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March 9 - 15, 2022

CityPULSE

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A newspaper for the rest of us



**Two years of pandemic survival
in Greater Lansing**

A special issue

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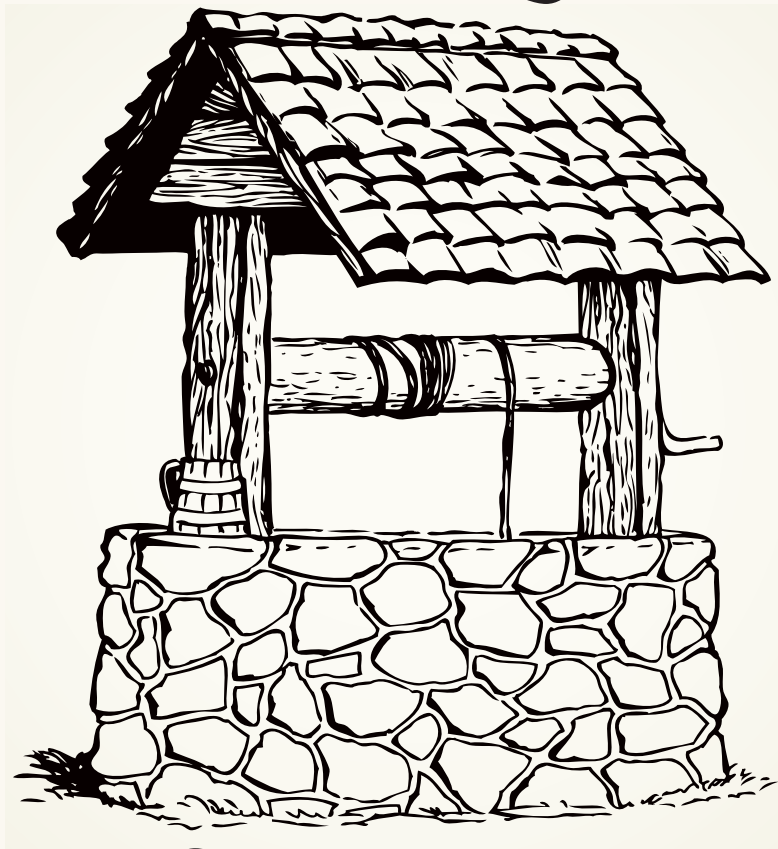
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CityPULSE

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Marking the pandemic's second anniversary



They braved the pandemic with new businesses



"An innovative St. Patrick's Day meal"



Photo illustration by Design2Pro

**PAGE
5**

**PAGE
14**

**PAGE
34**

**Cover
Art**

Is it from Russia or the American Right?

MATCH THE IDEA WITH THE SOURCE!



A.
GOV. ABBOTT
OF TEXAS

1. WAR ON UKRAINE IS JUSTIFIED
BECAUSE OF GAY PRIDE PARADES



D.
PUTIN

2. BILL BANNING DISCUSSION OF
ANYTHING LGBTQ-RELATED IN SCHOOLS



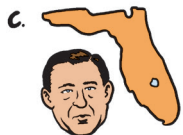
B.
ERIK PRINCE AND
STEVE BANNON

3. BAN ON MATERIALS THAT CAUSE
MINORS TO "FORM NON-TRADITIONAL
SEXUAL PREDISPOSITIONS"



E.
DIRECTOR OF
RUSSIAN FOREIGN
INTELLIGENCE
SERVICE

4. "THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE STILL KNOW
WHICH BATHROOM TO USE... THEY
DON'T HAVE THE PRIDE FLAGS..."



C.
GOV. DESANTIS
OF FLORIDA

5. GENDER-AFFIRMING MEDICAL CARE
FOR TRANS KIDS IS "CHILD ABUSE"



F.
RUSSIAN
ORTHODOX
PATRIARCH

6. THE WEST IS TRYING TO "CANCEL"
RUSSIA, "AS THEY NOW SAY IN
'TOLERANT' LIBERAL-FASCIST CIRCLES."

SORENSEN

ANSWER KEY: 1-F, 2-C, 3-D, 4-B, 5-A, 6-E

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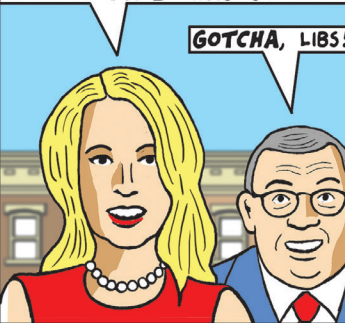
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PANDEMIC AND SOMETIMES HAVE
TO WEAR FACE MASKS?



**THE POWER OF POSITIVE
THINKING**

WE NEED A NO FLY ZONE! OR
A PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK ON RUSSIAN
GROUND FORCES!



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CONTINUE WITH NO CLEAR WAY
OUT, RUSSIA'S NUCLEAR FORCES
ARE NOW ON ALERT! THERE'S
ABSOLUTELY NO TELLING WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT!



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PULSE

NEWS & OPINION



Photo by Nicole Rico
 Eerily quiet downtown East Lansing at noon Monday, May 25, 2020.

Rewinding two years of pandemic survival in Greater Lansing

Tri-county region tracks two-year tally: 88,000 cases, 1,200 deaths

It's been two years since COVID-19 was detected in Michigan. Since then, more than 2 million residents — including at least 88,000 people in Greater Lansing — have caught the virus, and nearly 35,000 Michiganders have reportedly died from complications tied to their infections.

The two-year death toll in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties topped 1,200 this week. As we move past the grim second anniversary of the pandemic, let's take a look at how we got here.

2020

Thursday, March 10 — The coronavirus arrives in Michigan with the first two cases in southeast Michigan. The announcement was made just after polls closed for the primary election and almost immediately triggered height-

ened public health precautions statewide.

Michigan State University called off in-person classes. Students celebrated at local bars. By Thursday, Lansing Mayor Andy Schor suspended employee travel. Residents were asked to watch Council meetings from home. Cops stopped responding in person to certain crimes to reduce exposure. Michigan was tracking 50 cases by Saturday — three in Ingham County.

Over the next few weeks, executive orders from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer shuttered restaurant dining rooms, movie theaters, salons, libraries, casinos, gyms and just about every other venue. Business leaders were quickly up in arms over the newly restrictive rules.

By month's end, Whitmer ordered closed all other business operations that were "not necessary to sustain or protect life" and directed residents to stay home. The state tracked at least

1,300 cases and 15 deaths.

Retail associations advised stores to stop accepting empty beer and soda containers. Toilet paper and paper towels start to become scarce as local residents needlessly hoarded supplies.

On April 1, Ingham County reported its first COVID-19 death: a homebound man in his mid-50s with underlying health issues. Two weeks later, Beaumont Health, the state's largest healthcare system, announced it was nearing capacity with nearly 450 COVID-19 patients in its hospitals.

Wednesday, April 15 — Thousands of beeping vehicles swarm downtown Lansing, jamming up intersections, blocking roads and crowding the Capitol lawn to protest Whitmer's directives.

See COVID, Page 6



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

A protester climbs atop his car in downtown Lansing at the “Operation Gridlock” protest on April 15, 2020.

COVID-19

from page 5

By then, health officials had tracked nearly 30,000 cases and 2,000 deaths in Michigan. About 500 people tested positive for the virus in Greater Lansing; the local death toll rested at 17.

Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth reported that most local entrepreneurs had fallen in line with state orders, though a few businesses were still “pushing boundaries” on restrictions.

On April 30, thousands more protesters arrived at the Capitol, rallying in the rain against Whitmer’s orders before unsuccessfully attempting to breach the House floor.

By the summer months, disputes over emergency powers had reached a boiling point after Whitmer refused to delegate to lawmakers her executive powers to declare and extend a state of emergency in Michigan.

George Floyd’s murder in May also created a renewed disdain for police officers, heightening societal tensions and political discourse on both sides of the aisle.

Monday, June 8 — Michigan is riding high: Caseloads are decreasing and state officials recorded for the first time that more than half of all patients have recovered from the illness. It was a slight sign of hope and a trigger for freedom.

Some bars and restaurants reopened for the first time, though many were still closed or limited to carryout orders. Massive crowds again formed at Harper’s Restaurant and Brewpub in East Lansing.

A trickle of revised executive orders over the summer made small social gatherings legal again, though those mandates were rarely enforced. Shuttered sections of the state’s economy were allowed to reopen. Cranes were also back in the sky above Lansing. Companies wasted no time getting their builders and manufacturers back to work — though many companies and offices were still reluctant to restart business as usual while viral fears lingered.

An outbreak in the South Lansing Asian community showcased racial disparities tied to the pandemic. Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch and the Meijer warehouse were identified as the epicenter. Health officials also tagged Harper’s Restaurant and Brewpub, in East Lansing, as a viral hotspot.

Sparrow Health System opened a testing site at the Frandor Shopping Center. A legal battle between Whitmer and the Legislature over her public health protections continued. And by July, at least two dozen other bars and restaurants were ordered to again limit capacities.

An unusually quiet Welcome Weekend followed at MSU. City Pulse counted at least 70 local businesses that had closed through August. And by September, Ingham County was back in “crisis mode” again after tracking the highest case transmission rates anywhere in the state.

Thursday, Nov. 12 — The pandemic reached new levels of uncontrolled spread following a tumultuous election cycle, surging past 220,000 COVID-19 cases and 7,700 deaths.



Bert Schwartz/City Pulse

Ignoring mask requirements, Michigan State University students in line to enter Harper’s Restaurant and Brew Pub in East Lansing the first night bars could reopen on June 8, 2020. Harper’s cracked down after complaints.



Photo by Nicole Rico

Jon Howard, Flat, Black & Circular manager, reopened the East Lansing vinyl and CD shop after weeks of being closed. He and his customers were required to wear masks and capacity was limited.

Whitmer’s executive authorities had also then been defeated in court, but the state Department of Health and Human Services enacted new restrictions to slow the spread — another “three-week pause” on social gatherings, along with more dining room closures for bars and restaurants. It was crippling for the industry, but the rules appeared to serve their purpose. County health officials remained hopeful while daily caseloads — as high as 10,000 in mid-November — sharply declined into December.

The first emergency use vaccine authorizations from the FDA were issued before Christmas, though it would still

be a few months until they were available to anyone who wanted them.

2021

Greater Lansing (and much of Michigan) escaped an anticipated holiday-related case surge. State officials were still on high alert after the first B117 variant case was detected in January.

Early vaccine supplies were carefully prioritized after the holidays to those most at risk, but City Pulse discovered that Schor and City Councilmen Peter Spadafore and Brandon Betz had jumped the line — an issue that became

See COVID, Page 7

COVID-19

from page 6

less controversial as supply caught up with demand.

Despite the circulation of more contagious variants, caseloads only tumbled into February — triggering state officials to again reel back epidemic restrictions in March to allow for larger household gatherings and expanded capacity limits at bars, restaurants and other venues.

The shift was met about a week later with yet another rise in caseloads: the state's "third wave."

Wednesday, March 10 — The virus' one-year anniversary in Michigan was marked by a statewide death toll of 17,000 — including 276 people who had died in Ingham County.

In an interview with City Pulse, Whitmer looked back at the year with relentless optimism.

"What happens in the next couple of months is going to decide how well we actually rebound," she said. "As we come out of this, I know I'm going to continue trying to engage in dialogue with people who don't automatically see the world the same way as me. I want to learn from them."

Later that month, the state again restricted indoor gatherings to no more than three households at a time while case rates pushed to new extremes. East Lansing also ordered masks in outdoor spaces across most of the downtown area. The county followed suit with fresh capacity limits.

By April, anyone over age 16 could get vaccinated. The state set a goal to jab at least 70% of the population — a finish line that still remains uncrossed with a vaccination rate of about 66%.

Thursday, April 15 — The "third wave" of the pandemic makes Greater Lansing among the metropolitan areas with the fastest climbing rates of coronavirus transmission in the country.

"We are not through this. Don't give up now," said Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail.

Mass vaccination efforts railed on at MSU facilities and the Ingham County Fairgrounds. The Lansing City Council announced it would meet virtually until caseloads begin to decrease. A brief pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine created continued concerns over vaccine hesitancy after it was found that some women developed blood clots after getting their shots.

Before month's end, the state ordered



Photo by Nicole Rico

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor, pictured with his son, Ryan, as both worked at home during the early days of the pandemic.

children ages 2 to 4 to wear face coverings while in gatherings at schools, camps and other childcare facilities. Political tensions lingered, as did a dangerous pattern of misinformation about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines.

Monday, May 25 — The curve flattens.

With at least 55% of Michigan residents ages 16 and older vaccinated against the coronavirus, the state reeled back precautions and allowed all in-person work to resume across all sectors of employment. The daily commute resumes for thousands of people. The return to in-person work across all sectors marked the first official milestone of Whitmer's "MI Vacc to Normal" plan, triggered by at least 4.45 million Michigan residents having received both doses of vaccine.

The following weeks saw curfews and capacity limits lifted at restaurants and bars. Restrictions on face masks also loosened: Fully vaccinated people were no longer required to wear masks or socially distance in most settings. Most local businesses stopped requiring them at all.

Lingering uncertainties (and overall hesitancy to get back to work) also produced staffing shortages at a vast number of local employers. Experts estimated that the Lansing area alone saw more than 22,000 new job postings in August — up about 44% from over the prior year.

Wednesday, Sept. 22 — The FDA authorizes booster vaccines for older adults and others at higher risk of COVID-19 complications while the Delta variant begins ratcheting up caseloads.

While a handful of Michigan schools had closed due to widespread illnesses, teachers hoped digital learning would keep schools on schedule for yet another virtual year of education.



Photo by Nicole Rico

Scott Keith, the president and CEO of Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority, inside an empty Jackson Field on June 1, 2020. All Lansing Lugnuts games, and other special events, were on hold due to the virus.

Mask mandates stayed contentious. Several lawsuits were filed against several districts across the country over decisions on COVID-19 protocols that fall — including a now-dismissed case from an "anti-masker" father at Dewitt Public Schools who wanted the mask mandates dropped.

At the onset of that "fourth wave" in October, Sparrow Hospital nurses picketed in Lansing, calling on administrators to fix staffing shortages and poor working conditions as cases rose.

"The pandemic has shown us the flaws in our healthcare system and how vital it is that these flaws be fixed. Sparrow executives cannot keep choosing to skate on thin ice with our staffing levels," said Katie Pontifex, a local nurse and president of the Professional Employee Council.

By November, both McLaren and Sparrow hospitals were again at or close to full capacity.

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor lifted a universal mask mandate at City Hall in November, a controversial move that he reversed days later after local health officials pushed back.

Every Michigan county ranked "high risk" under the CDC's standards for covid transmission as winter arrived. In Ingham County, that spike was evidenced by more than 1,000 COVID-19 cases and 10 related deaths tracked in one week.

Wednesday, Dec. 1 — County health officials were "troubled" and "perplexed" by a recent increase in cases across Ingham County, a statistic that also was borne out across Michigan.

Percent positivity rates had doubled since October. Greater Lansing was in trouble — again. "I didn't expect a surge this time around," Vail said. "I figured with the vaccine we'd be OK."

Vail tied the increase in cases and hospitalizations to networks of unvaccinated people. Fully vaccinated individuals then represented only about 25% of all cases of COVID-19. And since January, fully vaccinated people represented only about 1.7% of cases and 0.02% of deaths.

About a week later, the first Michigan case of the omicron variant was detected in Michigan. The state ended up tracking a total of about 1 million more cases in 2021 — bringing the statewide total caseload to about 1.5 million since the pandemic arrived in the state. Ingham, Clinton and Eaton counties collectively accounted for about 65,000 of those cases and 1,000 deaths.

2022

Tuesday, Jan. 25 — The Ingham County Health Department tracked enough cases to represent about one infection for every five county residents while the omicron variant spread.

January marked a month-long average of about 555 new COVID-19 cases tracked daily — the single highest rate of case positivity since the pandemic began in March 2020.

Over the last few weeks, caseloads and positive rates plummeted near all-time lows.

Face masks became less common — either through optimism or pandemic fatigue.

And as of last week, about 73% of Ingham County residents who are eligible to receive the vaccine had one, officials said. Some age groups fared better than others: About 98% of those over age 65 were vaccinated. But only about 39% of children between ages 5-11 were vaccinated, in part because those shots were only available since mid-November.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

Dates that matter in Michigan’s response to COVID

By **KYLE MELINN**

Within the two years since the coronavirus blew into Michigan, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has gone from aggressively managing a response to barely acknowledging its existence.

The vaccines allowed Whitmer to push personal responsibility as the best way to keep folks safe from dying or falling seriously ill from COVID. Still the Governor was consistently criticized with playing politics with her decisions. She never loosened up restrictions

fast enough for Republicans. For some in her own party, she moved too fast.

Along the way, the following dates provide the best review of the dates that mattered in Michigan’s response to COVID-19.

March 10, 2020—State’s emergency management folks report the first two presumptive cases of COVID-19 in Michigan two hours after gubernatorial candidate Joe Biden was declared Michigan’s presidential primary winner.

The cases in Oakland and Wayne



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (left) and her chief medical executive, Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, at a news conference on May 29, 2020. Courtesy

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

counties spark questions about the announcement’s timing. Anecdotally, Michiganders were coming down sick more than a week before. Now, two years later, the Department of Health and Human Services is chronicling 14 COVID cases from March 1, 2020, and two COVID deaths from February 2020.

March 12, 2020— Whitmer orders

all Michigan K-12 school buildings closed from March 16 to April 6. The order triggers the first of 95 executive orders Whitmer signed in 2020 as a way to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Schools stay closed for the rest of the academic year. Within days, every "non-essential" industry is ordered shut through government action.

See State, Page 9

**NOTICE TO
RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS
CHARTER TOWNSHIP of LANSING**

NOTICE TO RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS IN THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING OF THE INTENT OF THE TOWNSHIP TO CAUSE THE DESTRUCTION OF NOXIOUS WEEDS IN SUCH CASES WHERE RESIDENTS, AND/OR PROPERTY OWNERS FAIL TO CONTROL OR ERRADICATE SUCH WEEDS ON THEIR PROPERTIES.

This notice is published in lieu of notice to individual property owners. In the event that any property owner shall fail or refuse to destroy any noxious weeds by cutting them or by other means of control before the first day of May, 2022 or fail to keep them cut and/or controlled at any time thereafter during the growing season, the Commissioner of Noxious Weeds of the Township shall have the duty of entering such lands, and such weeds will be caused to be cut or destroyed by the Township. The owner or owners of such lands shall pay the expense incurred in such destruction to the Township. The Township shall have a lien against such lands for such expense, which lien shall be enforced in the manner now provided by for the enforcement of tax liens against the lot to be charged and will be collected as in the case of general property tax against lot or lots in question in the event the charges involved are not paid by the owner, agent, or occupant of said lot within thirty (30) days from the date of billing to said person by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested. Charges will be made in accordance with Section 52.5 of the Code of Ordinances of the Charter Township of Lansing.

This notice appears by authority of Public Act 359 of 1941 of the State of Michigan and the Code of Ordinances, Title V, Chapter 52 of the Charter Township of Lansing.

Maggie Sanders, Clerk
Charter Township of Lansing

CP#22-063

March 23, 2020 — Michigan becomes the 11th state to lockdown or stay-in-place. The three-week order bans all out-of-movement to operations that weren't necessary to "sustain or protect life." Whitmer ends up extending the order to April 30, May 28 and, finally, to June 19.

Police are told to issue \$1,000 tickets to anyone caught violating the executive order, but relatively few were ever issued. At the time, an independent 501(c)3 nonprofits called "Act Now Coalition" projected that if Michigan had poor compliance with the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order, 59,000 people could die. As of March 6, 2022, Michigan's death toll from COVID was 32,118.

March 27, 2020 — President Donald Trump' steady stream of insults toward Whitmer reaches a peak when he referred to her as "the woman in Michigan" and tweets "Gretchen 'Half' Whitmer." At the time, Whitmer was being considered as Biden's running mate Whitmer responds by wearing a "That Woman From Michigan" T-Shirt on The Daily Show.

April 15, 2020 — Between 3,000 and 4,000 pickups, 18 wheelers and cars jammed Lansing's streets leading to the Capitol to protest the governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order. Operation Gridlock stretched down Michigan Ave-

nue from the Capitol to near Frandor at one point.

The day prior, one public survey found 71% of Michigan voters approving of Whitmer's handling of the coronavirus outbreak. April 16 was the highest number of COVID-related Michigan deaths reported for any day of the pandemic at 164.

April 29, 2020 — The Legislature declines to extend the governor's emergency executive order authority another 30 days, spurring Whitmer to sign new EOs the next day anyway, claiming a 1945 state law gave her the power to do it without lawmakers' OK. The move ignites a showdown. The governor wins short term, but the Legislature ultimately prevails before the state Supreme Court in October. Lawmakers later repeal the '45 law.

April 30, 2020 — A couple dozen armed protesters roamd the Capitol and the state Senate gallery during the now-infamous "pro-liberty patriot" rally. While some now frame it as a "dress rehearsal" for the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol insurrection, police force was only used to remove two protesters from the House gallery. Four protesters are later charged with plotting to kidnap Whitmer. The jarring presence of weapons inside the Senate chambers during a politically tense time spurs the

Michigan Capitol Commission to ban long guns from the Capitol.

May 20, 2020 — Michigan's unemployment rate in April soars to a record 22.7%. The number is later revised to 24%.

May 21, 2020 — Attorney General Dana Nessel bans Trump from visiting another indoor Michigan facility after he shows up unmasked to the Ford plant in Ypsilanti. Trump visited Michigan five times in one week as the election neared, but all events were outdoors.

June 19, 2020 — The Unemployment Insurance Agency reported that 93% of everyone eligible for benefits were approved and most of the remaining 7% who were not were suspected of fraud. The beleaguered agency struggled to keep up with new claims during the height of the pandemic, costing Director Steve Gray his job.

Jan. 22, 2021 — DHHS Director Robert Gordon abruptly resigns after conflicting with the governor behind the scenes over stricter COVID-19 orders. Whitmer pushes to loosen youth sports restrictions sooner than Gordon wanted amid stiff public pressure. Elizabeth Hertel, of East Lansing, replaces him.

March 12, 2021 — Records show the governor flew to Palm Beach to visit her ailing father. Outside the "Stay Home, Stay Safe order," Michigan never had any travel restrictions, per se, but extraneous travel was frowned upon.

May 23, 2021 — A complaint is filed against the Landshark in East Lansing after a photo of Whitmer seated unmasked with 12 other guests surfaces on social meetings. At the time, restaurants were limited to only seating six guests per table.

June 22, 2021 — The governor ends COVID-era restrictions 463 days after

ordering schools shut. Some general policies remain in place, but any school closings or mask mandates were handled — from that point on — by county health departments, local governments or school districts.

Aug. 22, 2021 — Board of Education member Pamela Pugh, the former chief medical adviser of Flint, asks the administration to impose a mandatory mask rule in every Michigan school building. She accuses the governor of putting politics before safety. Hertel says it is now up to local control.

Sept. 29, 2021 — A \$70 billion budget, the largest in history, is signed into law, bolstered by an extra \$5 billion in federal COVID-19 relief money and a huge influx in the sales tax collected from online sales. Only 16 months prior, state budget estimators projected a massive \$6.2 billion budget hole.

Jan. 3, 2022 — Omicron peaks in Michigan. A total of 24,788 cases were reported while 23,117 were reported the day after, likely a result of New Year parties spreading this highly contagious but less deadly variant.

Jan. 12, 2022 — Michigan's auditor general reports 8,061 COVID deaths came from nursing homes or other long-term care facilities, making up about a quarter of all Michigan-related COVID deaths. The number became a flashpoint for Republicans, who claim DHHS was purposely undercounting the results, but the auditor's percentages were right around the 34% of COVID deaths that DHHS reported back in June 2020. Also, the auditor used a much broader definition of long-term care facilities than DHHS, which had been sticking with federal definitions in their reporting.

(Kyle Melinn is an editor and reporter for the Capitol news service MIRS.)

Vehicle Auction
Tuesday, March 22, 9am
2010 Toyota Yaris JTDJT4K35A5286037
Swift Towing, 2347 N. Cedar, Holt
No calls

CP#22-064

**NOTICE TO PUBLIC OF AVAILABILITY
CITY OF LANSING
CONSOLIDATED PLAN, FY 2022 – 2026
ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, FY 2022-2023**

Notice is hereby given that the City of Lansing proposes to present notice of availability on the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, 2022-2026 and the Annual Action Plan for FY 2022 (7/1/22-6/30/23). A draft of the document will be available for public review and comment during the 30-day comment period from March 10 – April 8, 2022

Copies of the document and the proposed use of Community Development funds are available for review at the City Clerk's office, Ninth Floor, City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Ave.; the Capital Area District Library, 401 South Capitol; the Department of Economic Development and Planning Office, 316 N. Capitol, Suite D-1, Lansing, MI or on the Development Office website at: www.lansingmi.gov/development

All written comments submitted by citizens of Lansing will be considered and reviewed for possible inclusion in the final Five-Year Consolidated Plan, 2022-2026 and the Annual Action Plan for FY 2022 to be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) no later than May 14, 2022. A summary of all comments received will be attached to the final document.

For information regarding the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan Action Plan please contact:

Doris Witherspoon, Senior Planner
City of Lansing, Michigan
Department of Planning and Neighborhood Development
316 North Capitol, Suite D-1
Lansing Michigan 48933-1236
Telephone (517) 483-4063
doris.witherspoon@lansingmi.gov

CP#22-060

**CITY OF LANSING
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Hearing will be held on Monday, March 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 10th Floor Lansing City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI for the purpose of considering:

An Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, amend the Lansing Codified Ordinances by amending Chapter 696, Section 696.07, to provide requirements for owners of firearms to report the theft thereof and provide penalties for failure to make a report.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation to fully participate in these meetings should contact the City Council Office at 517-483-4177 (TDD (517) 483-4479) 24 hour notice may be needed for certain accommodations. An attempt will be made to grant all reasonable accommodation requests.

For more information, please call 517-483-4177. If you are interested in this matter, please attend the public hearing or send a representative. Written comments will be accepted between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on City business days if received before 5 p.m., on the day of the Public Hearing at the City Clerk's Office, Ninth Floor, City Hall, 124 West Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48933 or email city.clerk@lansingmi.gov.

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/MIPMC
www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk
www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope

CP#22-061

Lansing Legend: Dr. Surae Eaton-Sangster

By **AUDREY MATUSZ**

One thing they don't tell you about being a doctor is that your job doesn't end once you retire. Dr. Surae Eaton-Sangster, 72, is one of Lansing's most remembered family doctors. She sees her time working at Sparrow as a blessing and continues to view her profession as a means to connect with her greater community.

How long have you lived in Lansing?

I was born at Sparrow Hospital. I was gone for 17-18 years but been back for 38 years or so.

What got you into family medicine?

I went to Howard University planning to go into physical therapy, however Howard did not offer such a program (laughs), but I was accepted to Howard! I knew I would figure it out. It was the '60s and the peak of the civil rights movement and I ended up with a group of students who would lead demonstrations and organize student sit-ins. Then I suddenly decided that I didn't need to go to school. I dropped out. I wanted to help people in my community and helped start a space called the Center for Black Education. We took over an old house in a ghetto of D.C. and offered a lot of programs: educational, child-care and of course a medical program. Howard medical students and faculty volunteered and a local doctor donated

equipment to us as far as microscopes, medical beds and ophthalmoscopes. Dr. Roux was my supervisor at the center and one day he said, "Surae, you can't practice medicine without a license." It was that impetus that made me want to return to school. I applied to Howard and Michigan State, got into both, and decided to come back to Michigan State where my support system was.

How long did the Center for Black Education last?

I'd say at least five or six years. In the end, we ran out of funding, and all went our separate ways. D.C. really changed things for me. I tell my kids today, I used to not see white people for weeks. It was my first time seeing abject poverty. Coming from Lansing, to see the dichotomy of poverty there was just an eye opener for me.

Where were you during the King assassinations?

I don't know if I want that on tape (laughs). It was a wild time up and down Georgia Avenue and 14th Street. All the main streets in D.C.

Has your opinions on rioting changed over time?

As I've matured, I no longer think there is a reason for rioting for civil discord or as an outlet. For several reasons. It's often in our own communities where we're destroying businesses. We're rioting for our own gains, like stealing TVs for own personal reward. Certainly, demonstrations are something we should continue to do, but rioting does not lead to any progress at all.

What was the pandemic like for you?

Last January, the governor developed a program called Protect Michigan for COVID through Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. It was divided into 19 workgroups. I was the chair of the senior health workgroup, which had people from different counties working in nursing homes or AAA (Aging Assistance Agency). Within Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham we would put on clinics and with both AARP and the Protect Michigan workgroup. We created phone trees and called people to collect questions people had about the vaccine. We focused on Southeast Michigan, which was a void in the number of vaccinated people. In Ingham County, we focused on housing clinics in Black



Courtesy

Dr. Surae Eaton-Sangster

churches. Protect Michigan was only commissioned for a year, but we ended with 88% vaccination rate for ages 65+ statewide.

What was the biggest barrier in outreach?

Probably the biggest barrier in terms of COVID outreach was technology. Because in most cases you had to register to get a vaccine, and that registration was online. At least in Ingham and Eaton County we primarily focused on African American churches and setting up walk-in clinics, such as the Lansing Mall.

What clubs are you in?

I'm the treasurer of the Greater Lansing Area Club of the Negro Business and Professional Women's Club Inc. It's a chapter of a national organization that has been around since 1935. My mother started the Lansing club in 1982, which is known as the Greater Lansing Area Club. GLAC, as well as the national association, does a lot of community outreach like back-to-school backpacks for kids. Every year we have a Founder's Day, which is coming up next month, and we give out the Sojourner Truth award to recognize some outstanding individual in the Lansing area. We also have a community service award and other things based on what people have done in the community.

What was 2020-'21 like for you as a care provider?

First, my husband has a chronic lung condition and needs a lung transplant, so my biggest concern was keeping him away from COVID. I do a lot of consultation with friends and family. I have a

nephew who had a stroke a few years ago and needs a lot of advocating in hospitals.

The reason flu season was basically nonexistent in 2021 was because we were wearing masks. I was at a Michigan State basketball game, and they have discontinued mask wearing, which surprised me. I still wore my mask. We went from you couldn't get in without your immunization card and wearing a mask to just "come on in." But it's still an issue because you don't know who is vaccinated, and even if they are, they could be asymptomatic carriers.

Can community help you stay healthier?

It does! I think I've always enjoyed exercise. I play pickleball at least once a week and like going on walks with friends. My son's a runner and my daughter owns a spinning gym studio while working for the Pacers. My sister is amazing, she's 83 and still runs 5Ks. She just did the Turkey Trot and came to Thanksgiving dinner with her first-place medal. She is my inspiration.

We lost quite a few people in the Lansing area to COVID and the individuals that we lost were primarily unvaccinated. I didn't take care of COVID patients, however, experts on TV did speak often of premonitory conditions and people didn't do so well when they had obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension — things that are often preventable with good health maintenance. A sense of spirituality is also important for good health, whether you call that God or not. You need to feel connected to the world.



Audrey Matusz, the author of this series, is a former arts and culture editor of City Pulse who was born in Lansing and grew up in Okemos. She is a graduate of the Residential College of the Arts and Humanities at Michigan State University. She is a digital and instructional designer for the Michigan Victim Advocacy Network.

24 months of Covid

This week marks the second anniversary of the first COVID-19 diagnosis in Michigan. It's been a long, strange and painful ride. The incalculable loss of human life, the economic devastation, the collapse of comity among Americans, the abject failures of our political leadership — all of it has left us shell-shocked, tattered and torn.

The good news is we finally may be seeing a glimmer of light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. Case numbers are dropping precipitously. Mask mandates are falling away like autumn leaves on a blustery day.

It feels like we are in the home stretch, but we have to wonder if we are setting ourselves up for yet another dangerous variant, yet another spike that again overwhelms our hospitals. We've been here before and had our hopes crushed, so let's not plan the pandemic closing ceremonies just yet.

Worldwide, the official estimate is that 6 million people have lost their lives to COVID-19, but the true numbers are undoubtedly much larger. A recent review by The Economist estimated the global death toll at 14 million to 23.5 million. Here in Michigan, nearly 35,000 lives have been lost, but many more continue to suffer the consequences of the disease.

What have we learned over the past 24 months? That's a tricky question because it's clear that a significant swath of Americans learned absolutely nothing. Drowning in misinformation and parading the righteous indignation that stems from a dangerous combination of ignorance and defiance, scores of our fellow citizens remain convinced, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that the pandemic is a hoax, that COVID-19 is no worse than the flu, and that it's all part of a conspiracy by Democrats and the Washington deep state to divide our country

and turn everyone into compliant sheeple.

The pandemic brought out both the best in America and the worst. The list of heroes is long, starting with our frontline healthcare workers



— nurses and doctors and EMTs and support staff — but it also includes the everyday workers who drove the trucks that kept critical supply chains moving, the grocery store workers who did their best to keep the shelves stocked, and the food service industry personnel who put up with unappreciative and sometimes abusive customers while putting themselves and their families in jeopardy by working in close contact with the public.

For the first 18 months, we were deeply impressed with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's resolve. We'll follow the science, she said, and she did. At least until she embraced the political winds that counseled pulling back on statewide mandates if she hoped

to have any chance to win reelection this year. Of course, we want her to win. The Republican alternatives are a disturbing mix of Trumpian tools and self-aggrandizing, nouveau riche weirdos running vanity campaigns that pump up their inflated sense of their qualifications to run state government. Still, we think she could and should have stayed the course, saved more lives, and won reelection

by standing firm on her principles.

The executives leading our local healthcare systems were another disappointment. It is beyond our comprehension that neither Sparrow nor McLaren proactively required

their employees to get vaccinated. Of all the people who conceivably could and should be required to get the jab, hospi-

tal personnel who are charged with caring for the sick — not making people sick — top the list.

Where do we go from here? Early in the pandemic we were told we could achieve herd immunity after a certain portion of the population was vaccinated. Omicron pushed that day farther out due to its incredibly high transmissibility and because our

immunity evidently doesn't last very long.

As a result, some experts now say it will take better than a 90% vaccination rate, plus those who have acquired immunity by getting a COVID infection, to conceivably reach herd immunity.

Experts also say that COVID will soon transition from pandemic to endemic, slowly fading into the background but still claiming victims like other diseases we don't think about very much.

We're sure it will be a thrilling if misplaced validation for the COVID deniers when the ailment is finally declared to be no worse than the flu. Of course, this means that lots of people will continue to get sick, and the most vulnerable will continue to die, just like the flu.

Sadly, the pandemic will never be over for those with the misfortune of acquiring the mysterious and debilitating long form of COVID. Significant resources need to be dedicated to studying why it happens and how to treat it.

We also need to recognize and redress the disparate impacts of the pandemic on communities of color by pouring some of the billions in federal aid into support for families and children who continue to struggle with the aftereffects of the economic meltdown. Some of the heaviest burdens of the pandemic fell on the youngest among us as schools and families struggled to cope with massive disruptions in the educational enterprise. They will need our support to get back on track emotionally and academically.

In the meantime, the rest of the world is still a giant incubator for new variants that could be mild, but maybe not. That's why it's imperative for the U.S. and our global partners to accelerate distribution of vaccines and treatments around the planet.

As we hopefully approach the end of our long national nightmare, let's do everything we can to close the door behind us and ensure that this tragic and senseless chapter in our nation's history is never repeated.

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.)

How much freedom are we willing to give up?

By **DAVID KALLMAN**
OPINION

(David Kallman is a Lansing attorney.)

We all know the serious and deadly consequences from the virus that have swept the world in the past two years. We all experienced government actions attempting to address the problem.

The impact on families, individuals, businesses and places of worship was devastating. Government officials, often acting unilaterally outside the usual protections of our representative form of government, imposed many restrictions that the courts are now finding illegal and unconstitutional. I know this because I have represented many of these individuals in court.

Now that more information is exposing the ineffectiveness of many of the measures taken, it is important to consider how quickly we all gave up basic constitutional protections and inalienable rights. We must ask if we should do the same in the future if another pandemic arises.

Are we really prepared to go into lockdown mode again because of COVID-19 or other emergencies? Is the cure worse than the disease? Does everyone really understand the rights and liberties being eroded by unilateral actions of government officials, many of whom are unelected and unaccountable to the people, outside our constitutionally protected form of representative government? Why is there very little reporting on the large increases in mental health



Kallman

locking down nursing homes while requiring them to accept positive patients leading to the deaths of thousands, requiring businesses to record personal information of clients, curtailing the right of people to even meet in their homes, or at restaurants, gyms, and other businesses, were the norm.

Timothy Reichert told the Wall Street Journal: "The lockdowns mean that the right to earn a living is much more fragile and contingent than we thought. Consider that because of the lockdowns, my right, and yours, to earn a living depends on whether a government official allows it. ... What is this other than a new and technocratic form of subservience? The surveillance state has a legitimacy that it did not have prior to COVID-19. It is now apparently legitimate for state and federal agencies to observe, as well as regulate, my daily social interactions."

Former British Supreme Court Justice Jonathan Sumption told The Guardian: "The ease with which people could be terrorized into surrendering basic freedoms which are fundamental to our existence came as a shock to me." How much freedom are we willing to give up in the name of safety? He said the emergency measures used were "the most significant interference with personal freedom in the history of our country." He went on: "I do not doubt the seriousness of the epidemic, but I believe that history will look back on the measures taken to contain it as a monument of collective hysteria and governmental folly. Citizens should be treated as rational actors, capable of taking decisions for themselves and managing personal risk." Sumption concluded that the government's behavior was characterized by "a cavalier disregard for the limits of their legal powers." He said the government discovered "the power of public fear."

We face the same dangers in America. Will we also fail to care about the erosion of our constitutional rights until it is too late? We have a clear choice. Do we choose a country that shuts down its citizens, destroys businesses for the apparent good of the collective, and restricts liberty for the foreseeable future, all in the name of safety? In the alternative, do we choose a country that deals with the reality of the virus while encouraging personal responsibility and moving forward without throwing millions of Americans into poverty and dependency on the government? Do we choose a country that promotes an individual's choice, in consultation with doctors, of what medicines they take for their own health needs?

We must choose wisely.

There is no better investment than in our kids

By **GABRIELLE LAWRENCE**
OPINION

(The writer is the president of the Lansing School District Board of Education.)

It was almost exactly two years ago when I sat in a Lansing School District Board of Education meeting interviewing candidates to become our next superintendent when then-Superintendent Sam Sinicropi leaned over to me and whispered "Detroit (Public Schools) is closing."

I couldn't believe it. None of us could.

We spent the next several weeks — then the next several months — trying to determine when it would be safe to reopen Lansing schools, then putting in place plans for extended virtual learning and all that came with it, and eventually planning for the reopening of schools in the fall of 2021.

Throughout the pandemic, the Lansing School District has distributed more than 10,000 electronic devices (laptops, tablets, and iPads) to students. We became one of the first districts in the state to require staff to either show proof of vaccination or undergo regular testing. We handed out well over 3 million meals to members of our Lansing community. I don't mean only students; the Lansing School District, along with our food service partner, SodexoMagic, organized over 20 meal distribution sites throughout the city and handed out meals, no questions asked, to anyone who needed one.

We also created and implemented a fourth grade learn-to-swim program at Gardner International Academy. We started a completely virtual K-12 school, called Capital Area K-12 Online, which has drawn students from all over the state, and against all odds has resulted in an increased enrollment number this year districtwide. We started Universal Pre-K, which means that every student in our district, regardless of their family's income, can attend free, high-quality preschool.

Navigating a critical shortage of bus drivers, we came up with new methods of offering CATA bus passes and gas cards to our families. After suspending our superintendent search



Lawrence

for a year, we restarted the process and hired Ben Shuldiner, who became our new superintendent on July 1, 2021.

The Lansing School District has always been a family, and we have always taken care of our community, but that sentiment has never become more salient than during the pandemic. With the support of our community, last month, the board voted to institute a districtwide mask mandate that will remain in place until it is safe to lift.

We know that COVID-19 is a virus that is spread by respiratory droplets, and you do not have to be a doctor to understand how wearing a mask cuts down on the spread of respiratory droplets traveling in the air. My heart breaks for students in other districts, many of them in our surrounding areas, whose parents use them as pawns in their misguided ranting against masks.

To be sure, we have challenges in the Lansing School District, but our community is savvy enough to understand that wearing masks means reduced transmission of the virus, which means that schools stay open.

Throughout it all, we are dealing with a crippling teacher shortage and a lack of respect for the teaching profession. In the words of Quinta Brunson in her sitcom "Abbott Elementary," a love letter to public schools of Philadelphia, "Jacob and I came in together last year with 20 other teachers. We are two of the three left."

Here's how you can help. If you live in the Lansing School District, send your kids to Lansing schools. If you have students in the district, get involved in their education and in their school. Take an active role. Yes, make sure they do their homework, but also volunteer in their class. Be present.

If you live within the boundaries of the Lansing School District, the most important thing you can do is go to the polls and vote YES on the millage on May 3. The funds will allow the district to make extensive improvements to Sexton High School, install air conditioning throughout the entire district and completely tear down and replace four schools: Mt. Hope, Lewton, Willow, and Sheridan Road.

A strong public school district means a strong community. We have an opportunity to reinvest in our school district — in our kids — and there's no better investment.

STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT INGHAM COUNTY NOTICE TO CREDITORS Decedent's Estate

Case No. 21-000061-DE-P33
Estate of Theodore H. Peck Jr.
Date of birth: 07/26/1947.

TO ALL CREDITORS: NOTICE TO CREDITORS:

The decedent, Theodore H. Peck Jr., died 07/24/2017. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Tammy Grice, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933, and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 3/9/2022
Tammy Grice
13390 Tucker Dr.
DeWitt, MI 48820

CP#22-065

issues, deaths from suicide, cancer, the lack of needed medical care, and other harms caused by these mandates — especially in children?

Yet orders requiring the ubiquitous wearing of masks, social distancing,

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Riverwalk Theatre contemplates the next 60 years post-pandemic

By JEFF MAGNUSON
OPINION

(Jeff Magnuson is the president of Riverwalk Theatre.)

Riverwalk Theatre and the Costume Shop have been a part of the Lansing community in some form for over 60 years as Riverwalk Theatre, the Okemos Barn and Community Circle Players. The past two years have been unlike any others in our history.



Magnuson

We have been incredibly fortunate to have many dedicated members, supporters, volunteers and community agencies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our \$200,000 per year budget has been pared back significantly to continue to survive. I am pleased to tell you that we are still a vibrant, creative organization and we are ready for the next 60 years.

Our struggles have been like those of other small businesses whose business models were designed to bring people together. Speaking for our actors, directors, technicians and creatives: We've missed you. At Riverwalk Theatre, we threw out what we've always done and presented plays and play readings online. We offered new outdoor staged readings and experiences. Like our local restaurants, shops, museums and other indoor activities, we need people who feel safe gathering in public places to come together to watch our shows. We started small when we reopened indoors last fall. As we plan for our 2022-2023 season, you'll see us bring back big, exciting and entertaining theater experiences on both of our stages at Riverwalk Theatre.

Surviving financially has been possible through incredibly generous individual donors, memberships, the Payroll Protection Plan, LEAP, and the Michigan Arts and Culture Council. I cannot adequately express my gratitude for the support of these people and organizations.

Please, as you are able, support your local small businesses. Those of us in arts and culture need to see you now more than ever. Go out to see a play, attend a concert, visit a local destination or museum or shop at your locally owned businesses. This community has a wide-ranging variety of engaging experiences, including the performing and visual arts.

Some great resources for ideas and inspiration for activities indoors and out include Downtown Lansing Inc., the Arts Council of Greater Lansing, Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, Old Town Commercial Association and City Pulse.

After you're vaccinated and boosted, come experience how it feels to be with other people in your community again. If you like to paint, sew, build things with wood and screws, work on a computer that can operate lights and sound, or learn other new skills, we would love to welcome you to volunteer with us.

Now, more than ever, we need to find ways to come together.

ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Three Lansing businesses that emerged from the pandemic

By CHLOE ALVERSON

Lives and livelihoods were forever changed by the pandemic. Small businesses were notably hit hard because of various shutdowns and orders. Yet amid the loss and uncertainty of the past two years, businesses still found ways to flourish and grow.

Although it's been extremely difficult for economists to estimate the exact number and percentage of permanently closed small businesses, the fact checkers at PolitiFact confirmed that nearly a third of small businesses closed nationwide.

Yet, people still took the chance to open or expand businesses over the last couple of years. Here are three Lansing-area businesses that opened their doors since the pandemic's start.

Square One Breakfast and Bakery

Located in Hannah Plaza on Hagadorn Road in East Lansing is Square One Breakfast and Bakery. The restaurant is described on its website as “the place where great cooking and fantastic vibes meet” and the workers “welcome diners young and old.”

The breakfast and lunch spot serves up classics like strawberry stuffed French toast, as well as specialty dishes like the Hot Karl breakfast sandwich — house-blended sausage, egg, cheddar cheese, grilled onions and green peppers served on the customer's choice of bread.

After 10 years of planning, owner Ellen Leonard opened Square One in August 2021. In March 2020, she had been in lease negotiations for a different location, which she is thankful she didn't sign for.

“I was very apprehensive about the pandemic and economy, but I felt like the time was right and this was my shot,” Leonard said. “I kept moving forward.”

Leonard said the pandemic created many challenges, especially with the

Square One Breakfast and Bakery

4790 Hagadorn Rd., Suite 110, East Lansing
6 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday
(517) 203-5305



Chloe Alverson/City Pulse

Dymond Brown (right), owner of Onyx Nail Bar, sits at her station, ready for her next nail client.

rising cost of food and labor shortages. The stresses “made an already difficult industry even more challenging, with no end in sight.” The restaurant was a disaster at first, and it took more work than Leonard anticipated. She was able to open Square One five months after signing the lease for its location in Hannah Plaza.

The restaurant industry was hit hard and lost a lot of workers since the pandemic first started. Leonard said she is “blessed” with her “incredible staff” that she hired in the midst of a labor shortage. She is thankful for her workers, and she is thankful for the “incredible and supportive” customers who have given the restaurant a shot — Leonard said, as a small business owner, it makes such a difference when people give Square One a try.

“Running a restaurant takes grit, pandemic or not,” Leonard said. “It's an industry that I love and am passionate about.”

Onyx Nail Bar

Dymond Brown was working as a solo nail technician for three years and saw a jump in clientele after the pandemic shutdowns. Brown said her first days

open post-shutdowns made her a lot of money, but it was difficult to accommodate the growing number of customers by herself.

Last October, after hiring workers and moving to a bigger space, Brown welcomed new and old customers into Onyx Nail Bar, on the west side, with open arms — and a fresh set of nails.

Onyx Nail Bar

3203 W. Saginaw St., Lansing
9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Tuesday – Friday
9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Saturday
Closed Sunday
(517) 243-1752

Brown — going into her fifth year as a nail tech — now has four nail technicians, an esthetician and a lash artist working along with her at Onyx, 3203 W. Saginaw St. The salon offers various nail and spa services — from simple polish changes to exotic freestyle sets.

The highest priority, Brown said, is to provide customers with outstanding services in a comfortable environment. Before starting her own business, Brown noticed unfavorable trends in other nail salons where she worked.

“My goal was to make more money and work with other people,” she said.

“The biggest thing, for me, was to have a nail salon run the right way. A lot of times, you run into nail salons that are not sanitary, are not friendly and can't hold a nice conversation with customers.”

Before opening Onyx Nail Bar, Brown received a Paycheck Protection Program loan for \$6,280 in April 2021. The status reads “paid in full or forgiven” on FederalPay's website. The PPP loan, according to the website, was used for Brown's payroll and utility expenses. Brown also credited unemployment for helping her stay afloat during the shutdowns.

Although everything isn't about money for Brown, she said that the pandemic shutdowns helped grow her business. Brown added that Onyx Nail Bar is the first Black-owned nail salon in the area that accepts walk-ins every day.

“Most minority owned businesses are by appointment only,” she said. “Now, we can take walk-ins at any given time. That was another goal.”

She is taking steps toward making her business the number one nail salon in Lansing.

Social Sloth Cafe & Bakery

After pushing back the April opening date of their cafe, Social Sloth Cafe & Bakery, Burcay Gunguler and her husband, Aybars, finally opened their doors in late August 2020.

They had hoped for lots of business from people who worked downtown, especially those working for the state, but that wasn't the case. A few months after opening the cafe, a second shutdown drastically slowed business.

“We didn't want to give up, because we made an investment,” Gunguler said. “We had already bought lots of things, made arrangements with the wholesalers.”

“When you give up that chain,

Social Sloth Cafe

301 S. Washington Square, Suite 100, Lansing
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Monday – Friday
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday
Closed Sunday
(517) 253-0240

30 Lansing businesses lost to the pandemic

By CHLOE ALVERSON

Seeing storefronts plastered with for sale signs is the new normal. In a world that is two years into a pandemic, empty shops are all-too-familiar.

In the Lansing area, at least nearly 30 businesses closed for good since the pandemic began two years ago. Some places that were temporarily closed were fortunate enough to open their doors again, but many were not so lucky. At one point, in September 2020, City Pulse reported that 70 businesses in the area were closed or temporarily closed.

Laurie Lonsdorf, regional director of the Capital Region sector of Michigan’s Small Business Development Center, recalled what it was like for her and her team at the start of the pandemic.

“We were telling people to call your creditors, your banks, your landlords and make payment arrangements,” Lonsdorf said.

The development center is a federally funded organization that provides resources like business consulting and training to help people start — and grow — their small businesses. When the pandemic hit, the nonprofit tried to help rescue small businesses.

Cash flow remained the top priority, but the shutdown stopped or sharply cut revenue for many businesses. Lonsdorf and her team urged clients to focus on marketing, especially when numbers were low in the early days of the pandemic.

“We started having very frank, tough discussions advising businesses to lay off their people so their people could at least get unemployment,” she said. “It was devastating.”

In her role as regional director, Lonsdorf was involved in many grant reviews, which gave Capital area businesses “rescue funds and restart funds.” The loans were highly competitive and hard to apply for, Lonsdorf said, and

there simply was not enough money to go around. The Payroll Protection Program, or PPP, loan “essentially, turned into a grant,” because businesses could be forgiven of the loan, depending on how it was used.

“It was just life-saving,” Lonsdorf said. “The whole idea that it could help businesses save the jobs of their people, and they didn’t have to lay them off, or they could bring those people back. Once you destroy that staff team, it blows apart the cohesion of the business.”

In 2020, Lonsdorf said that the development center worked with 592 clients and helped start 25 new businesses. Last year, that number of clients dropped to 546. Despite having fewer clients, the development center assisted in the opening of 46 new businesses.

Other organizations in the area were also doing their part to save Lansing businesses, like the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. Michelle Rahl, its vice president of member engagement, said the start of the pandemic presented new challenges every day.

“Being the Capital City, I think downtown Lansing has been uniquely hit hard and continues to battle some of the challenges from the lost state workers,” Rahl said.

The chamber created the Relaunch Greater Lansing effort, which included a task force, to help businesses navigate the unknown.

“One of the great opportunities we had was to rally a lot of other business organizations and chambers to make sure that we were all aligned and providing strong resources, timely information and timely resources,” Rahl said.

years may have had a new experience, but it heightened the need to be engaged with the chamber.”

Restaurants were especially hit hard during the pandemic, with the shutdowns and capacity limits impacting the experience of dining out.

James Brains, admin of the Lansing Foodies Facebook group, said he and his wife, Erin, tried to bring positivity to small businesses, particularly restaurants. With 28,000 members in the Facebook group, Brains has realized the impact he can make. In February 2021, they started a support month for local restaurants to encourage members to patronize the spots.

“We were thinking of non-monetary ways we could leverage the size of Lansing Foodies to help restaurants out in the pandemic,” Brains said.

Throughout the month of February, Brains highlights different restaurants around the area for group members to support. He encourages members to post photos of their food to get others to patronize the restaurants. The incentive for posting in the group comes in the form of gift cards and gift certificates to Lansing area restaurants.

Last month was the second Lansing Foodies support month, which was a success. A winner was selected at random out of those in the group who had posted using the hashtag “LFSupportMonth2022.” This year’s prize was a \$100 giftcard to Saddleback BBQ. A runner-up was also chosen this year, as the Brains’ had noticed one user who posted and reviewed more than anyone else.

When asked what restaurant he was sorry to see go because of the pandemic, Brains said Amanecer Mexicano.

“It was a delicious Mexican breakfast place from the owners of El Oasis,” Brains said. “It had dishes you couldn’t find anywhere else.”

RIP: Businesses that did not survive the pandemic

The pandemic claimed the souls of many businesses across the country and throughout Lansing. Here is a list of the at least nearly 30 restaurants and businesses in the Capital City area that have, unfortunately, closed their doors for good.

- Deluca’s — Lansing
- Leo’s Outpost — Lansing
- Old Town Diner — Lansing
- Spartan Hall of Fame — East Lansing
- Punk Taco — East Lansing
- Los Tres Amigos — East Lansing
- Frاندor Deli — Lansing
- Taps 25 — Lansing
- The Brunch House — Lansing
- Mijo’s Diner — Lansing
- Good Slice Pizza Co. — Lansing

- Cops Cafe and Bakery — Lansing
- Finley’s Grill and Smokehouse — Lansing
- Reno’s Sports Bar & Grill West — Lansing
- Studio 109 — Lansing
- Center for Social Dance — Okemos
- Espresso Royale — East Lansing
- Fireside Grill — Dimondale
- Claddagh Irish Pub — Lansing
- Cantina Eastwood — Lansing
- Edmund’s — Lansing
- Houlihan’s — Lansing
- For Crêpe Sake — Lansing
- Snap Custom Pizza — East Lansing
- Amer’ican Bistro — Lansing
- Wings Over East Lansing — East Lansing
- The Cosmos — East Lansing
- Amanecer Mexicano — Lansing

She also said that, although new chamber members experienced virtual engagement, she was glad to give businesses the opportunity to connect with each other and their clients.

“Businesses still needed to find a way to meet new people, meet new clients and maintain and grow relationships,” Rahl said. “The chamber provided them with that opportunity. The members who joined us over the last couple of

Businesses

from page 14

everything is ruined.”

They used the power of social media to promote their downtown Lansing business at 301 S. Washington Square. The Gungulers use the hashtag “Let’s hang together” to boost online engagement.

The second shutdown lasted from

mid-November 2020 through the start of February 2021. During that time, the cafe offered curbside pickup and takeout options — including holiday meals — of its Turkish-inspired dishes.

“When you make things in good quality and people are really open-minded to taste different things, it makes the change,” Gunguler said.

Gunguler credited the cafe’s regulars for helping spread the word about the sloth-themed spot. She said Social Sloth is one of the few places cooking up

traditional Turkish eats — like kumru and pogaca. Although their menu setup at the time was not ideal for takeout, the couple made it work.

One lesson Gunguler said she’s learned since the start of the pandemic is that “crisis always happens in businesses.”

“You are supposed to make the negative into a positive,” she said. “Of course, you have different scenarios, but this was worldwide — not only about you.”

Now that things are returning to a new normal, Gunguler explained how

the cafe is offering cooking classes and Instagram live videos. Cooking classes are held in-person at the cafe. The Instagram live video series, titled Food Talks, is once monthly. The most recent Food Talks — hosted by Gunguler’s chef husband — featured a chef from Paris.

Even as a new business, Social Sloth became an established Lansing business — winning the award for best bakery in City Pulse’s 2021 Top of the Town awards.

At Coontz Law, we believe the justice system can do better. We believe in holding the Government accountable. We believe in empathetic representation of the accused. We believe Black Lives Matter. We believe we can—and will—change the world, starting right here in our backyard.

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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.

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Favorite Things

Candice Wilmore and her video camera



Candice Wilmore, 73, spent the worst days of the pandemic living in isolation at the Friendship Manor senior living apartment complex near the Frandor Shopping Center. Throughout the pandemic's peak, and to this day, her favorite thing is her video camera. Wilmore used the camera to record her thoughts on life, and now she uploads the videos to her personal YouTube channel.

I bought a video camera last September. It's just a cheap video camera I got for \$100 off the internet. I knew it wasn't going to be a big investment. I've been a still photographer for many years, and my Nikon takes video, but I wanted something higher quality.

I feel so strongly about the way the pandemic has affected people. I don't think we've given ourselves enough credit for waking up every day and dealing with it. I feel such empathy for other people.

I started my YouTube channel five months ago. My goal was to practice speaking from my heart, about what I've discovered in my 73 years of life. There are so many ways to say the same thing, and what I say won't be anything new. Perhaps, a reminder for us all, but especially to myself, to pay attention to what I've learned, what is the most important, while I'm still alive and breathing. Words are tricky. We can make things so complicated. I hope I don't add to all that.

To sit in front of a camera with no audience and try to speak without any notes — to sit there and feel like I have anything valuable to say — has been very challenging and interesting. Every time I do it, I have a slightly different experience. There's real loss of connection and

humanity, there's an incredible sadness I feel for humanity in having to live through this very difficult time.

Rather than come together, it seems to have divided people in a way that is so unnecessary. We could've risen to this occasion as human beings, and to see how much it has divided people and how much people have had to suffer — the isolation, sadness and depression — we could've done a better job maintaining our humanity through all of this.

When you try to share with people that you've discovered something about yourself that's profound and beautiful, it can come across boasting that you're somehow "enlightened." It's often not taken in by other people in a way that you would expect. I've seen how many times you must be careful about saying you've discovered something beautiful inside. People can take it as preaching or trying to promote something. It can be very tricky.

Staring into a camera, talking to an audience that may never find me or be interested, it took a lot of courage. I had no idea how people would perceive it. "Crone" is a mythological term — it usually means an old witch or hag; It's in a lot of old fairy tales.

These are not my words, but the true definition of a crone, in a more positive way and the one that I embrace, is: "An older woman who is not afraid to tell the truth about her life." That's where I'm at. I finally feel like I'm not afraid to tell the truth.

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

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neither can you.

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Photo by Nicole RICO

Lines form at an old automotive garage near the Frandor Shopping Center that Sparrow Health System converted into COVID-19 testing site and vaccine distribution hub.

COVID-19 two years later

What happened, what’s happening and what’s up next? Years of pandemic survival takes toll – in more ways than one

By TODD HEYWOOD

Two years ago, an invader so small that an army of 15,000 of them would fit on the head of a pin pushed the state into an emergency, shuttered our economy, locked us in homes, caused us to wear masks, restructured the way school and work got done and created a new, virtual world.

Shortly after 10 p.m. March 10, just after then-Democratic candidate for President Joe Biden declared victory in the Michigan primary, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer held a press conference to announce that the first two confirmed cases of a novel coronavirus (that had already leveled populations in China) had been detected in Michigan. It had also already been spotted in nearby states, and reviews of blood samples have since identified that the virus had already been circulating widely in major metropolitan areas of the U.S. as early as December 2019.

As emergency orders started shuttering businesses and restricting travel to protect hospital systems from becoming overrun by people with the new virus, Michigan residents rushed out to hoard toilet paper. Gun purchases shot through the roof.

The advent of a once-in-a-century novel viral pandemic tossed pre-pandemic life up in the air like a deck of cards. The virus has shifted into what officials have called its

endemic stage — meaning it will likely be here circulating for years. And Michiganders are still trying to find the rest of the cards lost in the now 2-year-old game of 52-card pickup.

COVID comes knocking

Kim Russom had already made plans for a lengthy leave from her work in her massage therapy business in East Lansing when COVID-19 appeared in Michigan. On March 6, she had major surgery on her shoulder that took her out of play at her therapy clinic and left the workload to five other massage therapists on staff. Russom expected the income from her successful small business to continue flowing in like normal until she could return five or six months later.

But then, the stay-at-home orders started coming down from state and local authorities. “For the first time in my life, I was despondent. We didn’t know how long the shutdown would go,” Russom told City Pulse. “I had no income, my savings were depleting fast and I had no use at all of my right arm. I didn’t know if I would get it back. I just didn’t even know what to do.”



Russom

Russom spent plenty of time crying — as well as taking webinars to prepare for a reopening, she said. Recovery from major shoulder surgery was complicated by the stay-at-home orders.

Physical therapists attempted to counsel her through exercises on Zoom and other video platforms. But without the capacity for those experts to have their hands on her shoulder to determine what was and wasn’t working, her shoulder froze, leading to more surgeries and more frustrations — even as caseloads dipped and the world began to slowly reopen.

Russom, like others, was shocked at the speed in which governments moved to shutter the economy and limit chances for the virus’s spread. The plan was to keep hospitals from being overrun by the sick, who often required intensive respiratory care and sometimes intubation.

John Patterson, vice president of support services at McLaren Greater Lansing, said the hospital began gearing up for the pandemic in late February and early March.

“The first phase, in retrospect, wasn’t as bad as it was with what we saw down the road, because initially everything was shut down. We weren’t doing the elective surgeries. Our census had plummeted quite a bit,”

See COVID, Page 18

COVID

from page 17

Patterson said. “What we did notice is that the people that we were seeing were quite a bit sicker and people were delaying care.”

While the first viral wave in 2020 was manageable, the second wave really taxed the system — mostly because hospital staff were being worn out by the workloads. He said staffing was the limiting factor in the hospital hitting maximum capacities in the second, third and fourth waves.

While McLaren and Sparrow are considered competitors in the same market, the two hospitals were often coordinating — whether in connection with the county’s emergency operation center or through coordinated communications between the two entities. Patients were transferred between the two systems in order to keep staff from burning out or being too overwhelmed.

On that Tuesday when the first cases were confirmed in Michigan, Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail was in Washington preparing to speak at a conference. Instead of rubbing elbows with other health officers and public health practitioners, she found herself scrambling to book a flight back to the state before the coronavirus arrived in Greater Lansing.

Initial stay-at-home orders were for two weeks. Cordelia Black, executive director of the Office of School Culture in the Lansing School District, said the district still had to jump into action to ensure kids receiving free or discounted meals received food — and that education continued.

“We needed to get ourselves together around what that looked like for students right out of the gate,” she said. “Initially, when we closed down for two weeks, we knew that we just could not let kids sit out for two weeks. So, behind the scenes, your central level administrators had begun putting together supplemental educational resources for students. And so, as days and weeks continued to grow, we then started thinking about how we were going to get online.”

School officials set up distribution sites for food. Others hand-delivered meals to families. The district scrambled to find and distribute enough technology for students to continue their schooling online. They hit a wall at purchasing new technology because every business and school system was doing the same thing. Within weeks, they were able to scrape together enough new and used tablets for students and teachers.

Ingham County Prosecutor Carol Siemon recalled watering her office plants and packing what she thought she might need for two weeks at home when the stay-at-home order first arrived.

Neither she, nor Black, imagined the original two-week pause would morph into months of virtual communication,



Vail



Siemon



East Lansing Mayor Aaron Stephens distributes masks downtown to MSU students.

Photo by Nicole Rico



John Burnham, an employee of the Lansing Area AIDS Network, receives a COVID-19 vaccine.

Courtesy

COVID

from page 18

limited real-life interactions without masks and 6 feet of social distance.

“And, you know, some people literally didn’t come back to the office for months,” Siemon said.

While Siemon was figuring out how to pursue justice for victims with a shut-down court system and limited indoor gatherings, conservative lawyer David Kallman, from the Great Lakes Justice



Kallman

Project, watched as the government used its powers to shutter most of the economy.

“We didn’t come rushing out saying we deny there’s a virus,” he recalled.

“We didn’t deny there’s an emergency. We didn’t do that.”

But Kallman was wary of the government actions, and his phone was ringing with people wanting to do something about the state shutdown on all but a

limited few types of businesses.

“Clearly, it’s been a pretty bad virus. But that doesn’t mean our Constitution is suspended and all rights are out the door and the government can do whatever it wants to do. That’s the balance,” Kallman explained.

The first lawsuit his organization filed had challenged Whitmer’s orders because they didn’t have a carve-out to allow religious groups to meet in person. Whitmer ended up changing those orders to allow those gatherings before the case could proceed too far into the federal judiciary.



Jacobson

Peter Jacobson, codirector of the Mid-States Region of the Network for Public Health Law and professor emeritus in public health and law at the University of Michigan,

said that the pushback on masking and other mitigation efforts was similar to the 1918 flu pandemic. But he rejected

See COVID, Page 20

COVID-19 kills high school sweethearts on family vacation

Howell couple dies hours apart from coronavirus complications

By TODD HEYWOOD

Patty Zimmerle had an infectious laugh. When she laughed, said her youngest son, Jeff Zimmerle, you just couldn’t help laughing along with her. That infectious laughter and quick smile served her well in real estate for years at the Coldwell Banker firm in Holt.

Her husband, Andy, bonded with their youngest son, Jeff, by riding bikes with him through his childhood. Those rides created a lifelong connection to mountain biking, which Jeff Zimmerle still does. His dad worked as a controller, and did tax preparation on the side.

“I don’t think I had to do a tax return except maybe one time, so I would know how to do it,” Jeff Zimmerle, 48, said.

His parents met while students in Howell, married in October 1967 and remained married for 53 years until they died on April 20, 2021 — just hours apart. They were both 72.

They’d been hit by the coronavirus while on an annual family vacation in Florida. Andy Zimmerle fell sick first and was taken to the emergency room. Jeff Zimmerle drove him, and once his father tested positive for coronavirus, he was whisked away to an isolation room. It was the last time he saw his father alive.

Jeff Zimmerle said that doctors told him and his brothers that they were going to do a course of remdesivir on his father for five days. The expectation with the powerful antiviral drug was that the course of the novel virus would shorten, as would the damage the virus wreaked on the body.

A few days later, his mother started showing the same symptoms. Jeff Zimmerle took her to the hospital, where she tested positive and was admitted. The hope: Remdesivir would stop her from getting sicker.

“Her oxygen was already very, very low,” Jeff Zimmerle said.

But days later, Zimmerle and his brothers got a call from the doctors that they didn’t expect.

The virus in their mother was not responding to the remdesivir, and her lungs and heart were being overtaxed trying to keep the rest of her body oxygenated. Together, they decided it was best to put a tube down her throat and allow a machine to do the breathing for her, giving her lungs and heart a chance to rest and recover from the virtual assault.

To do that, however, required sedating his mother and then inducing a medical

coma. It was a risky medical choice, but the family decided it was the only one. A nurse brought an iPad into her room and her family gave her warm encouragement and let her know how much they loved her.

It was early April and the family had only rented a condo for only a limited time in Florida.

Jeff Zimmerle’s brother and sister-in-law decided to pack their car and drive back to Arizona, where they live, using that time to quarantine in case they were infected with the virus. Jeff Zimmerle was left to pack up his mother and father’s belongings, load them into their minivan and drive back to Michigan, leaving their parents in the hands of the doctors in Florida. He said he convoyed with a friend and drove more than half the distance from Florida to Michigan before both were bleary eyed. They pulled over and slept for a few hours, then made the long haul back up to Michigan.

A few days later, Zimmerle received an early morning phone call from his parents’ doctors.

“He said: ‘I need to start off with some bad news,’ Zimmerle recalled. “Your mother is not doing well. How far do you want us to go to sustain her life? We’ve maxed out her intubation system.”

Zimmerle said he would need to consult his brothers. That’s when the doctor dropped another bomb: the drugs and oxygen mask were not helping his dad recover. They wanted permission to put him on a ventilation system. Together, they decided their mother would not want to be kept alive with machines. They also agreed to let the doctors make a last-ditch effort to save their father.

Zimmerle called the doctors at the hospital and gave them the directives. But a few hours later, he got another call that his father had died as they were working to intubate him. His heart stopped and the medical team was unable to revive him.

That evening came the call the family had expected: Patty Zimmerle had died a few hours after her beloved husband. They were on the same floor, but in separate rooms. Jeff Zimmerle was the only one in the family to have the opportunity to say goodbye to his dad.

The Zimmerles weren’t opposed to vaccinations, but scheduling the vaccine between trips was a hassle. They figured they would get the shot when they returned to Michigan for the summer.

“I am not going to judge anybody’s choice on the vaccines,” Zimmerle said. “But you need to know that if you get this virus, it can and likely will kill you. That is the choice you are making, so make sure you understand that.”

— TODD HEYWOOD



Courtesy

Andy and Patty Zimmerle pose in front of one of her beloved holiday decorations in 2016. The couple celebrated over 50 years of marriage before dying hours apart from COVID-19 last April.



Courtesy

The couple when they were high school sweethearts.

COVID

from page 19

the allegations from some that public health officials overstepped their authority or were deliberately being “tyrannical” and ignoring the economic and social impacts of shut downs.

“It was a balancing act,” he said. “Those issues were taken to heart, but we had a novel, deadly virus and we didn’t know what was going to happen with it.”



Sosebee

Ellery Sosebee, then a captain at the Lansing Police Department and now the chief of police, said law enforcement moved quickly to shift around work schedules to prevent the department from

being overwhelmed with the virus. The new shift schedule allowed no more than half of the department to be exposed or infected at any given time. LPD also instituted new procedures for the jail to prevent infection from spreading and to keep the small lockup as empty as possible.



Bhatti

Farhan Bhatti, a Lansing District Board of Education member and CEO of the nonprofit Care Free Medical, said early in the pandemic that his team shuttered for medical visits but later found the at-risk and under-insured patients they served didn’t have the technology to access telemedicine. While they shut down their optical and dental programs, they continued in-person medical visits for the most at risk. They also instituted tight prevention protocols, including screening procedures, masking and sanitizers.

Michigan’s chief medical executive, Natasha Bagdasarian, was working in Singapore when COVID-19 appeared in Michigan. She told City Pulse that “decades” of underfunding of public health made responding to the pandemic more difficult.



Bagdasarian

underfunding of public health made responding to the pandemic more difficult.

“There were signals that we were seeing elsewhere that could have been taken a little more seriously and people could have reacted a little bit sooner on the national level,” she said.

Catching those signals, Bagdasarian explained, could have helped to create a much more robust testing program and prepare health systems for the size and scale yet to come.

She remembers talking to friends stateside and asking: “Are you guys ready for this?”

Law and order in a pandemic

Two years ago, with much of the country having come to a screeching halt, Cherry Hamrick and her friend Mark Buzzitta decided to make use of their newfound freedom. Hamrick, 73, and Buzzitta, 48, have walked every day since the first stay-at-home orders. The two agreed to walk no less than a mile every day. If one or the other was out of the area, then the two would Facetime



Courtesy

Cherry Hamrick and her friend Mark Buzzitta celebrated 600 days and 2,424 miles walked since the beginning of the stay-at-home orders and the COVID-19 pandemic.

during their walks to encourage each other and socialize.

To date, the two have walked 2,724 miles together. They’ve walked trails in Meridian Township, parks in DeWitt and more. They’ve also stuck to the streets in the Groesbeck Neighborhood where there is better street lighting and an earlier sunset.

At the end of the day, there is one big reason they keep on walking, she said: “We like exploring!”

But not everyone took the lemons of the stay-at-home orders and made pandemic lemonade.

As COVID-19 pushed through the first

of what would eventually become three waves of infection, and residents grew frustrated by what they saw as confusing and contradictory messaging about health risks, conservatives organized protests at the Capitol.

On April 15, thousands of cars and trucks filled Lansing streets. Despite promises by organizers that everyone would remain in vehicles, hundreds gathered on the Capitol lawn to protest the stay-home orders from Whitmer. In the process, they caused some interference with Sparrow Hospital’s operations, said Sosebee said, who was then captain of the patrol division.

Some ambulances were delayed getting to the emergency room. Chemotherapy patients also had trouble navigating the blockade. Remote Sparrow labs found their samples delayed.

No arrests were made and law enforcement generally allowed the protests to continue without confrontation or citation. Nobody was cited for any violation of local or state health orders.

Two weeks later, protesters descended on the Capitol again, this time rallying in the rain outside the building. Some were armed. They entered the building

See COVID, Page 21

COVID

from page 20

and attempted to enter the visitors' gallery as well as the House floor in an attempt to end the orders that Whitmer had extended until May 15. Men armed



Byrum

with semi-automatic rifles and affiliated with different militias in the state stood in the Senate visitors' gallery. The protests put Michigan on the national news with images of protesters

screaming at law enforcement.

That protest would later be called a dress rehearsal for the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection in D.C.

Siemon said there are broad strokes unpinning the rise in violent crime in Lansing, as well as a simultaneous decrease in property related crimes during the pandemic. She tied in the impacts of civil unrest — from those protesting the governor's health orders to racial equity protests following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Siemon said the "constant stress for all" played into politics, drug overdose and suicide rates, social isolation, hate crimes and inequities.

COVID-19 in Ingham County hit Black and brown communities harder than white communities. And transmission rates are still nearly double for Black communities over white communities.

With the original two weeks of stay at home over, Siemon and her team had to figure out how to continue pursuing justice. Courts were still holding arraignments, often putting people back out on the street with either personal or low-cost bonds. The goal was to keep jails from being filled with people and having an outbreak of COVID-19 behind bars. For the most part, it worked.

But it also meant the courts had developed overwhelming backlogs of cases requiring jury trials.

"The biggest issue during the pandemic came with facilitating jury trials, because they require a large pool of potential jurors to assemble in one place," said Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum, who is also clerk of the 30th Circuit Court in Ingham County.

"That process has been updated to include overflow areas, additional rooms, and other health and safety precautions. Due to the close proximity that prospective and selected jurors have with others, masking has been required since the outset of the pandemic as well," she said.

Siemon has since ordered her team to



Photo by Nicole Rico

Strange Matter barista Jake Mervyn whips up a double shot at the Michigan Avenue location.

review cases to determine which suspects can be offered plea deals, avoiding a need for a jury and more courtroom time. If that wasn't happening, the backlog could take years to clear, she explained.

Before the pandemic hit, Ingham County was already experiencing hefty declines in the number of people it was sentencing to prison, according to county data. That was the result of Siemon's focus on addressing racial disparities and economic burdens on individuals and finding solutions outside of incarceration, she said. Still, prison commitments continued to decline into 2020.

In 2019, Ingham County sent 189 people to prison. In 2020, the number dropped to 73 — a decline that would stay steady into the pandemic with another 74 prison commitments in 2021.

While the lack of jury trials added to the decrease, Siemon said there was a bit more to it.

"The MDOC was not even taking persons sentenced to prisons, so they mostly stayed in local jails. It also generally meant that if someone was picked up on a parole violation, they might remain in jail instead of being remanded to prison," she said. "The Interstate Commission for Juveniles, prosecutors, and judges did a very good job of keeping new admissions down for offenses that might have previously resulted in a bond/jail ... but they also couldn't move people who might have been awaiting an extradition or prison commitment."

Taking the risk of arresting someone,

thus potentially exposing an officer to COVID-19 only to see that offender out on the streets the next day was "frustrating" for some cops, Sosebee said.

The other public safety issue that rose to the forefront during the pandemic and stay-at-home orders, Siemon said, was the increase in reckless driving — both a local and national trend. She used to sit on her East Lansing patio and hear the drag racers rushing down Saginaw Highway. City Pulse reported a 48% decline in traffic stops in 2020 compared to previous years.

Data from the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Medicine Global Health Now reported last December that traffic fatalities were up nationwide by 7.2% in 2020, along with an 18% jump in the first six months of 2021. That same report found the number of miles being driven by American drivers had dropped by 13% over the same time period. Mothers Against Drunk Driving also reported last week that alcohol-related fatalities jumped up 14% from 2019 to 2020, despite Americans driving 11% fewer miles in that same period.

While the data shows an increase in reckless driving and fatalities from vehicle accidents, Ingham County saw a decrease in the number of criminal cases authorized for reckless driving.

In 2018, the office had 55 such cases. In 2020, it was 48 cases and in 2021, it was 41 cases.

County officials said that not all

reckless driving incidents would necessarily end up in the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office. Those might be a single-vehicle accident and fatality, or they might be charged under local authorities like the city of Lansing and East Lansing.

Although an increase in gun violence incidents in Lansing had already begun when the pandemic struck, they escalated further with the shutdowns. Siemon said most of the gun violence arose from verbal arguments and, increasingly, from things published on social media.

Sosebee said that while there are groups of young people regularly tied to the gun violence in the area, he doesn't consider them gangs — with a leadership structure and rituals as are usual markers for gangs — because they were only loosely and socially associated with each other.

He also blamed the increase in gun violence on verbal statements and social media posts.

And while many Americans were rushing stores early in the pandemic to stock up on toilet paper, Sosebee noticed another trend: They were also buying more guns.

"More guns means more opportunity for gun violence," he said.

Siemon and Sosebee also said the pandemic resulted in more domestic violence incidents, and Siemon said those cases are involving much more violence than before the pandemic hit.

The train at the end of the tunnel?

Now, while we approach the two-year mark of COVID-19's assault on the state, cases of the highly infectious Omicron variant are declining — as are hospitalizations and deaths. The virus is still here — still spreading, still killing — but it is quickly receding.

As it does, health officials from federal and state governments are loosening pandemic restrictions such as mask requirements and social distancing.

The pandemic and its associated restrictions on life before the virus have resulted in some innovations that were originally unexpected. Black pointed out that parental surveys at Lansing schools found a significant number of students enrolling in cyber education. As a result, the district launched an online academy late last year. Enrollment there now tops 700 students.

And the new construction of McLaren's hospital on the edge of Michigan State University, which opened Sunday (March 6), resulted in a \$1.2 million change order to create a floor filled with negative pressure — specially designed areas to prevent infections from escaping



City Pulse/Kyle Kaminski

Nurses picket in front of Sparrow Hospital in Lansing amid pandemic-induced staffing shortages.

COVID

from page 21

a room when a door is opened.

Even while a new normal settles in, battles over vaccination and masking have continued. More than 1,000 cars and trucks rallied in Maryland last week-end to protest vaccination mandates in a clone of similar protests to the one that brought the Ambassador Bridge to a standstill. That protest hit the state's car manufacturing market hard — as much as \$350 million in one week.

Meanwhile, Kallman is still working on lawsuits about masks. His case against Ingham County and MDHHS on behalf of Resurrection Schools will have a rehearing before the entire 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. Kallman hopes to get the mandates tossed out on religious grounds — arguing that the masks inhibit learning and shroud a child's God-given facial expressions.

Kallman has also fought for the right of Western Michigan University athletes to refuse a COVID-19 vaccination based on strongly held religious beliefs — a move that would violate WMU rules. The athletes were offering to get regular testing and to wear masks, but the university wouldn't budge.

Some small businesses are waging legal battles against citations by local and state health officials for operating in violation of pandemic orders. Most, like Charlie's Bar and Grill in Pottersville, have paid their fines and had the licenses reinstated.

While Haslett Public Schools

rescinded its mask requirement last month, Lansing plans to keep its requirement for the foreseeable future, Bhatti said.

Three vaccines have now been approved for use in the United States and have proven effective in preventing people from getting sick enough to require hospitalization and intubation, and even more effective at preventing death. There are also now therapeutics that help to stop the virus' assault on the body — limiting the severity and duration of the infection.

For most, there is a sense of a light at the end of a very long tunnel.

But medical officials caution against popping the champagne just yet.

Vaccine uptake has not been nearly high enough in the U.S. to prevent future waves of infections, nor has there been enough people vaccinated across the globe. Experts said that leaves the door open for the wily virus to find new genetic sequences, creating new variants that may be more infectious and more deadly. The new variants could also arise with the capacity to evade antibodies that vaccinated bodies have created as a line of defense.

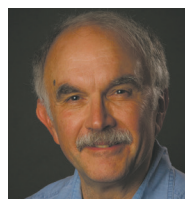
It's still unknown. And what that looks like has already been seen. The Omicron variant, which fueled the last wave of the virus, was capable of slipping past some immunities, allowing vaccinated people to not only get infected, but develop mild symptoms and transmit the virus.

Those unvaccinated were significantly more likely to end up in the hospital or dead. Jacobson said the "antipathy and opposition" to vaccines "remains



City Pulse/Kyle Kaminski

Protesters and police officers take a knee at the State Capitol in memory of George Floyd.



Gulick

startling" to him.

In Ingham County, 73.4% of eligible residents — meaning those ages 5 and older — have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

But that is not the

case across the state.

Like Ingham, Bagdasarian said the state is also working on implementing delivery of vaccines directly to communities that need them. Ingham ran early pop-up clinics in communities throughout the county and partnered with the Lansing School District to run, so far, nine vaccination clinics for students and their families.

On the horizon, all interviewed agreed, is a tidal wave of mental health issues caused by the pandemic. Vail pointed out that the isolation, the constant stress from fear of disease to financial woes and the impact of losing loved ones without saying goodbye would feed an increased need for mental health services.

Black, from the Lansing schools, agreed, noting the district is trying to scale up systems to deliver the mental health support that students and families will need.

Even if another variant of concern doesn't appear, the effects of the four waves may linger physically in residents for months or years to come. Estimates vary of how many people who contracted coronavirus will develop what has been dubbed "Long COVID." But most estimates assume 30 percent of those who had coronavirus will also develop the

lingering malaise.

"Anytime you see a virus that impacts how we taste and smell, you know that it is impacting the nerves and the brain," said Vail.

Added Dr. Peter Gulick, an infectious disease doctor who teaches at MSU: "That is going to have an impact on the economy. Some, if not all, of those people are going to have issues getting back into the workforce."

He said many develop brain fog and post-exertional exhaustion. A walk from the front door to a mailbox can wipe out a person with the post-infection issues for hours or days. Brain fog results in people being unable to concentrate. Those with the syndrome can also develop hair loss, skin issues, lung issues and heart issues, among other problems. Gulick said he has heard of patients who have lung tissue as dainty and fragile as tissue paper after their COVID-19 infections, creating significant issues for people who were otherwise healthy.

Clinics to investigate Long COVID are being set up at U-M and Beaumont Hospital systems, as well as the National Institutes of Health. The state does not keep track of Long COVID cases in any public databases.

"The fact is, we are still learning something new about this virus every day," Gulick said. "While we think of it as a respiratory virus, it has the capacity to attack many different parts of the body, causing different issues of concern. Unlike SARS, this virus uses a very common protein system to enter a human cell, the ACE 2. It's everywhere in the body."



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1:00pm- **Mira Awad** *Creator* of *Muna*
2:30pm- **Yael Katzir** *Director* of *My Grandma Had a Gun*
3:15pm- **Yael Katzir** on *Love it Was Not*

Tuesday, March 22- IN-PERSON

6:00pm- **Complimentary dinner** by Woody's Oasis will be served outside Wells Hall facing the International Center (Behind the Starbucks in the B-Wing)

7:00pm- Live screening of ***Aulcie***, Wells Hall B-117 (Masks are required)

8:30pm- Live discussion with **Director Dani Menkin**

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Pandemic stole the spotlight from theater companies

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Theater companies in the Lansing area are still reeling from pandemic surprises and numerous shutdowns.

“Having never lived through a pandemic, every day was a surprise,” John Lepard, Williamston Theatre’s cofounder and director said. “Nine plays were moved or canceled due to the pandemic. I could not imagine the theater being put on ice for 18 months.”

Like many, Tom Ferris, a Riverwalk Theatre director and set builder, was also caught by surprise.

“We were slow to understand how COVID would ultimately affect us,” Ferris said. “At first, we thought we might just lose one production.”

As the coronavirus raged on, Riverwalk lost four more shows in the 2019-’20 season.

“We slowly realized that COVID would impact more than just one season,” Ferris said. Riverwalk’s entire 2020-2021 lineup was put on hold.



Courtesy

A glimpse of a rehearsal for “All Is Calm,” which was Peppermint Creek Theatre Co.’s first in-person production since the pandemic.

Michigan State University’s Department of Theatre was also deeply affected.

“The pandemic was immediately devastating to our productions,” Abigail Tykocki said.

The MSU productions manager, communications specialist and faculty member said that the number of campus

shows lost was “almost too many to count.” Two were canceled for the 2019-’20 season. All seven the next season and all 2020 Summer Circle shows were abandoned.

She also said many community outreach and engagement initiatives were abandoned, as were productions by student organizations.

“We’ll be feeling the impacts of this for years to come,” Tykocki said.

Similarly, at Lansing Community College, the Performing Arts Department’s “Middletown” was cut one week before opening in March 2020.

“We ended up canceling all seven of our planned live summer stage, black box, dance and mainstage performances through May 2021,” said Melissa Kaplan, LCC’s academic and arts outreach coordinator. None of the performances were rescheduled.

“It was a loss of community for us all, but I felt it especially for our students,”

Kaplan said. “The disconnection was really rough for them.”

Owosso’s Lebowsky Center for the Performing Arts lost two regular season productions and three special events.

“We even planned an outdoor Holiday Show for December of 2020, but the COVID numbers rose to a point where we had to cancel those plans,” Julie Wenzlick said.

“I think we haven’t yet seen all the impact the pandemic has and will continue to have,” Wenzlick said.

Linda Granger, Starlight Dinner Theatre’s artistic director, founder and president, was surprised that the pandemic would mean losing the group’s performance site. She also surprised that more people did not come to the shows once the theater opened up again.

“People no longer had expendable money to include dinner with their tickets like they did before,” Granger said. “We lost about half our regular audience members either through moving, death, aging or COVID concerns.”

Starlight lost four shows when coronavirus restrictions forced them to

See Theater, Page 25

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Theater

from page 24

vacate the Waverly East Intermediate School. “The Lion in Winter” was closed in mid-run and rescheduled for last November. The canceled “Guys and Dolls” opened in February as a stripped-down, “Concert Version.”

Ixion Ensemble canceled two shows, rescheduling one.

“We were able to present ‘Dreams’ and ‘Rust’ outdoors during COVID,” artistic director Jeff Croff said. Like all area companies, Ixion is offering a reduced number of shows for the 2021-‘22 season.

Owosso’s theater, Riverwalk and Peppermint Creek Theatre Co. also had outdoor shows. In June, Starlight’s “West Side Story” will be presented outside in downtown Lansing.

Riverwalk, LCC, MSU and Peppermint Creek all pivoted to create virtual productions when live shows were risky. Peppermint Creek’s entire 2020-2021 season was virtual. About half of those interviewed mentioned they were surprised how quickly — and cleverly — plays became available digitally.

Many companies won’t recoup royalties paid in advance for plays never

shown. How much staff pay, costume rentals, director and musician fees, and more that were lost is hard to determine. The Lebowsky Center, MSU, Riverwalk, Peppermint Creek and Williamston Theatre did get some surprise grant help.

Even with grant help, Leopard estimated the Williamston Theatre lost upward of \$450,000. Ferris said Riverwalk lost 85% of anticipated ticket sales for the 2020-‘21 season. LCC’s performing arts program lost \$8,000 to \$10,000 in ticket sales, Kaplan said. The program also missed out on \$7,500 in donations. Starlight Dinner Theatre’s donations dropped by 83% in 2020 and 42% in 2021.

Over the Ledge Theatre Co. has remained dark since the pandemic’s shutdowns. Joe Dickson, its president and executive director, said it had lost \$16,000 to \$17,000 in revenue, despite donations.

“It’s easier for OTL than most theaters to slim down our costs,” he said.

The coronavirus’ impact on theater participants and devoted audiences is immeasurable.

“The biggest loss for us was not having the opportunities to work together to present live theater in front of a live audience,” Ferris said. “Isolation from others was the curse of the pandemic.”

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Libraries, bookshops found ways to thrive during pandemic

By **BILL CASTANIER**

As if taking a cue from the nursery rhyme that starts “Jack be nimble, Jack be quick,” bookstores and libraries around the Capital City were quick to adapt to the changing COVID-19 pandemic landscape that began in 2020.

Since then, things have changed dramatically. Bookstores and libraries weathered the storm and, in some instances, have come back stronger and more resilient after learning how to manage the selling and lending of books during a pandemic.

After talking with some local sources and reviewing a number of national studies, I learned that the pandemic may have positively impacted the reading, buying and borrowing books. Initially, bookstores and libraries went into crisis mode when the coronavirus first struck. Workers were laid off or worked from home, as was the case for the Capital Area District Library.

Libraries had to figure out how to circulate books at the beginning of the pandemic, because it was commonly thought that the COVID-19 virus was spread by touching objects that had been exposed to it.

“At the beginning of Covid, books were considered ‘dirty,’ and we wondered if people were going to come back to our space,” said CADL executive director Scott Duimstra.

The process was cumbersome for libraries whose business model had always been circulating books to patrons. The huge number of books, totaling in the hundreds of thousands, needed to be housed and loaned safely. Fortunately for CADL, there was already a robust system in place for downloading audio and e-books. “In 2020, our digital circulation was huge,” Duimstra said.

CADL implemented curbside delivery and pickup, Duimstra said. The practice is still in place, although demand is minimal. Circulation of traditional print materials through CADL is returning to pre-pandemic levels.

“We learned that the browsing experience is still in demand,” he said. Although the numbers of in-person use are still down, “we have seen that people want to come into our space. The library is seen as a ‘third place’ where people want to gather and interact.”

Amanda Strong, the general manager of Schuler Books in Okemos, said that the store’s staff went from 20 employees

to three. As everything shut down, she said something unusual happened.

“We saw traffic increasing on the website,” Strong said. “We began selling educational materials across the country. It sustained us in those first few months.” She surmises that the increase was, in part, due to Amazon shipping only essential items at the start of the pandemic.

“The first year [of the pandemic], we surpassed the first 10 years of selling online,” Strong said.

The high demand allowed her to bring back more employees and gradually implement curbside book pickup. As the first wave of the virus subsided, Schuler’s began instore sales by appointments, which limited the number of shoppers in the store at one time.

The store also enforced mask rules and an arcane method of sanitizing and sequestering books. After perusing, customers were asked to place unpurchased books on tables, where the books were treated with ultraviolet light to kill germs.

Publishers, bookstores, libraries and e-platforms began offering virtual meet ups with authors in place of canceled in-person events to stay in touch with readers. Strong sees that trend continuing for some time.

“Virtual events became a great option for accessibility and gave us a broader reach,” she said. “We did a virtual event with Stacey Abrams, which was huge. Prior to Covid, we would have never been able to get her.”

Ray Walsh, owner of Curious Book Shop and Archives Book Shop, went a somewhat different route: relying on crowdsourced fundraising to get his East Lansing businesses through the tough times. He sold online and pur-



Bill Castanier/City Pulse

Delta Township Library, at 5130 Davenport Dr., Lansing, has “Grab & Go” lockers located outside the building

sued non-traditional sales outlets to sell books, such as Etsy.

Walsh noticed that he began selling more books in states that had experienced forest fires and flooding. He guessed that readers were trying to replace lost books, like treasured cookbooks.

“Our group funding was, in part, successful, because if people sent us money, we would send them books as a premium,” he said.

National reports, including some by Publishers Weekly, showed some surprising — and positive — book-selling numbers, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. Not surprisingly, Amazon continued to be the leading book seller — dominating both print and digital platforms. Amazon accounts for more than half of all print, digital and audio book sales, The New York Times reported in 2019.

The bounce-back of book selling numbers nationwide has been huge. A Publishers Weekly report stated, “Through October 2021, sales at bookstores were \$7.12 billion, up nearly 40% over the same period in 2020.” Pre-pandemic — in 2019 — book sales were around \$10 billion, the report said.

One thing booksellers and readers have learned from the coronavirus world is that the death of the book has

been greatly exaggerated — apologies to Mark Twain.

To underline that premise, you only have to look to the four new independent bookstores that have opened in the Lansing area during the Age of Covid, selling everything from horror, true crime, radical books and books by Black authors.

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Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

“It’s Getting Dark”--but it’s supposed to do that.

by Matt Jones

Across

1. They’re part of the vinyl solution?

4. Young of AC/DC

9. “Guernica” painter Picasso

14. Alley-____ (basketball maneuver)

15. Million-____ odds

16. “I speak for the trees” speaker

17. Win-win deal

19. Still around

20. Conclusion of “Hamilton”

21. Discussion need

23. Grandma, across the Atlantic

24. Seasonal reason to get a shot

26. Quite

28. Not built in a home workshop, perhaps

33. ____ Spaghetti (Detroit restaurant co-owned by Eminem)

36. Bard’s instrument

37. 2021 singer of “Easy On Me”

39. “Xanadu” rockers

40. Film editing technique, or what the edges of the theme answers represent

42. “Bloody ____!” (Cockney outburst)

43. Florida critter

45. Guitarist Benjamin and hockey player Bobby

46. It may be trapped in a filter

47. Old-timey emergency service provider

50. Go off course

51. Comes along

55. “American Dad!” employer

57. Primary impact

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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55	56				57			58	59	60				
62				63				64						
66								67					68	
69								70					71	

61. Layer discussed in “An Inconvenient Truth”

62. Pull some strings?

64. Maryland home of the U.S. Army Field Band

66. Kitchen range

67. Like Lamb Chop or Shaun

68. Chess’s ____ Lopez opening

69. Hurting more

70. Chimney deposits

71. Refreshing resort

Down

1. Like some yogurt, informally

2. Cook eggs, in a way

3. “In ____ of it all ...”

4. Leader of the Huns

5. “Conjunction Junction” conjunction

6. First-ballot Hall of Famer, presumably

7. Go back, in a way

8. Move like groundwater

9. It may get colored in at dinner

10. “You’ve got mail!” ISP

11. Where pirate ships sink, poetically

12. Obsidian source

13. “Oregon Trail” creatures

18. Jazz motifs

22. Climbing vine

25. Stanford rival

27. “Excellent”

29. Henry VII or Henry VIII, for instance

30. “SNL” castmate of Ferrell and Gasteyer

31. Company shake-up, for short

32. Self-titled 1969 jazz album

33. Former eBay chief

34. Current chancellor of Germany

35. Person who gets you going

38. Street of horror fame

40. Part of a pub concert promotion, perhaps

41. Insurance provider to mil. families

44. Bauxite, e.g.

46. Jump on, as an opportunity

48. “It’s too chilly!”

49. Suffixes that go with stadiums

52. Gets really high

53. Reach a conclusion

54. “Byeeeeee”

55. Utter some discouraging words

56. Keen on

58. Tabloid craft

59. Porto-____ (capital of Benin)

60. Small music group

63. “____ Been Everywhere”

65. Sticks around for a real blast?

SUDOKU

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		8			4			
	7	9		1				6
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5		1	9					
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Beginner

TO PLAY

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

Answers on page 33

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezсны

March 9-15, 2022

ARIES (March 21–April 19): Aries author Isak Dinesen defined “true piety” as “loving one’s destiny unconditionally.” That’s a worthy goal for you to aspire to in the coming weeks. I hope you will summon your deepest reserves of ingenuity and imagination as you cultivate a state of mind in which you adore your life just as it is. You won’t compare it negatively to anyone else’s fate, and you won’t wish it were different from what it actually is. Instead, you will be pleased and at peace with the truth of exactly who you are right now.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20): As author Mary Ruefle points out, “In the beginning, William Shakespeare was a baby, and knew absolutely nothing. He couldn’t even speak.” And yet eventually, he became a literary superstar—among history’s greatest authors. What happened in between? I’m not exaggerating when I attribute part of the transformation to magic. Vast amounts of hard work and help and luck were involved, too. But to change from a wordless, uncoordinated sprout to a potent, influential maestro, Taurus-born Shakespeare had to be the beneficiary of mysterious powers. I bring this up, Taurus, because I think you will have access to comparable mojo during the next four weeks.

GEMINI (May 21–June 20): As talented and financially successful as Kanye West is, the Gemini singer-songwriter experiences a lot of emotional suffering. But no one lives an ideal life, right? And we can learn from everyone. In any case, I’ve chosen quotes by Kanye that are in rapt alignment with your astrological omens. Here they are: 1. “I’m in pursuit of awesomeness; excellence is the bare minimum.” 2. “You’re not perfect, but you’re not your mistakes.” 3. “I’m not comfortable with comfort. I’m only comfortable when I’m in a place where I’m constantly learning and growing.” 4. “Everything I’m not makes me everything I am.”

CANCER (June 21–July 22): “Any real ecstasy is a sign you are moving in the right direction,” wrote philosopher Saint Teresa of Avila, who was renowned for her euphoric spiritual experiences. So is there any such thing as “fake ecstasy,” as she implies? Maybe fake ecstasy would be perverse bliss at the misfortune of an enemy, or the trivial joy that comes from realizing your house keys aren’t missing. Real ecstasy, on the other hand, might arise from a visceral sense of the presence of God, or the rapture that emerges as you make love with a person you care for, or the elation you feel when you commune with your favorite animal. Anyway, Cancerian, I predict that in the coming days, you will have an extra rich potential for the real kinds of rhapsodic delight and enchantment.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22): Leo actor Jennifer Lawrence portrayed a rugged, fierce, resourceful champion in The Hunger Games film trilogy. In real life, however, she has few resemblances to that stalwart hero. “I have the street smarts and survival skills of a poodle,” she has confessed. But I’ve got potentially good news for her and all the rest of you Leos. The coming months will be a favorable time for you to cultivate the qualities of a rugged, fierce, resourceful champion. And right now would be an excellent time to launch your efforts.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): Each of us periodically has to deal with conflict. There come times when we must face the fact that a specific situation in our lives isn’t working well and needs to be adjusted, fixed, or transformed. We might prefer to pretend the problem doesn’t exist. We may be inclined to endure the stressful discomfort rather than engage with its causes. But such an approach won’t be right for you in the coming days, dear Virgo. For the sake of your mental and spiritual health, you have a sacred duty to bravely risk a struggle to improve things. I’ll provide you with advice from novelist John Fowles. He said, “I must fight with my weapons. Not his. Not selfishness

and brutality and shame and resentment.” Fowles goes on to say that he will offer generosity and gentleness and no-shame and forgiveness.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): A blogger named MysteryOfWhat expressed appreciation for her errors and wrong turns. “I love all my mistakes!” she exclaimed. “I had fun!” She has a theory that she would not have been able to completely fulfill her interesting destiny without her blunders and her brilliant adjustments to those blunders. I won’t encourage you to be quite so boisterously unconditional in celebrating your fumbles and miscues, Libra. My inclination is to urge you to honor them and feel grateful for them, but I’m not sure I should advise you to shout out, “I love all my mistakes! I had fun!” But what do you think?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): Scorpio poet Norman MacCaig wrote, “Ask me, go on, ask me to do something impossible, something freakishly useless, something unimaginable and inimitable like making a finger break into blossom or walking for half an hour in twenty minutes or remembering tomorrow.” I hope people say things like that to you soon, Scorpio. I hope allies playfully nudge you to stretch your limits, expand your consciousness, and experiment on the frontier. To encourage such a development, you could do the same for your beloved allies: nudge them to stretch their limits, expand their consciousness, and experiment on the frontier.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): “Look at your body not as a source of physical attraction but as a shrine,” wrote teacher Sobonfu Somé. Personally, I have no problem if you regard your body as a source of physical attraction—as a gorgeous, radiant expression of your life energy, worthy of inspiring the appreciation of others. But I agree with Somé that you should also treat your body as a sacred sanctuary deserving of your reverence—especially now. Please boost your intention to provide your beloved organism with all the tender care it needs and warrants.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): “It’s surprising how much memory is built around things unnoticed at the time,” writes author Barbara Kingsolver. Yes! I agree. And by providing you with this heads-up from her, I’m hoping that the subtly potent events unfolding for you in the coming weeks will not go unnoticed. I’m hoping you will be alert for seemingly small but in fact crucial developments—and thereby give them all the focus and intelligence they deserve. Later, you’ll remember this delicately pivotal time with amazed gratitude.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): What’s more important: to learn or to unlearn? The answer, of course, is they are equally important. But sometimes, the most crucial preparation for a new learning phase is to initiate a surge of unlearning. That’s what I’m recommending for you right now. I foresee you embarking on a series of extravagant educational experiences in a couple of weeks. And the best way to ensure you take maximum advantage of the available lessons is by dumping useless knowledge and irrelevant information and numbing habits.

PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20): Singer-songwriter Jill Scott has earned one platinum and two gold records. She approaches her craft with diligence and intensity. On one occasion, she was frying a burger at her boyfriend’s house when she sensed a new song forming in her imagination. Abandoning the stove, she ran into the next room to grab pen and paper. Soon she had transcribed the beginning of a melody and lyrics. In the meantime, though, the kitchen caught on fire. Luckily, she doused it. Later Jill testified, “His cabinets were charred, and he was furious. But it was worth it for a song.” I don’t think you’ll have to make as big a sacrifice as hers in the coming days, Pisces. But you should respond robustly whenever inspiration arrives.

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

TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA



Olivia Dejonghe

PET ME released an EP last month.



Frank Vargas

Monte Pride released an LP, "Even in Absence," back in August 2020.



Michael Boyes

Harborcoat released a new LP, "Joy Is Elusive," in 2021.

Pandemic impacted Lansing's music scene in several ways

Local musicians safely soldiered on as music venues closed down

Greater Lansing has always been the underdog in Michigan's music canon. With Detroit, Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids close by, Mid-Michigan often gets passed up by the big, mainstream tours. However, one thing it rarely lacks is trusty dependable indie-music venues for local acts to perform at. That is, until COVID-19 happened.

Since then, The Loft (414 E. Michigan Ave.) shut its doors permanently. The long-term shutdown was too much for the once-packed club and in late 2021, its closure was official. Fitting about 500, the upstairs room was open to all music genres, from metal and rap, to rock and electronic. Throughout its entire run, The Loft always stayed focused on its initial goal: being a music venue, nothing more.

"It's not a restaurant or a sports bar," manager Jerome White told City Pulse soon after it opened in February 2010. "There is no confusing what this room is — it's a room for live entertainment."

For years, Fusion Shows booked countless sold-out nights at The Loft, but now it's just a part of our city's past. Today, the space once occupied by The Loft is now the home of The Studio at 414. While some music happens at this venture, it's by no means a traditional rock club. Music artists can rent the space for shows, but it's also being billed as "Downtown Lansing's premier wedding, event and banquet space."

Though, it hasn't been all bad news for Lansing. Other watering music

hotspots, like The Avenue Café, The Green Door, The Robin Theatre and UrbanBeat, all made it through the pandemic. And while it's still closed for renovations, the once-gritty watering hole known as Mac's Bar promises it will return after work is completed on the newly revamped room.

"Mac's will reopen just as soon as they are done," Mac's Bar owner Chuck Mannino told City Pulse back in December. "Hopefully this spring."

Prior to the renovation project, the CBGB-like venue had no doubt seen better days. The ceiling tiles were falling, and the walls were hole-ridden. But when it reopens, patrons will likely be shocked at its transformation.

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

Of course, the pandemic didn't just affect area businesses. Local musicians, who could no longer gig, also felt the sting. Though, it didn't stop them. Area troubadours, like Monte Pride, managed to release new recordings during the shutdown.

"It's been strange," Pride said back in August 2020, just after the release of his "Even in Absence" LP. "There isn't a guide to releasing an album during a pandemic, but even with everything going on and all of the deeply rooted

issues we're facing, I'm looking forward to getting the new music out to hopefully bring some solace to listeners."

Like many other performers, during the height of COVID, Pride said he brainstormed for ways to stay active in his art, but decided to be careful during those confusing times.

"I also miss performing a lot, but have appreciated the downtime to focus on writing for the next album and promoting this one," Pride said at the time. "I've considered outdoor, distanced shows to promote the release, and while I understand they can be done safely, I don't feel that it's worth the risk of gathering and people having potentially close contact with each other."

Last month, PET ME released a new EP. The band's guitarist Allie Hunt used that time to work on long-shelved musical missions. "COVID kind of made me take a look at my music fundamentals again" Hunt said. "I went hard learning some music theory I'd been putting off for years. Having that time with no shows or playing in bands has really helped me become a better musician."

In September 2021, Matt Carlson, another Lansing songwriter, also buckled down on getting things done. The vocalist/guitarist released an album with his side-project band, Harborcoat. The disc, "Joy Is Elusive," which features an all-star Lansing lineup of contributors, was unintentionally inspired by the pandemic.

"The songs themselves really weren't informed by the pandemic in terms of themes or structure," Carlson said just after he released the LP. "The themes were pretty well defined before lockdown occurred. However, working from home for months on end allowed me the time to write for longer periods each day and gave me a chance to really focus on the structure and contents of each tune."

After Carlson's initial songwriting process was over, and he was ready to hit the studio, the ripple effect of COVID continued on.

"Lockdown did severely affect our ability to rehearse and record the album," Carlson said back in September. "By July of 2020 we managed to find a way for three of us to get together at a time and work out the bare bones of the songs. Then, we made plans to record at my family's cabin for a week in September as a four piece."

"That week was a huge relief in so many ways," he added. "It felt great to be creating something with people I love at a time when the world felt filled with loss and fear."

I'm not sure if the average listener can hear the dimensions of grief and gratitude on the finished recording, but those of us who were there, you can feel it in the corners of the recordings."



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Pottery from Haley Potter



Sculptures from Frith Sculpture



Jorn Mork of West Virginia's hand cut and punched metal pieces with canvas giclee prints of her original artwork.



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OUTontheTOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

Events must be entered through the calendar at lansingcitypulse.com. Deadline is 9 a.m. Monday 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
Devyn Mitchell
Thurs., March 10, 7:30-10:30 p.m.
Joe Wright
Fri., March 11, 8-11 p.m.

Blue Owl
1149 S Washington, Lansing
Elden Kelly and Gregg Hill
Thurs., March 10, 6-8 p.m.

Classic Pub & Grill
16219 N. US 27, Lansing
Lady Luck
Fri. March 11, 8:30 p.m.
Darin Larner Trio
Sat. March 12, 8:30 p.m.

Eaton Rapids Craft Co.
204 N. Main St., Eaton Rapids
Kevin Parker
Fri., March 11, 7-10 p.m.
Jake VanRavenswaay
Sat., March 12, 7-10 p.m.

Green Door
2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
Bourbon Legends
Fri., March 11, 8:30 p.m.
Miranda & M-80s
Sat., March 11 26, 8:30 p.m.

One North
5001 W. Saginaw, Lansing
Tony Thompson
Fri., March 11, 6:30-10:30 p.m.

Royal Scot/Triple P Bar
4722 W. Grand River Ave., Lansing
The New Rule
Fri., March 11, 8-11 p.m.

Urban Beat
1213 N. Turner St., Lansing
Sean Miller
Thurs., March 10, 7-9 p.m.
Crossroads Resurrection
Sat., March 12, 7-10 p.m.
The Pickle Mafia
Sun., March 13, 7-10 p.m.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration and Parade

Saturday, March 12

11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Downtown Grand Ledge



The Grand Ledge Chamber of Commerce and the Grand Ledge Opera House are hosting a family-friendly St. Patrick's Day celebration on Saturday (March 12). The Opera House will have Irish cuisine, beer and wine. A downtown parade full of community members and local organizations will take place at 2 p.m. on Bridge Street. Entertainment at the Opera House will follow to bring some Celtic pride to the celebration. Dancers from the Hubbardston Irish Dance Troupe Studio, the McCartney Dancers and the Glen Erin Pipe Band are all set to perform. Admission into the Opera House is \$5.

Wednesday, March 9

18th Anniversary Celebration - East Lansing Public Art Gallery is celebrating all month long with special exhibits! 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd, East Lansing. cityofeastlansing.com.

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

Bookend Painting - 4:30-5:30 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S Main St., Eaton Rapids. eradl.org.

Bookmark Contest - Pick up a contest submission form beginning March 1st or print out at eradl.org 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S Main St.

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. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Grand Ledge Area

District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

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. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu

Thursday, March 10

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

Stitch 'n Bitch - Come hang out with some fellow stitching witches! 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center Street, Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540. manifestlansing.com.

Touch a Life: The Joshua Zuriel Hall Foundation Fundraiser - 6-8 p.m. Love Your Selfie Factory, 2910 Centre Blvd, Lansing.

Friday, March 11

Bird Feeder Kits- will be available in our

vestibule starting Friday, March 11th. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. eradl.org.

Irish Quartet, Téada - this veteran Irish band presents both fine instrumentals and outstanding vocal performances. 7:30-10 p.m. University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison, East Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

See Events, Page 33

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 30

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Events

from page 32

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

St Patrick's Day TGIF Dance Party - at Eagle Eye! All welcome. 7 p.m. 15500 Chandler Rd., Bath. tgifdance.com

Saturday, March 12

Conservation Stewards Workshop - There is an amazing world of life in the ecosystems around us to observe every day! 1-3 p.m. MSU Museum, 409 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. 517-884-6897. museum.msu.edu.

Craftivism in the MSU Museum Collections - 1:30-2:30 p.m. Michigan State University Museum, 409 West Circle Dr., East Lansing. 517-884-6897.

Creating Movie Magic: Music and Sound Design for Teens & Tweens [Registration Req.] - 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

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

Mindfulness 101 - 1-2:30 p.m. Better Health Markets & Vitamin Stores, 305 N. Clippert Ave, Lansing. 517-332-6892. betterhealthmarket.com.

St. Patrick's Day Parade with the Cat in the Hat - 2-4 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. gladl.org.

Sustainable Art – AM - 9 a.m., PM - 1 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Wine in the Woods - Bring your favorite beverage and enjoy a guided walk through the woods with a naturalist at the Harris Nature Center. 7-9 p.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos. meridian.mi.us.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 30

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

Sunday, March 13

With Math: Pi Day Pie - 1 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Monday, March 14

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

Corner Bookmarks - Kits that contain a Corner Bookmark craft will be available on a first-come, first-served basis in our vestibule starting Monday, March 14th. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 South Main Street, Eaton Rapids. eradl.org.

Jump Into Reading - Join Ms. Anna every Monday at the Library for stories, songs, and activities. 11-11:30 a.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S Main St., Eaton Rapids. eradl.org.

PJ Storytime - Wear your PJ's and bring your stuffed animal friend to the library to hear stories and meet a special guest. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. gladl.org

REO Town Pub - Celebrate Joe's Retirement! 7-9 p.m. 1145 S. Washington, Lansing.

Tabletop Gaming Club - 6-7:30 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. gladl.org

Tuesday, March 15

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

Financial Literacy Program Series - Presented by MSUFCU. 7-8 p.m. Dorothy Hull Library, 405 W Jefferson, Dimondale. 517-646-0633. windsor-township.ploud.net

Minecraft Mania - Join us for an evening of fun and friendly competition. 6-8 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org

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

Toastmasters Meeting - via Zoom! Meet interesting people and develop speaking skills 6:30-7 p.m. Link: capitalcitytoastmasters.toastmastersclubs.org

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GIFTS

Did you know?

Proper and aesthetically pleasing placement of artwork in a room can be a conundrum. Really it's quite simple. Just follow these three simple rules:

- 1) Artwork should be hung at eye level. Sixty inches is a great rule of thumb for eye level and the location of the center of the artwork. If you are hanging art above furniture, keep 4 to 6 inches between the art and the top of the furniture. They should feel connected rather than floating in free space.
- 2) If you are hanging multiple pieces together, treat them as if they are a single piece and follow the above rule.
- 3) When creating a gallery wall, maintain consistent space between pieces. Larger pieces should have two to three inches between frames and smaller pieces, 1.5-2.5 inches. Eclectic frame designs with a consistent color theme provides an interesting visual appeal.

Always have fun with your artwork and select pieces that make you happy.

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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

The Joyce of cooking a stout stew

By **ARI LeVAUX**

St. Patrick's Day is here, which means that about two weeks ago, you probably forgot to corn the beef. But there are other parts of Irish culture we can still celebrate, without as much advanced preparation. Like Irish writer James Joyce), whose masterpiece, "Ulysses," was first published 100 years ago on Feb. 2, 1922.

So, in honor of this centennial and St. Patrick's Day, I developed this recipe for osso buco with a Guinness beer sauce and lots of potatoes.

By osso buco, I simply mean shank. Any tough cut of meat will work. A bone attached is preferable, but a pack of stew meat chunks will make a glorious meal simmered in this dark, glistening and slightly sweet stout beer broth.

I made my osso buco with goat shanks, in honor of Joyce, whom I consider the GOAT (Greatest of All Time). Lamb would be a more Irish type of meat than goat. Any strong-flavored meat will find balance in the bitter, sweet and cumin-rich stew.

Joyce, a razor-sharp observer of the human relationship with food, deftly used their appetites to develop characters like Leopold Bloom, one of the two heroes of "Ulysses." The very first words we read about him are, "Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crust crumbs, fried hencods' roes."

Lust and food, and lust for food, are never far from Bloom's consciousness, but in Chapter 8, "Lestyrgonians," his appetite takes over. The Lestyrgonians were a mythical tribe of cannibals, and by the end of the chapter you can't help but feel like a cannibal too.

Bloom is the type to thoughtfully remind us of all of the gross things in a sausage and then proceed to eat one in small, dainty bites.

When he notices a local poet, who is also an outspoken vegetarian, Bloom's disdain for that cuisine and the kind of man who eats it goes on full display.

"His eyes followed the high figure in



Ari LeVaux

Hearty, chunky, sweet, salty and glistening with demiglace, it only takes a few hours to prepare this Guinnessed meat.

homespun, beard and bicycle, a listening woman by his side. Coming from the vegetarian. Only weggiebobles and fruit. Don't eat a beefsteak. If you do the eyes of that cow will pursue you through eternity. They say it's healthier....Why do they call that thing they gave me nutsteak? Nutarians. Frutarians. To give you an idea you are eating rumpsteak. Absurd. Salty too."

Despite his revulsion to not eating animals, Bloom is thoughtful enough to consider the possibility that he could have it wrong. He even acknowledges that the diet might make one a better poet, which is interesting if you're looking for autobiographical angles.

"Those literary ethereal people they are all. Dreamy, cloudy, symbolistic. Esthetes they are. I wouldn't be surprised if it was that kind of food produces the like waves of the brain the poetical. For example one of those policemen sweating Irish stew into their shirts; you couldn't squeeze a line of poetry out of him. Don't know what poetry is even."

A few minutes later, Bloom enters a raucous restaurant, anticipating a bite to eat, but quickly finds himself in touch with his inner vegetarian.

"Stink gripped his trembling breath: pungent meatjuice, slush of greens. See the animals feed. Men, men, men."

"Perched on high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at the tables calling for more

bread no charge, swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging, wiping wetted mustaches."

These observations of Bloom's continue for long enough to make us all uncomfortable, until he finds himself literally grossed out the door of that establishment. He opts instead for a simple gorgonzola sandwich, which he fastidiously dabbed with mustard and sliced into strips before eating.

My Guinness stew — or osso buco, if you've got the shin bones for it — is a nod to the organ meats that Bloom loves, prepared in delicate fashion of which he'd surely approve. For many, the flavor of lamb is enough to test their limits. But the beer and spices in my stew harness and balance those strong flavors with clout of their own. I've added chunks of elk heart to this very stew, and they were rendered mild as lambs by the rich sauce.

The bitterness of the stout means that sugar is welcome in the stew, and together those flavors form an alliance not unlike cola, without the carbonation. I add cumin, which isn't really an Irish spice, but I used to make this cumin heavy beer-braised deer neck tacos, so I know it goes well with meat and beer.

Hearty, chunky, sweet, salty and glistening with demiglace, it only takes a few hours to prepare my Guinnessed meat.

See Joyce, Page 35

Appetizers

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Joyce

from page 34

*Guinness Stew
(Or Osso Buco, if you got it)
2 lbs stew meat or meat on the bone
1 can Guinness or similar stout*



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1 large onion, chopped
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
2 tablespoons butter
2 large carrots, chopped
2 pieces of celery, chopped
2 large potatoes, cubed
2 tablespoons vinegar
1 tablespoon cumin powder
1 slice of bread, torn to pieces
1 - 2 tablespoon sugar, to taste
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper
More salt and pepper to taste
Chopped parsley for garnish

Turn the broiler to high and brown the meat in the center of the oven. Then, cook the meat until soft in water with a half can of stout. I used the Instant Pot, which took about 30 minutes, but you can also do it in the slow cooker or braise it in the oven.

In a heavy bottomed soup pan, sauté the garlic and onions in butter. When the onions are translucent, add the carrots, celery, potatoes, vinegar, cumin, bread, salt, pepper and sugar. Cook on medium until the bread dissolves and the broth is dark, thick and glistening. Season with extra salt, sugar or even beer, if you think it needs it. Serve dusted with chopped parsley, which looks like shamrocks if you squint your eyes. Wash it down with more stout.

The DISH: Barbequed nachos

By CHLOE ALVERSON

Last week, on a deceptively sunny March afternoon, my friend and I were exploring Old Town. We chose to eat at Meat BBQ. I had been only once before, and I enjoyed checking out the Star Wars collectables around the restaurant.

Although I eat meat, I don't like to overindulge. I wanted something I hadn't tried the first time around. I opted for a half order of nachos. The meat in the nachos — brisket, bacon and pork — comes topped with cheddar cheese, tomatoes, jalapenos, onions and fresh avocado. I asked them to hold the jalapeno. Sour cream and Jazzy Q — Meat's sweet and tangy barbecue sauce — are drizzled atop the meat and hand-cut tortilla strips.

When our food came out, I was amazed at the portion size of the half order. I didn't know where to start, but I knew that I would be getting my hands dirty in the process of eating this meal. The first bite was amazing, and I was instantly satisfied with my choice. The juicy meat, paired with the crunch of the chip and different sauces, was savory and scrumptious. The avocado and tomato gave the dish more flavor. It was the perfect taste of summer for a cold, windy day.



Chloe Alverson/City Pulse

A half order of nachos topped with sweet and tangy sauce from Meat BBQ in Old Town.



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