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January 8-9, 2024

CityPULSE

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**THE
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ISSUE**
2024

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Ode to my wife

I am more and more consumed with how lucky I am, and I know I am not alone. Most of us are who we are because of circumstance. Sure, you can do many things to set yourself up for the life you desire, but even the circumstances of where you were born, and who was there for you, are often bigger factors of who you are than what you did yourself. There are some exceptions to the rule, but even then, it is the environment in which you were born into that can determine how you go through life.

For most of us who live modestly at best, we have often had to figure out how to just get by each day. I grew up trying to escape the life I was in. I made choices by the circumstances I was faced with on a daily basis. How was I going to pay my rent, or feed myself? As much as I thought about goals, or making a plan, I did not have the mental capacity or the financial means to accommodate any such dreams.

I have always worked hard. Starting at 8 years old, I worked in my mom's "family" business all day, every day. The business was in our home, and it involved livestock, so there were no days off. It was at least an hour of work before school, and lasted until bedtime.

I didn't know any different at a young age, but what I did know is that I never enjoyed it. I spent a lot of time fantasizing about all the things I would've rather been doing. I did try to find joy wherever I could, even if it wasn't what I tried to imagine. I mostly found joy in making other people happy, whether it was pleasing my mom, or helping the people that frequented her business by carrying their purchases to their car or cashing them out at the register. I did nearly everything with a smile on my face.

I worked hard and the biggest rewards were from people who paid compliments about me to my mother. From the time I was 8 until my late teens, I can't tell you how many of my mom's customers said they watched me "grow up," and what a great son I was to her. Those compliments were welcome, and while my mother beamed at the thought, it was the nearly constant criticism and ridicule from her that would form who I am to this day.

I became bitter over the years to the one person who I wanted to please the most, and it impacted most of the relationships I would form. I only had surface-level relationships with many of those customers and yet they were the ones who paid attention to me with favor and kindness. I still have an affinity for bringing smiles to people's faces who I do not even know.

As I escaped that life, I had no support from family. I found employment and used my work ethic to impress nearly everyone I ever worked for. I began to explore some of the things I had wished for whenever I could, and sometimes it would be rewarding, while other times it would cost me. I had a roof over my head most of the time, and I fed myself whatever I could afford. But it was better than the life I had before, even if I had to sleep in a loading dock for semi-trailers, or worse.

As I look back on those times, I wish I had someone I could've trusted to talk to. My friends were certainly great drinking buddies, but not the people I could tell how I was feeling. And I was too proud, or too ashamed, to ask them for advice. I can say, however, that I never wanted to go to my mom and ask her. There was some part of me that would rather fail than to do that, if only I had that conviction. Escaping that life led to many trials and tribulations.

My brother has spent his entire adult life submersed in alcoholism. It is a tragic tale as old as time, and while we had similar circumstances, I chose other outlets, for better or worse, to cope with my life. I have tried to help him, but he has continued to make his choice and he will live with it on his terms. I don't mean to speak for him

because in his state of mind, he may feel differently, but he has different luck than I have had. He has met and married, and lost. Each of his relationships were codependent and enabled him to continue his drinking.

I could've easily met someone who came from a similar circumstance as mine. Or I could still be alone and living in shame. I could still be making choices rooted in survival and living the consequences of actions that I would not have if I had made better decisions with a clear mind.

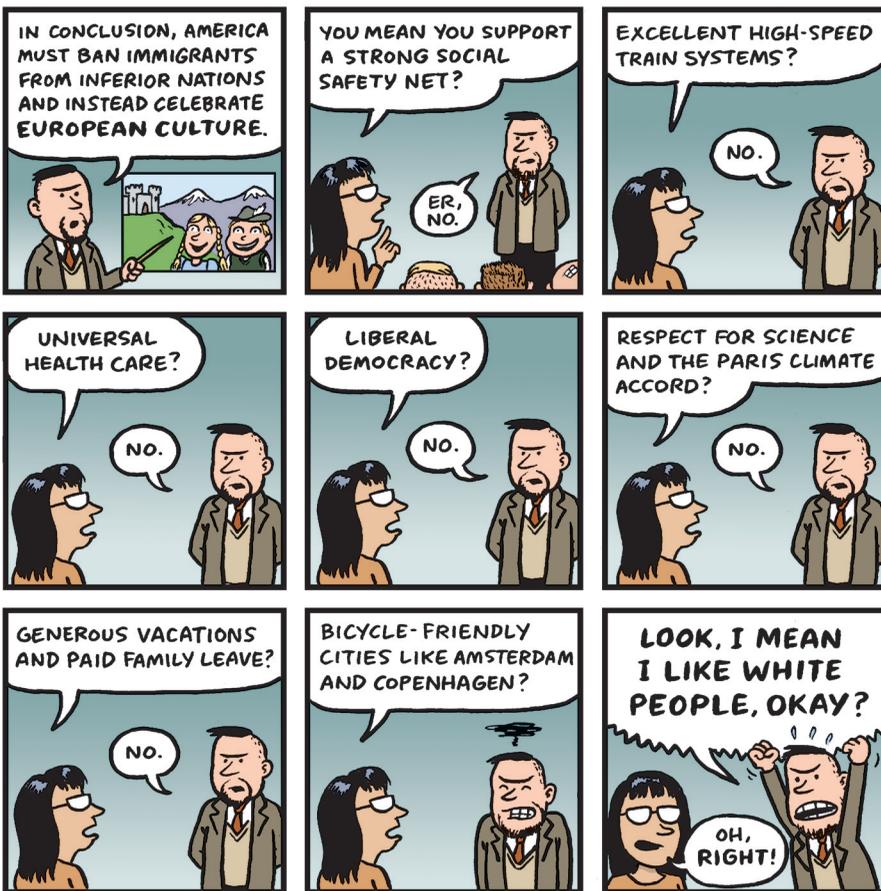
But I met my wife, and that makes me the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I was a walking red flag. I had only my charm to thank for the opportunity to talk with her. I had vices and addictions that I hadn't confronted. I didn't know how to have a relationship built on trust, and I wasn't open about any of that. I hid most of my character flaws masterfully. It would take years of her loving me for me to start to tear down the walls I had built up.

I remember feeling particularly vulnerable one night early on in our relationship and opening up to her about a particular trauma that happened to me. I knew she would not betray my confidence with my secret. To this day, we have not spoken of it again, but she knows, and I know she knows, and I know it will never be forgotten. And even though I knew I could trust her, the shame and guilt of my childhood was still an entangled web that would take my concerted effort to undo. To say that she has loved me unconditionally is an understatement. I was often cruel and full of rage. I did things that go against the type of person I envisioned myself as. And she loved me, and encouraged me to dig deeper, with support, empathy and the sort of kindness we should all aspire to.

I am still tilling the garden of my life, and finding out how amazing life is. Brandi could've met someone else before me. She came from a strong background, with generations of values showing the importance of the meaning of family. She could have spared herself the heartache of my growing pains. She didn't have to experience the worst of me to realize the best of me. But she did. I am part of something that I have spent a lifetime hiding from: what it truly means to live.

We all have our own luck. Some are born into desirable circumstances, some are not. You can do everything to try to change your circumstances, but that offers no guarantees. I could've been born in Palestine, had the same circumstances there, and now be under the threat of a bomb while I shelter under an already compromised structure, all because of the place of my birth. The people of Palestine are not Hamas. The people of Palestine were born into conditions that they have no control over. The Jewish people do not wish for the continuous bombing and killing of families, and children. The majority of people in that region want peace. None of them chose this; it was their luck.

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CityPULSE

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A few highlights of Lansing's arts scene in the new year

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Lansing hotel celebrates grand reopening under new management

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Square One knocks omelets out of the park

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Cover photos by Khalid Ibrahim

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

COMING SOON TO A MEGAPLEX NEAR YOU--IT'S THE...

TOM TOMORROW CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

FEATURING ALL THOSE RECURRENT CHARACTERS YOU VAGUELY REMEMBER, IN A VAST AND INTERTWINED ENTERTAINMENT EXTRAVAGANZA!

THE CAPITALISM-PACKED ADVENTURES OF **INVISIBLE-HAND-OF-THE-FREE-MARKET MAN**--STARRING CHRIS HEMSWORTH!

YES, I KNOW YOU CAN SEE ME.

IT'S A BLOODY META-PHOR, MATE!

THE CONFOUNDING MYSTERIES OF **CONSERVATIVE JONES, BOY DETECTIVE**--STARRING BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH, AND FEATURING MARTIN FREEMAN AS "MOONBAT"!

I'M WORKING ON MY LATEST CASE--WHY DOES THE DEGENERATE LEFT HATE DONALD TRUMP?

LET ME GUESS--IS IT BECAUSE THEY HATE AMERICA?

BY GOD, MOONBAT--THERE'S HOPE FOR YOU YET!

THE WILD WORLD OF **DR. WILBUR VON PHILBERT**--STARRING MARK RUFFALO, WITH A POPULAR CHILD ACTOR TO BE DETERMINED AS "BILLY"!

THAT'S MY **SECRET**, BILLY--I'M ALWAYS DOING SCIENCE!

DO I REALLY NEED AN EXTRA HEAD, THOUGH?

WHAT PART OF **SCIENCE** DO YOU FAIL TO COMPREHEND, BOY?

THOSE TWO **MAGA GUYS** WE ALWAYS USE--PLAYED BY SIR PATRICK STEWART AND IAN MCKEL-LAN, IN THE MOST CHALLENGING ROLES OF THEIR **CAREERS**!

IT CERTAINLY APPEARS THAT OUR BELOVED PRESIDENT TRUMP IS BEING UNFAIRLY PERSECUTED BY THE **DEEP STATE**!

QUITE RIGHT, OLD FRIEND! IT'S MOST UNSPORTING!

AND THE **LINCHPIN** OF THE T.T.C.U.--ROBERT DOWNEY JR. AS **SPARKY**!

I'M HERE TO COMPLAIN ABOUT POLITICS AND EAT FISH--

--AND I'M ALL OUT OF FISH!

TOM TOMORROW © 2024 ... JOIN SPARKY'S LIST: thismodernworld.com/subscriptions

PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

What is the Wheel District?

Unpacking a proposal to replace blight with equitable housing stock

Harry Hepler is back.

The developer known for creating dramatic living and working spaces will come before the Lansing City Council on Monday (Jan. 8) with his next project: a 134-unit apartment complex called Prudden Wheel Lofts.

Hepler's \$8 million to \$10 million plan is to repurpose an old factory building, at 700 May St., between Oakland Avenue and Saginaw Street. That's in line with two of his earlier projects, downtown's Case Place, a former tractor factory on Pere Marquette, and Motor Wheel Lofts, his signature residential adaptation of a massive, early-20th century factory that made steel wheels and brake drums.

But there the similarities will largely end. His earlier projects have spacious floor plans and preserve their industrial roots in their décor. The units in Prudden Wheel Lofts will all be sleek, ultra-modern one bedrooms maxing out at 470 square feet.

Moreover, though they'll be packed with amenities — washers and dryers, dish washers, ice makers — they will be so "green" that Hepler promises no extra charge for utilities.

"This is probably one of the most sustainable projects in the country," Hepler said, ticking off "solar ray energy on the roof storing energy in a battery, some wind energy, no natural gas or combustibles of any kind, heat pumps throughout."

And a river will run through it — well, a creek. The plans call for collecting rain water from the the roof that will empty into a 400-foot-long cistern in the basement to flush the toilets.

Hepler said the structure, known as the High Bay Crane space, was built in 1955 to make gun shells for South Korea. Because it was during the height of the Cold War, the U.S. Government required a nuclear fallout shelter beneath. That's what Hepler is transforming into a creek, as he calls it.

The lofts will take up most of the



Courtesy rendering

Developer Harry Hepler proposes transforming a 69-year-old former factory into an ultra-"green" and ultra-modern complex of 134 apartments on May Street called Prudden Wheel Lofts near his groundbreaking Motor Wheel Lofts project on Saginaw Street in Lansing.

70,000-square-foot building. The 1.5-acre site will feature a pool, pickleball courts, cross-training space, community rooms and more.

Hepler said his target audience is 20-somethings. To encourage them to rent, most units will be furnished and top out at \$1,195 a month.

"We're intentionally keeping the rents down so these 20-year-olds can escape from the couch in their parents' basement," he said.

Part of what's driving Hepler's plan is the struggle he and other landlords have faced in leasing office space since the pandemic. He has owned the building for two decades and was renting it for offices before COVID struck. It made more sense to him to shift gears into residential.

It also fits into the Schor administration's goal of more affordable housing in the city. The city is seeking to declare the property part of a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone, a designation established by the state in 1992 that provides a tax incentive for developing or rehabilitating residential housing units.

Called the Wheel District, the zone would span from Saginaw to the south, the CSX Railroad track to the west, Oakland to the north and Pennsylvania Avenue to the east.

"If you look at what's happened in the last decade, housing has been so

expensive," Hepler said. "Your municipalities will want to see the price go down, but we haven't done our best job creating the best economic tools for that to take place."

If the Wheel District is ultimately approved by the City Council, the loft project and homes within the district's borders would see property tax payments frozen at their current rates for 12 years. Prudden Wheel Lofts would have its tax capped at \$55,000 a year through that term. Hepler said he projects property tax payments will be \$275,000 a year or more once they are uncapped.

With interest rates high and material costs expensive, the tax incentive makes a crucial difference, he said.

To prepare for construction, Hepler acquired and demolished 21 homes within the proposed Wheel District boundaries. Hepler believes his Motor Wheel Lofts, which had its own enterprise zone period expire in 2018, serves as an example of how the area could be further transformed through the Wheel District.

"This was a vacant site for 35 years. It had no activity, it was boarded up and blighted, no one was there. The most occupants it had were pigeons. So, this has been a big success for this facility," Hepler said.

In preparing the new enterprise zone proposal, Hepler worked close-

ly with Kris Klein, vice president of the Lansing Economic Development Corp., or LEAP.

"We're bringing the NEZ back to the forefront as a tool we can use to build off of," Klein said. "The last one was East Village, roughly 15 years ago, so there's not many folks around that saw that one established." East Village is a suburban-like residential development on Saginaw near Marshall Street.

Initially, Hepler said the city was only looking at incentivizing his development, just as it had for the Motor Wheel Lofts. He asked if the boundaries could be extended to also include nearby homeowners.

"We asked why it had to be just our parcel. Why couldn't those homeowners on May Street to the east, about 20 of them, take advantage of this, too? They're the ones who have suffered through all this physical obsolescence," Hepler said.

Klein and his team agreed the move would promote homeownership, giving the neighborhood and its residents an additional boost.

"Now, if you have a home on May Street and you do a full rehab on the property there, taxes would stay at what they are today and remain frozen for 12 years. If you sell, you can

See Hepler, Page 6

The teen challenge: What Lansing offers, and what it lacks

By JOAN NELSON

Last month I shared that child care tied for second place among issues of concern to 67 eastside Lansing neighbors. Sharing second place on the list of Unmet Community Needs was “Youth Center or Clubhouse.”

The community design event where these issues surfaced was hosted by Allen Neighborhood Center (in part to determine potential uses of available space in their Allen Place complex on East Kalamazoo Street. Clearly the needs of younger neighbors were front of mind for participants.

Around the time of the charrette, I talked with my friend Bill Castanier, historian, preservationist and City Pulse writer. Bill and I both spent our teen years in Bay City, and he called to share a recent article about a landmark hangout we frequented back in the



Opinion

‘60s: the Band Canyon, where kids not only danced their hearts out but also hung out in the Gossip Room, catching up with friends from around the city. We also spent at least one evening each week “at the Ins,” that is, burning up about 86 cents’ worth of gas (according to Bill), slowly circling in and out of White’s Drive In, Burger King and McDonald’s on Euclid Avenue, occasionally stopping to chat with friends. It all seems pretty innocent now, and a much different world than that inhabited by teens today.

Perhaps the people attending the ANC charrette have read the same grim statistics that you and I have seen lately. In 2020, an analysis by health-policy research group KFF found that 16% of U.S. kids ages 12 to 17 have anxiety, depression or both, a roughly 33% increase since 2016. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that in 2021, 42% of U.S. high school

students said they felt persistently sad or hopeless, and another 29% reported experiencing poor mental health. Even more concerning, 22% had seriously considered suicide, and 10% had attempted suicide.

Addressing these mental health challenges will require a comprehensive approach, with parents, teachers and social workers working on multiple fronts. My interest, as usual, is the role that neighborhoods and the city might play in helping to craft solutions.

The community role is crucial and potentially transformative. In a December article on Strong Towns’ website entitled “Kids These Days... Deserve Better,” Tiffany Owens Reed discusses the need for city spaces where kids can explore safely and “flex their independence.” She notes that “cities that foster exploration are those with attractive public spaces, plenty of small businesses to patronize, public transit that connects to the wider area, and human-scaled streets conducive to wandering.”

In Lansing, there are many youth initiatives already in place by the city and the community. These programs offer models for expansion as well as ideas for even more that can be done.

Currently the city is invested in its anti-gun violence initiative, called Advance Peace, which focuses on young people who are at greatest risk of being pulled into dangerous activities. The Parks and Recreation Department offers a slew of after-school programming at all city centers, including those explicitly for teens. Weekly Teen Nights allow young people to roam from electronic video games to basketball and other activities. Director Brett Kaschinske notes that he would welcome additional ideas from teens.

In addition to city programs, Lansing has unique community-based programs. One of the busiest teen gathering spots is The Fledge, founded by Jerry Norris, whose official title is Primus Inter Pares (“one among equals”). The Fledge,

See Nelson, Page 7

Hepler

from page 5

transfer that NEZ certificate to the new buyer, who then pays that same rate for the remaining period,” Hepler explained.

The hope is that these perks, coupled with the lofts’ central location, will add younger renters to the mix. When the Motor Wheel Lofts first opened, Hepler said he primarily rented to tenants in their 20s, but economic factors tied to the 2008 housing crisis and resulting Great Recession changed that. Now, the average resident is closer to 40 years old.

“Because of housing market pressure, Motor Wheel moved out of that role of being somebody’s first place to live. We’re hopeful that Prudden Wheel Lofts is a better replacement for that. It will help stop that younger generation from living in the outskirts, create a better balance in the community and give the downtown a competitive edge,” Hepler said.

Ideally, the loft tenants and homeowners would intermingle, creating the foundation for the future of the district. As Hepler put it, “the pair of them, like bookends, will do the heavy lifting for the community.”

He expects little to no opposition from the Council.

“Some leadership has changed. So, there’s going to be some questions,



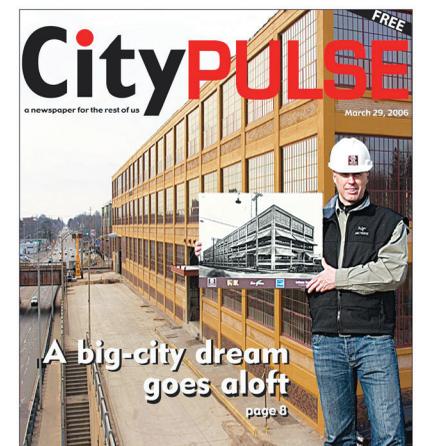
This rendering shows an example of an upper-story one-bedroom apartment. Aimed at tenants in their 20s, they will all be one bedroom and range from 420 to 470 square feet. Most will come furnished, with rents maxing at \$1,195, including utilities.

which I think are great, but I haven’t felt any indication that anybody feels differently,” he said.

For his part, Mayor Andy Schor is

onboard.

“I am incredibly supportive of the passage of this Neighborhood Enterprise Zone and for the creation of new



Hepler on the cover of City Pulse in 2006 for a story on Motor Wheel Lofts, which he was in the process of rehabbing into apartments.

housing options in this area. These new housing opportunities for residents are key to growing our city, and we need to continue to use these tools to help create a strong, vibrant community into the future,” Schor said.

Added Hepler, “It’s all about physical design of the city. If I can get all this done in the next few years, I will be very happy to see what was once an entire industrial facility prosper and become a whole new community.”

— TYLER SCHNEIDER AND
BERL SCHWARTZ

Nelson

from page 6

1300 Eureka St., draws 200(!) teens each week, who come to hang out with friends in the music studio, the coding club, the gardening group, or the Youth Entrepreneurial Program. They might also make use of the Fledge's cache of art supplies to try their hand at painting or screen-printing.

But it's not just these activities that draw so many young folks. It is also (maybe primarily) the core beliefs and feelings shared by members that define the Fledge experience and make it such an attractive hangout. Top of the list is "values, not rules." "Rules are lazy," Norris noted, as he described the communal learning that goes on as regular attendees and staff convey values via "respectful explaining, mentoring, and the very occasional sign." "Radical Inclusion" and "trust first" also serve to create space that "moves young people in a safer, healthier, more prosperous direction," Norris added. Significantly, the Fledge has been visited recently by people from

Arizona, Colorado, Los Angeles and Berlin who are interested in the model.

Another approach for community-based youth programming is ANC's Youth Service Corps, a job and life skills training program coordinated by Kelsi Brianna. In YSC, teens learn skills (e.g., gardening, cooking, simple patch and repair, rake and runs, tea-making, and farmers market retailing) in service to their neighborhood

YSC encourages youth to pay attention to local people and places and to take pride in work that improves their communities and the lives of their neighbors. Teens exploring and learning about their neighborhood embrace the spirit of community care and stewardship; this bodes well for neighborhoods and cities. This approach also provides teens a sense of propriety and belonging that eases at least some of the current day challenges they face.

So what next steps are suggested from the variety of existing programs? All of us need to play a role in thinking about and implementing additional community-based solutions. But the critical key to success is teen input and

teen agency. Other cities have created youth commissions. Perhaps a similar initiative for Lansing could expand and amplify youth offerings to make Lansing a truly nurturing environment for young people.

(Joan Nelson is the retired founding executive director of the Allen Neighborhood Center. Her column appears the first issue of the month.)



**ONEIDA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
FOR P.A. 425 PROPERTY TRANSFER**

The Oneida Charter Township Board will conduct a public hearing, for the affected property owner and the City of Grand Ledge, on a proposed Agreement for the Conditional Transfer of Property and Governmental Functions Pursuant to 1984 PA 425 and 1967 PA 8, and the proposed conditional transfer therein, between the Oneida Charter Township and the City of Grand Ledge. The public hearing will take place on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7pm at the Oneida Charter Township Hall, 11041 Oneida Road, Grand Ledge, MI 48837.

The properties proposed for the conditional transfer from Oneida Charter Township to the City of Grand Ledge consists:

Location: 3.67-acre city-owned property located south of Fieldview Drive and west of M-100
Parcel Number: 030-014-200-060-00

Copies of the proposed Agreement and legal descriptions and survey of the land proposed to be conditionally transferred are available from the Township at the Oneida Charter Township Hall, 11041 Oneida Road, Grand Ledge, MI 48837, during the Township's normal business hours of 8am to 1pm Monday through Thursday, and also available at the public hearing.

Members of the public are invited to attend the public hearing and to provide public comment. Oneida Charter Township will provide auxiliary aids or services to individuals with disabilities. Persons needing such services should contact the Township in writing or by telephone not less than four (4) days before the public hearing.

Jacqueline Kilgore, Clerk
Oneida Charter Township
Phone: (517) 622-8078

CP#23-354

STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT, INGHAM COUNTY, NOTICE TO CREDITORS, Decedent's Estate, File No. 23-1039-DE - Estate of Alexander Robert Piontkowski - Deceased, Date of Birth: 05-04-90. NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Alexander Robert Piontkowski, died 07/21/2023. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Robert Piontkowski, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 313 West Kalamazoo Ave., Lansing, and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice, 12/27/2023. Attorney Kimberly L. Savage, Bar No. 968267, 1483 Haslett Rd, Haslett, MI 48840 517-515-5000. Personal representative Robert Piontkowski, 5906 West Sleepy Hollow Ln., Haslett, MI 48840, 517-290-7699.

CP#23-348



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY
LEGAL AD NOTICE: ZONING AMENDMENT #2023-08
(CV DISTRICT)**

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LEGAL NOTICE
ZONING AMENDMENT #2023-08 (CV DISTRICT)
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Township Board at its regular meeting on December 5, 2023 approved for introduction and subsequent adoption Ordinance 2023-08 to amend the CV, Conservancy District, to update the standards therein.

A complete copy of the amendment may be viewed at the Community Planning and Development office, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864-1198 (phone 517-853-4560), between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Deborah Guthrie
Township Clerk**

CP#23-350

Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable, prime community.



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY
LEGAL AD NOTICE: SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 24001
(2731 GRAND RIVER)
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2024**

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LEGAL NOTICE
Special Use Permit # 24001 (2731 Grand River)
Notice of Application**

Notice is hereby given that the Planning Commission of the Charter Township of Meridian will hold a public hearing on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., in the Meridian Township Municipal Building, Town Hall Room, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, to hear all persons interested in a request from Meridian Retail Management II LLC to construct a proposed restaurant with a drive-through at 2731 Grand River.

Information may be examined at the Department of Community Planning and Development, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864-1198, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Written comments may be sent prior to the Planning Commission, Charter Township of Meridian, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, Michigan, 48864, or by email to shorkey@meridian.mi.us, or at the public hearing..

**Deborah Guthrie
Township Clerk**

CP#23-353

Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable, prime community.





**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
2024 BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS SCHEDULE SUMMARY**

<p>Township Board 6:00 pm – Town Hall Room</p> <p>January 9, 23 July 9, 23 February 6 August 8, 20 March 5, 19 September 3, 17 April 2, 16 October 1, 15 May 9, 21 November 12, 26 June 4, 18 December 3, 17</p> <p>6:00 pm – Central Fire Station February 20</p>	<p>Park Commission 4:30 pm – Service Center</p> <p>January 9 July 9 February 13 August 13 April 16 October 8 May 14</p> <p>4:30 pm -Town Hall Room March 12 September 10 June 11 November 12</p>
<p>Board of Review Town Hall Room</p> <p>March 5, 10:00 AM – Organizational Meeting</p> <p>Administrative Conference Room March 11, 2:00 - 5:00PM and 6:00 - 9:00PM March 12, 9:00AM - 12:00PM and 1:00 - 4:00 PM March 13, 9:00AM – 12:00PM</p> <p>10:00 AM – Assessing Conference Room July 16 December 10</p>	<p>Brownfield Redevelopment Authority 9:00 am – Town Hall Room</p> <p>January 11 July 11 February 8 August 8 March 14 September 12 April 11 October 10 May 9 November 14 June 13 December 12</p>
<p>Community Resources Commission 6:00 pm – Admin. Conference Room</p> <p>January 10 July 10 February 21 August 14 March 13 September 11 April 10 October 9 May 8 November 13 June 12 December 11</p>	<p>Communications Commission 6:00 pm – Town Hall Room</p> <p>March 27 September 25 June 26 December 18</p>
<p>Corridor Improvement Authority 6:00 pm – Central Fire Station</p> <p>January 17 July 17 February 21 August 21 March 20 September 18 April 17 October 16 May 15 November 20 June 26 December 18</p>	<p>Environmental Commission 7:00 pm – Town Hall Room</p> <p>January 3 August 7 February 7 September 4 March 6 October 2 April 3 November 6 May 1 December 4 June 5</p>
<p>Economic Development Corporation 7:30 am – Town Hall Room</p> <p>January 4 July 11 February 1 September 5 March 7 October 3 April 4 November 7 May 2 December 5 June 6</p> <p>7:30 am – Central Fire Station August 1</p>	<p>Downtown Development Authority 7:30 am – Town Hall Room</p> <p>January 8 July 1 February 5 September 9 March 4 October 7 April 1 November 11 May 6 December 2 June 3</p> <p>7:30 am – Central Fire Station August 5</p>
<p>Land Preservation 6:00 pm – Service Center</p> <p>January 10</p>	<p>Planning Commission 6:30 pm – Town Hall Room</p> <p>January 8, 22 July 8, 22 February 12, 26 August 12, 26 March 11, 25 September 9, 23 April 8, 22 October 14, 28 May 13, 27 November 11 June 10, 24 December 9</p>
<p>Transportation Commission</p> <p>NO MEETINGS SCHEDULED</p>	<p>Zoning Board of Appeals 6:30 pm – Town Hall Room</p> <p>January 17 July 17 February 21 August 21 March 20 September 18 April 17 October 16 May 15 November 20 June 19 December 18</p>

** This calendar reflects scheduled meetings as of the first of the year, 2024. Please note, meetings may be added/canceled throughout the month with appropriate notice. For an up to date calendar, visit www.meridian.mi.us. Prepared by the Meridian Township Clerk's Office, Deborah Guthrie, Township Clerk, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 | 517.853.4300

CP#23-352



Redistricting commission must get its act together and prove me wrong

It'd be easy to spike the football. I could say my July 21, 2021, column about the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission's being a train wreck was correct and spend the next 600 words gloating.

But I'm not doing an end zone dance. Honestly, I wish I'd been wrong.

I warned that this inefficient, rudderless entity was wasting too much time to draw effective, well-researched maps correctly, and that is what happened.

The MICRC spent much of their 2021 dithering with bureaucratic busywork and then rushed through the drawing of the Metro Detroit legislative districts in order to meet its constitutional deadlines.

Now, they must redraw 13 Metro Detroit legislative districts because a federal judicial panel ruled them unconstitutional.

The judges ruled a couple of weeks ago that the MICRC purposely created race-based districts that carved up Detroit and its suburbs like a pizza pie. Birmingham and Detroit's Brightmoor neighborhood were part of one district. St. Clair Shores and Jefferson-Chalmers were included in another.

None of it made any sense.

The commission's adviser, Bruce Adelson, told these neophytes that their Detroit-based districts not only didn't have to have a majority of Black voters, but SHOULDNT have a majority of Black voters. Past legislatures didn't do this because they didn't want to get sued for violating the Voting Rights Act.

The MICRC followed Adelson's bizarre theory. The courts said this violated the Voting Rights Act.

Surprise, surprise.

The redistricting commission could appeal. They could defend Adelson's belief that Detroiters don't need districts with more than 45% Black voters, but what's the point?

Adelson mercifully resigned. And taxpayers shouldn't spend one more penny defending his position that Black voters in Detroit shouldn't have legislative districts in which they make up the majority.

It's time to move on. The courts need to honor our constitution and give the commission another crack at these districts. This time, let's bring in a Republican and a Democrat with some experience in drawing Michigan maps

that will hold up in court, not something based on sketchy legal theories.

Say what you will about the Michigan Legislature's old legislative maps. At least its maps complied with the Voting Rights Act, at least in recent years.

While we're at it, it's time to shape up this unaccountable commission with some commonsense rules.

We have 13 members who were paid \$55,755 a year to literally do nothing for the entirety of 2022 and 2023, except attend a few Zoom meetings. Even that, shockingly, was too much of a commitment for a few of them.

Three of them moved out of state. When Commissioner Rebecca Szetela called them out on it and basically exposed Adelson as a fraud in a court hearing, she was ostracized for not being a team player.

Speaking of a being a team player, we still have one commissioner — Erin Wagner — who has attended zero meetings in person. WTF?

Look, the MICRC is not a unilateral failure. It needs some strong leadership, some accountability and some strong rules to serve as a framework for 2031 and beyond (when the next redistricting commission will start doing its work).

Once Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson picks replacement commissioners, this crew needs to all get together, in the same room, FOR THE FIRST TIME, and start some team building. Now.

Anyone who can't meet this very basic requirement must be removed. No more Zoom. The COVID crisis is over. Every meeting from here on out must be in person. No more meetings where commissioners walk off camera and literally disappear, or click in when it fits in with their schedule.

In-person meetings work for the Legislature and nearly every other government body in Michigan. It can work for them. Any meeting missed means they don't get paid. It works in the real world; it can work here.

We need the redistricting commission to succeed because, like it or not, this is what we got. We voted this into our constitution. It can work.

If the commissioners aren't willing to make these rule changes, Secretary of State Benson may need to get involved. If not her, the Legislature needs to draft some accountability rules.

Prove my train wreck column of 30 months ago wrong. Please.

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



KYLE MELINN

Opinion

POLITICS

ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Arts events to look forward to in 2024

By **NICOLE NOECHEL**

Last week, Lawrence Cosentino offered an eloquent look back at all the Greater Lansing arts scene had to offer in 2023, but there's much more to come in 2024. While I can't list every theater production, concert, festival and art exhibition in store for this year, I've compiled some highlights that should help fill freshly unwrapped calendars while we wait for more announcements to come.

Literature

Farmington Hills novelist, poet and playwright Stephen Mack Jones will deliver the keynote speech at this year's Night for Notables, which is scheduled for April 20 at the Library of Michigan. The event will celebrate the winners of this year's Michigan Notable Book awards, which are yet to be announced. Jones has won two Michigan Notable Book awards for his novels "August Snow" and "Dead of Winter" and is a recipient of the prestigious Kresge Arts in Detroit Literary Fellowship, among other accolades. The event will also include an afterglow reception, where the winning authors will be available to chat and sign books.

Also of interest is the annual A Rally of Writers conference, which is scheduled for April 13 at Lansing Community College's West Campus. The daylong event will include plenty of writing workshops and speeches by notable Michigan authors, including Michigan Poet Laureate Nandi Comer, this year's keynote. For more information, see Bill Castanier's book story on page 20.

Film

The Capital City Film Festival returns April 10 through 20, featuring "an eclectic mix of independent films, live music, interactive media and more." Festivals in the past have included a mix of films, from animation to drama to documentaries, as well as poetry readings, dance parties, a global art exhibition and beyond. The festival is looking for people to join its board or planning team for the upcoming season. Interested parties can apply via the Google Form on the festival's Facebook page, facebook.com/capacityfilmfest, by Jan. 8.

In addition, the Lake Michigan Film Festival, showcasing independent films



Photo by Joan Marcus

Featuring music by Swedish pop supergroup ABBA, the tour of Broadway smash hit "Mamma Mia!" stops at the Wharton Center Jan. 16 through 21.

from Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois, runs Feb. 29 through March 3 at the Studio C! theater in the Meridian Mall. The list of films hasn't been announced yet, but those interested can stay up to date at elff.com.

Theater

The Wharton Center's 2023-2024 Broadway season continues with "Mamma Mia!" Jan. 16 through 21, followed by "Funny Girl" Feb. 6 through 11, "Moulin Rouge!" April 2 through 14 and "Six," a modern retelling of the lives of the six wives of England's Henry VIII, May 14 through 19.

The Michigan State University Department of Theatre's post-winter-break season begins Feb. 9 through 18 at the Fairchild Theatre with the world premiere of playwright Iraisia Ann Reilly's "Stevie and the Real World," performed by master of fine arts acting and design candidates. According to the Wharton Center website, "Through a series of interviews and exercises, Reilly creates a play full of humor, wonder, and ... puppets."

Peppermint Creek Theatre Co. will produce the off-Broadway play "How to Defend Yourself," about a group of sorority sisters who form a DIY self-defense class after one of them is raped, Feb. 1 through 4 and 8 through 11 at the Stage One Performing Arts Center

in Sycamore Creek Church's Eastwood campus. Chelsea Lake Roberts offers a behind-the-scenes look at the show on page 19.

Also at Stage One, Ixion Theatre Ensemble kicks off its season March 1, 2, 8 and 9 with "Pipeline," by Dominique Morisseau, about an inner-city teacher's fight to secure a good future for her son without turning her back on the community that made him who he is.

The Williamston Theatre, Riverwalk Theatre, Starlight Dinner Theatre, Lebowsky Center for Performing Arts and Lansing Community College also have shows coming up in the first few months of 2024, so make sure to check their websites for more information.

Visual art

The Lansing Art Gallery's annual Art-Path exhibition returns for its seventh year this summer to bring an eclectic mix of art by Michigan artists to more than 2-and-a-half miles of the Lansing River Trail, from the historic arts district of Old Town through the Capitol complex. The gallery is taking applications for artwork, which may be of any medium, including murals, paintings, sculptures and fiber installations. Interested parties can apply by Feb. 15 at lansingartgallery.org/artpath-2024.

The MSU Broad Art Museum has four new exhibitions planned for 2024,

including the Faculty Triennial, which opens Jan. 20 and features recent works produced by faculty in the school's Art, Art History, and Design Department; "DOOMSCROLLING," by Los Angeles tapestry artist Kayla Mattes, which opens Feb. 3 and explores society's addictive relationship with digital culture; the 2024 Master of Fine Arts Exhibition, which opens March 9; and "Eye Witness," by Palestinian-born abstract painter and MSU alumna Samia Halaby, which opens June 29 and features a range of paintings that were shaped by the artist's nomadic career across the Midwest, East Coast and the Arab world.

Music

Just to name a few musical events coming up at the Wharton Center, famed cellist Yo-Yo Ma, Grammy-winning pianist Emanuel Ax and violinist Leonidas Kavakos will perform a selection of works by Beethoven on Jan. 31; the Lansing Symphony Orchestra will perform alongside Classical Mystery Tour, a Beatles tribute show, on Feb. 16; Grammy-winning composer Maria Schneider will show off her 18-person orchestra's jazz chops on Feb. 23; and Rock and Americana icon John Mellencamp will perform hits both old and new on March 19.

The Mid-Winter Singing Festival will celebrate its 20th anniversary Feb. 2 and 3 at University United Methodist Church in East Lansing, offering a chance to belt out classic and beloved songs alongside other music-loving community members. Festival veterans Rachael Davis, Joel Mabus, Robert B. Jones and Frank Youngman will lead the Friday evening community sing at 7:30 p.m., followed by a children's concert 11 a.m. Saturday with the Lake Effect Family Band, a roots group from Cadillac, and a final community sing 12:30 p.m. Saturday.

Finally, the inaugural Rock Lansing music festival is set for May 18 at Adado Riverfront Park, featuring performances by Michigan rockers like Patty Pershaya & the Mayhops, Taproot, JP & the Energy and Of Virtue as well as national acts like Nonpoint and Any Given Sin. The festival features two stages as well as vendors and food trucks. For a complete list of performers, visit rocklansing.live.

What makes the world turn City Pulse's 2024 People Issue

Happy New Year! You might want to brew up a cup of coffee. Seven cups, in fact — one for each of the conversations on the following pages.

Somewhere between the crushing minutiae of social media — the photos of your boss's lunch, bulletins on Aunt Frieda's cat's spleen operation — and the truly crushing reports from places like the Middle East and Washington, D.C., is a non-crushing, breathable space of lived everyday experience.

That's where City Pulse's annual People Issue comes in.

This isn't a ranked list of movers and shakers, influencers, up-and-comers or self-promoters. This year, we were fortunate to find seven people who do interesting and worthwhile things, often behind the scenes, and were willing to share their experiences with us.

One of the seven, **Elizabeth Hernandez**, expressed the spirit of the People Issue best in a conversation about the rewards of volunteer work. She gives of herself to those in need, as she put it, to "let them know they are part of what makes the world turn."

It's not exactly breaking news, but life is going on all around us, and the following interviews offer a sweet sample to go with your coffee.

Staying connected with the community is a key People Issue goal. It's also what motivates the people you're about to meet. Musician **Kieffer Norton**, vocalist for post-hardcore "gay screamo" band Dear Heretic and guitarist for emo-rock band Tournament, owns the Goblin Zone, a DIY music venue in Lansing that provides a haven for members of the city's punk and emo scene.

Norton created the new space after another DIY space, the Church of Elvis Presley, closed, in the fear that the punk and emo community would "fizzle out and lose connection with each other."

"I really didn't want that to happen," Norton said.

Connection with community is the key for **Kolmarge Harris**, who runs the Lansing Spartans Youth Organization, providing health and fitness programs for area youth and keeping boxing alive in Lansing for more than 20 years.

Harris talks frankly about being bullied while growing up on the west side of Chicago, what it's like to lose more matches than you win, and how the hard knocks help him empathize with others.

Matea Caluk, who moved to Lansing in the late 1990s as a refugee from the war in Bosnia, explains how her turbulent life experience informs her work, helping students and supporting equity and diversity at MSU.

Playwright **Sandra Seaton**, another Chicago transplant, talks about the stories and people that inspire her award-winning literary work. **Mohammed Hassan Khalil**, director of MSU's Muslim Studies program, talks about riding the see-saw of positive and negative images in American perception of Muslim people since 2000.

Ozay Moore, a passionate hip-hop artist, DJ and director of All of the Above Hip Hop Academy, tells about what it's like to be energized by young, creative minds. (But be warned: Moore is also a coffee nerd, so make sure you're on your toes when brewing his cup.)

Their words are not alone on the page. Their faces give us so much more. Every year, Khalid Ibrahim of Eat Pomegranate Photography creates memorable images to go with the interviews, by virtue of his technical wizardry, artistic insight and uncanny knack for finding the right remark or question that brings out the essence of each subject. Thanks to Ibrahim, you can look that person you're having coffee with straight in the eye, and perhaps even a bit deeper.

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

(Care to recommend someone for next year's People Issue? Please email publisher@lansingcitypulse.com.)

8 years of City Pulse People Issue Highlights: 2016-2023

Farha Abbasi, Psychiatrist (2017)

Abolarin Agnona, Veterinarian (2017)

Haimen Al-Sumaidee, Refugee Job Development Coordinator (2019)

Jose Aste, Head Chef/Owner of Tantay (2021)

Guadalupe Ayala, City of Lansing Diversity Officer (2021)

Ligia Romero Balcarcel, Military Veteran (2016)

Ryan Basore, Cannabis Activist and Entrepreneur (2020)

Sein Paul Benavides, Hispanic Activist (2023)

Farhan Bhatti, Care Free Medical Director (2023)

Amy Bigman, Rabbi at Congregation Shaarey Zedek (2021)

Twyla Birdsong, Blues/Soul Singer (2016)

Melina Brann, Women's Center of Greater Lansing Director (2021)

Eugene Cain, Educator (2023)

Debbie Carlos, Artist (2017)

Oscar Castaneda, Advocate for Immigrants (2019)

Etienne Charles, Musician and Teacher (2018)

Ryan Claytor, Comic Book Artist (2016)

Suban Nur Cooley, Writer and Editor (2017)

Guillermo Delgado, Painter, Educator (2020)

Morgan Doherty, LGBT Resource Center Coordinator at MSU (2020)

Aarin Dokum, Nokomis Center Interim President (2019)

Tana Fedewa, Advocate for Survivors (2019)

Steve Flaster, Salesman and Educator (2018)

Krista Fuerst, Director of Expectant Parents Orga-

nization (2020)

Chana Kraus-Friedberg, Poet (2021)

Nic Gareiss, Dancer and Musician (2017)

Deborah Guthrie, Meridian Township Clerk (2021)

Muhammad Hamdan, Oncologist & Hematologist (2016)

Lucas Holiday, Vocalist (2018)

Elizabeth Homer, Women's Equality Activist (2023)

Twesigye "Jackson" Kaguri, Founder of Nyaka AIDS Orphan Project (2020)

Todd Karinen, Metal Guru (2020)

Ezra & Marshall Kelly, Trans Twins (2019)

Cameo King, Founder of Grit, Glam & Guts (2021)

Tiesha King, Dark Artist (2019)

Sarah Kovan, Rhodes Scholar (2016)

Henry Kwok, owner of Henry's Place Restaurant (2022)

Rev. Phiwa Langeni, Salus Center Director (2019)

Bill Lett, Retired Owner of Lett's Bridal (2019)

Hope Lovell, Health Care activist (2023)

Octavio Más-Arocas, Orchestra Director (2023)

Barbara Roberts Mason, Political Activist (2023)

Liz McDaniel, Musician (2016)

Liz McMurray, owner of Liz's Alterations, (2022)

Tammara McCollom, owner of Smoothie Queen (2022)

Mark Meadows, East Lansing Mayor (2016)

Ashley Medina, Hair stylist (2022)

Thierry Nana, Student, Designer and Artist (2018)

Jennifer Nagel, Fitness Expert, Business Owner (2020)

Jerry Norris, Owner of The Fledge (2021)

Julie Pington, President/CEO of the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau (2022)

Marilyn Plummer, Public Servant (2018)

Bernie Porn, Pollster (2022)

Amy Rickett, Actor and Director (2018)

Jeana-Dee Allen & Dylan Rogers, Robin Theatre Founders (2017)

Theresa Rosado, Journalist, Artist, Activist (2019)

Bob Rose, Artist (2021)

Robin Schneider, Medical Marijuana Advocate (2017, 2019)

Alice Sessions, Preservationist (2018)

Jeff Shoup, Musician (2017)

Robert Song, President & CEO of Maru Hospitality Group (2017)

Whitney Spotts, Vocalist (2018)

Nick Stachurski, Creative Marketing Executive (2016)

Joseph Steinhardt, Record Producer and Educator (2018)

Altaye Tadessi, Restaurateur (2022)

Tashmica Torok, Social Activist (2016)

Sonny Truong, Tailor (2023)

Christine Turpening, LGBTQ+ Activist (2023)

Willard Walker, Public Servant (2021)

Jared Waltrip (aka Bentley James), Drag Queen (2022)

Eugene Wanger, Death Penalty Opponent (2020)

Elaine Womboldt, Neighborhood Activist (2018)

Geri Alunit Zeldes, Journalism Educator (2017)

LANSING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MOZART AND BIZET

JANUARY 12 • 7:30 PM

**MATEA
CALUK****'COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE
OUTSTANDING CHANGE AGENTS!'**

Matea Caluk, 37, was born in Bosnia but moved to Lansing with her family in the late 1990s as refugees of the Bosnian War. A 10-year Michigan State University employee, Caluk was recently appointed chief of staff of the Residence Education and Housing Services Department. In her free time, she also serves on the Ingham County Racial Equity Task Force and the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce DEI Committee and is a co-founder of 3KIND Perspective, a local DEI consulting service.

Tell us a little bit about your background and how you got to the United States?

I grew up in Bosnia until I was about 11 years old. Due to the civil war that took place in the region, my family was relocated through refugee services to Lansing. As a kid, I had never heard of Michigan, because when you live internationally, you're not really sure about where a lot of these places are in the U.S. When we got here, there were refugees from the Balkans, from Sudan, all different parts of the world. It was very much like an international community in the south Lansing area that we lived in.

The whole experience had to have been very formative for you. What do you remember of Bosnia?

I was there until fourth grade, so a lot of my foundational friendships took place during that time. There were days when there would be bombings or sirens and we wouldn't be able to go to school. We would have to stay home and shelter in our basement.

Otherwise, I remember having a very fun childhood, going to school, hanging out with my friends and, when it's snowing outside, going out to ski with my friends and sledding as a little kid. I remember all of those good times, but I definitely also remember uncertainty and feeling scared. As a kid, because you're in the middle of it, it kind of becomes a part of your way of life, a part of your childhood.

How often do you go back?

When I was younger, I went back often. I actually met my partner there, and we're from the same city. We got married and he moved here to the U.S, but we both still have family there. Now, it's kind of like we're living in two worlds, but we make it work. It's been pretty cool to have those different cultural components as a part of raising our own family, too.

Tell us about your new role at MSU.

I started last month, and it's been really wonderful. I felt like this was a really great match for my skill set. In my role, I'm able to look at strategic planning and assessment, budgeting, staff development, climate and culture within the department to look into how we're serve our students through an equity lens. We also create great experiences for students who are living in the residence halls.

In what ways does your background inform the work you do now?

When I first moved here, it was a kind of a culture shock for me to recognize the fact that I was different than my community and people around me, especially when I went to school, because I didn't speak English. Being

able to navigate that experience while having a support system and people there who cared about me really drives me to be involved in these different initiatives that provide that for other people.

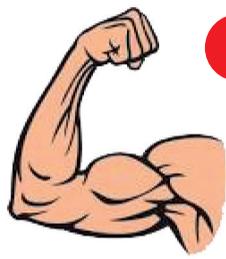
What kind of reception have you received from MSU students?

Current college students are very much in tune to what social change is, what we need to be doing and in being able to really understand and celebrate diversity and identity. They thrive in being able to sit down and have conversations with people. They're such outstanding change agents, and it's been really exciting to see that level of activism and advocacy from them. I think that being able to support them is really important. To me, that's exciting, because, back in the day, I was that student, and now I get to work with students who are really passionate about changing the world in a positive way.

Is there anything else you want to add?

I would encourage people to think of some small things that they can do to celebrate diversity. What are ways that you can be conscious of inclusion? To look out for the people around you and make sure that their voices, stories and narratives are included in the ways that our spaces function? Sometimes, we think about diversity, equity and inclusion as being something specific that's reserved for a specific job, role, or just for activists within our community. Really, it's something that all of us can do.

— TYLER SCHNEIDER



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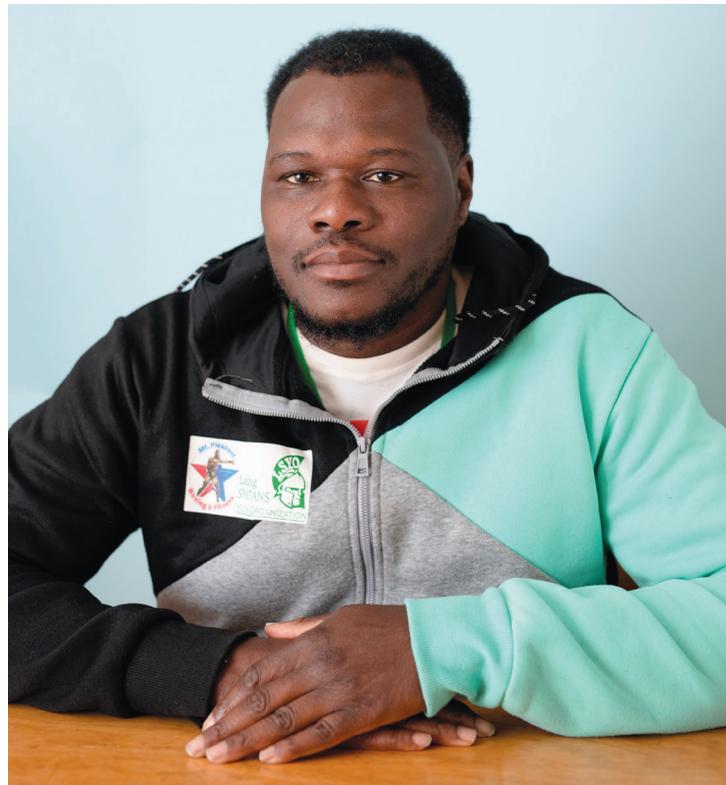
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KOLMARGE HARRIS

‘IF HE DIDN’T MOVE US TO LANSING, I’D PROBABLY BE DEAD.’



Kolmarge Harris, 48, has helped keep boxing alive in Lansing for more than 20 years — as well as providing numerous health and fitness opportunities — with his nonprofit Lansing Spartans Youth Organization, which has spread to Mt. Pleasant. After his life began on the rough west side of Chicago, Harris’ father moved his family to Lansing and involved him in Golden Gloves. He also helped him overcome dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder.

Tell us about your youngest years in Chicago.

I grew up by the old Chicago Stadium. On that side of town was all gang members and the Cabrini-Green Apartments. That’s when the bullying started. I was one of the quiet kids. I remember getting shot at once because I was wearing the wrong colors on the wrong side of the street. Then my father first took me to the Windy City Boxing Club when I was about 5, in 1979. There were pros like Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, Sugar Ray Leonard. We had to get invited because there were so many pros back then, you couldn’t really go to the gym without permission. I got bullied a lot. It was crazy, because I couldn’t read or write; it was special ed this and special ed that. I’m very blessed because my daddy moved us away from Chicago back in the ‘80s to Lansing, where he worked at GM. If he didn’t move us, I’d probably be dead, or in prison, or I would have really hurt somebody.

I tell my story, but I don’t get real deep into it. I learned in boxing that would

put a sour taste in a lot of people’s mouths. And people like to judge. So, I don’t want to put some things out there that people might take the wrong way.

How did life change once you moved to Lansing?

I started boxing at the old Civic Center, when they used to host Golden Gloves there. I was 9 years old. I went to Dwight Rich on the south side. I got bullied there because I was the new kid from Chicago.

When I went to the South Side Boxing Club and got introduced to the Boys & Girls Club. That was different, but it helped me a lot. I met Joe Lipsey, Roger Turner, Fabian Williams, James Toney, Emmanuel Steward, so many people who were boxers from Michigan. By the time I was at Eastern High School, my name got out and they still picked on me some, but not as much because they were scared. After my daddy died, Tommy Washington Sr. helped me a lot, he took me in and trained me. He was the only mentor I had. He helped me start the East Side Boxing Club in his garage. In 2009, I started the Lansing Spartans Youth Organization, and it became an official nonprofit in 2014.

You spent 15 years as a pro in boxing, but you only won two of your 19 matches. Do you think there are lessons you learned from dealing with defeat that have made you a different or even better mentor and instructor than you might have been if you won all the time?

I think me losing my fights and what-not did make me a better person.

Some people say that boxing can be good for people, but it can also not be good. Boxing just helped me get out of my scenario, and I just used it to my advantage.

I could have been a world champion. People knew my talent. But my daddy died, and that just took it out of me. I did have another mentor, but I was stubborn. I just think this made me better. I get more praise as not being a boxer, but more from my entrepreneurship in the community. And the World Boxing Council and World Boxing Organization recognized me on that level.

I’m still out in the community. My thing is, if I can get the right support, I can go farther with it and get recognized in other parts of the world. But I don’t have that support yet.

I understand that you would like to possibly take your boxing and fitness programs to more of a national stage. Can you tell me more about that?

Yes, that’s my goal. I’ll still have the program here and come back to Lansing and Mt. Pleasant. But I’ve got to go somewhere where people will really see my talent and help me take it to the next level. If I go to Nevada and California, I will have more support on that level than what I have now. I think my nonprofit will get support there, not just the boxing, but the anti-bullying message, too.

— STEVE UNDERWOOD

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ELIZABETH HERNANDEZ

**'WE DIDN'T HAVE EVERYTHING WE
WANTED, BUT WE HAD EVERYTHING
WE NEEDED!'**



Elizabeth Hernandez has devoted her personal time to volunteerism in Greater Lansing in the past 15 years with Lansing Kiwanis Club, Greater Lansing Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, NorthWest Initiative, Do1Thing, the Lansing Old Newsboys and others. Hernandez, 50, was born in Lansing as one of 11 children and grew up in Detroit before returning. She is a process improvement adviser in strategic planning and development at the Lansing Board of Water & Light. She has three adult children.

It's really amazing, how many organizations you've served in the past 15 years. Were there experiences when you were young that inspired this passion?

When I first started volunteering, it was in a church when I was about 12. They had a food bank, and when I would work over there, it was interesting to me to see other workers, picking out food for families and handing them their bag. I thought that was kind of strange.

I remember a moment of a family coming up, and thinking that instead, I'm going to ask them what they actually want. I said, you can pick something out from this, and they said yes, my son loves this, and so on. That just brought me more joy, knowing that even if you don't have everything that you need, that doesn't mean you can't still have good things in life.

They say beggars can't be choosy, and I understand that to a certain degree, but that doesn't mean people who don't have the means can't have those.

I just love to give them a great gift, get them something nice and let them know they are part of what makes the world turn. I get really emotional when I talk about this stuff!

Was your family a strong influence in whom you've become as a volunteer?

I have such a great heart and love for my family and my friends. My mom has been pretty much a rock and has gone through so much in her life. I absolutely love her to death. I have five sisters and four brothers. (Another brother died.) Growing up we didn't have everything we wanted, but we had everything we needed. The struggle was real, but we continued to get through it. The biggest part of learning something from that was the resiliency piece of it. There has been a lot of struggle with diabetes in my family, and my mom just had a kidney transplant this year. My mom and dad are not together, but I have probably the best stepmom in the world, I absolutely love her and thank my dad for bringing her into our lives. They all help inspire me to continue to do the things that I do. When I'm in a position where I can help others, that makes me happiest. That's the reason I'm here: service. It's my life.

Were there some specific experiences you had with organizations that inspired you to join them?

When my kids were young, we had a house fire. We lost everything. I remember the Red Cross being one of the first ones to be there. I remember going into their mobile unit, sitting down and they gave me a little bag of stuff: a washcloth, soap, toothpaste and toothbrush. The lady said, "Here,

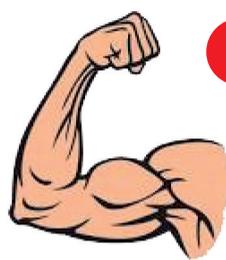
you take this," and I said, "It's OK, I don't need it."

But I looked down a moment, and then I said, "Oh my God, I do need this, I don't have anything! It all just burned up." I just thought, man, even when you don't think you need them, there may be a time that you do. That really kind of sunk into me. I thought, man, what a great organization. Now I'm a blood drive coordinator for BWL. Right now, I'm putting together an annual schedule, so we're very intentional about getting the work done to help save lives.

Then as far as the Kiwanis Club, I happened to be at a fundraiser and met a few local members. I asked if they could tell me about it and they shared how they were a global service organization, changing one child, one community at a time. I said I'd love to join. You know, there's not a whole lot of people who look like me there, but my focus is doing what I can do to move that organization forward and keep it moving into the future's hands. There was a time when Kiwanis didn't even have females in their club. It feels really good for me being Hispanic and coming into a community like that.

Eventually, I became the first Hispanic woman president. But to me, a leader is not a title, it's an action that proves that you're a leader.

— STEVE UNDERWOOD



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MOHAMMAD HASSAN

KHALIL

‘THOSE INVOLVED IN TERRORISM DON’T EVEN MAKE UP A PERCENT OF A PERCENT OF THE MUSLIM POPULATION!’



Mohammad Hassan Khalil, 44, is an East Lansing native who has served as the director of Michigan State University’s Muslim studies program since 2013. He teaches religious studies and is an adjunct professor of law at MSU. Khalil has written two books on Islamic thought and recently co-produced “American Jedi: The Salman Hamdani Story,” a 2023 documentary film about a Muslim-American who died while rescuing others on 9/11.

Tell us about yourself.

I grew up in East Lansing. My father was a professor of electrical engineering, and my mother did a variety of things but also received a bachelor’s degree in business from MSU. I met my future wife in high school here. She said she was going to the University of Michigan, so that’s where I decided to go. Love will make you do strange things.

I ended up majoring in Arabic and Islamic studies, but I started in pre-dental. I wanted to be a dentist because, at the time, people were telling me you really can’t make a career out of Islamic or religious studies. I saw that my orthodontist was making a lot of money, so I went to dental school for my first year.

What changed your mind?

I was in my first year when 9/11 happened. At that point, it became hard for me to focus on dentistry. I would skip classes to attend other classes that I found more relevant to my personal concerns. That eventually led to me quitting dental school altogether as a sophomore and switching over to reli-

gious studies.

How has the American perception of Muslim people changed?

We go through these cycles where things get quiet, and then things get intense, and we get breaks in between. Obviously, 2001 was an intense period. Then you have the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, so there’s a lot of tension there. Things began to settle down until we got to Barack Hussein Obama, and then again until Donald Trump called for “a complete and total shutdown of Muslims entering the country” in December of 2015. Then, in 2016, the number of hate crimes against Muslims were significantly higher than they were in 2001. Through Oct. 6 this year, I would say it was actually maybe the quietest it had been in a long time. And then Oct. 7 hit, and now we have a lot of things going on again.

Why do you think that is?

I think a big part of it has to do with what people see. If you look at the 2010s, the reports on Muslims in that decade were overwhelmingly negative. So, people are seeing negative stories on the Boston Marathon bombing, the Orlando nightclub shooting and ISIS, and they’re not seeing anything positive to counterbalance that. What I always remind people of is, if you add all of these negative stories of all those individuals involved in terrorism, they don’t even make up a percent of a percent of the Muslim population.

Would you say representation has improved since?

It’s gotten better, to some extent, but it’s not perfect. One example is “Back to the Future,” a film I love. There’s a

scene in the middle of it where you see these Libyan terrorists who just kind of appear out of nowhere as the bad guys and start speaking gibberish. It was like they were just these caricatures, like they weren’t even human beings. That’s why, for me, it was so refreshing to see the recent Spider Man films, where you have characters wearing hijab, who appear to be Muslim, and they’re not necessarily the hero or the villain, they’re just normal. In my mind, that was one of the greatest things that I’ve seen in recent years.

You’ve written two books on Islamic thought.

In my first book, I looked at how Muslims think about non-Muslims. I read pre-modern Muslim scholars from hundreds of years ago, who had nothing to do with the American context, because I was curious to see how they thought about that issue. What I found was that they were much more open minded than I’d assumed.

For my second, I’d always been interested in how violent extremists use religion and twist the sources to justify their claims. I think there’s this assumption that people like Osama bin Laden and the leaders of ISIS are literalists — that they’re scary because they’re taking the sources seriously. What I wanted to show was, no, they aren’t. They may be literalist in some areas, they’ll have a beard and some of the superficial things. But when it comes to terrorism and violence, they really aren’t.

— TYLER SCHNEIDER

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OZAY MOORE

'I LOVE HAVING CLOSE PROXIMITY TO YOUNG, CREATIVE MINDS AND YOUNG, CREATIVE PEOPLE'



Ozay Moore, 42, is a hip-hop artist, DJ and founder and executive director of All of the Above Hip Hop Academy, a nonprofit organization that provides hip-hop-related classes, workshops and performance opportunities for local youth. He also co-founded 2019's Below the Stacks mural festival, which resulted in the creation of 11 murals on buildings throughout Lansing. He grew up in Seattle and lived in Portland, Oregon, for a short time before moving to Lansing to start a family in 2006.

Tell me about the work you do at All of the Above.

Essentially, we center the core tenants of hip-hop culture — breaking, graffiti art, DJing, emceeing and knowledge — and create spaces for youth, the community and our practitioners to learn from each other. Youth are learning about the whole spectrum of where hip-hop has been, where it's come up out of. We're giving that context to younger people, and then younger people are able to speak to where hip-hop is going. We're teaching them, but we're also having great conversations around personal development, youth development, community development, vocational pathways, education, activism and being a mindful community member. We really leverage hip-hop culture to kind of do all of the above, hence the name. We're one part cultural preservation, another part skill training, and then also just trying to support the forward and upward mobility of hip-hop culture and the people who represent it in our community.

Do you have any big plans or goals for All of the Above?

This year, All of the Above will have its first home base. I mean, we've had a home base at the Lansing Public Media

Center for about four years now, but it was more like an office that we utilized as a teaching space and classroom. A lot of the work we've done over the last decade has been intentionally mobile because Lansing doesn't have any specific place where people hang out — there's not one location where youth and teens go to spend time outside of school. The goal has always been to meet the youth where they're at. And it feels like this year, we're going to be able to house a lot of what we do under one roof, which is really exciting.

What do you enjoy about working with youth?

I like to be constantly learning and being challenged to grow as an artist, but also just as a community member. Having such close proximity to young, creative minds and young, creative people, and then establishing this respect that goes both ways, I love being in that space. The fact that we're able to be intentional about fostering an environment where young people feel appreciated and whole and seen and validated but also feel like they're getting support to be and produce and become what they want to be in the arts and in the community, I love that.

Tell me about your music. Are you working on any projects right now?

Music has always been a part of my life. It's kind of had different places at different seasons of my life. But in this particular season, I have a project that I'm working on with my brother-in-law Sareem Poems and producer Daniel Steele. That's been kind of a slow build. A few years ago, I put out a project with Tall Black Guy on Coalmine Records, which did really well. It was great. I felt like the pandemic provided a lot of material and things to talk about, and we were able to put it out on record. I'm also getting contracted to do a

piece for ESPN through Hulu. It's a breaking documentary where we're going to be creating original music for the project, so that's really exciting.

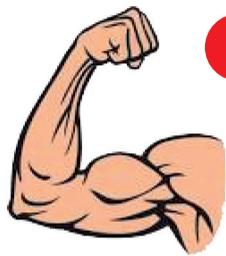
How did you get involved in making murals?

I'm one of those people that has dabbled in a lot of things. I came up in a hip-hop community where if you rapped, you were probably also breaking or DJing or doing graffiti. So, I've always drawn, and I've always done graffiti art. I had some mentors who were active graffiti artists. There's this exchange where graffiti artists, when they meet each other, they exchange books and draw their piece in there. Over the years, I've collected a lot of different signatures and tags and work from folks. It helped me develop my own. The only reason I know how to do murals now is because I've had years of dabbling, but my dabbling is always through a pretty critical lens. As an artist, I'm hypercritical about what I do. I'm forever a student, forever trying to grow.

What else do you like to do in your free time? I see on your Instagram that you're a coffee nerd.

I guess I'm a coffee nerd, but I try not to be pretentious about it. I'm not above some Folgers. Whether I'm using a Hario V60 or a Kalita Wave or a Chemex or whatever, the process is kind of meditative — just slowing down and calculating the measurements and weighing the beans and tasting what comes out of this slower process. Having a lot of interests tends to make for a pretty busy schedule, but brewing coffee allows me to slow down a little bit.

— NICOLE NOECHEL



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KIEFFER NORTON

‘I WAS DEFINITELY TAKEN ABACK BY THE AMOUNT THE COMMUNITY WAS ABLE TO GIVE.’



Kieffer Norton, 25, is the vocalist of post-hardcore band Dear Heretic, guitarist of emo-rock band Tournament and owner of the Goblin Zone, a DIY music venue in Lansing that was founded to provide a space for local bands to play and members of the punk and emo scenes to commune after another DIY space, the Church of Elvis Presley, closed its doors. Norton grew up in DeWitt and lived in Grand Haven for about four and a half years before settling in Lansing in 2021. When they're not playing music or hosting shows, they enjoy hanging out with their cat and trying new vegan food around the area.

How did the Goblin Zone come to be?

I only did it because I found out the Church was going to shut down. They only had about six months left on their lease and weren't sure they were going to renew it. I was like, "Man, that really sucks." Because after the church is gone, there's nothing left. There's nowhere in Lansing for the community to go. We're all going to fizzle out and lose connection with each other. I really didn't want that to happen and figured I could start doing shows in my house. Initially, it was going to be a temporary thing. That kind of morphed into its own thing after that.

Do you have any goals for the future of the Goblin Zone?

There are specific types of events I want to pull off, like I really want to do a poetry night. I want to look at doing some comedy stuff and then hopefully organize some larger-scale community events. I was talking to my friend Noah, who makes these candles that will

burn with any fuel. They're really easy to make, and we talked about doing a workshop teaching people how to make them. Things like that. The goal is definitely to just expand what I'm doing here. There are more than 100 people at a lot of the shows. That's such a broad audience to teach something meaningful or useful to.

Tell me about some of the fundraisers you've been able to do through the Goblin Zone.

I think the first one was for the Fledge. That was my band's EP release show. We raised around \$170. The next one I did was for a house venue called Nudieland in Minneapolis that was the site of a shooting. We donated all the proceeds from that night to the recovery fund. I did another food and clothing drive for the Fledge in September. And then the big one was the Halloween cover show, which was my biggest show ever — the most bands I've ever done and the most people that have ever come out. We did a fundraiser for the Palestine Children's Relief Fund, and we raised \$950, which was crazy. I think our highest donation total up to that point was like \$500. I was definitely taken aback by the amount the community was able to give.

When and how did you get into music?

Definitely really early in my life because my parents are both musically inclined. My mom is more dance and performance inclined. She instructs color guard and stuff like that. My dad was a jazz trumpet player and played guitar. I got involved in band in school and played trumpet all through my school

years, but I didn't start playing guitar until I was around 19.

Tell me about your bands. What kinds of music do you play?

I sing in a gay screamo band Dear Heretic. We're like mid-2000s post-hardcore. I write most of the songs. Especially being the vocalist, I feel like I have an idea in mind of how I want the song to go. So that's kind of my passion project when it comes to music. And then I play guitar in Tournament, which is a country band. We're really an emo band. Emo rock, I guess. We wrote a song called "Rock and Roll Jesus Christ," and I think that's all that matters.

When you're writing music for Dear Heretic, what do you take influence from? What inspires you?

The first EP was written a lot about things I'm afraid of. The first song is about a recurring dream I would have about dying in a nuclear explosion. I definitely draw a lot from my own personal experience as a nonbinary/trans person, and also just living in culture and seeing what I see wrong with culture. I draw a lot from seeing the destruction of our environment. I'm vegan and love animals a lot, so parts of songs are about that. I definitely draw a lot from my own experiences and my own belief systems. Also, at times, I've just drawn influence directly from bands or the writing of the music itself. Most of the time, it's a Say Anything song. That's my favorite band of all time, and I just tend to rip off Say Anything a lot.

— NICOLE NOECHEL

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SANDRA SEATON

'I TOOK THIS CREATIVE WRITING COURSE AND SOMETHING JUST CLICKED!'



Sandra Seaton is the winner of the Mark Twain Award from the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. The author of 14 plays, opera librettos, a spoken-word piece and short fiction, her best known work explores the life of Sarah "Sally" Hemmings, a woman who was owned by Thomas Jefferson. Seaton taught creative writing for 15 years at Central Michigan University and lives in East Lansing.

Tell me a bit about your background.

My family was in show business and my grandmother, not as a paid professional because women of her generation didn't do that, but she did the minstrel shows. She went around reciting poems by Paul Lawrence Dunbar to raise money for her church. As a child I was always taught to recite poetry and to perform. I read constantly in high school and would read while walking down the street. When I went to college, at first I was going to major in journalism, but then I took this creative writing course and it just clicked. I taught fiction writing and novel writing, but I was drawn to plays because of my family and poetry.

Please, say more about that.

I wanted to write about my grandmother because I had tried to record her, but when I got back the tape recorder hadn't worked. I never was able to record her so I wrote "The Bridge Party" to bring her back to me. I'm really interested in Black history and in recovering stories and voices. My family came to Columbia, Tennessee, in the 1830s. Cyrus, my great-great-grandfather, and he was a "free Black." Well, obviously Black people weren't really

free at that time, but he wasn't a slave. He bought farmland. He and his wife, Elizabeth, raised 22 children. Then the land was taken from them. They had a son named Israel who sassed a white man. And he was forced to leave town, hiding in a wagon. They dressed him up as a woman to disguise him and sent him out of town. My play, "The Will," was about that.

Do you write poetry?

I'm a librettist, and that means you write words to sing. Being a poet is different from being a librettist, because the librettist collaborates with the composer. The poet writes on her and his own. The poem is a complete thing. But in the libretto you have to leave room for the music. Which is similar to plays, because you have to leave room for the people to move around, for the subtext and all that.

Did you ever consider moving back to Chicago or one of the coasts to pursue career opportunities?

The contacts are clearly in New York and on the West Coast. This piece I wrote called "The First Bluebird in the Morning" is only six minutes long. It's about a young man who's about to go on parole and he has conversations with a bluebird who flies in and out of the yard. It was a finalist for this Opera America Award about a week ago and they had a big party in New York, and there was a reception. I never get to go to things like that. I have a lot of friends who are in those places, but my husband's job was always at MSU, and so that kept us here. East Lansing is actually a great place to write, and it's worked for me. I've written a lot at my home office, and I've gone to residen-

cies. I really recommend Ragdale for writers.

What are you working on now?

I'm working on a musical about my high school years in Chicago. And I'm the literary executor for my sister who passed away. I have to finish her novel.

Do you think about the audience when you write?

No. But I have to believe in it. It has to have integrity. It has to be something that I'm not ashamed to have out there and it has to have some truth to it.

What about the Sally Hemmings story has captivated audiences?

I'm trying to tell stories about African Americans and to humanize them, to treat them as complicated characters in a way that gives them some depth. My great-grandmother was the daughter of the son of a man who had an estate and she was raised there as a member of the family. She could've either stayed there and passed for white or she could have left and married a Black man, which she chose to do. There are a lot of stories like the Sally Hemmings story.

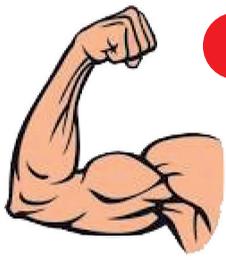
Do you have a writing group?

I have a silent writing group that meets every Thursday on Zoom.

What is the most important part of being a writer?

It's just the revising.

— CHELSEA LAKE ROBERTS



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Peppermint Creek examines rape culture in award-winning off-Broadway play

By **CHELSEA LAKE ROBERTS**

Next month, Peppermint Creek Theatre Co. will mount a production of “How to Defend Yourself,” a play about a group of sorority sisters who gather for a self-defense class after one of them is raped. Written by Liliana Padilla, the play premiered off-Broadway last year after winning the Yale Drama Series Prize in 2019.

In an article for Dramatics Magazine, Anita Martin writes that Padilla’s script “explores underlying social forces that help normalize and eroticize male violence against women.” Although the term “rape culture” never actually shows up in the script, the playwright defines it as “the systemic belief that you need to dominate another being in order to have power. That core belief spirals into different behaviors that create the conditions for violence.” In Martin’s article, Padilla remarks that rape culture “is something that is collectively held and therefore can be collectively transformed.”

Sally Hecksel will make her directorial debut with the Peppermint Creek production, opening Feb. 1 at the Stage One Performing Arts Center in Sycamore Creek Church’s Eastwood campus. An actress in her own right, Hecksel completed the theater studio program at Lansing Community College and has also worked as an assistant director and a stage manager. She’s often called in to work as an intimacy coordinator for local theater groups, helping to choreograph fight scenes and onstage violence.

“Advocating for actors and their wellbeing is something that I feel passionate about,” Hecksel said. “After this show, I’ve decided to shift to pursuing a formal intimacy coordination certification so that I can better help the local acting community.”

Hecksel has taken great care to make

the show’s environment supportive, especially considering its topic, and she’s been blown away by the tenacity and transparency her actors have brought to the work.

“I’m grateful that the cast has been willing to have tough conversations with me and has been willing to explore so many facets and nuances of

something that most folks have a difficult time confronting,” she said.

In addition to the script and the acting, Hecksel is especially excited for the audience to experience the music, designed by Nathan

Tyckocki.

“I think it will help us move through time during a specific moment in the show and will put the audience in the right headspace to process everything,” she said. “My goal with this show is to have cohesion between as many elements as possible. I want to fully immerse the audience in the world, even between scenes.”

This is Storm Kopitsch’s fifth production with Peppermint Creek. She plays Brandi, a sorority girl with a black belt in karate.

“All she wants is control over her life, and she feels like she’s never had that,” Kopitsch said. “It’s easy to stereotype her and put her in this box. But the more I dive into Brandi, the more I’m finding she’s one of the most complex characters in the show.”

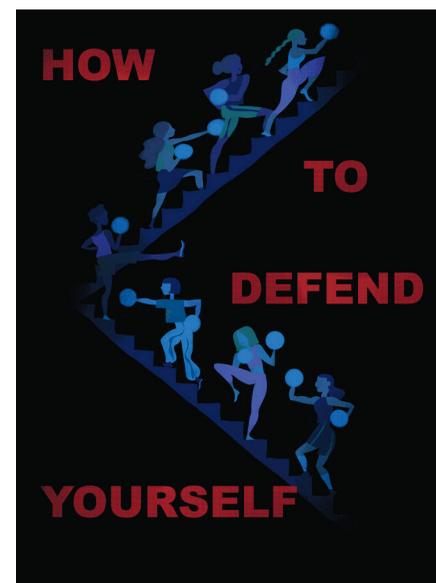
Returning for his second Peppermint Creek show is relative theater newcomer TJ Kelly Jr., who plays Eggo.

“Eggo is Eggo,” Kelly said. “He’s a college frat boy. He might be an incel. He just wants the right answers to love. Eggo has a lot of love to give to anyone, and he’s perplexed as to why women don’t feel the same way back.”

Kelly hopes audience members will return home with a lot to think about.

“This show can get very heavy, but that’s a good thing. It may not have any

BEHIND THE CURTAIN



Courtesy of Peppermint Creek Theatre Co.

Peppermint Creek Theatre Co.’s production of “How to Defend Yourself,” by Liliana Padilla, runs Feb. 1 through 4 and 8 through 11 at the Stage One Performing Arts Center in Sycamore Creek Church’s Eastwood campus.

There are certainly things that lean more to one side or the other, but I’m hoping that our community will see that this is something worth exploring and talking about.”

January and early February theater productions

“Mamma Mia!”

Jan. 16-21
7:30 p.m. Tuesday–Thursday
8 p.m. Friday–Saturday
2 p.m. Saturday
1 and 6:30 p.m. Sunday
Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing
whartoncenter.com

“Air Play”

Jan. 26-27
7:30 p.m. Friday

1:30 p.m. Saturday
Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing
whartoncenter.com

“How to Defend Yourself”

Peppermint Creek Theatre Co.
Feb. 1-4 and 8-11
7 p.m. Thursday–Saturday
2 p.m. Sunday
Stage One Performing Arts Center
2200 Lake Lansing Road, Lansing
peppermintcreek.org

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- a new Broadway musical revue about individual choices



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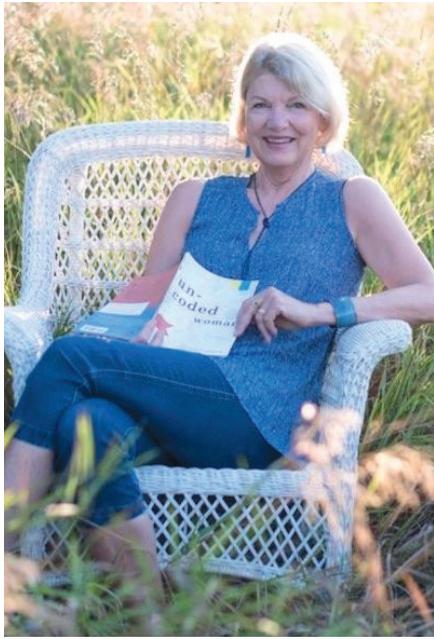


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STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT, CLINTON COUNTY, NOTICE TO CREDITORS, Decedent’s Estate, File No. 23-31580-DE - Estate of Wesley John Wyrembelski, Date of Birth: 04/14/1961. NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Wesley John Wyrembelski, died 05/18/2022. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Carey Mitchell, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 100 E. State St., Ste. 4300, St. Johns, Michigan, 48879, 989-224-5190, and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice, 1/3/2023. Attorney Kimberly L. Savage, Bar No. P68267, 1483 Haslett Rd, Haslett, MI 48840 517-515-5000. Personal representative Carey Mitchell, 16930 Cynthia Lane, Haslett, Michigan, 810-499-4506.

CP#23-351

Anne-Marie Oomen takes this year's Michigan Author Award crown



Courtesy photo

Northwest Michigan author Anne-Marie Oomen was “floored” when she learned she had won the 2023-2024 Michigan Author Award. “It feels like I’m too young for a lifetime award,” she said.

By BILL CASTANIER

It's a safe bet that in the last 20 years, few Michigan authors have been more prolific or involved in more writing gigs than Anne-Marie Oomen. She has likely won more writing awards than any other living Michigan author, including four Michigan Notable Book awards, and she recently added the 2023-2024 Michigan Author Award to her credentials.

The Michigan Author Award was es-

tablished in 1992 to recognize significant Michigan authors for their lifetime achievements. Developed by the Michigan Library Association, the award is now facilitated by the Library of Michigan and the Michigan Center for the Book.

This year's Michigan Author Award selection committee, which I served on, included representatives from the Library of Michigan, Bath Township Public Library, Clinton-Macomb District Library, Capital Area District Libraries, University of Michigan Library, Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Center for the Book, Michigan Humanities and Michigan State Historic Preservation Office.

“I was floored when I learned about the award,” Oomen said. “It feels like I’m too young for a lifetime award.”

There's no question Oomen stays busy. She's the founding editor of Dunes Review, an online literary magazine; former president of Michigan Writers Inc.; and an instructor at Lasell University in Massachusetts as well as Interlochen College of Creative Arts. She also appears at conferences throughout the country.

After nearly 20 years of teaching all levels of students, from junior high to graduate school, Oomen landed the prestigious position of writer in residence at Interlochen Arts Academy from 1997 to 1999, then chaired the creative writing department from 1999 to 2008.

While serving as chair of the department, Oomen oversaw the program development of the Writing House, a dedicated building for the creative writing program. After her tenure as chair, she continued as an instructor of creative writing and supervising editor of the Interlochen Review, the school's online literary journal, until 2014.

Oomen's 2022 memoir, “As Long as I Know You: The Mom Book,” won the Association of Writers & Writing Programs' Sue William Silverman Prize in Creative Nonfiction as well as a Michigan Notable Book award and a silver Independent Publisher Book Award, or IPPY.

Other Michigan Notable Book selections Oomen has authored include “Pulling Down the Barn: Memories of a Rural Childhood,” “House of Fields: Memories of a Rural Education” and “The Lake Michigan Mermaid: A Tale in Poems,” co-authored by Linda Nemecek Foster. Her edited work “Elemental: A Collection of Michigan Creative Nonfiction” was also selected for the award.

Oomen has written seven plays, including “Northern Belles,” which was inspired by oral histories of women farmers, and “Secrets of Luuce Talk Tavern,” winner of the Community Theatre Association of Michigan's annual playwriting contest in 2012. She developed scripts for two recent video projects, “When Water Moves,” funded by a Michigan Arts and Culture Council grant, and “Plague Phase,” a collaboration with the northwest Michigan multimedia magazine Nature Change, both of which reflect her interest in water justice and environmental issues.

Oomen said she's working on several projects, and “more and more have to do with water activism,” including a book titled “The Lake Huron Mermaid,” a sister book to “The Lake Michigan Mermaid.”

Set the date for A Rally of Writers 2024

Make your plans now — before it sells out — to attend this year's A Rally of Writers, which is set for April 13 at Lansing Community College's West Campus.

This year's keynote speaker is Michigan Poet Laureate Nandi Comer, the first poet laureate the state has had in more than 60 years, who will be making one of her first public appearances in mid-Michigan.

Comer, who hails from Detroit, incorporates race, gender, sexuality and class in her writings about her hometown. Her books include “American Family: A Syndrome” and “Tapping Out,” which was a winner of the 2020 Midland Authors Award for poetry.

Other featured speakers include Steven Harper Piziks and Jay Whistler. Piziks is a science-fiction and steampunk writer, and Whistler writes creative ghost stories primarily for middle school readers.

The rally continues to be the best deal going for new and emerging writers, and several graduates have gone on to successful writing careers. The daylong program includes a variety of workshops about specialty writing and improving writing skills.



Photo by Khary Mason

Michigan Poet Laureate Nandi Comer will give the keynote speech at this year's A Rally of Writers on April 13.

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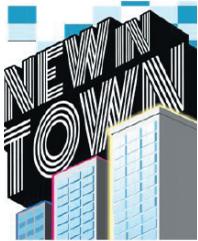
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DoubleTree by Hilton takes over the former Radisson downtown

By TYLER SCHNEIDER



DoubleTree by Hilton Lansing

111 N. Grand Ave., Lansing
517-482-0188

hilton.com/en/hotels/landtdt-doubletree-lansing/

Waramaug Hospitality, a privately held investment company, purchased the property from Block 100 Limited Partnership for \$12,018,000. After almost a year of renovations, the DoubleTree is in full operation and will host a formal ribbon-cutting and grand reopening event from 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 10.

The only major changes to the layout came in the form of a new bar and restaurant and a Hilton-branded Made Market coffee and sandwich shop on the first floor. The updated decor, which

In September 2023, the DoubleTree by Hilton Lansing welcomed guests for the first time into its 257-room, 11-floor property at 111 N. Grand Ave., which had previously been the Radisson since 1986.

It was announced that the Radisson would undergo a rebranding in 2021, when Waramaug

Hospitality, a privately held investment company, purchased the property from Block 100 Limited Partnership for \$12,018,000. After almost a year of renovations, the DoubleTree is in full operation and will host a formal ribbon-cutting and grand reopening event from 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 10.

The only major changes to the layout came in the form of a new bar and restaurant and a Hilton-branded Made Market coffee and sandwich shop on the first floor. The updated decor, which

includes room doors painted Michigan State University green and lobby walls adorned with automobile-themed metal sculptures, has been catered to reflect the region.

“The feeling here is an homage to the fact that the auto industry is here and so important to Michigan, and the fact that we’re in Sparty’s home. You’re going to see a lot of the Spartan colors throughout, subtly. You’re going to see nods to the motor industry and to the fact that we’re here in the capital,” general manager Patrick Perry said.

The building retained its second-floor connection to the Lansing Center on the east side of the Grand River. It also offers 10,000 square feet worth of meeting and event space, headlined by the 6,900-square-foot Capitol Ballroom and including several smaller rooms with scenic views of the riverfront.

“Hilton is very targeted on the business travel market. It’s really one of their strongest points,” Perry said. “That’s good for us because there are a number of state and national businesses that have headquarters here or are prominent in the area. Business travelers make up the largest portion of our business. Another is lobbyists coming

in to meet with representatives. Then, of course, you have Michigan State University.”

Football game days will be some of the busiest of the year, Perry said, with teams like the University of Nebraska having already booked stays in 2023.

“We’ll have seven or eight football teams come to town each season, and they need to stay in a place that accommodates their needs. At 100

rooms at a time over a weekend, that’s a large piece of business,” Perry said. “Then you’ve also got all the fans who come to town for those days, too.”

Perry said the DoubleTree team has been working closely with Lansing Center staff to attract new conventions and other large-scale gatherings in 2024.

“We’re looking to add future business



Courtesy photo

The new DoubleTree by Hilton Lansing, formerly the Radisson, is the only full-service hotel in downtown Lansing, according to general manager Patrick Perry.

by attracting groups that could come to town for events and bring business and revenue in throughout all of downtown, not just at the hotel and the conference center,” Perry said. “It’s been a fantastic partnership so far, and I know the town is absolutely thrilled to have an upscale hotel property in a historic location.”



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Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Best of 2023" -- it's quite the year.
by Matt Jones
© 2023 Matt Jones

ACROSS

- 1. "Asteroid City" director Anderson
- 4. Calendar pages
- 8. Active sorts
- 13. "Yeah, right" laugh
- 14. "There oughta be ___ against that!"
- 15. Ibuprofen option
- 16. Game whose sequel was Time's #1 best video game of 2023
- 18. Early parlor game (and nothing to do with drawing first blood)
- 19. Take an unfair share
- 20. His Best Supporting Actor Oscar win was part of CBC's best pop culture moments of 2023
- 22. "University Challenge" ainer, informally, with "the"
- 24. Be down
- 25. Monday, in France
- 26. "Fine with me"
- 28. Ice, in Germany
- 30. Part of a sword
- 31. Diane Morgan-starring British mockumentary series that landed on many U.S. "Best of 2023" lists
- 34. "___ the fields we go" ("Jingle Bells")
- 35. Got an ___ effort
- 36. Word after even or odd when describing mammals with hooves
- 38. Actress Carrere of "Wayne's World"
- 41. Highest-placing Taylor Swift song (#19) on Rolling Stone's "100 Best Songs of 2023"
- 46. Tonsillectomy docs
- 48. Ending for racket or rocket
- 49. Former Georgian president Shevardnadze
- 50. Consume
- 52. Custard fruit

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13			14				15				
16			17				18				
	19			20		21					
22	23			24			25				
26			27		28		29		30		
31				32			33		34		
		35				36		37			
38	39	40		41		42			43	44	45
46			47		48		49				
50				51		52		53		54	
55				56				57			
58					59		60			61	62
63						64				65	
66						67				68	

- 54. Netflix stopped mailing them in 2023
 - 55. With 59-Across, Hayao Miyazaki's final film, which made many 2023 top ten lists
 - 57. ___ Khan University (Karachi institution)
 - 58. Dirty clothes basket
 - 59. See 55-Across
 - 63. East Coast toll-paying convenience
 - 64. "Game of Thrones" actress Chaplin
 - 65. Masseur's specialty
 - 66. Second effort
 - 67. Basic training figs.
 - 68. "Lord of the Rings" beast
- DOWN**
- 1. "Huh...?!"
 - 2. Animal that goes for a long swim?
 - 3. New Hampshire senator Jeanne with a rhyming surname
 - 4. "Deputy ___" (TV canine)
 - 5. Chicken-king connector
 - 6. Oldest of the "Animaniacs" siblings
 - 7. "Popeye" kid whose name has an apostrophe
 - 8. Actress Hannah of "Kill Bill"
 - 9. Not-so-see-through
 - 10. Major Spanish newspaper
 - 11. Brand with a new label
 - 12. More rocky
 - 15. Hosp. heart ward
 - 17. Like some cheesecakes
 - 21. Beneficiary of, as an estate
 - 22. Ballpoint brand
 - 23. Ostrich kin
 - 24. "Oh ___!" (Marcia Brady quote, in that episode with the football)
 - 27. ___ Stadium (L.A. venue that hosted Super Bowl LVI)
 - 29. Candy maker Russell
 - 32. City near Buffalo, NY
 - 33. Take advice from
 - 37. Lackey
 - 38. Cranky infant, perhaps
 - 39. Befogged
 - 40. Endeavor
 - 42. Alphabetically last U.S. state capital
 - 43. Former Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist Dave
 - 44. O'Hare's airport code
 - 45. Dictionary entries (abbr.)
 - 47. Not quite good
 - 51. Rhyming works
 - 53. Like a specially formed committee
 - 56. Many mos.
 - 57. Shouts of discovery
 - 60. Brian with the 2022 album ForeverAndEverNoMore
 - 61. Not just my
 - 62. "The Voice" network

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Answers on page 24

SUDOKU

Intermediate

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

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

January 3-9, 2024

The Free Will Astrology column that appeared in last week's issue was meant for this week, so we are re-running it. We apologize for the error and will be back next week with a new Free Will Astrology column.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): The plan I will propose in this horoscope is for temporary use. I'm not recommending you stick to it for all of 2024 — just for the next 15 to 18 days. If you do, I believe it will set you up for beautiful success in the coming months. Here's my idea: Embark on a free-form extravaganza of playing and having fun. Just for now, set aside your ambition. Don't worry about improving yourself and producing results. Simply enjoy a phase of suspending inhibitions, creatively messing around, having nothing to prove and being motivated by the quest for joy.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Climate change is impacting rainbows. Rising temperatures and dryer conditions mean that some parts of the world will get fewer rainbows, and other areas will get more. Canada and Siberia will benefit, while the Mediterranean will be less well-endowed with sky-borne arcs of color that come from sunlit rain. But I predict that no matter where you live, the rainbow will be a potent and regular symbol for you Bulls in 2024 — more than ever before. That means you will have increased reasons to entertain hope and more power to find beauty. On occasion, there may even be very good luck at the metaphorical rainbow's end. If you're an LGBTQIA2S+ Taurus, be on high alert for breakthroughs in your ability to get the appreciation you deserve.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): As one of your inspirational stories for 2024, I offer this tale from singer-songwriter Tom Waits: "Once upon a time, there was a crooked tree and a straight tree. They grew next to each other. Every day, the straight tree would look at the crooked tree and say, 'You're crooked. You've always been crooked, and you'll continue to be crooked. But look at me! I'm tall, and I'm straight.' Then one day, lumberjacks came to the forest and looked around. The manager in charge said, 'Cut all the straight trees.' And that crooked tree is still there to this day, growing strong and growing strange." (PS: Here's more from Gemini writer Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Be true to your own act, and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant.")

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Japanese artist Hokusai (1760-1849) developed a fascination for his country's iconic Mount Fuji. In his 70s, he produced a series of woodblock prints titled "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji." Later, he added three books of prints collectively called "One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji." Some art historians say his obsession stemmed from the legend that the mountain was home to the secret of immortality. The coming year will be a fine time for you Cancerians to celebrate and concentrate on your own Mount Fuji-like passion. Sometime soon, identify what it is and start making plans to commune with it intensely.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): If you will ever in your life go viral — that is, create or do something that suddenly becomes widely known and influential — I bet it will be in 2024. Even if you don't produce TikTok videos seen by 10 million people, you are at least likely to become more visible in your local community or field of endeavor. Of course, I would prefer that your fame and clout spread because of the good deeds you do, not the weird deeds. So, I urge you to cultivate high integrity and a wildly generous spirit in the coming months. Be a role model who inspires and uplifts.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I expect 2024 to be a free-spirited, wide-ranging, big-vision type of year for you, dear Virgo. I predict you will feel an abundance of urges to travel, roam and explore. You will be more excited than anxious about the prospect of leaving your comfort zone, and you will have a special fondness for getting your mind expanded by interesting encounters. That doesn't mean you will avoid all awkwardness and confusion. Some of

that stuff will happen, though it will usually evolve into educational adventures. And the extra good news is that wandering out in nature will provide even more inspiration and healing than usual. Treasure this quote from conservationist Rachel Carson: "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure: the migration of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for the spring."

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): I am pleased to inform you that a visit to hell will not be on your itinerary in 2024. You may be invited to take a few excursions into the realm that depth psychologists call the underworld, but that's a good thing. There you will be able to hunt for treasures that have been hidden and uncover secrets that will illuminate your epic, months-long quest for wholeness. It may sometimes be dark and shadowy down there below, but almost always dark and shadowy in ways that will lead you to healing. (I will reiterate what I implied above: The underworld is NOT hell.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): I hope that working hard on togetherness will be a fun project for you in the coming months. To do it well, you must outgrow some habitual ways of doing friendship and intimacy. You will have to be imaginative and ingenious. Are you willing to believe that you do not yet know all there is to know about being a fantastic ally and partner? Are you ready to approach the arts of collaboration and cooperation as if enhancing your skills is the most important thing you can do? For the sake of your best selfish goals, be a brilliant teammate in 2024.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Each of us is a complex, kaleidoscopic work of art, whether or not we consciously approach our destiny in that spirit. Every day, we use our creative imagination to craft new elements of the masterpiece known as the story of our life. Leos come by this fun project naturally, but you Sagittarians also have great potential to embrace it with glee and panache. I trust you will be especially keen on enjoying this sacred work in 2024. Today and the coming weeks will be an excellent time to ramp up the scintillating drama.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "I am against sex education in schools because sex is more fun when it's dirty and sinful." So said Capricorn author Florence King. I reject and rebel against that perverse declaration — and encourage you to disavow it, too, in 2024. In my astrological opinion, the coming months will be a favorable time to learn everything about sex and eros that you don't already know. I hope you will dive deep as you gather a rich array of teachings about how to enjoy the art of making love more than ever before.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Singer-songwriter Tori Amos says she's sure she was burned for being a witch in a previous lifetime. I suspect most of us had past incarnations in which we were punished simply for being our beautiful selves. I bring this up, Aquarius, because I think 2024 will be a favorable time to get some healing from any ancient hurt like that. You will have a series of experiences that could help you recover from the illusion that being faithful to your truth is somehow wrong. Life will conspire with you to help you reclaim more of the full audacity to be your gorgeous, genuine self.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): I believe 2024 will be one of the best years ever for your education. Your willingness and eagerness to learn will be at a peak. Your knack for attracting inspirational teachers will be excellent. It's likely you will be exceptionally curious and open to good influences. My advice is to be alert for lessons not just from obvious sources of wisdom and revelation, but also from unexpected founts. Don't be too sure you know where revelations and illumination might come from.

Go to RealAstrology.com to check out Rob Breznsky'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.

OUT on the TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

Events must be entered through the calendar at lansingcitypulse.com. Deadline is 4 p.m. Wednesday for the upcoming Wednesday edition. Charges may apply for paid events to appear in print. If you need assistance, please call Nicole at (517) 999-5066.

Wednesday, Jan. 3

Balloon Animals Workshop with Mr. Greg - Learn types of balloons to use and how to inflate and twist them to make a fun creation! Ages 4-8. Registration req. 11 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-346-8094. gladl.org.

"Fitness Over 50" Senior Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall Food Court. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Karaoke with The BIG Man Genesis - 9 p.m. Lansing Shuffle, 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. 517-940-4619. lansingshuffle.com.

LBCA Meeting - 7:30 a.m. Pine Hills Golf Course, 6603 Woodbury Road, Laingsburg.

Lego Palooza - Each child will get a tray of LEGO bricks, and the challenge is to build a fantastic creation! 2 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-346-8094. gladl.org.

Mindfulness Meditation in the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition - All are welcome to join our weekly practice! 7-9 p.m. Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S. MLK Jr. Blvd., Lansing. facebook.com/LansingAreaMindfulnessCommunity.

Toy Designer - Day camp for ages 5-11. Explore the design process as you sketch, describe and create prototypes for toys of your invention. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Thursday, Jan. 4

"A Course in Miracles," Facilitated by Lisa Schmidt - 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

Adult Roller Derby Basic Skills Boot Camp Virtual Orientation - Meeting link available at fb.me/e/9B2IT1MxE. Ten-week program with twice-weekly practices begins Jan. 21. 7 p.m. lansingrollerderby.com.

Game Night with Hoplite Games - 7 p.m. Lansing Shuffle, 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. 517-940-4619. lansingshuffle.com.

Karaoke Thursday - 8 p.m.-midnight. The Green Door Bar & Grill, 2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 517-325-9897. greendoorlive.com.

Kitchen Chemistry - Day camp for ages 5-11. Explore how to turn simple kitchen supplies into tasty chemistry concoctions! 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Ladies Silver Blades Skating Club - Join other adult women for fun, exercise, friendship and skating practice. 9:30-11:30 a.m. East Lansing Ice Cube, 2810 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. ladiessilverblades.org.

Learn to Play Mountain Dulcimer - View a brief demonstration and learn several songs. Ages 8+. Registration req. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-346-8094. gladl.org.

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

Take Off Pounds Sensibly - Weight-loss support group. Weigh-in 5:30 p.m., meeting 6-7 p.m. Haslett

Middle School, 1535 Franklin St., Haslett. 800-932-8677. facebook.com/HaslettTops.

Yoga with Maja McKeever, Slow Flow for Better Mobility - 6 p.m. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. 269-762-3189. unitylansing.org.

Friday, Jan. 5

Euchre with the Kiwanis Club and Unity - Potluck at 6:30 p.m., Euchre at 7. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. 269-762-3189. unitylansing.org.

"Fitness Over 50" Senior Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall Food Court. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Marvelous Machines - Day camp for ages 5-11. Deconstruct and create simple machines to solve problems and complete challenges. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Z Collective plays Motown Hits - Z Collective is a band of experienced Lansing musicians who share a love for the Motown sound and R&B. 7:30 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. 517-331-8440. urbanbeatevents.com.

Saturday, Jan. 6

Contra & Square Dance - All dances taught. No partner needed. Come at 6:30 for a quick workshop on easy contra dance moves. 7 p.m. Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. 517-614-5858. tenpoundfiddle.org.

Family Day: LIFT - Lift your imagination as we ink, stamp and print one-of-a-kind artwork. All ages welcome. Registration encouraged. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Off the Couch Band - The Off the Couch Band, fronted by the amazing Dr. Fab, is ready to blow your mind with its rock, country and blues fusion. 7 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. 517-331-8440. urbanbeatevents.com.

Sunday, Jan. 7

Bottle and Can Collection for Eastern Ingham Farmers Market - 11 a.m.-1 p.m. McCormick Park, 123 High St., Williamston. 517-618-1630. easterninghamfarmersmarket.org.

GLAD Drum Circle - All ages and experience levels welcome. 2-4 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-803-2392. facebook.com/GreaterLansingAreaDrummers.

JUGGLERS AND WOULD-BE JUGGLERS - Jugglers meet at the Orchard Street Pump House at 2 p.m. Sundays. 368 Orchard St., East Lansing. mikemarhanka@gmail.com.

Junior Roller Derby Basic Skills Boot Camp Orientation - Ten-week program begins Jan. 10. Ages 7-12. 3-5 p.m. Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing. lansingrollerderby.com.

Museum Tour: Architecture - Learn more about our unique building and the Pritzker Prize-win-



Lansing Roller Derby basic skills boot camp orientations

7-9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 4 (virtual)

5-7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 7

Court One Training Center
7868 Old M-78, East Lansing

Lansing Roller Derby is holding orientations for its adult basic skills boot camp 7 p.m. Thursday (Jan. 4) and 5 p.m. Sunday (Jan. 7). The first orientation will be virtual, and the second will be held at Court One Training Center in East Lansing.

The 10-week course, with twice-weekly practices on Sundays and Thursdays, begins Jan. 21. Participants will learn introductory, intermediate and advanced skills, including proper stance, stopping and turning, speed control, agility, endurance and more.

After completing the boot camp, those who pass a basic skills test will be invited to join the Lansing Roller Derby team.

Lansing Junior Roller Derby will also host a basic skills boot camp for kids ages 7 to 12, with an orientation 3 p.m. Sunday at Court One Training Center. The camp will run for 10 weeks, with practices on Sundays and Wednesdays.

The enrollment fee for both camps is \$80, which is due on the first day of practice.

To learn more about the boot camps, visit lansingrollerderby.com/basic-skills-boot-camp or lansingrollerderby.com/join-lansingjuniorrollerderby. For a link to the virtual orientation, visit fb.me/e/9B2IT1MxE.

ning architect behind it. 1 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Red Cedar Quaker Friends Worship - 10:30 a.m. 1400 Turner St., Lansing. redcedarfriends.org/join-us-for-worship.

Sunday Brunch - Visit lookingglassbrewingcompany.com for menu. Noon-5 p.m. Looking Glass Brewing Co., 115 N. Bridge St., Dewitt. 517-668-6004.1/7/2024 12:00pm

Monday, Jan. 8

Ballet II for kids - Ages 9-13. 4 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Beginning East Coast Swing Dance Class - Seven-week class. East Coast swing is more circular in motion than West Coast swing and is danced to faster music. Registration req. 8 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. 517-364-8888. sparrow.org/our-hospitals-services/michigan-athletic-club.

Beginning West Coast Swing Dance Class

- Seven-week class. West Coast swing consists of 6-count and 8-count dance elements. Registration req. 7 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. 517-364-8888. sparrow.org/our-hospitals-services/michigan-athletic-club.

Book Discussion Group - Join us for a lively discussion of "Honor," by Thrity Umrigar. 1 p.m. Mason City Hall, 201 W. Ash St., Mason. 517-676-9088. cadl.org/about/our-locations/mason.

Finance Committee - 6 p.m. Laingsburg City Hall, 114 Woodhull St., Laingsburg. laingsburg.us.

"Fitness Over 50" Senior Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall Food Court. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Gloss Mondays Open Floor - Aspiring drag performers showcase their talent. 8 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. 517-331-8440. urbanbeatevents.com.

See Events, Page 24

Punk Prom

Friday, Jan. 5
9 p.m.
The Avenue
2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

The Punk Art Collective, a club that meets once a month at The Avenue to allow artists of all skill levels to work on projects or create new pieces, is celebrating its first anniversary 9 p.m. Friday (Jan. 5) with a Punk Prom at The Avenue, featuring karaoke, vendors and, of course, arts and crafts.

Attendees are encouraged to dress in their best punk prom attire for the chance to be crowned prom queen, king or lord. There is no cover charge, and Ruckus Ramen will be open until 10 p.m.

For more information, visit facebook.com/punkartmeetup.



Events

from page 23

Improv Acting Class - 8:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

It's Electric! STREAM Science Fun - We'll read a science story, then get out our Snap Circuit sets and other electrical toys to see how electricity works! Best for ages 6+. Registration req. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

Jazz Dance Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Police Committee Meeting - 6:30 p.m. Laingsburg City Hall, 114 Woodhull St., Laingsburg. laingsburg.us.

Ruhala Broadway Ensemble - Learn to excel equally in singing, acting and dance. 5:30 p.m. 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Tuesday, Jan. 9

Acrylic Painting Basics — Eight-Week Class - Explore fundamental skills like color mixing, theory, texture, expression and style, with each class building on the last. 6 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Acting 101 Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Acting Ensemble Class - 8 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Adult Clay (A) - Explore or hone skills in wheel throwing, hand-building and glazing. Work at your pace on diverse ceramic projects. 6 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Beginners' Clay — Eight-Week Class - Use pinching, texturing, rolling and sculpting to create cool things. 4:30 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Beginning Salsa Dance Class - Easy-to-learn Latin dance. Registration req. 8 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. 517-364-8888. sparrow.org/our-hospitals-services/michigan-athletic-club.

Fundamentals of Drawing — Eight-Week Class - Discover the art of drawing fundamentals: shape, value and space. Geared toward ages 10-13. 4:30 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Intro to Acting/Improv for Kids - Ages 5-12. 4 p.m.

Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

LAGE Game Night East - 6:30-11 p.m. The Junction, 410 S. Clippert St., Lansing. meetup.com/lansing/events.

LAGE Game Night West - 6:30-11 p.m. Frank's Press Box, 7216 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing. meetup.com/lansing/events.

Level I Dance Class - Introduction to theater dance using ballet, tap and jazz. Ages 5-8. 4:45 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Michigan Agri-Business Association Winter Convention - This conference features nearly 100 expert speakers and an improved trade show, all geared to give you the insight and information you need for success in the year ahead! 7:30 a.m. DoubleTree by Hilton, 111 N. Grand Ave., Lansing. maba.swoogo.com/2024winterconference/agenda.

Minecraft Mania! - An evening of fun and friendly competition. We'll have our Minecraft server set up and laptops ready to go. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

Oh, Shoot Again! Learn to Take and Edit Photos — Eight-Week Class - Learn digital photography and Photoshop skills to enhance your images. 4:30 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

On the Same Page Book Club - Chat, eat snacks and have book-related fun. Grades 7-12. Registration req. 6 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers — six-week workshop - Learn self-care strategies such as stress management, dealing with difficult emotions, communicating in challenging situations and dealing with losses. 6 p.m. For Zoom link, call Tri-County Office on Aging at 517-887-1465 or email histedc@toa.org.

THE PULSIFIEDS

Singers wanted for Ingham Festival Chorale. Rehearsals begin Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, from 2pm-3:30pm, at University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison Rd, East Lansing MI 48823. Historical and modern works. \$50 membership fee includes all music. No auditions. Performance is Sunday, Apr. 7, 2024. For more info, call 517-706-9045.

Preschool Family Storytime - Join us for stories and literacy-enhancing activities, including songs and rhymes. Ages 1-6. 11 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

Preschool Storytime - Enjoy songs, rhymes and stories with Miss Lindsay. Ages 3-6. 10:30 a.m. Mason City Hall, 201 W. Ash St., Mason. 517-676-9088. cadl.org/about/our-locations/mason.

StressBusters: Positive Mental Health for Kids - 3 p.m. session for ages 3-6 and caregivers, 4 p.m. sessions for ages 7-10 and 11-14. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-346-8094. gladl.org.

Trivia at Lansing Shuffle with DJ Trivia - 7:30-9 p.m. 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. 517-940-4619. lansingshuffle.com.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

Acting & Glee Music Class for Kids - Ages 5-12. 4:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Adult Sew Fun - Get comfortable "driving" the sewing machine in this beginning sewing class focusing on learning machine sewing skills and techniques. 6 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Allen Farmers Market - 3-6:30 p.m. 1629 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. 517-999-3911. allenneighborhood-center.org/market.

Battle of the Books Kickoff - Learn more about Battle of the Books, including discussions of this year's book list, an overview of the program and a Q&A. Registration req. 6:30 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

Beginning Hustle Dance Class - Registration req. 7 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. 517-364-8888. sparrow.org/our-hospitals-services/michigan-athletic-club.

"Fitness Over 50" Senior Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall Food Court. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Improv Acting Class - 8:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Jazz Dance Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Karaoke with The BIG Man Genesis - 9 p.m. Lansing Shuffle, 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. 517-940-4619. lansingshuffle.com.

MASH — REACH Open Studio - Use REACH's space and tools for your own creative endeavors. Bring your own supplies, as available materials vary from time to time. 6 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804

S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Michigan Agri-Business Association Winter Convention - This conference features nearly 100 expert speakers and an improved trade show, all geared to give you the insight and information you need for success in the year ahead! 8 a.m. DoubleTree by Hilton, 111 N. Grand Ave., Lansing. maba.swoogo.com/2024winterconference/agenda.

Mindfulness Meditation in the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition - All are welcome to join our weekly practice! 7-9 p.m. Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S. MLK Jr. Blvd., Lansing. lamc.info.

Mid-Michigan Photography Club Annual Clinic and Open House - Sessions on camera and exposure basics, processing, equipment and composition. Bring your camera and your questions. 6 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 510 W. Ottawa St., Lansing. mmphotoclub.net.

Movers & Readers Storytime - Enjoy songs, rhymes and stories with Miss Lindsay. Ages 0-3. 10:30 a.m. Mason City Hall, 201 W. Ash St., Mason. 517-676-9088. cadl.org/about/our-locations/mason.

Junior Roller Derby Basic Skills Boot Camp - Ten-week program. Ages 7-12. 6-8 p.m. Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing. lansingrollerderby.com.

Tap II Class - 6 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Walk-in Wednesday: Paper Collage Birds - Make a paper collage bird and take it home with you. Registration encouraged. 4:30 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Thursday, Jan. 11

"A Course in Miracles," Facilitated by Lisa Schmidt - 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

Acting 101 Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Acting Ensemble Class - 8 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Beginning American Style Foxtrot Dance Class - Registration req. 8 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. 517-364-8888. sparrow.org/our-hospitals-services/michigan-athletic-club.

Game Night with Hoplite Games - 7 p.m. Lansing Shuffle, 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. 517-940-4619. lansingshuffle.com.

Jazz/Hip Hop II class - Ages 9-13. 4 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Karaoke Thursday - 8 p.m.-midnight. The Green Door Bar & Grill, 2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 517-325-9897. greendoorlive.com.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 22

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From Pg. 22

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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Trying the West Side omelet on the east side

By **LIZY FERGUSON**

I can cook many things fairly well, but anything that requires patience or finesse will always elude me. Thus, the omelet, deceptively simple though it may be, is something I must seek outside my home if I want it done well. And therein lies the rub, because it seems that most restaurants also struggle to knock the dish out of the park. Thankfully Square One, a breakfast and lunch spot tucked away in East Lansing's Hannah Plaza, has me covered.

With many tantalizing options, ranging from cinnamon roll pancakes to croissant sandwiches, it was hard to narrow down my order, but the spinach in the West Side omelet's list of ingredients quickly

captured my attention. After a Christmas weekend stuffing myself with mac and cheese, éclair cake and duck à l'orange, I was beginning to come down and realize that vegetables would need to be reincorporated into my diet.

Apart from spinach, the West Side came with roasted red peppers, green onion, herbed cream cheese and bacon — in the spirit of my return to the lighter side, I substituted this for turkey bacon. All of this was nestled within a huge, perfectly cooked envelope of fluffy egg. Not at all greasy, the interior was custard-like but not runny, and the exterior was flecked with an appropriate ratio of golden brown to pure, rich yellow.

The fillings were the star of the show, however. The roasted red peppers and crispy turkey bacon



West Side omelet

\$11

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4790 Hagadorn Road, Suite 110, East Lansing
6 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday

8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday-Sunday

517-203-5305

squareoneeastlansing.com



Lizy Ferguson for City Pulse

Square One Breakfast & Bakery's West Side omelet is loaded with spinach, roasted red peppers, green onion, herbed cream cheese and bacon.

provided a smoky, savory complement to the richness of the cream cheese, and everything was swimming in a generous sea of lush, dark green, perfectly wilted spinach. Each bite was a delicious, self-contained cross-section that held together, rather than the contents spilling out and spreading in a watery film across the plate, which is what often happens with omelets.

My only disappointment was that the omelet didn't come with potatoes, but it was so large that I ended up taking half of it home anyway. It did come with some perfectly serviceable rye toast, and the coffee was good and plentiful. This was not my first trip to Square One, but it was my first of its omelets. It will certainly not be the last, but it will be hard to beat.

TOP 5 DINING GUIDE

THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN GREATER LANSING AS DECIDED BY CITY PULSE READERS

TOP 5 BRUNCH SPOTS

Based on your votes in City Pulse's 2023 Top of the Town contest. Bon appétit!

1. Beggar's Banquet

Wood-lined restaurant and saloon serving a wide menu of brunch items until 3 p.m.
218 Abbot Road, East Lansing
517-351-4540
beggarsbanquet.com
10 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday
9 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday
9 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday

2. Good Truckin' Diner

Diner fare served in down-to-earth digs with patio picnic tables
1107 S. Washington Ave., Lansing

517-253-7961

facebook.com/goodtruckin
7 a.m.-3 p.m. daily

3. One North Kitchen & Bar

Casual sports bar with a diverse menu and a brunch buffet on Sundays
5001 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing
517-901-5001
onenorthdining.com
11 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Thursday
11 a.m.-midnight Friday-Saturday
10 a.m.-11 p.m. Sunday

4. The People's Kitchen

Creative comfort food and craft cocktails, plus weekend brunch
2722 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
517-507-5730
eatpeoples.com
9 a.m.-9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday
9 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday
9 a.m.-3 p.m., 5-8 p.m. Sunday

5. Soup Spoon Café

Colorful and cozy café offering homemade soup, homestyle eats and regional beers
1419 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
517-316-2377
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8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Appetizers

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To a blessed and based new year

By ARI LEVAUX

Most cooks and eaters understand the importance of acid in food. If a dish isn't popping as envisioned, a squeeze of lemon or a dash of vinegar will sharpen the flavors with a bright zing. To a meat or cheese eater, a mouthful just isn't the same without a sip of wine. A salad maker needs acid as much as oil and salt. Dessert makers use acid to help them add more sugar.

Scientifically speaking, acid lowers

pH, which is a measure of how many hydrogen ions are bouncing around the scene. A base is the opposite of an acid. It raises the pH by decreasing the concentration of hydrogen ions. The many culinary acids, including citrus and vinegar, tend to

FLASH
in the pan



get all of the attention, while their basic counterparts quietly make good things happen — sometimes by canceling out acids. Once you learn how to properly pump up the base, nothing, including breakfast,

will ever be the same. So, as we head into the new year, I'll show you how

to use baking soda and baking powder, the two most common culinary bases, to improve your eggs, potatoes and even your morning coffee.

In contemporary slang, the term “based” carries many connotations, all of them flattering. They describe an attitude of independence, of not caring what others think of one's life choices, as well as almost every synonym for “fabulous.”

Me, I'm old-fashioned. When I hear something is based, I still think, “Who raised the pH?” But once upon a time, I was that guy in the back of the truck in Bolivia, chewing coca leaves with the farmers while nibbling upon a gray,



Courtesy of Ari LeVaux

Boiling potatoes in baking soda and water before baking them creates a tater-tot effect, with puffy interiors encased by delectable, golden skins.

crumbly form of limestone. As a recent chemistry graduate, I knew the limestone, a base, was used to displace the cocaine, a weaker base, and make it available to enter the chewer's bloodstream.

“Based” could have described my status that day in the back of that truck, with a year's supply of baking soda toothpaste in my backpack. My Arm & Hammer tooth powder proved a more potent base than the lime rock — and with a minty taste, no less.

Is there anything baking soda can't do? It's the most based thing in the kitchen, hands down. Baking powder is more complex, with thickeners and multiple rising agents, including baking soda.

My furnace broke about three years ago, and I haven't bothered to get it fixed because the flickering gas space heater keeps the house plenty warm. And one of the perks of heating by stove is that you can place things on top to gently cook them. It happens to be perfect for making dulce de leche.

I fill a quart jar with milk and add a teaspoon of vanilla and half a teaspoon of baking soda. The baking soda keeps the milk from becoming acidic as it condenses, which would cause it to curdle. The process is labor intensive because you don't stop stirring, but it's worth doing if you have too much milk on your hands, and it can be done on a stove on low heat. As it thickens, stir in up to half a cup of sugar if you think it needs it.

I use the same theory in making a beverage that I drink every day. I use about a half cup of milk to a cup of strong coffee, along with a table-

See Flash, Page 27

START 2024 BETTER BETTER SAVINGS OF 40-50% OFF RETAIL THESE TOP 24 SUPPLEMENT BRANDS

- Ancient Nutrition • Better Health • Carlson • CBD Living • Country Life
- CV Sciences • Charlotte's Web • Enzymedica • Gaia • Garden Of Life
- Herb Pharm • Irwin Naturals • Jarrow • Kal • Megafood • Natural Factors
- NaturesPlus • Natures Way • New Chapter • Nordic Naturals
- Solaray • Solgar • Vital Proteins • Zhou

JANUARY 4 – 9



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517-332-6892
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Sun: 10am-7pm

Should carbs be avoided at night?

From METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Many people are familiar with the notion that avoiding carbs at night can help ensure they're not ultimately stored as fat. But is that perception the truth, a half-truth or a complete fabrication? As popular as the "no carbs at night" approach may be, it's not entirely accurate. In fact, the Institute of Nutrition and Fitness Sciences notes that consuming carbohydrates at night can help improve sleep by corralling the hormone cortisol, which the body produces in response to stress. If that hormone is not controlled at night, individuals may experience difficulty falling asleep.

A good night's rest ensures the body has ample time to repair itself and recover. Without that recovery time, individuals may be more vulnerable to injuries that can compromise their efforts to get healthier. The institute also notes that carbohydrates serve as energy sources that help the body build muscle and burn fat, so avoiding carbs entirely could make it hard for individuals to achieve their health and fitness goals.

Despite the many ways carbs help



Metro Creative Connection

the body, the notion that it's best to avoid them at night is not entirely inaccurate. However, rather than avoiding carbs at night, the institute recommends individuals avoid excessive consumption of carbs. Excessive consumption of any food can compromise efforts to eat healthier, and carbs are no exception to that rule. But loading up on carbs at night can make the scale an uninviting place in the morning. That's because carbs have a tendency to retain water, which the institute indicates can lead to an increase in body weight.

Flash

from page 26

spoon of cocoa powder, a dash of vanilla extract and a pinch of baking soda. I mix it all together and let it sit on the stove for at least an hour. The baking soda softens the double-acid whammy of coffee and cocoa powder while sweetening the drink with sugar from the milk. You can cheat, of course, with sweeteners. But with a nuanced light-roast coffee, to my taste, a cup of unsweetened stovetop mocha doesn't need anything extra. Naturally sweetened from within, it goes down smooth and comfy.

Based potatoes

Crispy on the outside and light as clouds on the inside, these potatoes will change your life.

Serves four

- 2 pounds potatoes, cut into roughly 1-inch cubes
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- Other spices of your choice

Add the potatoes to 6 quarts of salted water and bring to a boil. When the

water has come to a rolling boil, add the baking soda and watch the cauldron roil.

Boil until the potatoes are soft, about 15 minutes. Drain and let dry in the colander for another 10 minutes. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Transfer the potatoes to a baking pan and toss with the olive oil, then the spices. Spread the potatoes out so there's minimal touching among the spuds. Bake for 30 minutes or until utterly delectable — whichever comes first.

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