and other top executives to answer our questions. She has learned well from longtime Lansing public relations practitioner Steve Serkaian, executive director of public affairs at BWL and a holdover from the Bernero days.



Instead of an interview, Peffley responded only in a polished op-ed in which he repeatedly questioned assessments from environmental experts and insisted that drinking water is safe and that BWL's water supplies continue to "meet or exceed" all regulatory safety standards.

While technically true, his statements completely ignored the potential for contamination at dozens of private wells that provide drinking water for hundreds of people near Erickson. His statements also didn't offer much acknowledgement that a problem even existed, much less explain why BWL officials seemed to have alerted nobody of the public health concerns.

About a month later, without having directly addressed any problems, the PR campaign continued with the announcement that BWL had "proac-

tively" tested six drinking wells in the area. It was a sweetheart move for a utility company caught in the midst of a possible cover up.

Except, it wasn't. BWL wasn't proactively doing anything.

The company, instead, had actually been ordered by state regulators to get a handle on the pollution situation. Moreover, those reactive results spelled out some really bad news:

BWL only tested six wells. And all of them came back for potentially dangerously high levels of boron.

That's a six for six, Dick.

Michigan doesn't set health limits on boron in drinking water, though groundwater limits of 0.5 mg/L are

in place. EPA also has an unenforceable "advisory" limit of 6 mg/L for adults and 3 mg/L for

children. BWL's well tests detected boron levels between 2.48 mg/L and 4.17 mg/L.

Research shows that boron is harmful to plant life at lower levels. Boron has also been linked to developmental and reproductive toxicity, low birth weight and shrunk testicles.

Peffley, apparently, hasn't been drinking from those taps. His ballsy PR campaign only continues.

EPA documents showed that BWL

claimed to be in compliance with federal coal ash rules, but experts said those rules were violated back in 2017 when BWL failed to test for contamination.

BWL has also repeatedly made claims about the investigation process that directly contradict statements from EGLE. In other instances, Adamy and Peffley have only downplayed the issue.

Even BWL Board Chairman David Price — someone who should definitely be in the know — wasn't informed of the contamination problems before January. He was told the ponds weren't contaminating groundwater, which was also directly contradicted by regulatory documents.

And when presented with EGLE's statements, Adamy has still insisted the agency is wrong.

Meanwhile, Peffley still claims to be "proactively" investigating the situation despite having known about the issue at the Erickson Power Station as early as April 2020, records showed.

While the state has ordered at least another 60 wells to be tested, BWL still doesn't have a handle on the pollution plume's size or location, how many drinking water wells are contaminated in the nearby vicinity or how long its neighbors have been sipping on and showering in boron water.

From Day One, BWL has not been forthcoming about this public health calamity — denying our reporters an opportunity to conduct basic interviews and then failing to answer several emailed questions. The latest PR tactic seems to be centered on simply ignoring City Pulse altogether and hoping the problem — or at least public awareness of the problem — just evaporates.

We're reluctant to say this next statement given the inadequate leadership also tied to his predecessor: But if Peffley and the rest of his team don't start prioritizing public safety over their public image, then perhaps it's time for him to seriously consider resigning from the post.

The CP Edit Opinion

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

1.) Write a letter to the editor.

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

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

House, Senate coming at governor with united \$2.5 billion tax cut front

Opinion The Republican-led House and Senate are unified in asking Gov. Gretchen Whitmer for a \$2.5 billion tax cut package, a plan she’s already called “unsustainable” but one she’s going to have to negotiate from.

The Democratic governor kicked off Tax Cut Fever 2022 when she proposed expanding the Earned Income



Tax Credit and eliminating retirement income from state taxes, but Republicans have since taken it to a new level.

They are passing such a massive tax cut — one that admittedly would require future spending cuts to make work — that Whitmer may be forced politically to take a closer look at expanding her initial ideas.

On Tuesday, the House passed a revamped \$2.5 billion tax cut bill along with its \$1.5 billion local government unfunded liability program for a total



NOTICE

THE CITY OF LANSING BOARD OF REVIEW WILL HOLD AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING ON TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH AT 2:00 PM.

THE BOARD OF REVIEW OF THE CITY OF LANSING WILL MEET IN REGULAR SESSION TO HEAR APPEALS ON:
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2022 AND TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2022 – 9AM TO 12 PM & 1:30 PM TO 4:30 PM;
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022 – 1:30 PM - 4:00 PM AND 5:30 PM TO 8:30 PM;
THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022, AND FRIDAY MARCH 18TH FROM 9AM TO 12 PM & 1:30 PM TO 3:30 PM AT LANSING CITY HALL, 124 W MICHIGAN AVE, 3RD FLOOR.

IF YOU WISH TO APPEAL YOUR ASSESSMENT OR SIMPLY WANT MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL THE ASSESSING OFFICE AT 517 483-7624. APPOINTMENTS ARE NOT REQUIRED BUT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TO AVOID WAIT TIMES. TAXPAYERS MAY SUBMIT AN APPEAL IN WRITING. ALL WRITTEN APPEALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THURSDAY, MARCH 17TH, 2022. PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR FORMS AND INFORMATION AT WWW.LANSINGMI.GOV

2022 Ratios and Tentative Multipliers

Clinton County

Property Class	Tentative Ratio	Multiplier
Agricultural	46.37	1.0783
Commercial	47.47	1.0533
Industrial	47.39	1.0551
Residential	N/C	
Timber Cutover	N/C	
Developmental	N/C	

Eaton County

Property Class	Tentative Ratio	Multiplier
Agricultural	N/C	
Commercial	47.23	1.0586
Industrial	43.36	1.1531
Residential	45.54	1.0979
Timber Cutover	N/C	
Developmental	N/C	

Ingham County

Property Class	Tentative Ratio	Multiplier
Agricultural	N/C	
Commercial	46.43	1.0769
Industrial	47.25	1.0581
Residential	46.44	1.0767
Timber Cutover	N/C	
Developmental	N/C	

CP#22-056

of spend of \$4 billion.

The plan lowers the income tax rate to 3.9%, expands income tax exemptions for seniors and creates a \$500-a-child tax credit. The House and Senate had already advanced plans that lowered the state’s income tax rate from 4.25% to 3.9%.

A new consensus House-Senate agreement reduces taxes in the face of an unprecedented \$6 billion to \$7 billion surplus in General Fund revenue amount.

“Our state coffers are flush with cash. We have more money than we ever dreamed of,” said Rep. Steve Johnson. “The people of Michigan are struggling right now. It’s harder than ever for them to pay their bills. It’s time that we come together and given them a much needed tax break.”

The two chambers’ majorities agreed to go along with the House’s proposal to expand the universe of taxpayers who receive \$20,000-per-person (\$40,000 per couple) write-offs on their retirement income to those 62 and older as opposed to the current range of 67 and older. On top of that, Michiganders 62 and older would have the first \$20,000 of non-retirement income exempt from the state income tax

In exchange, the House adopted the Senate’s proposal to bring about a \$500-a-child tax credit. A business tax cut was not included in what was sent back to the Senate.

Along with the tax-cut bill is House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Albert’s plan to create a one-time, \$1.5 billion grant program for local governments that pledge to take various steps to shore up their unfunded liabilities.

For Whitmer, there are a lot of reasons to say no.

For one, the overly generous tax cut would spur the federal government to pull back \$3 billion in the federal American Rescue Plan unless there are massive cuts to the budget so it doesn’t look like the federal money is being used to backfill the tax cut.

Also, a blanket income tax cut doesn’t help the people Whitmer was hoping to help: the least of thee. According to the National Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, the income tax cut would only mean an average tax cut of \$12 for the lowest 20% of wage earners.

For those making \$539,000 or more, they would see a tax cut of \$4,901.

“It will drag our state into a new decade of cataclysmic budget cuts and a failure of leadership to make sure that not just this state government, but our local governments are also not able to succeed,” said Rep. Yousef Rabhi, D-Ann Arbor.

Going into an election year, Whitmer can’t afford to stamp “NO” on this plan and move on. It’s hard to justify to the independents who will decide this election that in an era of inflation Lansing can’t some afford to give some of that enormous surplus back to the taxpayers.

In the end, Republicans gave her a nice gesture with the \$500-a-child tax credit. That’s something she can work with.

Whether she’s willing to reduce the income tax may end up being the big sticking point. Because if she’s reelected governor, the last thing she wants is to have to have to make more cuts to the budget.

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

ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Getting the facts straight about Lansing Facts

By CHLOE ALVERSON

What makes Frandor Shopping Center special? Why is Quality Dairy so endearing?

Only Lansing locals — like those running the Lansing Facts page — would understand the answers to such questions.

The satiric Lansing Facts Twitter account — @LansingMIFacts — was started by Craig Terrill in 2017. Terrill, 42, was running a professional social media account for work. He wanted to start something less serious. After consulting friends, Lansing Facts was born.

Terrill built a Twitter audience by following Lansing businesses and interacting with them online. Lansing Facts joined Instagram in June 2018, under the same name as Twitter, but isn't as active on it compared to other social media platforms.

Ty Forquer, 40, was someone who often interacted with the Lansing Facts account on Twitter. After meeting through mutual friends, Terrill gave Forquer the keys to the Twitter account in early 2019. Terrill said Forquer's involvement with Lansing Facts was a natural fit.

"It was one of those decisions that was a no-brainer," Terrill said. "He was writing better jokes than I was. And that's Management 101. You get people to work with you that are better than you at it, and it makes everyone better."

The Twitter account took off, and that's when Forquer realized that the page may see similar success on Facebook. The two had been resisting the move to Facebook due to algorithm issues — Forquer explained how the platform often punishes users for posting too much, and Lansing Facts posted frequently. The Lansing Facts Facebook page — also @LansingMIFacts — was started in May 2019 and is now close to reaching 17,000 likes.

"There's a bigger audience," Forquer said. "They behave differently. They like to interact more and comment more."

Both Forquer, a strategizer for the Michigan College Access Network non-profit and a former City Pulse editor, and Terrill, a state communications

specialist, consider the Facebook page a place for their greatest hits from Twitter. The two feeds look different, with much more content on Twitter, where Forquer said he and Terrill "let everything fly, every day, and see what sticks." He considers that to be "the beauty of Twitter."

"You can find these communities of people who have experienced the same weird things that you have, who have noticed the same weird billboard on I-496, or have almost gotten hit by a car in Frandor," Forquer said. "When you see other people having these experiences, you feel a little less alone in the world."

Terrill explained the account as a "local Onion," referencing the popular online satire page The Onion. Forquer described it as "hyper-regional humor."

"We don't expect people much out of an hour away from Lansing to understand a lot of what we do," Forquer said. "It's our way of celebrating the weird little city we live in. It's like our inside joke with the world that no one else outside of Lansing understands."

When people don't understand the humor behind a post, or if they feel that the account is making fun of Lansing, Terrill said that Lansing Facts' followers will "step in and set them straight." It doesn't happen very often, though.

"I think most people understand that our joking only comes from a place of love and finding the weird quirks about our community that makes Lansing what it is," Forquer said.

Terrill admitted that sometimes the humor of the account is off. He and Forquer do their best to own up to missed jokes or when something posted isn't "100% cool." Their followers typically will tell them when a post doesn't read well.

"We're about making the community better and poking fun at ourselves, but we don't want to be mean," Terrill said. "It's always a fine line to walk, and we don't always get it right."

The two admins post the jokes and memes as they come. Sometimes, Terrill will be more active. Other times, Forquer steps up. When one is more active, the other admin steps back. The same goes for when one may be feeling



Lansing Facts
January 20 · 6

ok, he's making some good points tho



Jena Hovey

(Above) The faces behind the Lansing Facts page: (left to right) Ty Forquer, Craig Terrill and Emily Syrja. (Below) An example of Lansing Facts' meme content.

burnt out or uninspired. Longtime followers may be able to tell who wrote what posts, Terrill said.

"We've just kind of done our thing, and people have come along for the ride, which is baffling to us," Forquer said. "Also, we have developed a community that we really love. People send us pictures of the Frandor snowhill, weird potholes and whatever's going on at their local Quality Dairy."

There is a small circle of people working with Terrill and Forquer in their version of a writers' room. Emily Syrja, Dan Hartley and Tricia Chamberlain were among those who Forquer and Terrill credited for helping with the account. They help with various projects for Lansing Facts, like videos and events.

"Those are some things we'd like to

do more — is get back to the community and be less of just an online thing," Forquer said.

Terrill agreed that, once the pandemic is "in the rearview mirror," he'd like to see more video projects and community events from Lansing Facts. As for what the future holds for the account, the two are confident that it will continue to grow as long as they produce good content — and as long as people continue to consume Lansing-based humor.

"It's easy to get lost in national stuff, news and doom scrolling," Terrill said. "No one's talking to you in a fun way about what is going on around you, directly. That can be a nice break for people, I think. I know it's been a nice break for me."

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Enter to win 2 tickets to the Lansing Symphony Orchestra Haydn, Mozart, Poulenc: “Wit & Balance”



March 19, 2022 • 7:30 p.m.
Visit lansingcitypulse.com

CityPULSE

Favorite Things **Loren Pudvay and their passport**



Loren Pudvay, 38, is a musician who performs with several bands such as The Hunkey Newcomers. Pudvay, who uses they/them pronouns, said their favorite thing is their passport. It evokes a sense of adventure, such as their whirlwind trip through Europe back in 2019.

I first got my passport eight or nine years ago. I got it originally because I was dating somebody abroad that I was going to visit, but that never happened. It didn't work out and I never went, so I had it sitting around.

Then, on a whim, a few years later, I decided to go to Europe. Originally, I planned to go with a friend. We had our tickets and everything planned out. But the airline we booked with went under. My friend backed out of the trip, but I decided to buckle down and go for it.

This was my first ever flight I ever took on my way to Europe. It was such a long flight, from Chicago to London. The terror didn't set in until halfway through, but I got through it.

I spent a few days in London, went to pubs and did some touristy stuff. I also went to a demonstration in a park downtown. It was against climate change, it was fun.

I went to Paris after that. It was intimidating. I ate lots of good food, walked around and hung around the Louvre. I talked to a lot of French people; I think they get an

unfair bad reputation.

I moved around France after that, visiting a bunch of cities.

After France, I went to Italy. I met a lot of locals at the small town I visited. I stopped in Pisa to see the Leaning Tower. The town itself of Pisa was kind of a garbage dump. But it was fun to see the tower. Pisa is super dilapidated and seemed like a place that had failed economically. There was lots of graffiti, which I was surprised to see. I stayed in Florence for a few hours, I didn't stay there overnight but it was one of my favorite spots.

I spent a week in Rome — I really went all over the place. A lot of these places, I just passed by for a few hours. It was accessible thanks to the rail pass I had. Eighty percent of the time, nobody checked for train tickets, and I asked, “Why did I buy this thing?” From Rome, I went to Milan and then Switzerland, where I saw the Alps and hung out in Zurich.

Finally, I went to Sweden, Berlin and Copenhagen — that was the end of it.

I love my passport because it's a tool at my disposal that lets me travel and see the world when time and money allow it. It's good to know that I have that access, and I appreciate the privilege of it.

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

**Start at LCC. Finish at
a four-year university.**



You belong here
lcc.edu/youbelong

LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION/EMPLOYER.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Giant canvases by Hamtramck-based artist Beverly Fishman celebrate the Broad Museum's 10th birthday.

Happy birthday to art

For the MSU Broad Art Museum, the 10th year is the charm

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

The stainless steel gills of MSU's Broad Museum gulped golden gobs of sunshine into the galleries Sunday afternoon. Two students, Megan Fazio and Hannah Etheridge, took in a towering wall of paintings by Hamtramck, Michigan-based artist Beverly Fishman.

"It's so big it tricks your brain," Fazio said.

"It's like we're inside of it," Etheridge nodded.

The playful angles and electric hues of Fishman's huge canvases, commissioned for the Broad's 10th birthday year, toyed brazenly with the late Zaha Hadid's swooping architectural design and easily put the sunshine in the shade.

A more somber mood ruled in the adjoining gallery, where a knot of rapt scholars scrutinized original drawings by the 20th century's most recognizable artist, Frida Kahlo, and lingered to read letters written in her own hand.

Upstairs, visitors lost themselves in a packed labyrinth of art from the Broad's "museum collection," including long-buried works from the former Kresge Art Gallery, ranging from ancient Greek klyxes

(vessels designed to maximize your Scrabble score) to medieval portraits to abstract modernism. The walls were festooned, salon-style, with three layers of portraits and landscapes from a dozen centuries and cultures. Tucked into the visual splendor were, oh, by the way, a Rembrandt etching and a mobile by Alexander Calder.

At dead center of the gallery, Erica Holtz stared at a breathtaking, 8-foot-wide figure of the martyred St. Cecilia, in the form of a young Black man, painted by Kehinde Wiley, the New York artist who painted the famous official portrait of Barack Obama.

For much of the Broad's 10-year history, if you asked someone whether if he or she planned to visit the new museum in town, you would either get a terse "no" or a terser "Yeah, I've seen it."

Not this spring.

"I'd absolutely come back again," Holtz said.

After a rocky pre-adolescence marked by bad luck with its top leadership, unmet expectations, a persistent undertow of bafflement and hostility from the community, and a pandemic for a cherry on top, the Broad Museum is cooking on all burners this spring. Three major exhibits, each one completely different from the

others, and a student exhibit bursting with imagination, are sending a strong message from the Broad's third director, Mónica Ramírez-Montagut: This is the year it all comes together.

"When I was hired a year and a half ago, I proposed a vision that you would walk into the Broad and there would be something for everyone," she said. "I think this roster of exhibitions delivers that vision."

She ticked off the boxes: traditional historical art; cutting edge contemporary art "with a ton of visual impact"; imaginative student art; the star power of Frida Kahlo. Check, check, check, check.

"That kind of rich mix of perspectives and textures is something we've been aiming for awhile," she said. "And folks are responding very well to this combination. We want to walk into the museum, not through the lens of an art expert, but a person who is walking into the museum for the first time. As long as we do that, we will continue to see positive results."

Eye-popping dance

Jordan Sutton, a member of the Broad's advisory board, frequently takes her four daughters, aged 3 to 8, to the museum. She kept on coming even during the pandemic,

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when strict protocols were in place.

“You walk in there and you can tell the difference,” Sutton said. “There’s something that’s so ‘wow’ about it that’s hard to put your finger on.”

Then she put her finger on it.

“Mónica’s energy is absolutely contagious,” Sutton said. “That’s what you’re seeing, and what all of us feel when we walk into the museum. That’s terrific for us as a community, but also for the staff, because they’re doing their best work as a result of her leadership.”

Alan Ross, chairman of the Broad’s advisory board, is over the moon with her.

“She’s very knowledgeable,” Ross said. “She’s very approachable. We’re just so pleased to have her leading the Broad. The board supports her 100 percent.”

Sutton was impressed by recent exhibits like “Interstates of Mind,” about car culture and the effects of the interstate highway system on the urban landscape, and a series of exhibits on mass incarceration, including art by incarcerated people in Michigan. Both exhibits involved dozens of local community organizations, from the Historical Society of Greater Lansing to prison reform advocates to local residents who remembered the Black neighborhoods wiped out by I-496.

“Her vision is global, like we’ve always had,” Sutton said. “But it also speaks to the heart of where we are, locally and regionally. You can see that in the choices for exhibits and the relationships with local groups that are being presented.”

The most dramatic evidence of that is the current “History Told Slant” exhibit of art from the museum’s own collection, including the former Kresge collection. (The title of the exhibit refers both to the angled walls of the Broad and a verse by Emily Dickinson, “Tell all the truth but tell it slant.”)

It’s a loving, lavish tribute, not only to the 7,500 pieces gathered by the Kresge Art Museum in its 80 years, but also to the people who created and collected it.

For visitors who never went to Kresge, there are discoveries everywhere, from ancient and medieval art to abstracts and modernism, along with generous samplings of Asian, African and Latin American art.

In a poignant tableau, splashy abstract paintings by Alma Goetsch and richly textured prints by Kathrine Winckler, two leading MSU art professors in the 1960s, do an eye-popping dance at right angles to each other. Goetsch and Winckler lived together for decades in a little house in Okemos they commissioned from Frank Lloyd Wright, where they held workshops, classes and salons, part of a golden age of art education and creativity at MSU. To complete the ensemble, a Wright chair from the house is nestled in the nook between, as if waiting for one of the two women to take a seat and comment on the art.

In a nearby video, former Kresge Art Museum director Susan Bandes details



the Kresge collection’s rich history.

Ramírez-Montagut said that bringing back the rich collection that began at Kresge, from ancient to modern, is “instrumental” to making people “feel they belong here and that it also their museum.”

“History Told Slant” is not a one-off, either. It’s a foretaste of a major change at the Broad, an expanded space in the lower level where up to 5,000 pieces from the collection will go on view permanently (see related story).

“A lot of people miss seeing those artworks, and it behooves us to make an effort to have these artworks that folks would come every month to visit — to have them be available again,” Ramírez-Montagut said. “The lower level refurbishment is going to earn us that credibility with the community. Go to the Broad because there will be something you will like.”

Finding an identity

It was frustrating for the public, not to mention the museum board, when the Broad Museum did not live up to its potential from the get-go. Steven Bridges, the Broad’s senior curator, took a longer view. Bridges came on board in 2016.

“These 10 years have been a process of finding an identity and building the personality and character of the institution,” Bridges said. “Ten years is just a blip in the history of most museums.”

When the Broad opened in 2012, Michael Rush, the museum’s founding director, was like the cool teacher who grabbed you by the lapels and said, “You’ve got to see this,” even if you weren’t sure you wanted to. Rush’s energy and gregarious nature gave the Broad a fighting chance to overcome its already growing reputation as an ivory tower full of recondite, academic



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Visitors took in a varied banquet of art at the Broad when the Master of Fine Arts exhibition opened last week.

art, but it was not to be.

“We had a great director in Michael Rush, and there was all this excitement, but he became ill,” board member Hari Kern recalled. Despite his cancer, Rush soldiered on, but he was away for treatment much of the time and died in March 2015. Rush’s successor, Marc-Olivier Wahler, made a splash with his magic-themed “Transformed Man” exhibit (the one with the dangling elephant and the musical tent full of fireflies) and established the Broad Art Lab, a hub for workshops and community outreach across Grand River Avenue. But the soft-spoken Swiss intellectual never fulfilled

the board’s, or the public’s, expectations.

“There was something about his background, and his European roots, and his wish for international recognition that did not resonate with people in this community that well,” Kern said. “I thought he was sincere, but it was not a good fit for this community.”

Ross put it more bluntly in a 2018 interview: “Maybe we should have interviewed more.” The issue was mooted when Wahler left the museum in 2018 to take care of his wife, who was battling cancer.

The time was ripe to make a clean

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break with the Broad's old leadership model. Philanthropist and arts supporter Jack Davis, who died in May 2020, headed the Broad's advisory board. In a 2019 interview, Davis cited the Broad's tendency to hire directors "who want to display their creations, in terms of exhibits."

"There's nothing wrong with that," Davis said. "But the next person should also have management skills and an idea of how to appeal to the public."

The board was impressed with Ramírez-Montagut's people skills, her expertise as a trained architect and museum curator, and her outreach work at Tulane University's Newcomb Art Museum.

"She can relate to people on all levels," Kern said. "There's no pretention. She is what she is. She's so enthusiastic and wants people to learn about contemporary art, to learn about our building."

"One of her main assets at Tulane was engaging local groups, and she's continued that here," Ross said.

Under Ramírez-Montagut, the Broad Museum began to read less like a Jean-Luc Godard film with unhelpful subtitles and more like a multilingual menu for a restaurant specializing in home cooking.

Twisting the aluminum

It was almost a blessing that by the time Ramírez-Montagut was named Broad Museum director in May 2020, early euphoria over the capacity of the Broad to transform the economic landscape and draw 150,000 visitors a year was a distant memory.

The Broad drew an impressive 98,000 visitors in 2013, its first calendar year, but since then, it has drawn roughly 60,000 to 70,000 visitors a year. Attendance for the pandemic year of 2021 was 48,500, but that number is hard to interpret as a failure, a success or just hanging in there. A bright spot is that last year, 4,000 people came to the Broad's family programs, from guided hands-on activities like Family Day and Make and Take Saturdays, and 2,000 K-12 art students participated in educational programs.

"The number floated when the museum was conceived, thinking it was single-handedly going to reinvigorate the economic development of downtown — not feasible, to be honest," Ramírez-Montagut said.

Even the Guggenheim Bilbao, often cited as the catalyst for that city's economic transformation, was part of a multi-billion-dollar downtown civic investment.

Nevertheless, Ramírez-Montagut is confident that with the right mix of exhibits and relentless outreach to MSU departments and the surrounding community, the Broad can draw a lot more people, and the coming, sort-of-post-pandemic year will be the first real test.

"I think we can get to 100,000 with this kind of a roster of exhibitions, where people walk in and they feel welcome and they see something that is for them, and we welcome families,"



Courtesy

More than 2,000 K-12 art students participated in educational programs at the Broad last year, despite the pandemic.

she said. "But we're still building our credibility and our reach."

The pandemic has hampered Ramírez-Montagut from fully applying another skill: her ability to pull together big events encompassing film, dance, music and art like the 2004 bilingual MexicoNow festival, a grand showcase of Mexican contemporary art, music and dance with more than 150 events in 36 venues.

"We had to scale down, but these kinds of things will come back," she said. Planning is hard in the COVID era, but a series of concerts involving musicians from the MSU College of Music is among several events waiting in the wings.

Art-wise, there will definitely be a grand finale to the Broad's 10th birthday celebration: an exhibit that features a panoply of objects designed by the museum's visionary architect, Zaha Hadid, beginning Sept. 10.

Hadid was fascinated by the objects that define human life.

"Tables, chairs, perfumes, sports-wear — you name it, she designed it," Ramírez-Montagut said. "The objects, like our building, are going to be so different — a sofa that looks nothing like a sofa." (The Zephyr Sofa is inspired by natural rock formations shaped by the "subtractive process" of erosion, according to Zaha Hadid Architects, which assures us they are also comfy.)



Courtesy

Some 4,000 people came to the Broad's family programs in 2021.

The Hadid show is a fitting way to bring the Broad Museum full circle after 10 years, from the community's unhealthy obsession with the building and relative indifference to the contents to complete mutual harmony.

The Broad team is already in the midst of negotiating elaborate standards for the placement and treatment of each object set by Hadid's exacting

design firm. Ramírez-Montagut is positively eager to explain the outré forms, principles and materials behind Hadid's objects to curious, baffled or downright hostile visitors.

"You're looking at a sofa; it's made by twisting aluminum like rubber," she said matter-of-factly, rehearsing the

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tour a few months ahead of time.

For the Broad, showcasing Hadid's designs in a building she designed is nothing less than a dream show, but that's not enough for Ramírez-Montagut. Her mind is already firing on all circuits, looking for outreach opportunities. She seized on the idea that — no surprise — the omnivorous brain of Zaha Hadid also designed the packaging of her products.

"The experience of unpacking the object you bought is part of our culture," Ramírez-Montagut said. "We see videos of people unboxing products."

MSU also happens to be home to the leading packaging school in the nation. Boom — another connection made.

"We could highlight the contribu-

tions of that school, in dialogue with some of Zaha Hadid's packaging," Ramírez-Montagut said.

Last year, the Broad built a multi-faceted exhibit around the 2021 plantings in MSU's epic Beal seed experiment, the longest running scientific experiment in the world at 80 years and counting. A lot of people didn't know about the experiment, despite the national press coverage, until they saw the show.

Looking at the campus buildings along the Grand River, the Broad Museum resembles a missile embedded in a brick wall, but to Ramírez-Montagut, it's a door.

"We can be a showcase for some of the tremendous contributions — the expertise on campus, and make them available to the public in a way that's accessible to them, in a place that's free and open to everyone," she said. "That's a formula for success."



Courtesy

Pakistani artist Imram Qureshi's massive sculpture of crumpled paper was a highlight of the Broad's third year.

Broad Museum plans to permanently display former Kresge works

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

St. Anthony has risen from his crate.

Broad Museum director Monica Ramírez-Montagut told City Pulse last week that she plans to create a permanent space for the "museum collection," including the former Kresge Art Gallery collection, resolving a question that has hung over the museum like a sword of Damocles since its beginnings in 2012.

By tearing out walls and moving some administrative offices, Ramírez-Montagut hopes to open up existing lower level gallery space at the Broad to an additional 1,800 square feet, creating more than 5,000 square feet of exhibit space in all, where some 5,000 items in the museum's permanent collection, including works from the former Kresge Art Gallery, will be permanently housed.

The art will be displayed in an "open storage" plan that maximizes the number of objects on view.

"You'll walk in and be surrounded by art," Ramírez-Montagut said.

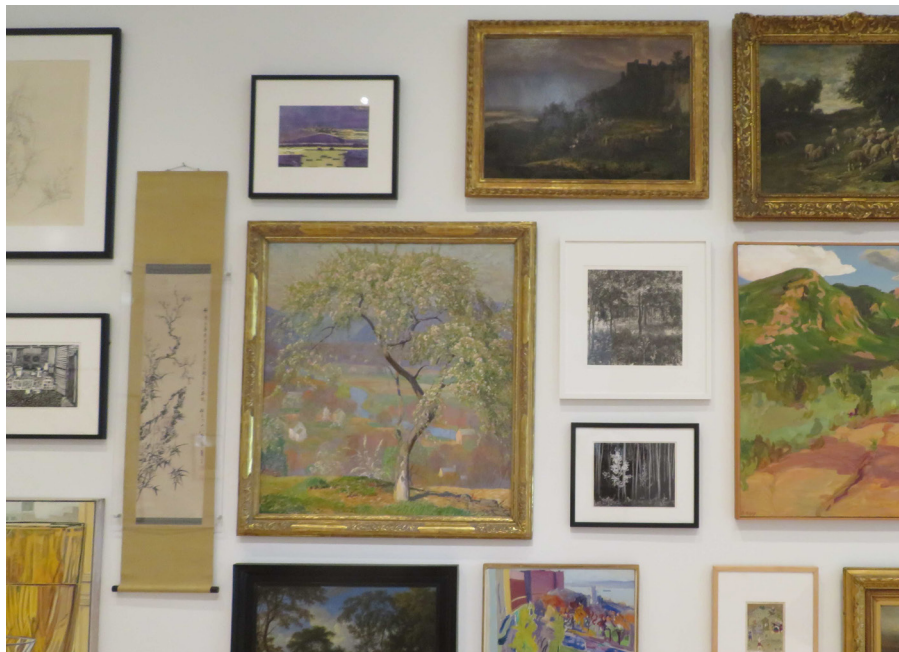
Pieces will be closer to one another than they are in a traditional gallery show and may not have explanatory labels, but visitors will be able look up the information by number in an online database.

"It's a way for folks to explore our permanent collection on their own," she said. "You bring your narrative to it. What are you interested in? Egyptian pieces, the Greek vases we have, contemporary art? Visitors can focus on the works that speak to them."

"This is a really new concept many large institutions have engaged in," Broad Museum advisory board Chairman Alan Ross said. "Instead of being behind the scenes and not seen, the public can come see things they haven't seen in a long time."

With the blessing of the museum's advisory board, Ramírez-Montagut is carrying out a multi-pronged effort to ground the Broad in the surrounding university and greater Lansing and topple the ivory-tower reputation that dogged the museum in its first decade.

She said that bringing the former Kresge collection, along with works the Broad has purchased in its first decade, into public view is an "integral part of



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

A wall filled with landscapes from The "History Told Slant" exhibit now on view at the MSU Broad Museum gives a taste of the museum's plan to permanently display thousands of objects from the Kresge Art Museum.

that plan."

The Broad Museum began as a plan to expand MSU's Kresge Art Museum, home to about 7,500 works of art, from Greek and Roman artifacts to Islamic manuscripts, European portraits and landscapes and modernist canvases and sculptures.

One of the most popular items in the former Kresge collection is a 17th-century oil portrait of St. Anthony of Padua, now on display in the Broad's "History Told Slant" exhibit.

The Kresge collection, now part of the Broad's "museum collection," includes a Roman floor mosaic, works by Salvador Dali, Alexander Calder, August Rodin, and unusual specialties like a set of 12th-century Chinese tiger pillows (finest in the West, according to museum literature), Buddhas from east Asia, Yoruba figures from West Africa, a vast collection of works on paper and much more.

In 2003, the Friends of Kresge unveiled plans to quadruple Kresge's space and renovate the building, using privately donated funds, with the goal of doing justice to collection, then housed in a small gallery inside an aca-

demic building on the Red Cedar river in mid-campus.

"The quality of the collection has always far outclassed the facility that housed it," former Kresge director Susan Bades said in 2003.

"If the exhibit can be faulted, it's for an extra-artistic reason — the inadequacy of the exhibition galleries," art critic Roger Green said in 2003. "The burgeoning art collection deserves a proper home."

Two Kresge docents, David and Ruth Greenbaum, spearheaded a support group for the Kresge, Better Art Museum, raising thousands of dollars with a plucky barrage of grass-roots fundraisers, from bake sales to art auctions.

The \$12 million expansion plan was dwarfed in 2007 by the bombshell announcement that contemporary art collector Eli Broad would give \$26 million (later beefed up to \$28 million) for a whole new museum.

Eli Broad died last year.

A source close to Kresge, who asked not to be named, said that early designs for the Broad Museum included gallery space set aside for the Kresge collection, but the space disappeared in later

drafts.

Hari Kern, now on the Broad Museum's advisory board, was among the Kresge expansion supporters.

"There was a bitter taste in some people's mouths because of the history behind the Broad," Kern said. "The Greenbaums had started the Better Art Museum campaign, and people were contributing, then Mr. Broad walked in with his millions, and the Kresge Art Museum went underground. That was a disappointment to many people."

The 2010 booklet tie-in for the "Friends" exhibit closed with a pointed look forward to the Broad Museum: "With this iconic building, the arts community and art museum friends look forward to realizing their long held ambitions for exhibitions and display space," it reads.

MSU officials never explained why the Kresge Museum and its collection had to die for the Broad to live, even in response to direct queries, and never confirmed the widespread notion that Eli Broad made the closing of Kresge a condition of his gift, but Michael Rush, the Broad's founding director, came close in a 2012 interview with City Pulse.

"The founders, Eli and Edythe Broad, gave their money to support a contemporary art museum on the campus of MSU," Rush said. "That's the basic reality. When you have philanthropists entering the situation at that level of giving, which is extraordinary, and it is the donor intent for the museum to be a contemporary one, then that is what we embrace."

Rush and his successor, Marc Olivier-Wahler, pleaded that they used Kresge objects to "contextualize" contemporary art at the Broad.

"They said they would bring out the Kresge pieces and spotlight them. It was happening just a little, but not very much," Kern said.

Ross applauded the project and said the board is behind Ramírez-Montagut "100 percent."

"Coming from an established academic environment at Tulane, Mónica sees the need for bringing out the historic collections, and she has implemented that program," Ross said.

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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



Lansing Symphony Orchestra infiltrates REO Town's Robin Theatre

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

So, this guy walks off the street into a Bar ... tók concert.

Then he goes on a Biedenbender.

Forgive the composer puns, but the Lansing Symphony Orchestra is also trying to grab your attention, albeit more artfully, by doing something new in its 92-year history Thursday (March 3) and April 7. The orchestra's first-ever pair of concerts at the intimate Robin Theatre in REO Town will feature high-energy modern and contemporary music.

LSO maestro Timothy Muffitt promises an "adventure."

"We want to play music of our time, present it in a way that is very inviting, that presents no barriers to the audience," Muffitt said. "We're hoping that if someone were to walk in off the street, which we hope they will — people that maybe didn't have any background in classical music — would come away thinking, 'That was amazing, and I want more of it.'"

A protean ensemble of six top LSO musicians will play in several different combinations.

The concerts follow up on a popular series of virtual recitals that not only

LSO at the Robin Theatre

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masks and vaccination required
therobintheatre.com
lansingsymphony.org

helped keep the symphony active during the pandemic, but also featured smaller ensembles and unconventional repertoire Muffitt has wanted to offer the



Adolphus Hailstork



Jesse Jones



Zhou Tian

Courtesy Photos

The concerts at Robin Theatre will be unlike any that the Lansing Symphony Orchestra has done.

public for a long time.

A few weeks ago, LSO executive director Courtney Millbrook contacted Robin Theatre owners Jeana-Dee Allen and Dylan Rogers to arrange a tour with Muffitt.

"They had me at 'hello,'" Muffitt said. "It's the perfect venue for this."

Both concerts will draw from Michigan's strong hand of living, working composers. "Viaje," by Michigan State University composition Professor Zhou Tian, evokes the surging growth and strange melancholy of spring, as a trio of flute, cello and piano conjure up a bright garden crowded with blossoming melodies and spare, meditative spaces. Tian will be there to talk about the music.

"Staying the Night," a luminous duet for flute and clarinet by MSU composition Professor David Biedenbender, plumbs the mysteries of love, time and memory with delicate echoes that spiral upward into impassioned cries of mourning.

Biedenbender will be at the concert, along with Robert Fanning, a widely published poet and professor at Central Michigan University. The notes to Biedenbender's score declare that the music would never have been written without Fanning's tender and moving poem, which describes how ordinary objects like a box of spaghetti or a pear take on a sacred quality when the loved one who touched them dies.

In a stunning solo viola work by Oberlin College composer and sound designer Jesse Jones, LSO principal violist Sam Koeppel will flit up and down the scale like a moth on a moonflower, melding the virtuosity of Bach with the austerity of modern European composers like Arvo Pärt. It's a short piece, but it's intense and gorgeous — the kind of music a delighted Muffitt could never work into a full-scale LSO concert.

"Who was expecting to see a solo viola work on March 3?" he asked, not waiting for a show of hands.

The evening's anchor is a set of three dances by African American composer Adolphus Cunningham Hailstork III, a 1971 MSU grad who bucked the avant-garde trends of his day with an unpretentious, blue-collar attitude toward music making and is now "one of our nation's most important composers," in Muffitt's estimation.

Hailstork's dances for string trio are energetic, lively and surprisingly delicate for a guy whose name belongs on a Great Lakes freighter.

The concert will begin and end with showstoppers from well beyond the shores of Michigan. Demonic eddies of melody flow into a weird lagoon of greenish harmony and re-erupt in a grand fountain of nervous energy in the evening's opener, the final movement from Hungarian composer Béla Bartók's "Contrasts" for piano, clarinet and violin. The piece was commissioned by swing clarinetist and big band icon Benny Goodman.

For a finale, Muffitt huddled with LSO composer-in-residence Patrick Harlin to come up with an arrangement that would harness the take-no-prisoners thrust of Argentinian tango master Astor Piazzolla.

Harlin not only arranged Piazzolla's fever-dream "Libertango" for Thursday's ensemble, but also helped Muffitt put the whole program together.

The lineup for the April 7 LSO concert at the Robin has not yet been finalized, but Muffitt said the ensemble will be "totally different" than that on March 3, with a full slate of music by Michigan-based composers.

"When you look at the number of composers, it's really remarkable, the talent we have," Muffitt said. "We expect that in New York and California, but we have a lot to be proud of in Michigan, where we have one of the richest musical cultures in the nation, and these concerts are a celebration of that."

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Lansing pot shops prove that size isn't everything

Four dank cannabis products newly available in Lansing

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Once again, I found myself overwhelmed last month with the massive assortment of dank cannabis products on the shelves across Greater Lansing. Skymint rolled out some delectably fruity gummy squares. Wana Brands released some tiny low-dose candies that are perfect for newbie stoners. First Class Cannabis Co. is celebrating its first anniversary in Lansing — and keeping its shelves filled with plenty of new items too. Gage also just stocked up on some of the most adorable (and perhaps the tastiest) miniature joints on the local market.

So, without further ado, I present this month's Kief Tray — a broad assortment of some dank marijuana products that I just didn't have time to feature on their own over the last month.

Skymint

Gummies — \$18/100mg

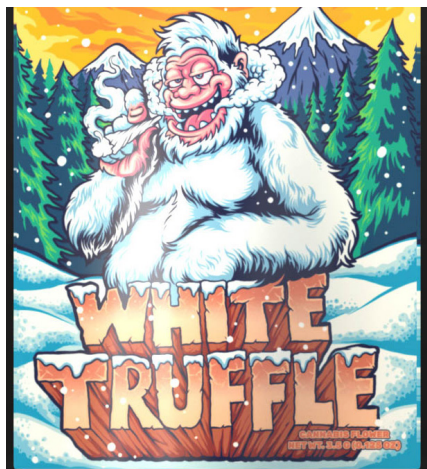
Cannabis-infused gummies are everywhere in Lansing. And most of them seem to be the same, sugar-coated distillate balls that always produce the same terpeneless, overtly boring high. The weed chefs over at Skymint apparently recognized that trend last month when they decided it was time to totally reformulate their in-house gummy lineup into a much more premium product.

Skymint's new gummy squares — which, thankfully, are not coated in sugar — come in four flavors: Watermelon Kush, Strawberry Haze, Blueberry OG and Night Berry. Each flavor is tailored with all-natural ingredients and terpene blends to achieve a specific set of effects.

The Strawberry Haze is loaded with sativa-leaning terpenes to produce a more energetic type of head buzz. The Watermelon Kush, my personal favorite, provides a more relaxing body high on the indica-side of the spectrum. The Blueberry OG is a more balanced hybrid — the best of both worlds. And Night Berry (you guessed it) has a special CBN formula for a peaceful night's rest.

After sampling all four last month, I can personally vouch for each of them

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Courtesy

THC gummies by First Class Cannabis Co. (left) and Skymint.

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Lansterdam

from page 21

working exactly as designed. And with two Night Berry gummies an hour before bed, I've had some amazing sleep.

All of them were perfectly chewy. They're affordable. The reusable tin was a nice touch. But the taste factor was what really sold me: no aftertaste. All-natural ingredients. Real fruit flavors. And for utility-minded smokers: A long-lasting high that kept me totally baked for about five hours.

Homegrown Cannabis Co.

Cannabis-infused Wana Tarts — \$20/100mg

The potency of edible cannabis products can be a bit overwhelming for some newbie stoners — and probably for your parents, too. Wana Brands totally gets that. So, in partnership with High Life Farms, the company rolled out a new lineup of low-dose candy tarts to the Michigan market last month that are designed to help people find the exact dose of THC that works best for them.

Each package is filled with 20 oversized Smarties that each contain 5 mg of THC — making it the perfect product for just about all occasions. Never tried an edible? Haven't smoked in 20 years? Try one, and enjoy an exceptionally mild buzz. If you like that, try another. Maybe start with two next time. Everyone is different. These will help you find your perfect stoner threshold.

Warning: Experienced smokers might find themselves snacking down the whole jar. The Hibiscus Lemonade flavor was tangy, sour and sweet — the kind of candy I'd eat even without the cannabis infusion. They also come in two other flavors: Mixed Berry and Black Cherry. Pick them up at Homegrown Cannabis Co. on Pennsylvania Avenue, as well as several other shops.

GAGE Cannabis Co.

Pure Beauty - Thizzlez — \$50/3.5g

If tiny edibles aren't your thing, then maybe tiny smokables will do the trick.

After forming a five-year partnership last summer, Gage and California-based Pure Beauty put their heads together last month to launch one of the most adorable lineups of prerolled joints in Michigan: Pure Beauty Babies. And 10 of them can fit in a box about the size of a matchbook.

I tried out the Thizzlez strain last month, which turned out to be a bouquet of fruity scents and flavors all rolled up into a box of 0.35g joints —



Courtesy

Cannabis candy tarts by Homegrown Cannabis Co. (left) and Thizzlez joints by Gage Cannabis Co.

exactly the perfect sized smoke for a dog walk.

I've been burned by substandard packs of prerolls in the past, but these are no cheap gimmick.

They tasted delectable. They burned evenly. The smoke was smooth. And they're great for those smaller smoke sessions when you don't necessarily want to rip down a full-sized joint.

And since the whole box can fit in your coin pocket, Pure Beauties are super convenient for a night out: You'll blend right in with the cigarette smokers, and it'll be gone before anyone notices.

First Class Cannabis Co.

Michigander Fire - White Truffle — \$50/3.5g

I could spend the next six weeks writing about the extensive product selection at First Class Cannabis Co. and probably still wouldn't make it through half of their inventory. This shop — which celebrates its first anniversary in Lansing this week — seems to have everything.

So, when the manager personally recommended this strain, I knew it had to be good stuff.

Michigander Fire, a cultivation brand based in Mount Morris, was founded as a medical marijuana operation in 2011 and only recently expanded to retail shelves in Michigan last year. Several of its higher-end strains are available at First Class, in-

cluding White Truffle. At \$50 for 3.5g, it's a pretty expensive bag of pot. But, like most things in life, you get what you pay for.

These frosty, mid-sized nuggets were deep purple and shimmered with trichomes. And they were pungent as hell; The bag was skunky, earthy, musty, garlicky — sort of like fresh hay and cheese.

Amateur smokers might be put off by that funky profile. But for me, it was pure terpene paradise.

One joint also ran me over like a freight train, in the most blissful way possible. White Truffle is a total anxiety eraser, almost like it was expressly designed to be smoked after a long workday.

Visit First Class Cannabis Co. 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Saturday (March 5) for its one-year anniversary celebration. Michigander Fire strains will be 20% off. Other brands will be there with samples and discounts. Krystal's Kitchen will also be serving up dank barbecue goodness.

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.

Owosso's 'The Sound of Music' unimaginable in many ways

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

When I was a boy, my mom took me to see a community theater production of "The Sound of Music." It was my first play experience. Hearing the Rodgers and Hammerstein songs performed live — and often by kids near my age

Review

— made me an immediate fan of the theater.

The packed house for the Lebowsky Center for Performing Arts' Sunday matinee of the famous musical included lots of kids. Many were the age I was when I saw it. They all had the transfixed look of wonder I surely had in the '60s.

The grownups during Owosso's staging of the "The Sound of Music" had similar looks of awe and admiration. For the curtain calls, the entire audience rose for an extended standing ovation.

The Lebowsky version gives countless reasons to deserve such reactions — beginning with the seven kids who play the von Trapp children.

"The Sound of Music"

8 p.m. March 4 & 5
3 p.m. March 5 & 6
Tickets (\$18-\$25) available
at lebowskycenter.com
Office: (989) 723-4003
Masks required.

Ranging from high school to elementary school ages, the clan quickly showed that they are more than simply adorable. Each of the descending-in-height actors demonstrate professional singing, dancing and acting skills.

DeWitt High School senior Lauren Schorfhaar, as Liesl, and Owosso Central Elementary second grader Scarlett Duffield, as Gretl, attract the most attention, Schorfhaar for her mighty voice and dance moves, and the diminutive Duffield for her ability to match the other talented young performers — and for her impossible-to-ignore charm.

None of the adults in "The Sound of Music" offers any weak links, either. Rachael Cupples provides Mother Abbess with a divine voice. Quentin Brainerd II is a respectable Captain Georg von Trapp who can be an authoritative master of decorum and a solid singer and guitarist.

Even though Kaila Szafranski's Maria Rainer never plays the guitar she frequently carries on stage, her vocals, dancing and thespian skills command and shine in the central role throughout the two-and-a-half-hour musical.

Erica Bradley's marvelous choreography is inventive. The well-orchestrated and well-executed dance moves in "The



Courtesy

Quentin Brainerd as Captain von Trapp with the von Trapp children in "The Sound of Music" at the Lebowsky Center for Performing Arts.

Sound of Music" are a big part of why the show is entertaining.

Garrett Bradley's direction keeps the focus on the fabulous dance and musical numbers. The show never drags.

His cast is well-rehearsed and in sync. Bradley's casting pairs appropriate actors for each role. Sometimes, views of certain characters are blocked — not unexpected with 22 cast members and seven in the ensemble. With the complex movements in "The Sound of Music" by so many, it's amazing how Bradley avoids any collisions.

The three-story set by Dirk Rennick and Dan Wenzlick is magical. By opening or sealing parts of a painted mountainside view, the space transforms into a church, family estate and more. Effective lighting by Adam Gordon adds to the illusions.

I can't imagine the orchestra I saw as a kid being more impressive than Owosso's 16 expert musicians, who are directed by Jillian Boots. Although hidden in a pit below the stage, their power is a noticeable force throughout the show. The Lebowsky orchestra does justice to Richard Rodgers' music made famous by the 1959 Broadway production and the 1965 movie with Julie Andrews.

When the orchestra accompanies the cast belting out familiar songs like "My Favorite Things," "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," "Sixteen Going on Seventeen," and the title tune, even non-theater aficionados will be moved.

THE PULSIFIEDS

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The Michigan State University Dept. of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education seeks qualified candidates for the following full-time position:

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Lasting impressions at Impression 5 Science Center

By **CHELSEA PHILLIPS**

Impression 5 Science Center is an interactive space for children and families to explore and create using all five senses. It is conveniently located in downtown Lansing, nestled just between the Riverwalk Theatre and the R. E. Olds Transportation Museum. It started in East Lansing in 1972 as one of the first interactive science museums in the country and made the move to its current location in 1982.

The center has spaces dedicated for newborns and beyond, with programs like **Discovery Time** designed for children as young as 2, and the Youth Action Council for children fifth grade through 12th grade.

Impression 5 Science Center features both stationary and traveling exhibits. Executive director Erik Larson explained that proposals for new exhibits come from a variety of sources, such as members, staff and sponsors.

“Impression 5 has a team in place that actually researches and develops, prototypes and fabricates its own exhibits,” Larson said.

To supplement those exhibits, the museum brings in traveling exhibits



submit a suggestion please email chloe@lansingcitypulse.com

This occasional feature highlights events and milestones at local nonprofits. If you would like to

from all over the country. Creating new exhibits can take up to two and a half years, according to Larson.

“We know our members and visitors want to see new exhibits much more frequently than that,” he said.

Along with the delight of celebrating 50 years of operation this April, Larson said there are exciting changes coming. One update the museum is looking to do would replace the climbing structure in the First Impression Room — a learning space designated for children ages birth to 4 years old. There are plans to add a second nursing room, which will be located on the first floor of the science center. Another change will be the addition of a café inside the current snack and eating area.

Bringing back Member Nights is also on the list of upcoming changes, according to Larson. He explained that these events were “wrapped around a theme or opening of an exhibit” and happened



Courtesy

The First Impression Room is one of the many exhibits at Impression 5 Science Center where young children can safely play and explore.

several times each year prior to the pandemic.

Like many organizations and businesses, Impression 5 Science Center’s operations were impacted by the pandemic. Previously, Larson said the museum had around 3,700 members. That number dropped by half during the pandemic. The museum’s hours were also affected.

“Prior to the pandemic, we were open six days a week to the public,” Larson

said. “We were open until 5 o’clock.”

The museum is open to the public four days a week with shortened hours. The hour adjustment and operation days are things the museum continues to evaluate as the pandemic continues, Larson said.

Sponsors and government programs helped Impression 5 during the pandemic, but Larson said that the museum is always looking for more volunteers and funding for future projects.

Take the risk out of creating at Risky Studios

By **CHLOE ALVERSON**

Despite its East Lansing location, Risky Studios isn’t just for college students. Owners Joshua and Alicia Southern hope the multimedia production studio will serve as a co-working space for creatives and businesses in the area.

Located on the lower level at 301 M.A.C. Ave., the Southernns found a location that is easily accessible from Michigan State University and near the center of downtown East Lansing. Alicia Southern said that their studio will be a great

resource for students who need access to things like recording equipment and editing software — things that often don’t fit into a college dorm room or college budget.

The couple decided to open the production studio after Joshua Southern’s production company — Risky Music Group — had outgrown its various locations within their Lansing home.

“With the desire to want to do more collaborations, and the opportunity to expand, we knew we had to get out of the house,” he said. “We’re at a point now where we want to share some of the wealth with the community.”

The space features a recording booth, an audio production area and backdrops for photography opportunities. Even with the small space, a lot can be accomplished in Risky Studios. The Southernns intend to build a directory of clients to promote their busi-

nesses as well — a perk that only Risky Studios members can enjoy.

“Those trusted sources we have for photography or whatever it is, we want to have that business directory to say, ‘Hey, do you need this? These are the people we trust to do those projects for you,’” Alicia Southern said.

Membership packages are fitting for creatives who are using the space consistently. For studio services like podcasting, photography and the recording studio, there are hourly rates. An hour of music production and vocal recording starts at \$50. The Southernns would be present to act as mentors and assist clients through the creative process.

The Southernns also plan to rent out the studio for small events of 20 people or fewer. Alicia Southern described it as a “micro-event space” for networking events, open mics and study groups.



Courtesy

Joshua and Alicia Southern celebrated the grand opening of Risky Studios on Saturday (Feb. 26).

“Anybody who is wanting to venture off into any creative endeavor that you may have, you can get on our website and book some time,” Joshua Southern said. “Feel free to reach out.”



Risky Studios

301 M.A.C. Ave., Suite 106,
East Lansing
(989) 341-3652
booking@riskystudioslansing.com

What to know about ‘What the Fireflies Knew’

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Most authors go their entire writing career with the dream of getting their book reviewed in The New York Times. First-time author Kai Harris already checked that off her list, since her debut novel, “What the Fireflies Knew,” was the topic of a recent Sunday review.

Harris grew up in Detroit and spent her summers in Lansing with her grandfather, “granddaddy Grady.” She completed her Ph.D. in fiction at Western Michigan University. Harris turned her summer experiences with her grandfather into the setting for her book, which is the coming-of-age story for a 10-year-old black girl, Kenyatta, or “KB” as she is known.

“It was tricky writing a book tied to my life,” Harris said.

The book follows KB and her older sister, Nia, as they are dropped off at her grandfather’s Lansing home following a tragic drug overdose of their father, the loss of their Detroit home and the unravelling of her mother. Both girls think their mother will return soon, but as the sweltering summer moves into the dog days of August, the girls are no longer sure that will happen. And as the summer winds down, the unlikely family will confront decades old secrets that have been percolating.

Harris used one of her favorite childhood books, “Anne of Green Gables,” as a totem for KB’s storytelling. The age difference between the sisters becomes more pronounced as Nia, who is five years older, grows into adulthood. The grandfather, who in many ways is a man of mystery, becomes closer with the young girls and is a powerful advocate for their growing independence.

Although the book is set in the ‘90s, the young girls still face instances of racism, as a couple of white kids who live across the street are instructed to not play with KB. Harris said only the setting is autobiographical, but



Kai Harris

the themes of family and the angst of young adulthood are universal.

Harris, an assistant professor of creative writing at Santa Clara University, said the book first began in 2014 as a short story. By 2016, she had transformed it into a novel.

“The hardest part was the rewriting,” Harris said. “I wrote the book before I knew what I was doing.”

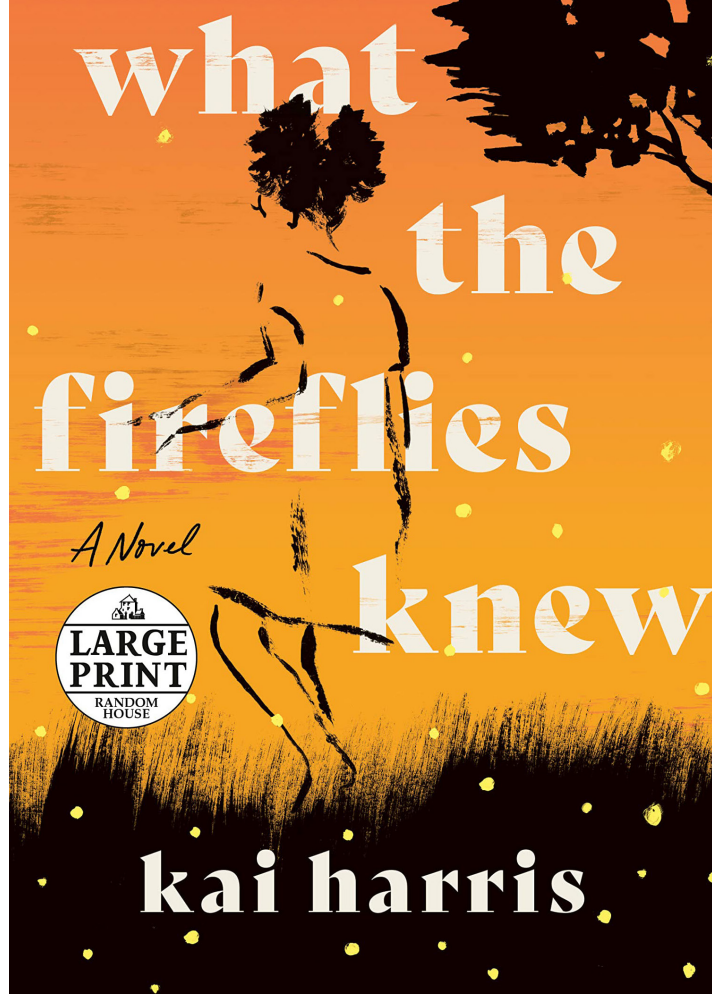
She said her writing is inspired by other Black women writers, like Toni Morrison and Jesmyn Ward.

“I met Ward at a conference at U-M, and I had a whole speech planned for when I met her,” Harris said. “But I ended up speechless.”

“What the Fireflies Knew is a fabulous debut and truly a gem of a novel, full of the beauty, tenderness, and poignancy of Black girlhood.”

—Deesha Philyaw,

author of *The Secret Lives of Church Ladies*



Courtesy

“What the Fireflies Knew,” by Kai Harris follows the story of two sisters who are sent to live with their estranged grandfather in Lansing.

Harris said one of her goals in writing about the young Black woman’s experience was to create an “unfiltered black girl.”

“I wrote it in first person so it would be more immediate as seen through KB’s eyes,” she said. “Above all, KB learns how family is there for each other.”

The New York Times’ review put Harris among a number of talented, young Black women, like “The Hate U Give” author, Angie Thomas. The Times reviewer wrote that Harris’ book “is best when its touch is the lightest.”

“It was surreal and really unexpected,” Harris said.

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Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Director's Cut"--- where do we go from here?

by Matt Jones

Across

1. Fashion mogul von Furstenberg

6. "And Winter Came..." singer

10. Sound-boosting devices

14. "Citizen Kane" director Welles

15. "High" places for pirates

16. "Who Let the Dogs Out?" group ___ Men

17. "Hairspray" director

19. Laugh-and-a-half

20. Like tough push-ups

21. Matriarch

23. Suffix after Insta- or auto-

26. Groups of quail

27. Arm muscle, informally

30. In addition

32. Uncompressed audio file format

33. Folk singer Phil

34. Flautist Jean-Pierre ___

36. HRE part

39. "___ is me!"

40. Colorful writing implements

41. "Bill ___ Saves the World" (Netflix series)

42. Abbr. at the bottom of a business letter

43. Birds, formally

44. "Heads up" abbr.

45. ___-One ("Sound of da Police" musician)

47. "___: Vegas" (rebooted TV series)

48. Actress Tyler of "Archer"

49. Become less intense

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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60						61		62	63					
64						65				66				
67						68				69				

52. "Help!" co-star Ringo

54. Memorized perfectly

56. Fasteners that pop into place

60. Sandpaper quality

61. Neither wins nor loses

64. "Blues to the Bone" singer ___ James

65. Market order

66. "Dia de ___" (Shakira song)

67. "Fantastic Mr. Fox" author Roald

68. Graded item

69. Extra you may have to ask for at some drive-thrus (due to state laws)

Down

1. "Cobra Kai" school

2. Metal that can rust

3. NYC tennis stadium namesake

4. Obscure people

5. Swaddle

6. Yearbook superlatives ender

7. "Born," in a Wikipedia bio

8. Fabric shop purchase

9. NBA component?

10. Brand used to treat cold sores

11. Big-ticket items

12. Counterfeit

13. Appeases fully

18. CPA's entry

22. Cat noises at night

24. Underscore alternative

25. What the circled letters represent

27. Former heavyweight champ Riddick

28. Picture that can be dragged

29. Consults

31. "Let's see what you got!"

34. Minister, for short

35. Ques. response

37. Ancient legend

38. "CHiPS" remake actor Michael

40. Fill the tank

44. Circulatory conduit

46. Apartment, typically

48. Comes to light

49. Having a border

50. Principal artery

51. "Blue Ribbon" beer brand

53. Vessel boarded by pairs

55. Sloth's hangout

57. Loving or lasting leader?

58. Part of TB

59. Lots of it was created for the Beijing Olympics

62. South African golf legend Ernie

63. ___-newsweekly (paper you might be holding)

SUDOKU

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Intermediate

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 28

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezсны

March 2-8, 2022

ARIES (March 21-April 19): "I not only bow to the inevitable," wrote Aries author Thornton Wilder. "I am fortified by it." Wow. That was a brazen declaration. Did he sincerely mean it? He declared that he grew stronger through surrender; that he derived energy by willingly giving in to the epic trends of his destiny. I don't think that's always true for everyone. But I suspect it will be a useful perspective for you in the coming weeks, Aries.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Vive la différence! Hooray for how we are not alike! I am all in favor of cultural diversity, neurodiversity, spiritual diversity, and physical diversity. Are you? The coming weeks will be an excellent time to celebrate the bounties and blessings that come your way because of the holy gift of endless variety. The immediate future will also be a perfect phase to be extra appreciative that your companions and allies are not the same as you. I encourage you to tell them why you love how different they are. Now here's poet Anna Akhmatova to weave it together: "I breathe the moonlight, and you breathe the sunlight, but we live together in the same love."

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Gemini singer-songwriter Bob Dylan said, "I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom." I think that will be a key theme for you in the coming weeks. Dylan described the type of hero I hope you aspire to be. Be alert! You are on the cusp of an invigorating liberation. To ensure you proceed with maximum grace, take on the increased responsibility that justifies and fortifies your additional freedom.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): "I'd rather be seduced than comforted," wrote author Judith Rossner. What about you, Cancerian? Do you prefer being enticed, invited, drawn out of your shell, and led into interesting temptation? Or are you more inclined to thrive when you're nurtured, soothed, supported, and encouraged to relax and cultivate peace? I'm not saying one is better than the other, but I urge you to favor the first in the coming weeks: being enticed, invited, drawn out of your shell, and led into interesting temptation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): A woman from Cornwall, UK, named Karen Harris was adopted as a little girl. At age 18, she began trying to track down her biological parents. Thirty-four years later, she was finally reunited with her father. The turning point: He appeared on the "Suggested Friends" feature on her Facebook page. I propose we make Karen Harris your inspirational role model. Now is a favorable time to find what you lost a while ago; to re-link with a good resource that disappeared from your life; to reclaim a connection that could be meaningful to you again.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Buddhist teacher Chögyam Trungpa told us, "Meditation is not a matter of trying to achieve ecstasy, spiritual bliss, or tranquility." Instead, he said that meditation is how we "expose and undo our neurotic games, our self-deceptions, our hidden fears and hopes." Excuse me, Mr. Trungpa, but I don't allow anyone, not even a holy guy like you, to dictate what meditation is and isn't. Many other spiritual mentors I've enjoyed learning from say that meditation can also be a discipline to achieve ecstasy, spiritual bliss, and tranquility. And I suspect that's what Virgo meditators should emphasize in the coming weeks. You people are in a phase when you can cultivate extraordinary encounters with that all fun stuff. If you're not a meditator, now would be a good time to try it out. I recommend the books "Meditation for Beginners" by Jack Kornfield and "How to Meditate" by Pema Chödrön.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Comedian Fred Allen observed, "It is probably not love that makes the world go around, but rather those mutually supportive alliances through which partners recognize their dependence on each other for the achievement of shared and private goals." That's an unromantic thing to say, isn't it? Or maybe it isn't. Maybe it's very romantic, even enchanting, to

exult in how our allies help us make our dreams come true—and how we help them make their dreams come true. In my astrological opinion, the coming weeks will be an excellent time to focus on the synergies and symbioses that empower you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "It's never too late to have a happy childhood!" declare many self-help gurus. "It's never too early to start channeling the wise elder who is already forming within you," declare I. Oddly enough, both of these guiding principles will be useful for you to meditate on during the coming weeks. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you're in an unusually good position to resurrect childlike wonder and curiosity. You're also poised to draw stellar advice from the Future You who has learned many secrets that the Current You doesn't know yet. Bonus: Your Inner Child and your Inner Elder could collaborate to create a marvelous breakthrough or two.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "A myriad of modest delights constitute happiness," wrote poet Charles Baudelaire. That will be a reliable formula for you in the coming weeks, Sagittarius. You may not harvest any glorious outbreaks of bliss, but you will be regularly visited by small enchantments, generous details, and useful tweaks. I hope you won't miss or ignore some of these nurturing blessings because you're fixated on the hope of making big leaps. Be grateful for modest delights.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): I found out some fun facts about renowned Capricorn poet Robert Duncan (1919–1988), who was a bohemian socialist and trailblazing gay activist. He was adopted by Theosophical parents who chose him because of his astrological make-up. They interpreted Robert's dreams when he was a child. Later in life, he had an affair with actor Robert De Niro's father, also named Robert, who was a famous abstract expressionist painter. Anyway, Capricorn, this is the kind of quirky and fascinating information I hope you'll be on the lookout for. It's time to seek high entertainment as you expedite your learning; to change your fate for the better as you gather interesting clues; to be voraciously curious as you attract stimulating influences that inspire you to be innovative.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "I always strive, when I can, to spread sweetness and light," said P. G. Wodehouse. "There have been several complaints about it." I know what he means. During my own crusade to express crafty, discerning forms of optimism, I have enraged many people. They don't like to be reminded that thousands of things go right every day. They would rather stew in their disgruntlement and cynicism, delusionally imagining that a dire perspective is the most intelligent and realistic stance. If you're one of those types, Aquarius, I have bad news for you: The coming weeks will bring you invitations and opportunities to cultivate a more positive outlook. I don't mean that you should ignore problems or stop trying to fix what needs correction. Simply notice everything that's working well and providing you with what you need. For inspiration, read my essay: tinyurl.com/HighestGlory

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Pastor and activist Charles Henry Parkhurst (1842–1933) said, "All great discoveries are made by people whose feelings run ahead of their thinking." The approach worked well for him. In 1892, he discovered and exposed monumental corruption in the New York City government. His actions led to significant reforms of the local police and political organizations. In my astrological opinion, you should incorporate his view as you craft the next chapter of your life story. You may not yet have been able to fully conceive of your future prospects and labors of love, but your feelings can lead you to them.

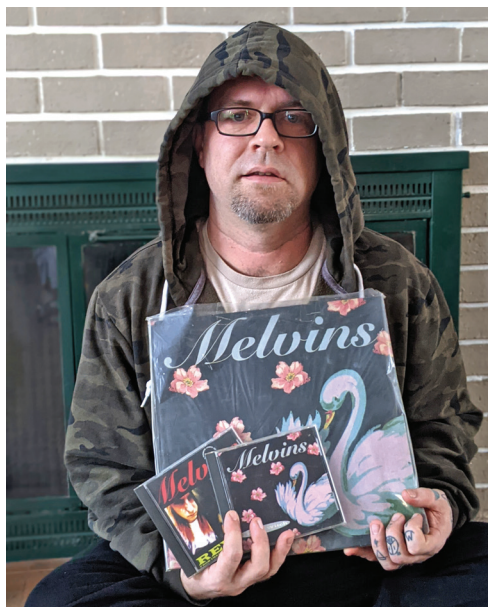
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TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

LIFE CHANGING ALBUMS: RYAN ANDREWS TALKS THE MELVINS



Ryan Andrews, known locally for bands like No Skull and Red Teeth, had a punk-rock epiphany thanks to the Melvins' 1994 LP, "Stoner Witch." (courtesy photos)

How 1994's 'Stoner Witch' inspired a 'punk rock epiphany'

Known for his heavy, eardrum-shattered riffs, Ryan Andrews (aka RK Andrews) is a vet in the Lansing music scene. From his time in Red Teeth, BerT and No Skull, to his other ventures with Fall into your Grave, Ghost in the Mind and Bloom or Die, his sound is both distinct and dynamic. In this week's edition of "Life Changing Albums," Andrews dishes on some sludgy stimuli that guided his sonic sensibilities. Here's what the musician, and Madlantis Records' co-founder, had to say about a particular 1994 LP.

What album do you feel changed your life? What was your life like at the time?

The Melvins' "Stoner Witch." I was 15, it was 1996, and I was in high school, so I was doing 15-year-old high-schooler things, like causing trouble and being an idiot. Growing up in the '90s, and being a Nirvana fan, I'd been hearing of the Melvins for a while. I had just seen White Zombie at Wings Stadium and the Melvins were one of the openers. I was excited yet confused by them. Shortly after, I joined the BMG CD Club. As part of signing on, you got to choose like 10 CDs for a dollar or something ridiculous like that. I basically ordered "Stoner Witch" on the recommendation of Kurt Cobain.

Do you recall your first impres-

sion of "Stoner Witch"?

The impact was immediate. From the first dischord, I was hooked. I listened to it on loop for months. "Stoner Witch" is like a noisy punk band playing slow, low-tuned versions of riff heavy '70s rock, but produced by some weird minimalist artist. The lead guitars we're too quiet and the drums were so minimal — but so rocking and primal. It was like nothing I'd ever heard. Really, it's the drums on this album that changed the way I look at music. They do this trick a lot where there's a heavy, kind of ham-fisted riff, while the drums are so minimal yet pounding. It's not what you'd expect and totally changes the feeling of the song.

How did this discovery impact your own songwriting?

This album completely changed how I looked at music. There are lead guitars that are almost buried in the mix. There are strange chord changes that seem wrong. That experimental approach forever warped my view of songwriting. It was that moment where I actually realized there weren't rules in making songs. I remember actually thinking many times, "I didn't know you were allowed to do that in music." I was instantly obsessed with the Melvins and this album, as well as many of their other albums. Their

records directly inform a hard majority of the music I make to this day. "Stoner Witch" was my punk rock epiphany.

It helped me broaden my musical style, by knowing you can do anything you want, even if people tell you that it's wrong. It's not ... they just don't get it. This album in particular is actually not my favorite by them. That honor goes to "Lysol." But "Stoner Witch" was the catalyst for my opening up to punk and a lot of other music.

In the '90s, did you find any fellow Melvins fans to befriend?

Back then, the Melvins were not as well known as they are today. Nowadays, people actually recognize who they are in general and are mentioned as an influence by many really popular bands in current heavy music. Back then, it was like I had my own world. No one I knew had heard of them, but if I did meet someone who actually knew about them, they became my friend soon after. In a weird, teenage-ego type of way, this album gave me my own thing. It gave me my own world than not many people knew of. Back then, finding information on them was rare, so I also had my own mystery. And as I turned my friends on to the Melvins, we had our own "mythology" and our own scene, kind of. I always liken it to how the '70s

punk kids talked about the bands back then and how The Ramones and The Sex Pistols and everyone gave them their own identity — the Melvins and "Stoner Witch" did that for me and my friends, albeit in a smaller and more insular way.

As far as your own music, what have you been up to?

Right now, I'm working on a new No Skull album called "Fields of None." It's inspired by the "Dark Tower" series, by Stephen King. We're also about to release a 15-minute piece of music called "Stones are Earth Bones" in the next few months. I'm also finishing up a solo RK Andrews album called "Mysterious Ocean." It consists of three songs inspired by Nnedi Okorafor's books "Akata Witch" and "Akata Warrior." There's another piece called "Vincent and Theo," which was inspired by the book of the same name about Vincent Van Gogh and his relationship with his brother Theo Van Gogh. I've also got a cover of the Guided By Voices song, "Striped White Jets," coming out soon on the Phonophore Records tribute comp.



OUT on the TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

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

LIVE + LOCAL

B&I Bar
5247 Old Lansing Rd., Lansing
Dan Dan Laird
Thurs., March 3, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Blue Owl
1149 S Washington, Lansing
Elden Kelly and Gregg Hill
Thurs., March 3, 6-8 p.m.

Classic Pub & Grill
16219 N. US 27, Lansing
Medusa
Fri., March 4, 8:30 p.m.
Frog & The Beeftones
Sat., March 5, 8:30 p.m.

Eaton Rapids Craft Co.
204 N. Main St., Eaton Rapids
Kurt Stone
Fri., March 4, 7-10 p.m.
Russ Holcomb
Sat., March 5, 7-10 p.m.

The Exchange
314 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
The New Rule
Fri. & Sat., March 4-5, 9:30 p.m.

Lansing Brewing Company
518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing
Atomic Annie
Fri., March 4, 8-10 p.m.

Peanut Barrel
521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing
The Swift Brothers
Fri., March 4, 8-10 p.m.

Urban Beat
1213 N. Turner St., Lansing
Kennedy's Kitchen
Fri., March 4, 7-10 p.m.

Wednesday, March 2

Allen Farmers Market - 3-6 p.m. Allen Market Place, 1611 E Kalamazoo, Lansing.
"Best Books" Tiny Art Show - Pick up your Tiny Art Kit 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org
Cat in the Hat Loves Green Eggs and Ham - Come take a photo with the Cat in the Hat. 6-7 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St. gladl.org
David Simmons, voice - MSU College of Music. 8 p.m.. Cook Recital Hall, MSU, East Lansing. events.msu.edu.

March Mid-Winter Art/Craft Market
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Saturday, March 5
800 W. Barnes Ave., Lansing

The second Mid-Winter Art/Craft Market is this Saturday (March 6). The event is hosted by South Lansing Community Development Association. Over 60 local vendors will sell Michigan-made items such as candles, pottery and baked goods. Attendees can enjoy Mexican food while browsing the vast selection of vendors. The indoor event will feature live entertainment, a raffle and an activity area for kids. Masks are required for all visitors and vendors.

The Elements Series: Water - Special exhibition through March 19. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Nelson Gallery, 113 S. Washington Sq., Lansing. thenelsongallery.com.

March is Reading Month - Daily Events at GLADL - Library Land 3/1 - 3/31. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

Michigan Young Birders Network Virtual Meeting - 7-8 p.m. via Zoom. Michigan Audubon, 2310 Science Parkway, Suite 200, Okemos. michiganaudubon.org.

Studio Squad - Calling all creative kids ages 9-12! 4:30-5:30 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu

Thursday, March 3

Beginning Ukulele for the Family - 4 week series of classes. 6-7 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org

Capital Area Audubon Society - Presentation by Keke Ann Ray on her experiences as a field biologist. 7-8:30 p.m. Zoom link at capitalareaaudubon.org.

Coffee with the East Lansing Fire Chief - 9-11 a.m. Grand Traverse Pie Co., 1403 E. Grand River Ave. cityofeastlansing.com.

Mu He, piano - 6 p.m. Cook Recital Hall, East Lansing. events.msu.edu.

East Lansing Roller Derby Basic Skills Boot Camp - 8-10 p.m. Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing.

Stitch 'n Bitch - 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center Street, Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540. manifestlansing.com.

Friday, March 4

Arts Night Out in Old Town Lansing - 5 p.m. Arts Council of Greater Lansing, 1208 Turner Street, Lansing. myartsnightout.com

FOMO?: Change Blindness and Selective Attention - 12-1 p.m. MSU Museum, 409 West Circle Drive, East Lansing. Pre-register at museum.msu.edu.

Lansing 2600 Meeting - a monthly gathering of local hackers, phreaks, and others of various labelability. 6-8 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St, Lansing. 517-230-7679.

The Magical Toyshop - The East Lansing Dance and Theatre Company. 7-8:30 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. magicaltoyshop.eventbrite.com.

Muslim Journeys: An Early Modern

Anglo-Muslim Archive - with Professor Jyotsna G. Singh (Department of English). 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. via Zoom. events.msu.edu.

Nature Explorers - 9:45 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Saturday, March 5

18th Anniversary Celebration - of the The East Lansing Public Art Gallery throughout March. 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd, East Lansing. cityofeastlansing.com.

Children's Cultural Concert Series - Joe Reilly's program, "Let's Be Inclusive." 11 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road East Lansing. cityofeastlansing.com.

Contra and Square Dance - All dances taught - no partner needed. 7-10 p.m. Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Avenue, Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

English dance, Lansing - Caller: Gaye Fifer; Music: Karen Axelrod and Daren Douglas. 2-5 p.m. Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Ave. Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

Family Day - at the MSU Broad Art Museum! 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

The Magical Toyshop - The East Lansing Dance and Theatre Company. 2-3:30 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd. magicaltoyshop.eventbrite.com.

Mid-Winter Farmers Market - Join us for this indoor market. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. South Lansing Community Development Association,

800 W Barnes Ave, Lansing. 517-374-5700.
Nature Explorers - 9:45 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.
Synergy - East Lansing Public Art Gallery - 1-2:30 p.m. Meet Yvette Robinson, director, whose art will be showcased! Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot, East Lansing.

Monday, March 7

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

Monday Night Bingo - Adult Bingo at the Reo Town Pub. 7-9 p.m. Reo Town Pub, 1145 S. Washington Ave., Lansing.

Ron Jackson Whatever's Open Tour Workshop - Ron Jackson Whatever's Open Tour Workshop 5:30 p.m. Elderly Instruments, 1100 N Washington Ave, Lansing.

Scrabble Hour - Recreational Scrabble 6-8 p.m. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. elpl.bibliocommons.com.

Tuesday, March 8

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

Preschool Family Storytime - 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St. gladl.org.

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 26

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SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 26

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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

All about that borscht: The soul food of Ukraine

By **ARI LeVAUX**

With the invasion happening in real time as I write this, I have no idea how the chips will have fallen by the time you read it. But one thing is clear. President Zelensky, and the nation he leads, are like a hearty bowl of borscht. Vladimir Putin, by contrast, is nothing but a tepid plate of Chicken Kiev.

On my desk is a self-published book of memoirs written by my cousin Paul

Zavod, who was born in Ukraine, in 1914. My mother's parents also came from Ukraine, as did my father's grandparents.

Ukraine was a rough place for Jews at that time. Paul's father was arrested for sneaking to the outhouse after curfew one night. They couldn't even leave their village without special permission. But the scariest moment, according to Paul's father, came when a pig escaped from a nearby farm and wandered into the neighborhood.

A resident was running a secret, unregistered and highly illegal vodka-making operation, and the smell of the alcoholic grain mash had caught the attention of the pig. The mash was hidden in an underground pit that was covered by some old boards. The massive animal broke through the boards and fell into the pit.

"Now, drunk as a hoot owl, trying to get out, the pig was bellowing at the top of its lungs," Paul wrote. "If anyone had reported it, all of us would have been in serious trouble. Luckily, we lived in a part of town that was 100% Jewish, and everyone knew what would happen if this became known, so no one even dreamed of reporting it. However, the animal had to be gotten rid of before he woke the rest of the people."

Since they couldn't get it out, they killed the pig in the pit and covered it

with dirt. Luckily, it didn't occur to anyone to search the Jewish neighborhood for the missing pig, and the mystery was never solved.

Ukraine has come a long way since then. It's now led by a Jewish president, which would have been unthinkable, and is a testament to how far this young democracy has come. Yet in other ways little has changed. Here we are, a century after my family left, but the neighborhood is still being bothered by a drunk, lost pig.

Borscht is often celebrated as a Russian dish, but that only holds true if Ukraine is part of Russia, because borscht — and specifically the kind made primarily with beets — comes from Ukraine. If you don't believe me, ask my mom.

Years ago, seven time zones away from Ukraine, in the dining car of a train in Siberia, I ordered a bowl of borscht. It was purple water with slices of hot dogs in it. They billed us not only for the pathetic bowl of soup, but also for the use of the silverware. When we protested, the host explained "mafia" and made a karate chop motion across his femur.

You can't get much more salt-of-the-land than borscht, and that is the kind of wholesome, earthy image that Putin wants for all of Mother Russia. But he's acting more like the guy on the train. Zelensky, meanwhile, is walking the

FLASH

in the pan



talk. He is from Ukraine, and was chosen by the Ukrainians to lead them. He is a deep bowl of borscht with extra-sour cream, with a dill pickle on the side.

By comparing Putin to a tepid plate of Chicken Kiev, I don't mean any ill will to that lovely, delicious dish. But its history that's been rewritten countless times to reflect politics. It has a French origin — like Putin's Napoleonic complex — that began with the czars developing a taste for French food. These Russian rules imported the necessary talent to instruct Russian chefs. Kiev, situated between Paris and Moscow, benefited from this traffic.

Kiev's Continental Hotel became the nexus for the evolution and development of Chicken Kiev, until it was destroyed during the second world war. The Red Army mined the building as it retreated, detonating the explosives when the Germans arrived. The hotel would be rebuilt, and the dish would be renamed by the Bolsheviks so as to strip it of any bourgeois connotation, and was

See Flash, Page 31



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RBF acceptable at Beggar's Banquet

By CHLOE ALVERSON

Beggar's Banquet needs no introduction. The restaurant and saloon has been a downtown East Lansing staple since opening its doors in 1973.

As an alum of Michigan State University, I have spent a lot of time in Beggar's curing my Sunday Scaries — usually with a mimosa in hand — and showcasing my best RBF, or “resting brunch face” as Beggar's puts it.

This weekend, after realizing I hadn't been to the restaurant since the summertime, I decided to meet a friend for brunch at Beggar's. This was

Sunday (Feb. 27), a day after the MSU men's basketball team secured a win over Purdue, and all of East Lansing was still buzzing with excitement.

After a short wait, my friend and I were escorted to a small corner table. Mimosas were immediately ordered. When you order a mimosa, you're in charge of concocting a perfect mimosa for yourself. You get a mini champagne bottle and a glass of juice to pour into a champagne flute to ensure that the mimosa is mixed to your liking.

I wanted to try something new — I almost always order the Huevos

Rancheros breakfast bowl. I almost always end up overeating and deem myself unproductive for the rest of the day. I opted for the Cali bene — two poached eggs, spinach, tomato and avocado atop an English muffin. The dish is topped with creamy hollandaise sauce. Potato cakes were my side of choice — they're perfectly crispy and crunchy. My meal was enjoyable, overall. I cleared my plate despite the sogginess from tomatoes and the eggs being slightly overcooked. Next time, I'll stick to what I know to be best, and I'll order my usual breakfast bowl.



Chloe Alverson/City Pulse

The Cali bene at Beggar's is one of four options for eggs benedict. Customers can also order a flight made up of three bene choices.

Flash

from page 30

instead called something along the lines of “breaded cutlet with parsley butter.”

Fast forward to the present and here we are the brink of World War III, with a chicken-hawk wandering about Ukraine. Zelensky clearly has a backbone that's up to the task, strengthened by generations of adversity, and borscht, the chunky soul of Ukraine. The only thing more Ukrainian than borscht is telling the Russians to bounce.

I was at the farmers market last Saturday, shopping for borscht materials. A cool thing about borscht is that you can get all of the ingredients you need at the winter market. Beets, onions, carrots,

garlic, celery, and even some meat on the bone — if you are feeling rich.

Meaty oven borscht

I make this recipe when I want more of a rich stew than a humble soup. Doing the whole thing in the oven heats the house, a nod to the old village, where the cook stove was the center of the action.

1-plus pounds of meat on the bone (e.g., spare rib or shank)

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

2 lbs beets, trimmed and cut into quarters or 1/8ths

3 stalks celery, minced

3 large carrots, sliced

1 large or several small potatoes, cubed

1 15-oz can of canned tomatoes

4 cloves garlic, chopped or mashed

1 lemon or lime

2 tbsp cider vinegar

2 quarts stock

2 teaspoons salt

2 bay leaves

Green herbs like dill for garnish

Sour cream and mayo for garnish

Turn on the broiler. Put the meat in a lidded baking pan, but without the lid for now, in middle or lower third of the oven, and carefully brown the meat until crispy brown but not burned. Remove the baking pan from the broiler. Put the meat on a plate to cool, and add the oil and onions to the hot pan, allowing the onions to start cooking. When the meat is cool enough to work with, cut it off the bone and cube it, and put

it back in the baking pan, along with the beets, celery, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, garlic, lime, vinegar, stock, salt and bay leaves. Braise at 350 with the lid on for an hour, then remove it from the oven to inspect. Sip the broth, and season with salt and pepper. Add more water if the level has dropped near or below half. Chew the meat and see if it's soft enough. When the meat is done, remove it from the oven and let it sit for an hour or so before serving. Garnish with herbs, and enough of that white creamy stuff to turn the borscht a bit pink.



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