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February 12 - 18, 2020

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Joan Jackson Johnson
Saint or sinner?
See page 16



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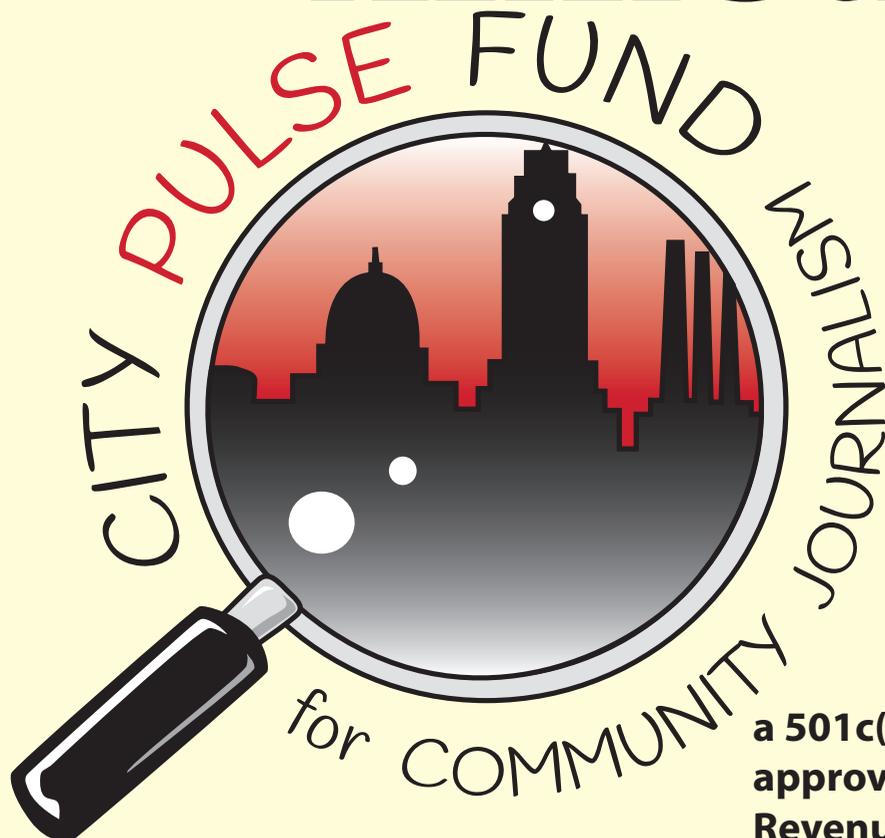
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Favorite Things

Dan Currie and his comedy notebook

Dan Currie is a local comedian who's performed hundreds of stand-up gigs across the state over the last few years. As co-host of Mac's Monday Comedy night, a long-running weekly event in Lansing, he's not only honed his own skills as a comic, he has also helped dozens of up-and-coming comics cut their teeth on stage. Currie chatted with City Pulse about a prized possession:

My favorite thing is a notebook I acquired back in 2014. Over a four-year span, I've had it at hundreds of shows. My friend and fellow comedian Carl Johnson booked me and a group of other comics for a tour in Canada. He bought it for himself, but was disappointed when he found it was basically graph paper on the inside as opposed to it being lined. I'd been looking for a small book to write set lists on and take on stage with me, so he gave it to me.

I finally filled the book a year or two ago, and each page represents a show where I was trying new material or strengthening material. I started comedy in 2007, but I think between 2014 and 2018 was when I really started to figure out who I was as a comedian, and this represents that.

The thing is, I wouldn't actually write jokes in the notebook. I've found I'm better at "writing" on stage. I have an idea, and I put it on the list for that night. Then I go on stage and work it out. I don't sit and write because I become too attached to how every word is supposed to be. I sound robotic. It's easier to write down one quick thing and then just riff on it. I sound more natural. I don't write the way I talk, and the way I talk is how I should do comedy.

Looking back at this particular notebook, I can definitely see a growth and a change in the pages. The first page has five joke ideas, and none of them had any legs. Some are jokes I wouldn't even think of doing anymore. As I turn through, it's fun to run across a joke I still do, then see a joke I only tried once or jokes that lasted for a brief time, but then faded from existence. Before I was given this in 2014, I had a big notebook I'd write in — a Moleskin with the folder in the back. I had that and I would write things on scraps of paper and then shove 'em in there. I had all of these papers spread



Courtesy photo

Stand-up comedian Dan Currie.

everywhere. So, I really needed this little notebook.

Flipping through, I also see different phases. The goal with comedy is to actually have fun. I think when you start, you're doing it for fun, but when you get a few years in, you start to take it almost too seriously. You beat yourself up when a joke doesn't work, you beat yourself up about a bad set. A good comic makes it look easy. When you're trying too hard, the audience feels that. They're like, "Man, whew, this guy cares way too much." But once you step back and realize that, you start being able to have fun up there again. The beginning of this book is when I was really trying too hard. The end of the book is when I started to have fun again. Another thing I noticed in there is a rough idea for a joke. I jotted down, "I'm always afraid I'm doing something wrong." This is on Nov. 10, 2014. At that point, I was struggling to talk about my anxieties and things like that, but that's where I see my first attempt at it. I was like, "Oh, that's when I first started talking about anxiety — and it didn't go well!" So, for the next few pages, it's some jokes about Cap'n Crunch Oops! All Berries and other not-personal subjects.

Now, I have a whole section about my anxiety in my act. In November 2014, I wasn't ready to handle it or deliver it correctly. I feel much more comfortable talking about it now. Last year, that chunk of my act got me 2nd Place in the Funniest Person in Grand Rapids Contest.

(This interview was edited and condensed by Rich Tupica. If you have a Favorite Things suggestion, email rich@lansingcitypulse.com.)

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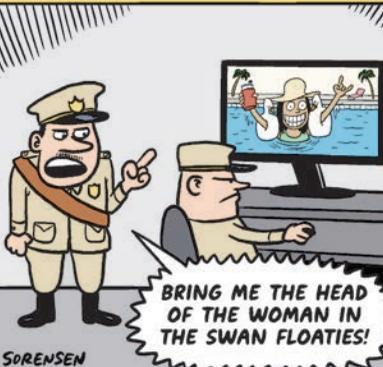


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The Dish goes to Black Cat Bistro



**Cover
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Art by Vince Joy

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PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

Schor's time is now

The CP Edit

Opinion

Halfway through Mayor Andy Schor's first term in office, it's time to take stock of his administration's efforts to move the city forward. There is much to like about our new mayor. His low-key, engaging leadership style is a sharp contrast with his predecessor's muscular persona. We have no complaints about Schor's more easygoing approach. With the understanding that running a city comes with a steep learning curve, we see both positive and negative in the results that Schor and his team have delivered thus far.

On the economic development front, the mayor has cut plenty of ribbons in his first 24 months. Schor highlighted many of them in his second State of the City Address last week, including the Red Cedar Renaissance, Pat Gillespie's 600 Block hotel and urban grocery store, new mixed-use developments on Michigan Avenue and on the old downtown YMCA site, Rotary Park on the downtown riverfront, the long-awaited revamp of Oliver Towers, and the renovation of the historic Abigail building on the former campus of the Michigan School for the Blind. In fairness, most of these projects had their genesis during the Bernero administration or as community-driven initiatives that predate Schor's administration. But Schor certainly deserves credit for keeping them on track and bringing them across the finish line, notwithstanding the recent and hopefully solvable financing glitch for the Red Cedar project.

One major initiative that Schor shepherded entirely on his own was the launch of the short-lived Lansing Ignite professional soccer team. It wasn't Schor's fault that the venture failed after a single season, but shrewder negotiation might have secured a guarantee from Lugnuts owner Tom Dickson that the soccer team would stick around for a minimum of two or three years. Pulling the plug on Ignite after one season may have been financially prudent for Dickson, but it was a modest political embarrassment for Schor.

Two important projects that have languished on Schor's watch are finding a new use for the Lansing City Market and moving forward with a plan for a new City Hall. As to the former, Schor held a listening session in July 2018 to gather public input on what to do with the barn-like structure on the downtown riverfront. Eighteen months later, no



apparent progress has been made in repurposing the now vacant facility, which is a key component in unlocking the riverfront's full potential. The mayor seems inclined toward a for-profit commercial project — for example, yet another brewpub. We encourage him to give equal weight to a city or privately initiated project with broader appeal to area citizens to complement the stellar addition of Rotary Park. Remember: The public approved the construction of the building for public use (as the ill-fated city market); it's time to make a success of it.

Regarding the City Hall project, we recognize that relocating the home of city government is a complicated puzzle, yet we can't help feeling the sting of lost opportunity. As the Bernero administration came to a close, a Chicago-based real estate developer offered a compelling plan to transform the existing City Hall into a new downtown hotel and move city operations to the former headquarters of the Lansing State Journal. We're not convinced that the obstacles cited by Schor, principally the lack of a solution for where to locate the city's courts and jail facility, are as insurmountable as he represents. In any case, the seeming lack of any progress on the project for two years running is disappointing.

Send letters to the editor on this editorial or any other topic to letters@lansingcitypulse.com. Please limit them to 250 words.

As much as we like Schor, it pains us to also note his well-publicized challenges in navigating the sensitivities of race relations. Having dismissed Bernero appointees Bob Johnson and Mary Riley at the outset of his administration, then muddling through a public spat with former Fire Chief Randy Talifarro, then catching heat for hiring an all-white class of new firefighters, Schor managed to create the impression — fair or not — that he is uncomfortable working with people of color. While the evidence makes clear it was the right thing to do, his recent suspension of Human Relations and Community Services director Joan Jackson Johnson reinforced that perception. To his credit, Schor has hired a diverse cabinet and staff that largely reflects the community it serves and retooled the process for hiring entry-level firefighters to ensure a more diverse department.

Taking a cue from his ubiquitous marketing slogan, we think the time is now for Schor to more boldly define and articulate his unique vision for Lansing's future, and to map out a clear and compelling strategy to accomplish his goals. We were pleased to see his State of the City speech make important strides in this direction. The mayor touted his administration's success in promoting arts and culture, fixing local roads, and coordinating efforts to aid distressed neighborhoods. Hiring a chief strategy officer to tackle the city's ongoing legacy cost challenges, his proposal to hire a sustainability director to develop and implement a city climate change plan, and his efforts to investigate the potential for a new downtown performing arts center are also noteworthy. We appreciate and support Schor's emphasis on placemaking and building more resilient neighborhoods. These initiatives should strengthen the city's quality of life and deliver even greater economic opportunities for all Lansing residents.

Based on our overall assessment of his performance, we give Mayor Schor a solid B as a midterm grade, with high hopes that the next two years bring him even closer to fulfilling his considerable potential as the city's chief executive.



Reveal: Art-o-Mat, Whole Foods, East Lansing

A few people recognized last month's Eye for Design as the art vending machine inside the Green State Bar and Grill at Whole Foods in East Lansing. However, the first person to correctly identify it was **Jeremy Herliczek**. Please stop by the City Pulse office at 1905 E. Michigan Avenue during business hours to pick up your Eye for Design coffee mug.

Known as an Art-o-Mat, the machine that formerly dispensed cigarettes now sells locally produced art at reasonable rates. It is one of only three such machines in Michigan. (The others are in Brighton and Allen Park.)

This month's Eye for Design can be found in downtown Lansing. If you know where, email carriesampson@micourthistory.org. The first one to correctly identify it wins an Eye for Design mug.



"Eye for Design" is our look at some of the nicer properties in Lansing. It rotates each with Eye candy of the Week and Eyesore of the Week.

A murder victim's mother speaks out

(The writer is the mother of Jeff Ballor and friend of Kristen Pangman, murder victims in a double homicide 2017 in Meridian Township.)

By **KAREN JACKSON**

As the mother of a murder victim, I can assure you that

OPINION losing a child to a brutal murder is life-changing, life-shattering and not only to me but to all the members of my family and the victim's friends. It is a life event that is impossible to fully understand if you haven't personally experienced it. First comes the worry that the murderer may not be caught. Then there is arranging for an untimely funeral, and all of the other personal affairs that must be dealt with under the worst of conditions. And then there are the horrors of the trial. There are no words to describe the terror of reliving the ghastly details of what my son suffered as he was stabbed in the back and neck multiple times only to be followed by multiple stabbings in his eye after death. Left on the concrete basement floor in a bloodied room where my son fought for his life and the life of his murdered friend are just some of the nauseating, horrific details brought out through graphic pictures and investigator descriptions during the trial. The shock, the blood, the pain and horror he must

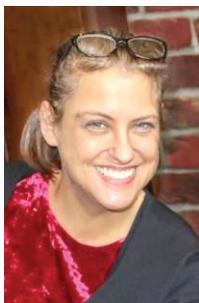


Jackson

have felt weighs heavy beyond belief in my heart. Not only were my son and his friend killed, but our family was broken, our personal and work lives suffered as the shock and grief cut deeply into our hearts and souls. And the heartache and the consequences continue to this day. The pain of this process is severe beyond description, far-reaching and never-ending and yet Carol Siemon endeavors to pursue a process to free murderers from prison.

Siemon has already enacted a policy to always offer defendants (even those accused of the most heinous crimes) a chance to plead guilty to a lesser charge like second-degree murder. Now she is initiating a plan to review the cases of 90 convicted murderers for the possibility of rehabilitation leading to eventual release from prison under her "belief that everyone deserves a second chance." Where is the second chance for the victims? They are gone forever.

With all the issues Ms. Siemon promised to spend her time on like substance abuse, mental health, poverty, sexual assault, domestic violence and victim-centered approaches to violent crimes, how did she land on this idea? And now she is apologizing for the way



Pangman



Ballor

she announced it to the public through a newspaper interview as if sending her intentions in a pretty envelope with a fancy logo would make her plan somehow palatable to murder victims' families.

I don't want an apology. I want a statement that she will drop her initiative.

I am enraged over this. Ms. Siemon's actions only add to the pain and suffering of the innocent victims' families by forcing them to relive the loss and horrific, very graphic details of the murder of their loved ones. I thought it was the job of a prosecutor to prosecute offenders, not to punish innocent families while defending the guilty.

In Michigan, first-degree murder is the only charge that carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. We have the Truth in Sentencing law that assures us that the MDOC cannot parole an offender prior to the completion of the minimum sentence. How is it that Ms. Siemon has the desire, time and ability to skirt around that law? If she has an issue with the law, she should be trying to change the law on her own time and not using her office as a prosecutor to wiggle around it. Furthermore, how are

prosecutors to justly prosecute a murder case when Ms. Siemon pulls the rug out from under them with her policies of pleading to a lower crime and reviewing already convicted cases? Why take the case at all? Why even bring murderers to trial if she intends to water their punishment down to suit her personal beliefs?

In her announcement, Ms. Siemon says, "... I personally believe there are some people who should be in prison forever, like the Jeffrey Dahmer type of people." I fail to see how her personal beliefs even enter into this issue. Yet they seem to be driving her initiative. Does she intend to let the murderer of an individual done in some way she sees as more acceptable have preference over "The Jeffrey Dahmer" type? First-degree murder is first-degree murder. Dead is dead. The victims are not coming back. Why then should their murderers receive the luxury of living free? Even if they are rehabilitated, they belong in prison for life.

In deference to the victims' families, Ms. Siemon tells us that once reviewed those murderers she chooses will go before a Parole Board where the family members will be given voices. We already gave voice as did a jury of peers when they decisively found a man guilty of 4 counts of first-degree murder as did the judge when she gave the mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole in our case. Ms. Siemon says it is vengeance on the part of the victims' families, trying to put our character on trial instead of upholding justice. I say justice should stand!

Siemon apologizes for insensitivity to murder victims

But county prosecutor still believes some killers may be rehabilitated

Ingham County Prosecuting Attorney Carol Siemon is apologizing to the families of murder victims after announcing plans to possibly commute the sentences of some prisoners serving life in prison without parole, as detailed in last week's cover story in City Pulse.

But that doesn't mean her plans have been paused. She'll just be more "considerate" about the rollout, she said.

"I regret that I did not fully take into account the impact on victims and their families when I prematurely discussed

the concept of reviewing older cases of life-without-parole," Siemon said. "My intent has always been that the victim's families or their representatives would get their first notice from trained professionals in our office after any review and before offering support or opposition to any application to commute a sentence."

Siemon faced widespread community backlash in recent weeks after she discussed plans with City Pulse to review about 90 prisoners serving life in prison without parole and to seek a gubernatorial commutation for those who displayed the most rehabilitative process. Prison is about justice, not vengeance, she explained.

But after stirring up concerns from

families of victims who leaned on those life sentences for closure, Siemon is apologizing for her "premature" announcement. And she has since promised to make sure victims' families are in the loop on any upcoming plans to release convicted murderers back onto the streets of Ingham County.

"I apologize that I discussed this project first with the news media, before we could develop a system to contact victims and their families and that my action has caused suffering," Siemon said. "We would never take a position on an application to commute a sentence without first seeking input from the victim's family."

Siemon told City Pulse that the views of victims' families don't always

"drive the decision." She also previously declined to address criticism of her prosecutorial policies, noting that she didn't want to rally "unwarranted opposition" to her upcoming plans to seek commutations from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Siemon also hedged her subsequent apology last week by doubling down on her judicial philosophy on prison.

"I don't believe 'lock them up and throw away the key' is the right approach in most cases," Siemon wrote in a statement. "I have worked to develop policies that move this guideline into action to acknowledge that some persons truly become rehabilitated over time and can be safely returned to the community."

— **KYLE KAMINSKI**

Seeds on asphalt

ELFCO aborts plan for Michigan Ave. market blames Lansing Township

The East Lansing Food Co-op's plan to start a new market to showcase locally produced food and other items is "on life support" because Lansing Township put too many obstacles in the way through the summer and fall of 2019, according to co-op board president Stephen Gasteyer.

Lansing Township Supervisor Diontrae Hayes said the co-op itself is responsible for the delays because of its "inexperience" with the permitting process.

Hayes said the site plan review process has "clear steps and guidelines" the co-op didn't follow.

Gasteyer said the board decided to pull the plug on the project in November.

"We wasted months and money dealing with the permitters," he said. "We decided that would take a very long time to work through the permitting process if we stuck with it at this site and we weren't going to be able to do that."

The co-op has been looking for a new spot and a more sustainable business model since it closed its old market on Northwind Drive in East Lansing in 2017.

Last spring, a member told the co-op board about a building for lease at 3026 E. Michigan Ave., just west of the huge Red Cedar development.

Marshall Clabeaux, project manager for the new store, called it "the perfect spot, between Lansing and East Lansing, right between both worlds and just off the highway. It has a garage door in the back so farmers can come right off the freeway and unload. You don't get more perfect."

The co-op named Alex Thompson as general manager for the market and hired a firm to draw up a site plan.

Throughout the summer, volunteers cleared brush in back of the store, painted new stripes in the parking lot and installed a fence around the Dumpster, at the township's request.

They also did painting and repairs inside the store, but that was a bone of contention with the township.

"They started doing work on the building before pulling the permit," Hayes said. "That's always a big no-no. Because it's commercial, you have to pull those permits with one of the trades, because we have to insure that work is safe. That's what set them back. They already started on the wrong foot."

The co-op got a "conditional approval" of its site plan in early November, but Clabeaux said the co-op board was taken aback by the conditions.

They included submitting signage permit applications to the township for review, making the parking lot handicap accessible and altering the setback to conform to code.

"It would have been nice to know these things four months ago," Clabeaux said. "Through this whole process, it's almost been like the mouse and the cheese. They give you a little bit, lead you to the trap."

Hayes chalked up the summer of delays and miscommunications to "either inexperience or blatant disregard for what the rules are, I don't know which."

The delays hurt the co-op more than they would have affected most businesses. The members hoped to open in late summer, just before the harvest reached its peak.

"The clock was ticking on when we were able to get the most produce and show people what we were going to sell," Gasteyer said.

With the weather worsening, the co-op asked the township for more time. The township notified the co-op that an extension through May would require a \$15,000 performance bond.

Clabeaux called it a "deposit" the co-op couldn't afford, but Hayes said that is inaccurate.

"It's like insurance," Hayes said. "In the event of a default, if the township has to come in, we can draw against that performance bond to do the work."

For co-op members, it was the last straw.

"We took the weekend to simmer down and reflect," Clabeaux said. "On Nov. 12, the board decided that they just don't want us to play. We've got to get out."

The co-op planned to shift from what Clabeaux called a "big-box" model, with weekly sales and a hefty



City Pulse archives

The East Lansing Food Co-op in better days at its home on Northwind Drive, which was closed in 2017.

promotional budget, to a farm market model similar to Local Roots Café in Wooster, Ohio, and Ann Arbor's Argus Farm Stop, where the co-op takes a percentage of sales in exchange for housing and selling the goods.

"Producers like it because they can just drop their goods off," Clabeaux said. "It keeps you flexible. We could have done candles or other Michigan made goods, especially in the winter time."

The co-op board hopes that its next iteration will serve a growing base of consumers who want to buy locally grown produce but can't make it to farmers markets and appreciate the convenience of paying for everything at one register.

On the supply side, mid-Michigan is rich in what Gasteyer calls "micro-farms," from small farms of 20 to 30 acres in the rural areas around Lansing to the dozens of community gardens, a quarter acre or less in size, that are proliferating within the city limits.

"Those folks don't have enough volume to sell through Meijer, but they're definitely producing more than they get rid of through a couple

of farmer's markets a week," Gasteyer said.

Gasteyer said the co-op board is looking at other locations.

"We are in conversation with other organizations about partnering," Gasteyer said. A source who asked not to be named said talks are underway between the co-op and the Allen Neighborhood Center and its weekly farmers market.

Meanwhile, the co-op's dry good dispensers, shelving and other equipment are still warehoused in the Lansing Bike Co-op, waiting to be dusted off.

"It just sucks," Clabeaux said. "A lot of effort went into that site. It would have served us well and it would have served the community well."

Hayes said the co-op is "an honorable institution that provides a great service to the community."

"I patronized it personally when it was in East Lansing," she said. "I would love for them to be in Lansing Township, but no matter how supportive we are of their mission, we have to be fair. Every business has to comply with the same permit requirements."

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Why Whitmer hasn't turned in her absentee ballot

She has her absentee ballot in hand, but Gov. Gretchen Whitmer isn't turning it in, yet.

With South Carolina, Nevada and the Super Tuesday states having to weigh into the Democratic presidential nomination sweepstakes, the state's top elected Democrat isn't unique in not having a favorite less than a month before Michigan's March 10 primary.

In an interview with City Pulse, Whitmer didn't name names. "The challenge for me and for my fellow Democratic governors is making sure that we're bringing people together after a primary," she said

"It's crucial. There's a wide array of people who are in this Democratic primary and their supporters are absolutely solid. If they don't win, they need to find space in the victor's platform."

Why the wait? Because a lot can change.

Will Bernie Sanders continue to roll? Will the southern states pick up a floundering Joe Biden? Will Mayor Pete Buttigieg be able to snowball support in states where he's spent very



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

little time and has very little organization? Will Elizabeth Warren or Amy Klobuchar still be around?

Can Mike Bloomberg muscle his way into the field? He's already spent \$8.5 million in Michigan on TV ads, with more to come.

Former Lansing Virg Bernero is endorsing him, and more support is coming.

When it comes to where Whitmer's support is going to go, she is asking herself two questions: "Who do I think will be able to deliver for the state of Michigan? And who can win?"

"That's a part of the calculation because at the end of the day, we need someone who is worthy of my vote and my kids' future," she said.

On Monday, former Bill Clinton strategist James Carville unloaded during an MSNBC interview that Democrats could hand President Donald Trump a second term if they don't stop lurching left and getting "sucked into every rabbit hole that somebody puts in front of you."

Carville was particularly concerned about Sanders' winning the

nomination and what that could mean for the Democrats' general election prospects. The issues people are concerned about aren't whether prisoners should vote. Talking about student loan forgiveness isn't going to ingratiate yourself to those who busted their hump to pay off their loans, he said.

Whitmer said she's seen the coverage of Carville's remarks. Again, she didn't mention Sanders, by name.

What she did say was this: "Every time a conversation happens about an issue that is not front and center or on the kitchen table. I get a little concerned. I'm not going to lie to you. I want to win. I want to win.

"I want to make sure that we have a leader in the White House who is not going to continue to blow up the national debt; not attack Medicare, Medicaid and social security; who is thinking about and cares about climate change and safety in our schools someone who values public education," she said.

That person isn't the current occupant. She did happen to run into him this weekend, however.

Whitmer and her husband were attending the National Governors Association meeting and went through the receiving line to get their picture taken with the president.

"That was a good State of the Union

response," Trump told Whitmer, to which she responded, "You're a hard act to follow."

Does Trump like Whitmer?

Apparently, the president has said something along that line to U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph, before. Remember, last year Trump had Whitmer sit next to him last year at the White House dinner for the nation's governors.

Asked about that, Whitmer quipped, "He's got other people in his sights right now."

On other issues, the governor said:

— She isn't opposed to the Legislature offering to voters to raise the sales tax a penny with the proceeds going to fund local road repairs or finance her bonding plan as long as there's a Proposal A-like fallback option if the proposal fails.

Hypothetically, a 25-cent gas tax increase that goes away if a penny sales tax is approved by voters would be a "responsible" discussion to have.

— She's said she believes "term limits are bad public policy." That said, she noted the state Legislature isn't a publicly popular body and any effort to expand them may need to include some additional legislative reforms.

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

COUNTY OF INGHAM
2020 TENTATIVE RATIOS AND ESTIMATED MULTIPLIERS
Prepared by the Ingham County Equalization/Tax Mapping Department

TOWNSHIPS:	Real Property										Personal Property	
	Agricultural		Commercial		Industrial		Residential		Developmental		Personal Property	
	Tent. Ratio	Tent. Multi.	Tent. Ratio	Tent. Multi.	Tent. Ratio	Tent. Multi.	Tent. Ratio	Tent. Multi.	Tent. Ratio	Tent. Multi.	Tent. Ratio	Tent. Multi.
ALAIEDON TOWNSHIP	40.68	1.22911	49.06	1.00000	50.25	0.99503	46.92	1.06565	NC		50.00	1.00000
AURELIUS TOWNSHIP	44.94	1.11260	44.43	1.12537	51.65	0.96806	48.56	1.02966	50.01	0.99978	50.00	1.00000
BUNKER HILL TOWNSHIP	47.10	1.06158	50.52	0.98971	48.25	1.03625	48.88	1.02292	NC		50.00	1.00000
DELHI CHARTER TOWNSHIP	42.75	1.16959	47.30	1.05709	46.02	1.08645	47.03	1.06316	NC		50.00	1.00000
INGHAM TOWNSHIP	45.53	1.09818	40.20	1.24379	NC		46.86	1.06701	NC		50.00	1.00000
LANSING CHARTER TOWNSHIP	NC		45.78	1.09218	46.95	1.06497	46.40	1.07759	NC		50.00	1.00000
LEROY TOWNSHIP	42.71	1.17069	47.25	1.05821	46.87	1.06678	47.78	1.04647	41.99	1.19076	50.00	1.00000
LESLIE TOWNSHIP	47.05	1.06270	46.07	1.08531	58.76	0.85092	46.06	1.08554	NC		50.00	1.00000
LOCKE TOWNSHIP	40.60	1.23153	39.38	1.26968	54.84	0.91175	45.44	1.10036	NC		50.00	1.00000
MERIDIAN CHARTER TOWNSHIP	NC		46.17	1.08296	53.98	0.92627	47.42	1.05441	NC		50.00	1.00000
ONONDAGA TOWNSHIP	46.10	1.08460	46.87	1.06678	44.04	1.13534	45.32	1.10327	NC		50.00	1.00000
STOCKBRIDGE TOWNSHIP	45.32	1.10327	45.72	1.09362	40.81	1.22531	44.34	1.12765	NC		50.00	1.00000
VEVAY TOWNSHIP	46.58	1.07343	48.55	1.02987	53.33	0.93756	47.29	1.05731	NC		50.00	1.00000
WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	42.44	1.17814	47.16	1.06022	42.44	1.17814	47.02	1.06338	NC		50.00	1.00000
WHITE OAK TOWNSHIP	49.96	1.00000	48.80	1.02459	48.12	1.03907	48.04	1.04080	NC		50.00	1.00000
WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP	42.97	1.16361	47.51	1.05241	44.65	1.11982	47.56	1.05131	48.95	1.02129	50.00	1.00000
CITIES:												
CITY OF EAST LANSING	NC		47.08	1.06203	44.73	1.11782	47.72	1.04778	NC		50.00	1.00000
CITY OF LANSING	NC		45.67	1.09481	47.41	1.05469	46.09	1.08484	NC		50.00	1.00000
CITY OF LESLIE	NC		48.21	1.03713	52.80	0.94697	47.04	1.06293	NC		50.00	1.00000
CITY OF MASON	NC		49.31	1.00000	53.10	0.94162	47.07	1.06225	NC		50.00	1.00000
CITY OF WILLIAMSTON	NC		47.27	1.05776	50.38	0.99246	46.22	1.08179	44.82	1.1156	50.00	1.00000

These Tentative Equalization Ratios and Estimated Multipliers are published in compliance with PA 165 of 1971. These figures are temporary in character and are intended to be informative in nature as of the third Monday in February. Local assessing and board of review activities may significantly change the tentative figures. Permanent Ratios and Multipliers will result from the activity of the local units and through equalization procedures. The recommended Tentative Ratios and Multipliers shall not prejudice the equalization procedures of Ingham County or the State of Michigan.

William E. Fowler, Director
Ingham County
Equalization/Tax Mapping Department

Need pills for pain? Some doctors say lay off the weed

Prescription policies for pot smokers vary across Greater Lansing

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Doug Barnes has battled with chronic pain for most of his adult life. And his doctor refuses to help him.

Barnes, 62, of St. Johns, suffers from gastrointestinal bleeding. He has seen dozens of local doctors, undergone several operations and been prescribed a litany of powerful painkillers in recent years, he said. Gummies infused with THC have helped him cope with discomfort too. But they've also cut off his supply to any other drugs.

His doctor's ultimatum: Either stop taking the gummies or never receive another prescription pain pill again.

"He told me he couldn't prescribe me anything until I tested clean from marijuana," Barnes said. "I couldn't get anything for pain, stress, sleep or anything. I was flabbergasted because it's really been helping me. Plus, it's legal in Michigan. It's really like the new wine here in Lansing, but my doctor apparently just doesn't see it that way."

Restrictive policies at Clinton County Medical Center in St. Johns — where Barnes was denied access to painkillers — are common across the state. Like many other patients, they've forced him to choose between opiates and marijuana. And marijuana advocates contend it's a decision that patients should never have to make.

"Physicians often make you choose between their medications or cannabis," explained Rick Thompson, owner of the Michigan Cannabis Business Development Group. "It's been a struggle. These doctors are in constant fear of losing their ability to prescribe these drugs, and it can put them at odds for what works for the patient."

Doctors can ultimately use their discretion to decide what's best for their practice. Even after marijuana was legalized for adult use in Michigan, many physicians — including some in Greater Lansing — have outright refused to allow their patients to smoke weed while taking prescription opioids to manage their chronic pain.

And prescription policies vary widely from doctor to doctor.

Physicians at McLaren Health Care in Lansing don't care if their patients smoke pot. A spokesman said they would typically have no reason to screen patients at all. And if they did,



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Doug Barnes, 62, of St. Johns, cannot receive prescription painkillers from Clinton County Medical Center because of his doctor's restrictive policies against cannabis consumption.

their tests wouldn't detect marijuana.

No specific policies exist at Sparrow Health Care, but a spokesman said it's "standard practice" to require patients to agree not to "mix substances." There, it's all about doctor discretion. Physicians are "always at liberty to make decisions about whether a medication is appropriate for patients to ensure their safety," a spokesman explained.

Other local pain management clinics — like one operated by Dr. David Nebbeling off Lake Lansing Road — are more friendly to the therapeutic benefits of weed. His office doesn't necessarily condone pot smoking, but he's certainly not denying prescriptions to patients who choose to consume it, a spokeswoman explained.

But many others across the state are taking a more hardline stance against marijuana. Barnes' doctor in St. Johns, for example, contends weed can be terribly addictive and dangerous when combined with certain opiates. Patients at his office are usually forced to choose

between getting prescription drugs and using any type of THC.

"We won't do it. The combination has never been tested," said Dr. Andrew Messenger, owner of Clinton County Medical Center and a doctor at Sparrow Clinton Hospital in St. Johns. "When a physician prescribes something, we have to be able to document that it will not cause harm. That's our mantra: Do no harm."

"If I don't know what a medication or the combination of medications is going to do, how can I do that?"

Messenger agreed to meet a City Pulse reporter in an exam room at his office earlier this month. He first attempted to obtain a urine sample from this reporter, explaining that if I tested positive for THC, it would tell him that I could not be objective. However, after I declined, he still was willing to elaborate on his restrictive policies.

Marijuana is addictive and its interactions with painkillers are unknown, he argued.

"Anytime you use two controlled sub-

stances that are habit forming, the risk of addiction skyrockets," Messenger explained. "We still believe in pain medication. We're in the pain business. We want people to be comfortable. A lot of people say they smoke pot for pain. Well, if you want to treat your own pain, you treat it your own way."

Messenger will prescribe painkillers for traumatic injuries — like "if a bone is sticking out of your leg," he said — but otherwise he sends away pot-smoking patients that suffer from chronic pain without any treatment at all.

"We're not cruel, but at the same time, marijuana is still federally illegal," Messenger added.

The American Academy of Family Physicians last year released research that indicates marijuana may have some therapeutic benefits, but also recognized possible "negative health outcomes" associated with cannabis use. Its interaction with painkillers hasn't necessarily shown positive results. But

Pot

from page 9

it hasn't been proven dangerous either.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention always encourage doctors to test their patients' urine before prescribing any controlled substances at all — but only for illicit substances that have proven implications for treatment. And the medical community is still largely undecided on how to handle marijuana.

“There is just so little scientific clinical research to show the benefits or the health risks on both sides of it,” said Dana Lawrence, communications director for the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians. “Physicians, understandably, are hesitant to counsel patients on whether they should be doing this. We just need some more research — especially on the interactions — before we can really be comfortable giving out advice.”

Guidance issued by the CDC in 2016, however, appears to point doctors in a more pot-friendly direction.

“Clinicians should not test for substances for which results would not affect pain management or for which implications for patient management are unclear,” according to a statement from the CDC. “For example, experts noted there might be uncertainty about the clinical implications of a positive urine test for THC.”

In short: The CDC doesn't want positive urine tests for marijuana to stand in the way of pain management.

But still, doctors like Messenger contend they know better. The uncertainty of marijuana's interaction with other substances (like oxycodone and hydrocodone) warrant their hesitation, he said. After all, narcotics licenses for physicians are issued at the federal

level. And marijuana is still listed as a Schedule I controlled substance.

“I'm not aware of those guidelines,” Messenger added. “If they are there, they're not right.”

Thompson, an avid cannabis smoker, has also had his own struggles with obtaining prescription medication. He said he recently visited an emergency room in Royal Oak over blinding migraines, but because he also smoked marijuana, his doctor refused to offer him a prescription — instead only offering simple oxygen therapy.

And those restrictive policies have made it difficult for cannabis smokers to get the treatment they deserve.

“These doctors are all concerned they'll be penalized by the federal government,” Thompson added. “The solution is de-scheduling cannabis on a federal level. Some doctors might be more lenient, but that's the only sign that will be a universal message to physicians in all 50 states. Anything else would only be a half step.”

A spokesman for the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs noted there are no general provisions in state law that would prevent a doctor from denying painkillers to pot-smoking patients. Complaints can always be filed, but in the absence of regulation, they're not likely to generate results.

“We have no oversight of individual physicians or medical offices where physicians practice,” he explained.

Dr. Lisa Lines, an instructor in quantitative health sciences at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, said it's past time for doctors to stop testing for marijuana. She published an article in 2017 calling for change.

“Testing for THC — and dumping patients that test positive — presents plenty of risks for patients: barriers to access to care, lack of adequate pain management, and disruption in care continuity, for starters,” Lines wrote.



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

After marijuana was legalized statewide for both medical and recreational use in Michigan, Barnes has found luck treating his chronic pain with THC-infused gummies from a dispensary.

“Instead, doctors should consider the evidence for marijuana as a potential therapeutic partner in treating pain.”

Lines said one of her close family members had also been taking prescription opioids for 15 years and wished she could use marijuana for her pain, largely because she knows from experience that it works. But her pain clinic tests for THC twice a year, and will cut her off from addictive medications if she ever tests positive for pot.

“This is just one battle in the ongoing civil war in the medical community over pain,” Lines wrote. “Time will tell whether the ongoing global marijuana legalization experiment will ultimately be a boon, a bane or both.”

But “encouraging signs” exist, Lines said. States that have medical marijuana dispensaries have seen a relative decrease in opioid addictions and deaths. Doctors, it seems, just need to

be more willing to release the pharmaceutical stranglehold that opiate manufacturers continue to have over the medical community.

Larry Ashley, a faculty member and addiction specialist at Central Michigan University, said medical schools across the U.S. — including CMU — still don't train students about medical marijuana at all. And unless the federal government takes a stand, patients like Barnes will likely be left to shop around between conflicting physicians.

“The pendulum swings,” Ashley added. “It's a problem, and until we do more legitimate long-term research and the federal laws get on board, we'll probably continue to have this type of thing. We're in a drug conflict with state and federal laws, and if it ever comes to a battle, federal laws will always supersede the state.”

— KYLE KAMINSKI

A whoop and holler

A decade after World War II, the journalist Milton Mayer — an American of Jewish and German lineage — set out to determine how an educated, Western people gave themselves over to fascism. The German people, Mayer reckoned, hadn't woken up one day and decided to be evil, nor was there anything qualitatively different about their culture that



JEFFREY C. BILLMAN

INFORMED DISSERT

made them more susceptible to a dictator's seduction; given the right set of circumstances, it could happen anywhere.

Mayer spent a year exploring Germany's Nazi era through interviews with 10 ordinary members of the party—some who were dedicated to the cause, others who were in it for a job or because of social pressure. He found that Hitler had given a dispir-

ited nation a sense of empowerment and enemies to blame for its ills. The Nazis' propaganda machine also habituated Germany's citizens to a constant state of anxiety that required trust in the state, the party, and their leader.

“Now I see a little better how Nazism overcame Germany — not by attack from without or by subversion from within, but with a whoop and holler,” Mayer wrote in “They Thought They Were Free,” first published in 1955. “It was what most Germans wanted — or, under pressure of combined illusion and reality, came to want. They wanted it; they got it; and

they liked it.”

That passage has always stuck with me. Authoritarianism doesn't succeed when it's foisted on people. It succeeds when it convinces people that they need it—indeed, that they want it—and fosters a sense of aggrievement, a sense that Others are to blame for their problems.

I thought about Mayer's book last Thursday morning when Donald Trump's press secretary went on Fox News and suggested “people should pay” for impeaching the president, and

See Billman, Page 11

Billman

from page 10

again that afternoon when I watched an acquitted Trump air a long list of grievances in the East Room of the White House — calling Democrats and FBI officials “scum” and “very sick and evil people” — while a throng of his die-hard supporters whooped and hollered.

I thought about it once more on Friday, when Trump sacked Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman (and his twin brother) and Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, who had testified in the House impeachment inquiry about Trump’s quid pro quo with Ukraine. And I thought about it on Sunday, when Sen. Lindsey Graham said that Rudy Giuliani’s anti-Biden “research” had a direct pipeline to Attorney General William Barr.

I thought about it not because Trump is like Hitler or Republicans are like Nazis. Those are facile comparisons. The U.S. isn’t a fascist state, and the president hasn’t shown genocidal or dictatorial tendencies (though he has a peculiar affection for strongmen).

I thought about it because the transition from freedom to illiberalism isn’t a binary point but rather a continuum, and the slow creep often goes unnoticed. I thought about it because none of Trump’s actions would have been tolerated even a few years ago, yet none of them provoked meaningful pushback from the president’s party.

Neither have Trump’s previous abuses of power, for that matter: trying to spike an AT&T-Time-Warner merger because he hates CNN; launching an antitrust investigation into car companies that didn’t do as he demanded; ordering the Pentagon to lock Amazon out of a lucrative contract because of coverage by The Washington Post — both owned by Jeff Bezos — among them. It’s noise baked into our political system. When everything is an outrage, nothing is.

Acquitting the president despite overwhelming evidence that he tried to extort foreign interference in an election was a flashing neon sign that the guardrails are gone, and not only will Republicans not stop the president, but they’ll cheer him on. The base will tolerate nothing less than total fealty.

To borrow from Mayer, the presi-

dent’s supporters, under pressure of combined illusion and reality, want it, got it, and liked it.

It’s not just Fox News and Breitbart feeding them propaganda. It’s also the Trump campaign itself creating a sort of alternate reality, one in which working-class, gun-owning conservative Christians are being overrun by liberals and socialists and undocumented immigrants, and Trump is their defender.

The March issue of The Atlantic has an eye-opening piece of the ramp-up of a billion-dollar disinformation machine, something Trump operatives aren’t even bothering to hide at this point. It’s an expansion of the same kind of dirty pool that aided Trump’s election four years ago, not to mention Brexit and the victory of Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines.

In essence, it rips a page from the authoritarian playbook and adds a modern twist: It’s not necessary to shut down dissenting voices when you can use social media to drown them out—and, in the process, destroy the independent journalistic institutions that try to hold you accountable.

“It’s a lesson drawn from demagogues around the world,” McKay Coppins writes. “When the press as an institution is weakened, fact-based journalism becomes just one more drop in the daily deluge of content—no more or less credible than partisan propaganda. Relativism is the real goal of Trump’s assault on the press.”

Above all else, authoritarianism — and its handmaiden, right-wing populism — is rooted in a need for order and security, things we all crave on some level, and crave more when we perceive chaos. Demagogues exacerbate the perception of chaos and nurse our sense of grievance — and then tell their followers that only they can fix it.

Post-impeachment, Trump has taken a brazen step in this direction: settling scores, purging the disloyal, threatening rivals, labeling opponents as “evil,” and preparing to eviscerate the media and saturate voters’ feeds with bullshit. He’ll see a victory in November as the ultimate vindication — as the American people whooping and hollering just like Republican leaders were in the East Room last week, as a sign that he should do as he pleases, norms be damned.

Republicans won’t stop him. Neither will our institutions. Only voters can.

(Jeffrey Billman is the editor of INDY Week, in Durham, North Carolina.)

CITY OF EAST LANSING NOTICE OF ELECTION TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020

To the qualified electors of the City of East Lansing, please take notice that a Presidential Primary Election will be held in the City of East Lansing, Ingham and Clinton Counties, Michigan, on Tuesday, March 10, 2020.

For the purposes of nominating candidates for the following office:

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Also, to vote on the following proposals:

INGHAM COUNTY POTTER PARK ZOO AND POTTER PARK OPERATIONAL MILLAGE QUESTION – Precincts 1-16

INGHAM COUNTYWIDE SYSTEM OF TRAILS AND PARKS MILLAGE RENEWAL QUESTION – Precincts 1-16

INGHAM COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES MILLAGE QUESTION – Precincts 1-16

CLINTON COUNTY MILLAGE PROPOSITION COUNTY-WIDE E-911 EMERGENCY DISPATCH QUESTION – Precinct 17

CITY OF EAST LANSING BALLOT QUESTION – Precincts 1-17

INGHAM INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION MILLAGE PROPOSAL (RESTORATION OF THE HEADLEE REDUCTION) QUESTION – Precincts 1-16

CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CATA) MILLAGE RENEWAL PROPOSITION QUESTION – Precincts 1-17

Full text of the ballot proposals may be obtained at the East Lansing City Clerk’s Office, 410 Abbot Road, Room 100, East Lansing, MI 48823. Sample ballots can also be found at www.mi.gov/vote.

Polls at said election will be open at 7:00 a.m. and will remain open until 8:00 p.m.

Photo Identification OR Affidavit Required to Vote:

Under Michigan law upheld by the Michigan Supreme Court, ALL voters will be asked to show photo identification to vote at the polls. Voters without identification will be required to fill out and sign an affidavit in order to receive a ballot.

LIST OF POLLING LOCATIONS:

- Pct. 1 - Brody Hall, MSU
- Pct. 2 - Martin Luther Chapel, 444 Abbot Road
- Pct. 3 - East Lansing Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road
- Pct. 4 - Capital City Vineyard Church, 1635 Coolidge Road
- Pct. 5 - Shaarey Zedek Congregation, 1924 Coolidge Road
- Pct. 6 - Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 1315 Abbot Road
- Pct. 7 - St. Paul Lutheran Church, 3383 Lake Lansing Road
- Pct. 8 - University Reformed Church, 841 Timberlane Street
- Pct. 9 - Edgewood United Church, 469 N. Hagadorn Road
- Pct. 10 - Edgewood United Church, 469 N. Hagadorn Road
- Pct. 11 - Burcham Hills Retirement Community, 2700 Burcham Drive
- Pct. 12 - Union Bldg., MSU
- Pct. 13 - IM Sports East, MSU
- Pct. 14 - IM Sports East, MSU
- Pct. 15 - IM Sports West, MSU
- Pct. 16 - Wesley Foundation, 1118 S. Harrison Road
- Pct. 17 - Shaarey Zedek Congregation, 1924 Coolidge Road

All polling places are accessible and voting instructions are available in alternative formats of audio and Braille.

The East Lansing City Clerk’s office will be open on February 25 and 27 from 5 pm-8 pm; March 3 and 5 from 5 pm-8 pm; and March 7 and 8 from 8 am-4 pm to register voters, issue and accept absentee ballots for qualified electors.

To see if you are registered or to find your polling location, check the Secretary of State Voter Information website at www.michigan.gov/vote

ABSENT VOTER BALLOTS:

Any registered voter may request an Absent Voter Ballot. No reason required.

The East Lansing City Clerk’s Office must have a signed application to issue an Absent Voter Ballot. Applications are available at the East Lansing City Clerk’s Office or online at cityofeastlansing.com.

March 9, 2020 at 4:00 pm is the deadline to request an absentee ballot except for those who register to vote on Election Day. Ballots issued on March 9, 2020 must be requested and voted in person at the East Lansing City Clerk’s Office.

Those registering to vote on Election Day, March 10, 2020, are eligible to receive an absent voter ballot at the East Lansing City Clerk’s Office.

Jennifer Shuster
East Lansing City Clerk

CP#20-035

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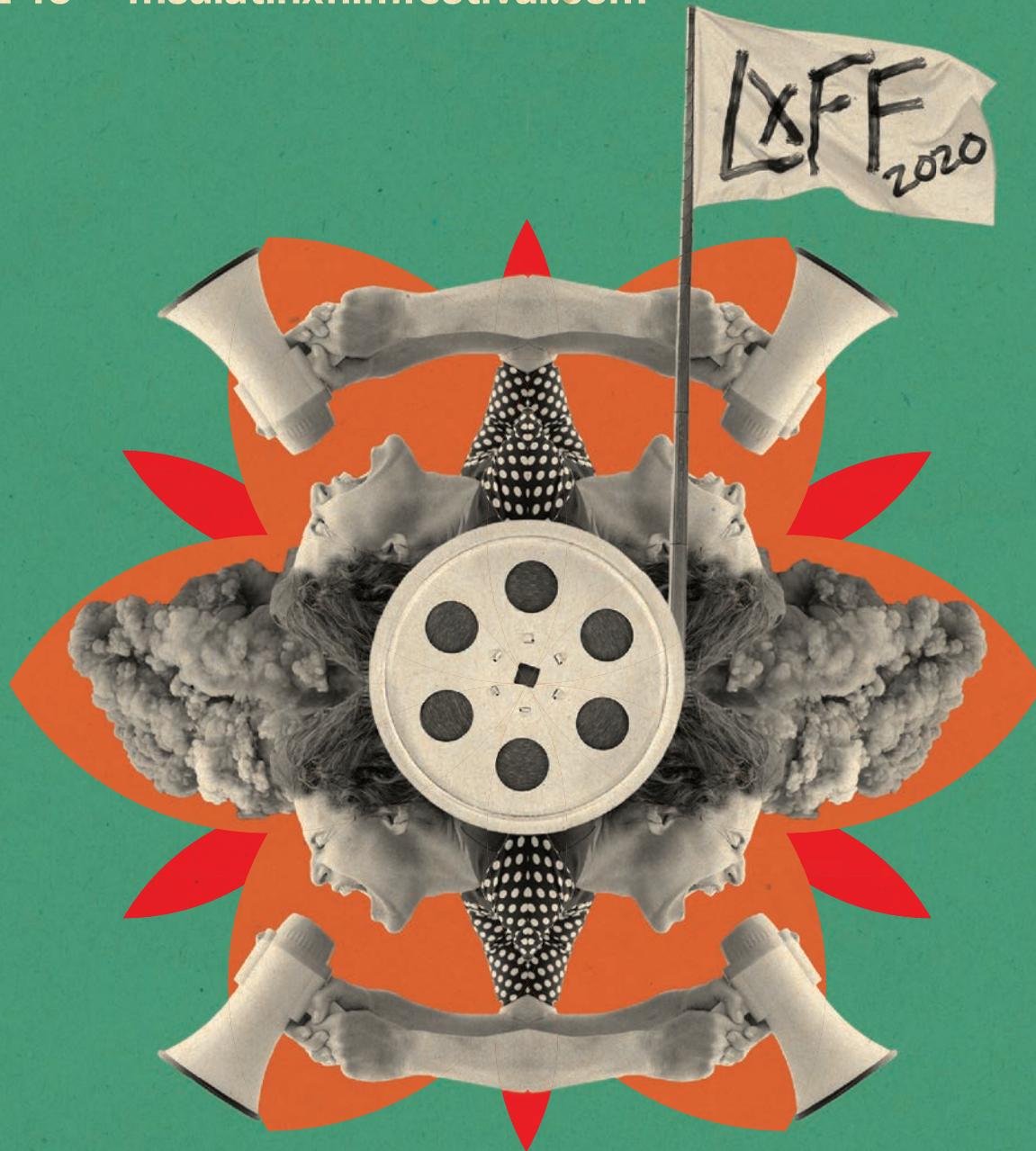


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CityPULSE



LOCAL EXPERTS

GIFTS

Custom framing in Old Town

Everyone is welcome to come in and play, see what they like, what they don't, and we can work from there. This is the direction I take with my customers when they want their picture framed.

Often, they come to my gallery for framing and the first question I get is, "How much does it cost to frame this picture?" At this stage I ask for more information about the picture and the final look that they want to achieve. The importance of the piece in their life and the meaning it holds are things I consider before going on to the next stage of frame suggestions.

Choosing from over 8,000 frames is a Herculean task, but I can certainly help customers make the right decision. After a bit of back and forth, I can work closely with them and help identify their needs based on their answers.

Where are you going to hang the frame? What is the color of the wall? Is there a presence of other colors in the room? Is the frame for the room or the piece? Other than the regular broad styles of traditional or contemporary frames, at this stage of the process I like to bring out the wild cards, based on my expertise.

This is when I pull out something unexpected which the customer did not think of, and all of a sudden it becomes this very cool frame which they really love. I encourage people to stop by the gallery for all their framing needs and more.



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BOOKS

Please let us help you with special orders

EVERYbody Reads has lots of books. Lots. Space, money and I suppose reality preclude us from carrying ALL of the books. That said though, our reach is insane. Certifiably, our ability to procure books is almost as impressive as my feline companion knowing to sing to me every morning at 3:34 a.m. Impressive indeed.

Last year, author Andrea Bartz offered a tweet explaining why it's important to special order from independent bookshops. Here are the highlights:

1. To clarify, independent bookstore means locally owned, community booksellers. (NOT Barnes & Noble. Definitely not Amazon.)
2. Your interest in a title will indicate to booksellers that it's worth checking out! Maybe they'll read it. Maybe they'll love it and give it table space up front and hand-sell it to everyone who walks in the door.
3. The New York Times considers purchases at privately-owned bookshops when putting together the Bestseller List, so your preorder might help your favorite author secure a spot on it.
4. Even if the bookstore doesn't decide to stock the book you requested, they will order it special just for you!
5. If you really just want to order books online, you can also order a book through Indiebound.com. They split their profits with independent bookshops in their community network.



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The importance of literacy – for one, for all

While many of us take literacy for granted, it is an important part of society. Literacy has positive effects on our community, and not just socially, but economically as well.

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Jose can actually make your life so much better

Do you know Jose Yanez? Isn't he cool? He's really smart, too. And nice. He is really good at being a personal financial planner. Jose, as it turns out, works with me. Same office and everything! Jose was kind enough to sit down with me the other day to answer some of the most important questions that our clients had about life insurance and retirement planning.

Me: Should everyone retire?
Jose: Mentally, No. But physically, our bodies will one day say, "Enough is enough," or you have other passions that you would like to pursue. When that time comes, will you have put yourself in a positive financial position to maintain the lifestyle you have become accustomed to?

Me: Do you hurt or help people?
Jose: Initially, it might hurt to have the gut-wrenching conversation about personal finances, but overall, I feel I help and bring value to people's lives.

Me: Does everybody need life insurance?
Jose: No, unless others rely on your income to live after you are gone. That being said, we all need some level of insurance whether it's life, disability, or long-term care. Everyone's situation is different.

Me: Work for the man?
Jose: NO, I work for my clients.
Me: Are you a witch?
Jose: More like a wizard...haha
Any questions that I forgot? Please call Jose at: 517-316-5333



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HEALTH

What is a doula?

"If a doula were a drug, it would be unethical not to use it."
-Dr. John H. Kennell

Imagine running a marathon. Just waking up one day, heading out of your house, and running 26.2 miles. No training. No coach. No support. Seems ill advised, don't you think?

Birth is an intense process and without education and support, it can be an arduous experience. The role of a doula is to help a person achieve the healthiest and most satisfying birth experience possible by providing continuous care.

As a doula, I meet with families during pregnancy to answer questions. We can talk through options about your birth experience and goals you may have. During labor and delivery, I give physical and emotional support to the birthing person and their partner. If desired, I can stay through the first hour or two post-delivery to help with first latch if you choose to breastfeed. A week or two after your birth, most clients find it beneficial to meet and discuss their labor experience. We'll talk about your entire birth and how you feel during the post-partum period. If there is additional information needed for the family relating to the baby's or mother's wellness, I can provide.



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Jackson Johnson retires from Lansing as federal investigation looms

Former Mayor Virg Bernero still defends retired human relations director

By KYLE KAMINSKI

It won't be an easy feat to replace Joan Jackson Johnson. Amid accusations of years of financial mismanagement, Jackson Johnson sent notice on Friday of her immediate retirement as the city's long-time director of Human Relations and Community Services. That letter — although only two sentences long — noted it had been her “honor to serve the people of the city of Lansing.”

But ask many who have gotten to know Jackson Johnson since she was hired by former Mayor Virg Bernero in 2008 and they'd tell you that honor was all theirs. Some of those closest to Jackson Johnson said they'll always remember the impact she made on the capital city as one of Lansing's most stalwart advocates for the poor.

“Hard work, compassion and elbow grease were the order of the day with Triple J,” Bernero said Monday. “Dr. Johnson worked tirelessly on behalf of the neediest of Lansing residents. I saw her put the needs of others over her own time and time again. I have no reason to doubt her integrity and commitment to her mission.”

Even as a federal investigation looms over Jackson Johnson's alleged missteps in office, Bernero, among others in Lansing, are just starting to realize that someone as altruistic as “Triple J,” like so many affectionately called her, could be capable of doing something wrong. Her name may have been tainted, but they still expect it to be cleared.

“She didn't care if you were black, white. It didn't make any difference. Male, female, it didn't bother her. She got her hands dirty. She rolled up her sleeves and she worked to help make Lansing great. We stand on her shoulders,” the Rev. Clyde Carnegie said. “Joan, we love you. We're not going to leave you.”

And Jackson Johnson won't exactly be leaving either. Although now retired, Jackson Johnson's attorney, Jamie White, told the media last week that she was excited and enthusiastic about this “new phase” in her life and that she'll now be able to focus more on her family and her “lifelong passion” of “helping others.”

It's still unclear what that charitable work might look like outside of City Hall, especially as the city continues to pursue a court-ordered takeover of a nonprofit — One Church One Family — that Jackson Johnson purportedly resigned from last year. Its future operation in Lansing remains largely uncertain.

White and Jackson Johnson haven't returned calls. Others in the community that were once quick to defend Jackson Johnson have also been less vocal in recent weeks after she was ousted from the job in January. And it has left the residents of Lansing with two sharply contrasting legacies that Jackson Johnson will leave behind.



Photo by Roxanne Frith

Jackson Johnson

Jackson Johnson — hired by Bernero in 2008 — had largely dedicated her life to community service even before the phrase became part of her job title. She has been heavily involved in dozens of charitable organizations for decades and has since developed a reputation as the patron saint of some of the poorest residents in Lansing.

“She's a beacon of hope in this city,” Joshua Gillespie said. “She's the reason why so many people are fed in this city, why many people have clothes in this city and why kids can eat when they get out of school. Dr. Joan Jackson Johnson is more than a hero. She's God sent, purposed to do the work of taking care of people.”

Gillespie's comment came soon after the news broke last month that Jackson Johnson has been placed on paid suspension based in a forensic audit and the city had referred its findings to the state attorney general. With Gillespie and most other of her friends and supporters staying quiet as the investigation escalated to the federal level — as well as Jackson Johnson herself — City Pulse has had to piece together a bio of Jackson Johnson from media reporting that City Pulse hasn't been able to verify independently.

Those stories and her resume say Jackson Johnson grew up in poverty in Tampa, Florida, and attended a racially segregated public school system with her eight siblings. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, a faith-based private school

established specifically to educate African American students.

Childhood roadblocks of disadvantage and discrimination helped to fuel her personal passion for advocating, empowering and educating poor children and families about homelessness and food deprivation, according to a interview she gave to the Capital Area Women's Lifestyle Magazine for a cover story published in 2018.

By the 1970s, Jackson Johnson moved to Michigan and earned her master's degree — and later her doctorate degree — in psychology from Michigan State University, according to a resume filed with the city of Lansing. It was there she met her husband Vernon and later had five children, including three who had been adopted.

She later went on to work as a probation officer for Ingham County and then as counselor for the Michigan Bureau of Rehabilitation while also starting up her own psychology practice, the East Lansing Center for Family. She still owns the building, but the staff told City Pulse last week that she rarely ever comes to the office.

Bernero reportedly recruited Jackson Johnson to his cabinet while the duo served on the board of directors for Community Mental Health. Mayor Andy Schor retained her in the same position when he was elected in 2017.

And over the years, Jackson Johnson has been said to have dedicated just about every ounce of her free time back to the local

See Jackson Johnson, Page 17

Jackson Johnson

from page 16

community. With help from Bernero, she helped to start a nonprofit organization — One Church One Family — to purchase homes in Lansing and rent them to homeless families at a drastically reduced rate.

She was also involved with the Capital Area Health Alliance, Capital Area Community Servicesm Inc., Loaves and Fishes Ministries, Advent House Ministries, the African American Health Institute, Catholic Social Services, the Ingham County Child Death Review Board, Capital Area Food Security Coalition and many other groups.

Jackson Johnson — when not inside her office applying for grants and coordinating services — was also known to scout around to local homeless shelters and search beneath bridges for those who needed her help. On the weekends, she also volunteered to serve meals to the homeless and had been known to pitch in any way she can.

That generosity led to her induction into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame among other awards such as the Advent House Volunteer of the Year, the ATHENA Award, State of Michigan Volunteer Family of the Year, the NAACP Citizen of the Year for Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc. the Sojourner Truth Award and many others.

Carnegie, Gillespie and several others crowded Lansing City Hall last month after the news broke that Jackson Johnson had been accused of financial impropriety and had been placed on paid leave. Like so many others in Lansing, they found it shocking that Jackson Johnson could have done anything but positive work for the city.

"If we're not supporting the people that are disenfranchised and at the



Bernero

bottom of our socioeconomic scale, our entire community is impacted," added retired Lansing teacher Cheryl Dudley. What had been done to Jackson Johnson, she said, was "horrible." And "a price is always paid when we touch God's people doing God's work."

But according to auditors, that work apparently also includes mismanaged finances and conflicting interests.

After the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development notified city officials about "issues with contracts" stemming from Jackson Johnson's department last year, auditors were hired to investigate. And their findings have cast a shadow over Jackson Johnson's otherwise impeccable record with the city.

Their report found at least \$1.38 million in city funds — under Jackson Johnson's direct oversight — had been funneled into various nonprofit groups in which she was either directly involved or had ties to members of her immediate family. That included at least \$86,000 that directly benefited those charitable agencies, auditors said.

Records also showed One Church

One Family had received the bulk of that cash — nearly \$500,000 — while Jackson Johnson served simultaneously as a department director for the city and as the nonprofit's president, secretary and treasurer. Officials have since cast the dueling roles as an insurmountable conflict of interests.

City officials this month also discovered that five of the six members of Lansing's Human Relations and Community Services Board — an entirely advisory and volunteer body which helped Jackson Johnson distribute grant funding — had been fraudulently listed in state records as directors of One Church One Family.

Subsequent interviews with board members showed that none were actually willingly involved in the nonprofit at all, indicating Jackson Johnson — at least in recent years — had directed the entire operation. Schor had labeled the development as "surprising" as officials continued to explore how the nonprofit had operated.

In the meantime, without any state registered agent or a formal board of directors, the city is demanding a court-ordered audit of the nonprofit's financials to ensure thousands of dollars in grant funding were spent appropriately. Lansing has also since petitioned a judge to appoint a receiver to take over the nonprofit.

But early records from One Church One Family show that Lansing is only attempting to dismantle a product of its own creation. Bylaws show Bernero had actually appointed Jackson Johnson (and former planning director Bob Johnson) to serve on the nonprofit's board of directors. And it wasn't a problem at the time, Bernero said.

"A city official serving on the board of a community nonprofit isn't an issue as long as there is transparency and accountability with regard to any perceived or actual conflicts of interest," Bernero told City Pulse Monday. "Any contract I signed would have been vet-

ted by the city attorney, so I had no reason to question the legality or propriety."

But under Schor's administration, the dueling roles — where Jackson Johnson had essentially cashed checks that carried her own signature — created a sort of legal grey area that warranted some more immediate consequences.

"I can only address the decision that I needed to make when the information was in front of me," Schor said. "When we saw a forensic audit suggesting that an employee may have violated state, federal or local law, it rose to the level where we strongly recommended putting her on leave and provided the report to proper authorities."

Because the cash also involved federal grants, Attorney General Dana Nessel's office — which was charged with reviewing the situation after Jackson Johnson was placed on paid leave last month — has since referred the file to federal investigators. A spokeswoman for the U.S. District Attorney's office

See Jackson Johnson, Page 18

CRIMINAL DEFENSE

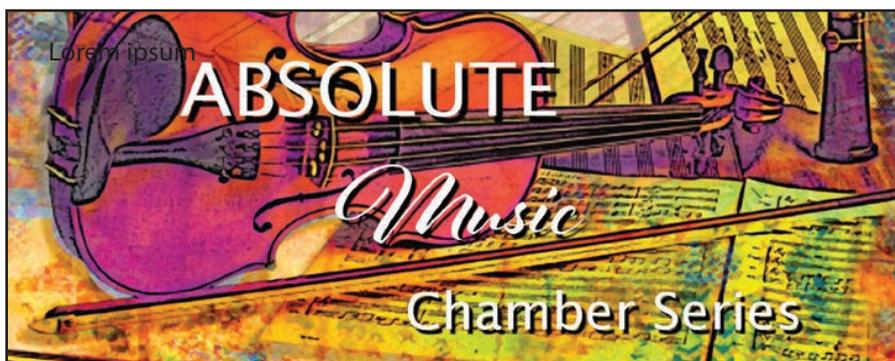


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ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Immersive and subversive: Latinx Film Festival goes big

By SKYLER ASHLEY

The second edition of Michigan State University's Latinx Film Festival is taking its concept of bringing internationally and locally produced Spanish, English and Portuguese language films to Mid-Michigan and making it larger than ever before. Boasting five days, a

MSU Latinx Film Festival

Wednesday, Feb. 12 -
Sunday, Feb. 16
For a full schedule of screenings and venues visit msulatinxfilmfestival.com

dozen venues, even more films — many of them by women directors — virtual reality film technology, director Q&As

and live music, LXFF is making the push to become a film festival that's a calling card for all of Michigan and not just MSU students and Greater Lansing residents.

Festival director Scott Boehm, an assistant professor of Spanish & global studies at MSU, said the success of the first edition in 2018 and the special events under the LXFF name in 2019 allowed it to grow exponentially.

"The turnout in 2018 exceeded all of our expectations, and when we did our special events the same thing happened," Boehm said. "We've been riding the wave of that and trying to offer more. There's a demand for it on and off-campus."

While the selection of films runs a gamut of genres such as comedy, documentary, suspense and drama — this year even features a mainstream blockbuster with "Dora and the Lost City of Gold" — it was vital to make sure the



Courtesy photo

A still from "Singing Our Way to Freedom," which tells the story of Ramon "Chunky" Sanchez, an activist who became known as Caesar Chavez's favorite musician.

primary focus was on highlighting movies that had a powerful socio-political statement.

"We have an eye to select films with social or political relevance," Boehm said.

"Marielle and Monica," showing Wednesday at the MSU Broad Museum, addresses the murder of Afro-Brazilian LGBTQ activist Marielle Franco. The film follows the life of her widow, Monica Benicio, who continues to dedicate her life to social justice. Jumping to WKAR Studios, Wednesday also features "The Pushouts," a documentary about high school dropout and gang member Victor Rios' 20-year journey to becoming a professor that helps troubled youth.

Thursday's screenings at the MSU Library includes Nonny De La Peña's brief but powerful documentary "The Use of Force"— an immersive activist-journalism project that uses virtual reality film technology. Just picture a

VR headset that, rather than attempting to place you within a video game, is putting you crushingly close on a human level to the death of Anastasio Hernández Rojas, who was fatally beaten in 2010 by several United States Border Patrol agents. The recreation of the event with 3D graphics is designed to simulate the effect of being a bystander to the incident.

Thursday the library also features a 360-video installation, "Puro 956: Discovering Narratives From the Rio Grande Valley," by MSU student Leobardo Vallejo. The Rio Grande Valley is nestled in the southernmost region of Texas bordering Mexico. Vallejo's hometown of Weslaco, Texas, is located within the valley and his film aimed to capture a realistic look at border communities free from hysterics and hyperbole.

"That region gets so much negative attention. Vallejo shows people who've never been there what it's actually like," Boehm said. "The university has amaz-

ing resources that are very underused. I approached the library and they were super enthusiastic and made 'Use of Force' happen."

Music is another major cultural element present. On top of the films and documentaries where the crux of the plot is music-centric, "Ruben Blades is Not My Name" on Saturday at the Robin Theatre and "Singing Our Way to Freedom" on Sunday at Celebration Cinema, LXFF is putting together several live concerts. The MSU College of Music String Quartet is performing Wednesday's opening reception at the Broad, playing five pieces by Colombian composer Jesus A. Rey Mariño, in addition to works by Argentinian composers Astor Piazzolla and Carlos Gardel and Mexican composer Manuel Ponce. Another College of Music band, Salsa Verde, is performing Saturday at the Lansing Brewing Co.

But perhaps the most interesting musical guest is Ozzie Rivera, a long-time Detroit activist, educator, historian, musician and everything in between. His band, RicanStructure, is performing Friday at MSU's Snyder-Phillips Hall after a run of short films from Puerto Rican filmmakers that explore the devastation of Hurricane Maria. Rivera is also participating in Saturday's meet and greet at Casa de Rosado, along with directors Paul Espinosa, José Luis Benavides, John Valdez and Alexandra Hidalgo.

"The whole idea behind the festival is to create spaces for conversations about issues that matter locally," Boehm said.

Gillespie Co.'s Provident Place moving in tenants by March

By SKYLER ASHLEY

One of Lansing's development hype-trains is finally arriving at the station. With interior construction nearing completion and approved tenants slated to move in by March 1, Gillespie Co.'s \$7 million Provident Place apartment building on E. Michigan Avenue is practically a go.

Construction of Provident Place, which features 33 apartments and 9,500 square feet of retail space, required the demolition of two

For more information on Provident Place visit thegillespiecompany.com



vacant buildings and a soil cleanup project that was funded in part by a 2015 grant program from the EPA that sponsors environmental cleanup projects. Provident Place also received a brownfield tax incentive — \$1.7 million over 19 years.

The buildings, which Gillespie Co.

founder and owner Scott Gillespie said were beyond repair, were razed and much of the dirt beneath had to be removed.

"Years ago, both of the properties were service stations. So there were multiple tanks in the ground," Gillespie said. "We removed the buildings, we removed the contamination and removed a ton of soil."

Provident Place offers a 505-square-foot studio option, and two different one-bedroom and

two-bedroom options, with the largest apartment reaching 1,025 square feet. Each unit sports a cool, modern look and features a washer/dryer and dishwasher. Dogs and cats are allowed. And, for a \$50 monthly fee, residents have access to an underground parking garage with an elevator. Rent for a studio apartment starts at \$795, while one-bedrooms and two-bedrooms start at \$900 and

Utopian punk: PET ME unveils debut EP at Mac's Bar

By RICH TUPICA

When you take a seat in PET ME vocalist Vikki Vera's house, alongside some guitars and amplifiers, you'll find a series of striking aquariums lining her wall.

"Those are reef bowls," Vera says. "That's live coral and I grow it. It's an

PET ME EP release

With If Walls Could Talk, Kiddo, Midnight Air
All ages, \$12, \$10 adv., 7 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 15 @ Mac's Bar,
2700 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
petme.bandcamp.com.

ultra-low
mainte-
nance coral
reef aquar-
ium. I used
to have
bigger reef

aquariums, but I got sick of the amount of time and money it took to keep them up. I wanted to do other things, like play in a band."

And that's indeed what she did. In spring of 2018, Vera, an already accomplished Lansing-based visual artist, decided to pursue the sonic arts and co-formed PET ME. By New Year's Eve 2018, the band performed live for the first time and introduced its self-described "fierce femme queercore power pop" to the Lansing music scene. Aside from Vera, the group also comprises guitarist Allie Hunt, bassist Quinn Endicott and drummer — known only by her first name — Myxi.

"Myxi was an early D&D character of mine — my Bard," explained the percussionist. "So, now that I'm a bard, I figured it's a great time to use that name."

The four-piece band just released its debut, a self-titled EP produced by local engineer Nick LaForge. It's on streaming services and, Saturday, the all-ages release party happens at Mac's Bar. On the disc, within three songs, PET ME veers seamlessly from anthemic indie-rock melodies into fiery riot grrl punk. Vera said it's a welcome change of pace.

"I've continued to make art, but I was just getting really disenchanted with it," she said. "I got sick of trying to make it work economically because I tend to



PET ME is (left to right): Myxi (drums), Vikki Vera (vocals), Allie Hunt (guitar) and Quinn Endicott (drums). The band releases its debut EP Saturday at Mac's Bar. You can find the band online at @petmeband on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

take way too long to make stuff. I was finding I couldn't charge what I felt the art was worth."

So why a band? Why dial back her creation of fine art — for the art of band merch?

"I wanted to reach more people," she said. "I knew there were people who liked my artwork, but I couldn't get it to them because it was too expensive to make. That's what I love about being in a band. People can come see us for \$10 and if they want a souvenir, they can buy a button for \$1 or have a sticker for free."

Like Myxi, Vera said she also reinvented herself with a stage name, preferring to leave her real persona out of PET ME. Her vocal delivery and stage presence was perhaps inspired by portions of her massive music collection — one that spans from newer UK bands like The Big Moon to throwback '90s Britpop icons like Elastica and Suede. With that is a heavy dose of obnoxious old-school punk like X-Ray Spex, Sex Pistols, Avengers and Dead Kennedys.

"We took it another step and got a lot of feedback — to figure out what people are liking and what people want to see," Gillespie said. "We started with a clean sheet of paper and distilled all the comments that we received. We took all of that information and designed it directly from the feedback. That part was a lot of fun."

While some online weren't kind to the design, Gillespie said he is open to conversations with dissatisfied

"I'm a very quiet and introverted person in my regular life," said the dynamic vocalist. "I adopt a more extroverted persona when I'm in the band, and having a stage name helps me inhabit that side of me. I chose 'Vikki' because it has a bit of a spiky and prickly sound that appeals to me. 'Vera' is derived from a Latin word meaning 'truth' and a lot of the lyrics I write are about living your truth ... 'Hungry' is a brand-new song about getting the fuck out of the closet and living your truth."

Hunt, the band's guitarist, is a familiar face in Lansing. Before she was writing hooky riffs for PET ME, the songwriter spent time performing with Charlatan. As for the new EP, Hunt said having LaForge behind the recording board helped with capturing the tracks — a fun-and-catchy batch of tunes that avoid being too self-serious, while still tackling social commentary.

"We definitely got feedback from Nick in the studio," Hunt said. "We even changed a couple things around, because it made more sense produc-

tion-wise."

While Hunt has a long history of gigging across Michigan, the rest of the band members are new to band life.

"Quinn and I are partners," Hunt said, "So, when we were forming the band, I said, 'Hey, we need a bassist, you should play bass.' Quinn could already play guitar pretty well, so it worked out."

"This is my first band," Endicott added. "I started playing bass right when the band started. I kind of prefer bass now. I like coming up with one-note lines, rather than playing full-on guitar chords on a six-string."

Starting a new undertaking has allowed them all to be open and collaborate freely. While Hunt provides the chords and Vera belts out her lyrics, from there, the rhythm section pulls it together.

"I'd like to think we all have musical input on the songs," Myxi said. "As we play, Allie will come up with a riff, then we all start playing and it grows from there. We bounce ideas around."

One of those jointly created songs, "Fully Automated," was inspired by the art of "leftist shitposting" on social media, Vera admits.

"Are you familiar with Fully Automated Luxury Gay Space Communism? It's a meme," the lyricist explained. "It's a utopian idea; a utopian daydream. The idea that with the resources and machine learning we already have, if we could muster the political will to do it, we already have the capability to give people a life of leisure without hanging them out to dry."

"Right now, automation is just being used to make a tiny bit of people richer," she added. "But it could be used to give people the life of leisure that people — 50 or 100 years ago — hoped we'd have by this time. Instead, people are working longer hours for less money. So, don't get me wrong: I'm not optimistic about the future. It's a utopian fantasy."

New in town

from page 19

\$1175.

The façade of the building immediately drew attention on social media, as it features a unique design that emulates the visage of several buildings squashed together on a city block, à la New York City or Chicago.

critics of Provident Place.

"I take pride in being part of the growth of Lansing and the rebirth of the east side," Gillespie said. "I've spoken with a ton of people on the east side, and I am always open to doing that."

Provident Place already has a tenant for the first floor's retail space, a gym called Flex City Fitness. Whether there will be a discount for tenants hasn't been confirmed.



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

Provident Place on Michigan Avenue.

CURTAIN CALL

Paranoia manifests itself in '900 Miles to International Falls'

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Williamston Theatre's "900 Miles to International Falls" begins with projections on a wall that stretch the length of the stage and from floor to ceiling. The rapidly changing social media posts and world news clips show how our planet evolves from about 2039 to 2054.

Review

It's a time of war, government propaganda and lies — and when mothers are asked to give up sons to fight never-ending battles. 2054 is when citizens are fighting aliens trying to occupy our lands. Sound familiar? Except in this new era, the "aliens" aren't Mexicans, South Americans, or other foreigners fleeing horrific and unlivable conditions. The future invasion is actual alien beings from a distant, uninhabitable planet. Who look just like us. And care for their babies, just like us. And who really want to be our friends.

"900 Miles to International Falls"

Through March 1
Tickets start at \$28
Williamston Theatre
122 S. Putnam St.,
Williamston
williamstontheatre.org,
(517) 655-7469

The world premiere of Annie Martin's play is full of parallelisms, surprises, shocks and novel storylines. Getting to International Falls isn't its real focus. "900 Miles" has flashes of aggression, emotional outbursts and genuine scares. Martin's script also includes humorous and touching moments.

What helps make her very adult play succeed and come alive are the grand elements of the Williamston production. The wall used as a continual screen, designed by Bartley H. Bauer, is quite complex. It is capable of revealing surprise doors, pullouts and openings. A simple table manages to fold out into a workbench.

The clever projections designed by Alison Dobbins are as varied as a brick facade, a silhouetted government figurehead, or a photographic backdrop of machinery in a field. They are all remarkable.

The stellar cast of five kept me completely transfixed during the under-two-hour-with-intermission play. The commanding Casaundra Freeman plays the rebellious Tanya Freeman with an ever-steady force. As her son, Clark, Jon Kent is a perfect pick for an adolescent

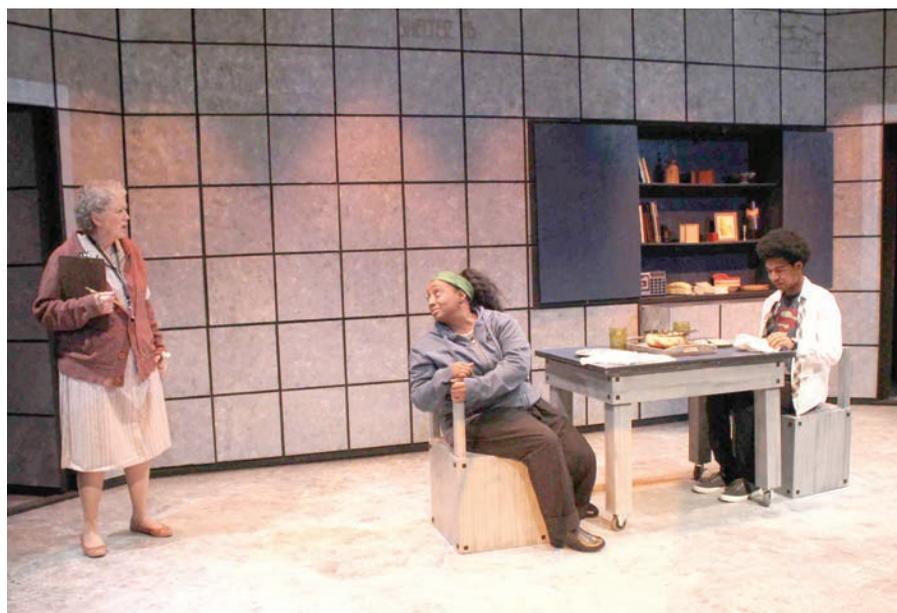


Photo courtesy Chris Purchis

(Left to right) Karen Sheridan, Casaundra Freeman and Jon Kent in "900 Miles to International Falls."

approaching manhood.

The engaging Heather Mahoney is a pregnant woman from Australia who has come to work at the gun factory near Detroit with Tanya. Mahoney's accent and mannerisms are spot-on. Known simply as "J," Mahoney inspires compassion.

Besides her other fleeting roles, the chameleon-like Darah Donaher skillfully plays another pregnant worker who eagerly supports the mandate for fertilization.

In the future, having babies by any means possible is encouraged to replenish male soldiers, and births are celebrated with a cake.

The always-potent Karen Sheridan

plays an assortment of mostly authoritarian roles with finesse and class. One moment she is affable and the next she is a tormenter.

Tony Caselli's direction keeps the action rolling flawlessly from one quick scene to another. Varied and detailed costumes by Karen Kangas-Preston help separate the character and scene changes. Jason Painter Price artfully conveys frequent and crucial sound effects. He makes realistic noises sometimes move. Michelle Raymond's prop guns seem eerily authentic.

If the Orwellian and horrific future "900 Miles" portrays isn't scary enough, the thought that a similar scenario could be less than 30 years away is terrifying.

'Unnecessary Farce' provides a much needed break from reality

By TOM HELMA

An existential question: When does a so-called unnecessary farce become necessary? Answer: When the past week's real-life political drama has become unbearable.

Nothing could be timelier than the comic relief of Riverwalk Theatre's production of "Unnecessary Farce," a Paul Slade Smith play that is directed with precision and perfection by Jeff Magnuson.

Arguably, there are traditional lead and supporting characters in this play,

but it has the feel of an ensemble cast, wherein quirky individual characterizations outshine the absurdity of the plot, which unfolds in two adjacent hotel rooms.

In and out we go, doors opening, knocking actors to the ground — comic timing and overlapping lines creating abundant laughs.

Chief among equals is Jesse Frawley in the role of Todd, the Highland Hitman from the Scottish Mafia. Frawley's Scotch brogue alone is a scene-stealing garble of nonsensical syllables that confuse the other actors and the audience as well — at one point evoking a rousing round of applause. Rachel Daugherty, in the role of Officer Billie Dwyer, evokes a second round of applause when Billie interprets his soliloquy in rapid fire clear English.

Bravo to both. Daugherty's characterization of Billie is a constant delight to watch, as she downs doughnuts with widening eyes while watching a video of what is happening in an adjacent room.

Eric Sheridan is the second cop, Steve, and along with Leigh Christopher as Karen Brown, an accountant is involved in multiple scenes of fervent passionate kisses and rapid disrobing — a parody of the sweaty scenes we see often in movies. Director Magnuson called in Amanda Tollstam as an "intimacy director." Tollstam writes of herself as a choreographer in the program notes, which read, "she is better known for more upright choreography."

Doak Bloss is Mayor Meekly and lives up to the name of his character, displaying an "Oh my!" confusion,

a baffled befuddlement, as he drifts in and out of the action on the stage. Watching his character come through a door, spin around; step out, then in again in a swirl is delightfully amusing all by itself.

Perhaps the funniest of many laughable scenes is where we discover that Mayor Meekly's wife Mary, portrayed by Gini Larson, is possibly more than what she seem. Could she secretly be Big Mack, the godmother of the Scottish Mafia? Hmm.

Cops and Mafioso circle each other with guns drawn and the bed that separates them becomes, well, you must see it to get the sight gag.

As to the title "Unnecessary Farce," what prompts the use of the word unnecessary? The explanation ends the play with a wide grin and an "Oh, I

Slow kills and quiet times

Eric Johnson's calm eye captures wild encounters

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

On the east wall of Old Town's Absolute Gallery is a photo of three cheetahs licking each other's faces. Fowler-based photographer Eric Johnson calls it "Triple Joy." It looks like a love fest, but the backstory makes the hair on your neck stand up.

Holding court at Friday's opening of his lush, vivid wildlife images, Johnson had a lot of backstories to share.

Eric Johnson:
Visions of Wildlife
Absolute Gallery
307 E. César E. Chavez
Ave., Lansing
(517) 482-8845

Just before the photo was taken, a mother cheetah took down a young gazelle, but didn't kill it

right away, to give the cubs in the photo some hunting practice.

Even for a man whose day job involves photographing crime scenes, it was tough to watch.

"The mother gazelle was off to the side, bleeding," Johnson said. "We watched the cheetahs chase it, knock it down, let it back up until they finally killed it and ate just about every last bit of it."

Johnson's telephoto lens captured the cubs affectionately (or just hungrily) licking the gazelle grease off each other's faces. It's true what they say — the family that preys together stays together.

In old movies, there's always a blowhard at the party who never stops talking about his African safari.

"The lion was only 50 feet away," he brags, just before a pie hits him in the face.

Johnson is the opposite. Quiet and methodical by nature, he leaves you

wanting more.

Nine of the pictures on the Absolute Gallery wall were chosen from thousands of entries as a National Geographic Picture of the Day.

One of them is a portrait of a huge, angry lion with two cubs jumping over him, taken at Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania. Johnson was about 50 yards away.

To photograph a group of silverback gorillas in Rwanda, he hiked to an altitude of 10,000 feet.

"It was the hardest thing I've ever done, physically," he said. "I didn't think I was going to make it." This time, he didn't need a telephoto lens.

The curious gorillas peered at Johnson, walked up to him and his wife, Val, and poked at their cameras. One young gorilla grabbed Val's leg and went for her cellphone.

"You're supposed to stay 10 meters away, but they don't know about that rule," Johnson said.

The most remarkable image is an alpha male gorilla, lounging pensively in the foliage, leaning on his left arm. Johnson jokingly calls it the "Burt Reynolds" shot. (It's the same pose the actor struck in his nude Cosmopolitan centerfold.)

Johnson, a native of Battle Creek, retired in 1979 after 31 years with the state police. He is now the only certified forensic photographer in Michigan and works with more than 60 law firms and 100 attorneys. Between that and his nature photography, he is seldom without a camera in his hand.

"It's a great retirement," he said.

He's been photographing wildlife most of his adult life, but never sold or exhibited any of his work until recently.

All of his proceeds from print sales are donated to three conservation groups:



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Wildlife photographer Eric Johnson had a few stories to tell at Absolute Gallery Friday.

Save the Rhino, the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Center.

"My goal is to show these animals to people who otherwise wouldn't see them, so they think about these animals and how many of them are endangered," he said.

The work requires almost superhuman reserves of patience.

It took Johnson 14 hours to get a portrait of a barred owl that will appear on the cover of the next issue of The Jack Pine Warbler, the magazine of the Michigan Audubon Society. He learned of the owl's nest in Kensington Metro Park near Milford and just staked out the tree until the owl showed up and the light was right.

Even Johnson's infinite patience doesn't always pay off. On one photo shoot, he got permission to set up shop near an eagle's nest and started photographing a baby eagle at two weeks old. When it looked like the eagle was about to fledge, Johnson camped out from sunup to sundown for 13 straight days. On the morning of the 14th, he had an appointment he couldn't postpone. When he came back, the eagle was gone.

There's a happy ending, though — he came back after a week and caught the eaglet when it soared on its first thermal current, before it had even learned to fly.

Many of Johnson's images show animals in quiet, even pensive, moments,



Eric Johnson/Visions of Wildlife

but his eye is quick to capture sudden action as well. On one of his African adventures, he watched a cattle egret — a slender mid-sized white bird — jump from the neck of a huge Cape buffalo to the ground. The buffalo bowed its massive head, allowing the egret to pick a few tasty parasites out of its nose. Johnson caught the fleeting study in contrast between the delicate egret and the hulking buffalo.

The scariest photo on the wall is a fearsome, open-mouthed 10,000-pound hippo surfacing from the Mara River in Kenya, looking like someone just told him some very bad news.

"Hippos are responsible for more human deaths than any other animal in Africa," Johnson helpfully noted.

After witnessing primal scenes like these, many people would reach for a stiff drink as soon as they reached camp.

Johnson has only one thought.

"I can't wait to get my photos loaded," he said.



Eric Johnson/Visions of Wildlife

'The Good Killer' continues Harry Dolan's saga of thriller books

By **BILL CASTANIER**

If you've attended a Harry Dolan book reading, you know he is one of the most unlikely thriller writers when compared to contemporaries such as Lee Childs, Robert Crais and Jeffrey Deaver.

In his latest book "The Good Killer," he's crossed over from a sublime, often-ethereal mystery writer to a well-honed thriller writer. On a personal level, he's still the no muss-no fuss, no drama author of four mystery books that primarily take place in Ann Arbor.

In a recent phone conversation with the author from his Ann Arbor home, he reminded me of interviews I've done with the late, great Elmore Leonard. His new novel also skews toward the lean writing of Leonard.

"The Good Killer" follows Sean Garrety, an Iraq War veteran, and par-amour Molly Bowen. They've entered a self-imposed witness protection program, following a botched robbery of a Detroit antiques dealer, which also resulted in the death of Sean's best friend and fellow veteran Cody.

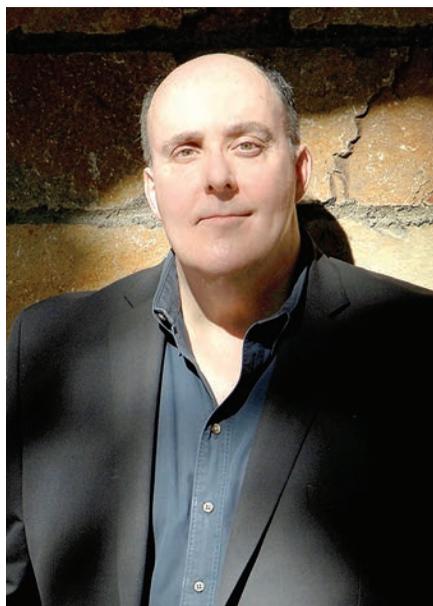
Four years later, Sean and Molly are living comfortably in Houston when the thriller begins its complex and bloody adventure. Sean finds himself ousted after a shopping trip for hiking boots ends with him stopping a mass killer in his tracks.

Predictably, Sean's bravery is caught on cell phones and security cameras. The notoriety means Sean and Molly must go on the run while eluding the brother of Cody, who seeks revenge for his brother's death. The FBI, the Houston Police and thugs sent on the hunt from the antiques dealer also give chase.

What also makes the book unusual is Dolan's use of numerous POV changes to move the book forward. We hear from Sean and Molly, Cody's brother Jimmy whom Sean dead, a selection of violent thugs, the cops and even the ghost of Cody.

But first, Sean, with Cody's ghost at his side, must reconnect with Molly, who's at a women's retreat in Montana.

The crux of the plot is who will get to Sean and Molly first? Will it be the cops, the vengeful brother or the greedy antiques dealer? While the protagonists are on the run, they become modern folk heroes and are helped by cops who give them a pass and average folks who harbor them.



Dolan

Dolan said his newest novel is "not a mystery, but there are revelations throughout the chase that provide plenty of answers to unknowns."

He said the idea for the book started with a man who "foils a mass shooting and the guy with the gun who kills him would have his own secret past."

"It went from there to a revenge plot," Dolan said.

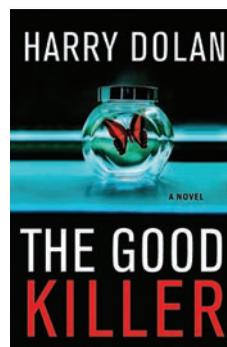
Dolan's writing is superb. He fleshes out the personalities of the hired thugs who, despite being violent, have some qualities to be admired.

"Even Jimmy Harper stands for something. He cannot be bought," Dolan said.

Dolan has also learned the importance of a well-edited book.

"My first draft was much longer with much more backstory," he said.

Following the editing and trimming of 12,000 words, "The Good



Killer" became his shortest novel at 93,000 words.

When he was writing the book Dolan wondered if the ghost of Cody would work. "It turned out to be a terrific way to reveal Sean's innermost thoughts," Dolan said.

Although the book is violent, with even Molly getting into the action, Dolan said he kept "a certain distance from the violence."

One technique of Dolan's that differs from Elmore Leonard is his research about the locales in the book on the web, while Leonard used an assistant who embedded himself in a location and fed the author tidbits to give his books authenticity.

The book's thrilling denouement is worth waiting for and it's where an unlikely hero emerges.

"The Good Killer" is the first of Dolan's books published by Mysterious Press, an imprint of Grove Atlantic,

which was founded by the legendary Otto Penzler in 1975, and named after his Mysterious Bookshop in New York City.

The Press publishes contemporary writers and also republishes classic mystery and thriller writers like Agatha Christie, Ellis Peters and Ellery Queen. Interestingly enough, the Press is publisher of "Eye of the Beholder: The Almost Perfect Murder," written by former Detroit anchor Diane Newton King, who was killed by a sniper in 1991 in her hometown of Marshall.

SCHULER BOOKS

BOOK TALK & SIGNING WITH C.M. GLEASON
February 20 • 6pm

C.M. Gleason returns with her third installment in the *Lincoln's White House Mysteries* series, *Murder at the Capitol*. In July 1861, just months after the Battle of Fort Sumter plunges the young nation into civil war, President Lincoln's top priority is to unite the country, while Adam Quinn finds himself on the trail of a murderer... In addition to her book Colleen will be talking about "10 Things You Didn't Know About Civil War Washington, D.C."

SCHULER BOOK CLUB
February 19 • 6pm

Join us monthly for the Schuler Book Club—a great way to create community, and engage with new books. This month we are reading *The Bromance Book Club* by Lyssa Kay Adams.

KID'S STORY TIME
Saturdays • 11am

Jump into the pages of our favorite books! We will sing songs, make a craft and go on a new adventure.

SchulerBooks.com / Event
Meridian Mall • Okemos

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OUT ON THE TOWN

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

Wednesday, February 12

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Aqua Fitness - Fun for all fitness levels. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

Group Dance Class - Beginning Salsa. 8:15-9:05 p.m. The MAC, 2900 Hannah Blvd, East Lansing. 517-364-8888.

Line Dance Lessons - All ages welcome. 7-9 p.m. Overdrive Lansing Mall, 5330 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing.

Make Your Business Legal - Course for prospective business owners 6-8 p.m. LCC, 309 N. Washington Square, Lansing. 517-483-1921. clients.sbdmichigan.org.

Technology with Michelle - 1-2 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Adventure Club Storytimes - 4-5 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson, Grand Ledge. grandledge.lib.mi.us.

Bookworms at the Broad - Bring your eyes, ears, and imaginations! 10 a.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Family Storytime (Ages up to 6) - 11 a.m.-12 p.m. CADL Webberville, 115 N. Main St., Webberville. cadl.org

Festival of Listening - Join us for an evening of untranslated poetry. 7-9 p.m. (Scene) MetroSpace, 110 Charles St, East Lansing. poetry.rcah.msu.edu.

EVENTS

Allen Farmers Market - 3-6:30 p.m. with Alex Mendenall performing at 5 p.m.

1611 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. 517-999-3911. alleneighborhoodcenter.org.

Code Club! - No coding expertise necessary. 6-7 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

Lansing Codes : Cowork at The Grid. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. The Grid, 226 E. Grand River Ave, Lansing.

Line Dancing - No partner or experience needed. 1-1:30 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

Sweet Treats-Cupcake Decorating - 6-7 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. grandledge.lib.mi.us.

Sweetheart Ball - 7-8:30 p.m. East Lansing Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. cityofeastlansing.com.

Threads of Wisdom: Ordains. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Inner Ascended Masters Ministries, 5705 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. 517-657-5800.

ARTS

Color & Creativity - 6:30-8 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Intro to Drawing Class: 6-8 p.m. MSU Broad Art Lab, 565 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. 517-884-4800.

Low-tech Screenprinting: 4:30 - 6 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Sorry, I'm Not Leaving Exhibition - 11 a.m.-6 p.m. all week. Lansing Art Gallery, 119 N. Washington, Ste. 101, Lansing. 517-374-6400.

Teen Wheel - 6:30-8 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Tween Wheel - 4:30-6 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

MUSIC

Tina Gorter, collaborative piano - Free. 6 p.m. Cook Recital Hall, 333 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. events.msu.edu.

Thursday, February 13

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

American Cosmic: UFOs, Religion, Technology - Free and public talk. 7 p.m. 1145 Engineering Building, 428 S. Shaw Lane, East Lansing.

Aqua Fitness - Fun for all fitness levels. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

English Country Dance - No experience needed. 7-9:30 p.m. Snyder-Phillips Hall, MSU, 362 Bogue St, East Lansing. 517-321-3070.

Strength & Balance (Adults) - Improve your posture, strength and balance. 2:30-3:30 p.m. CADL Okemos, 4321 Okemos Rd., Okemos.

Vision Board Make and Take Workshop - 6:30-8:30 p.m. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-256-6340.



Bitter Sometimes at Mac's Bar

If you don't enjoy celebrating Valentine's Day, Mac's Bar will be hosting "Bitter Sometimes," a delightfully anti-Valentine's Day night of entertainment that features tarot readings, art,

live music and prizes. Following a talent show at 8 p.m., sets will be performed by Christie Da Vinci, Rodeo Boys and DJ HOT DJ.

Bitter Sometimes wants you to ignore "the stream of superficial couple selfies clogging your feed and rock up with equally unimpressed cuties." The event also aims to celebrate "individuality," "LGBTQ love" and "melanin."

Zumba - Want to lose weight and have fun too? 6:30-7:30 p.m. Federated Polish Home, 1030 W. Mt. Hope Ave., Lansing. 517-882-2838.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Book Group - Read along and chat every month in person or on Goodreads.com (ERADL Book Group). 5:45-6:45 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main, Eaton Rapids.

Chipmunk Story Time - 10-11 a.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd, Okemos. 517-349-3866. meridian.mi.us.

EVENTS

Bath Township Farmers Market - 3-7 p.m. Bath Community Center, 5959 Park Lake Rd, Bath. bathtownship.us.

Candy Land-Life-Sized! (All ages) - 3-5 p.m. CADL Williamston, 3845 Vanneter Rd. #1, Williamston. cadl.org

Clinton County Open Food Distribution - T 8-10 a.m. Bath Community Center, 5959 Park Lake Rd, Bath. bathtownship.us.

Downtown Traffic JAM! - 4:30-6 p.m. Knapp's Building, 300 S. Washington Sq., Lansing.

The Future - Talk about the future. 10-11:30 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

Lansing Grassroots Philosophy - Discussion group. 6:30-8 p.m. Kelly's Downtown, 220 S Washington Square, Lansing.

Making Democracy Work: presented by the League of Women Voters Lansing Area. 6-8 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

ARTS

Community Art Projects - 3-6 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Studio (in)Process - The studio is (in)Process! 6-9 p.m. MSU Broad Art Lab, 565 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. 517-884-4800.

Unnecessary Farce - 7-9:30 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

MUSIC

Brittney Self, trumpet - Free. 6 p.m. Cook Recital Hall, 333 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. events.msu.edu.

Chenxi Zhou, violin - Free. 8 p.m.-12 a.m. Cook Recital Hall, 333 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. events.msu.edu.

Elden Kelly Live - 7:30-9:30 p.m. Henry's Place, 4926 Marsh Road, Okemos. 517-580-3075.

Friday, February 14

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Aqua Fitness - Fun for all fitness levels. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

Print Your Own Valentine's Day Underwear - 6-8 p.m. ALT Printing Co, 1139 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. 517-388-3558. altprintingco.com.

Teal Talk with Dr. Brian Johnson, College of Social Science - 1-2 p.m. MSU Museum, 409 W Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-355-2370.

EVENTS

Monthly Game Night - 7-10 p.m. Inner Ascended Masters Ministry, 5705 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. 517-657-5800.

Refuge Recovery Lansing - 7:30-8:30 p.m. Just B Yoga, 106 Island Ave., Lansing.

ARTS

Audio Theater - The Audio Air Force presents

See Out on the town, Page 27

SATURDAY, FEB. 15 >> WINTER GARAGE SALE AND FLEA MARKET



The annual Winter Garage Sale and Flea Market at the Ingham County Fairgrounds and Exposition Center returns for its 24th year. Antiques, vintage collectibles, jewelry, furniture and more can be purchased.

Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Ingham County Fairgrounds, 100 E. Ash St., Mason
Tigerprofleemarket.net, (517) 403-1135

Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Decade in Review, Part 4" -- fun stuff from 2016 & 2017.

by Matt Jones

Across

- 1 Compensation in a lawsuit
- 8 "Don't mind ___ do!"
- 11 Media device manufactured for the last time by Funai Electric in 2016
- 14 Check out
- 15 Exclamation from Poirot
- 17 Margaret Atwood's 2016 retelling of Shakespeare's "The Tempest"
- 18 It may be drafted for impeachment
- 19 Brute in a storybook
- 20 They may be dire
- 21 ___ out (back down from a daunting task)
- 24 '16 and '17, e.g.
- 26 Signature of Pooh's tree-dwelling friend
- 27 Being employed
- 29 Sharp ___ tack
- 31 "Major" or "Minor" constellation
- 35 Slide into your ___
- 36 2016 event featuring a shirtless Tongan, green pool water, and Ryan Lochte shenanigans
- 40 Hit the buffet
- 41 Jones who ran from a big boulder
- 42 +, on a battery
- 43 TV host who misannounced the winner of Miss Universe in 2017
- 45 Sault ___ Marie, Canada
- 46 Garr of "Young

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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56	57	58				59		60		61			
62								63			64	65	66
67								68					
69				70				71					

- Frankenstein
- 27 Shakespearean laments
- 48 Clean vigorously
- 50 Journalist Mary Louise Kelly's employer
- 52 Prefix for dermis
- 55 MIT's middle, in brief
- 56 Kick-ass
- 60 Chain to buy some stacks
- 62 Biblical king
- 63 Hit 2017 indie video game in the style of 1930s animation
- 67 Celebrated
- 68 Sees if one can
- 69 Network that aired a "Candy Crush" game show in 2017
- 70 Admin's domain, for short
- 71 Sound setups
- Down
- 1 Homer's exclamation
- 2 "Defending Liberty, Pursuing Justice" org.
- 3 Flavor enhancer initials
- 4 "___ Fables"
- 5 Actor Kinnear
- 6 The "E" in "EGBDF"
- 7 Passover feast
- 8 "___ shocked as you are"
- 9 Indiana's second-largest city
- 10 Album opener
- 11 "I conquered," to Caesar
- 12 Ancient Briton
- 13 Feels sorrow about
- 16 Broadband forerunner
- 21 Least narrow
- 22 Cell dweller
- 23 Good thing to pass
- 25 Ronan of "Little Women"
- 28 Lake that borders Ohio
- 30 Montenegrin, e.g.
- 32 Gets after
- 33 D.C. nine, for short
- 34 Affirm as true
- 37 Forming a chord, say
- 38 "Honeysuckle Rose" singer Anita
- 39 Hall of Famer Willie
- 44 Antarctic mountain ___ Massif
- 49 Coded message
- 51 Apples and pears, e.g.
- 53 Ancient Britons
- 54 "___ myself today ..." (NIN/Johnny Cash lyric)
- 56 "Be with you in just ___"
- 57 Place for growth?
- 58 Yale students
- 59 Docs that use endoscopes
- 61 "The Andy Griffith Show" kid
- 64 Linguistics suffix
- 65 "From ___ Zinc" (multivitamin slogan)
- 66 Two, to Juan

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Answers Page 27

SUDOKU

Advanced

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

TO PLAY

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

Answers on page 27

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

Feb. 12-18, 2020

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Now that she's in her late forties, Aries comedian and actress Tig Notaro is wiser about love. Her increased capacity for romantic happiness has developed in part because she's been willing to change her attitudes. She says, "Instead of being someone who expects people to have all the strengths I think I need them to have, I resolved to try to become someone who focuses on the strengths they do have." In accordance with this Valentine's season's astrological omens, Aries, I invite you to meditate on how you might cultivate more of that aptitude yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Taurus artist Joan Miró loved to daub colored paint on canvases. He said he approached his work in the same way he made love: "a total embrace, without caution, prudence thrown to the winds, nothing held back." In accordance with astrological omens, I invite you to invoke a similar attitude with all the important things you do in the coming weeks. Summon the ardor and artistry of a creative lover for all-purpose use. Happy Valentine Daze, Taurus!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In 1910, Gemini businessman Irving Seery was 20 years old. One evening he traveled to the Metropolitan Opera in New York City to see an opera starring the gorgeous and electrifying soprano singer Maria Jeritza. He fell in love instantly. For the next thirty-eight years he remained a bachelor as he nursed his desire to marry her. His devotion finally paid off. Jeritza married Seery in 1948. Dear Gemini, in 2020, I think you will be capable of a heroic feat of love that resembles Seery's. Which of your yearnings might evoke such intensely passionate dedication? Happy Valentine Daze!

CANCER (June 21-July 22): I've been married twice, both times to the same woman. Our first time around, we were less than perfectly wise in the arts of relationship. After our divorce and during the few years we weren't together, we each ripened into more graceful versions of ourselves; we developed greater intimacy skills. Our second marriage has been far more successful. Is there a comparable possibility in your life, Cancerian? A chance to enhance your ability to build satisfying togetherness? An opening to learn practical lessons from past romantic mistakes? Now is a favorable time to capitalize. Happy Valentine Daze!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): In 1911, the famous Russian poet Anna Akhmatova and the famous Italian painter Amedeo Modigliani were in love with each other. Both were quite poor, though. They didn't have much to spend on luxuries. In her memoir, Akhmatova recalled the time they went on a date in the rain at the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris. Barely protected under a rickety umbrella, they amused each other by reciting the verse of Paul Verlaine, a poet they both loved. Isn't that romantic? In the coming weeks, I recommend you experiment with comparable approaches to cultivating love. Get back to raw basics. Happy Valentine Daze!

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): [Warning: Poetry alert! If you prefer your horoscopes to be exclusively composed of practical, hyper-rational advice, stop reading now!] Happy Valentine Daze, Virgo! I hope there's someone in your life to whom you can give a note like the one I'll offer at the end of this oracle. If there's not, I trust you will locate that person in the next six months. Feel free to alter the note as you see fit. Here it is. "When you and I are together, it's as if we have been reborn into luckier lives; as if we can breathe deeper breaths that fill our bodies with richer sunlight; as if we see all of the world's beauty that alone we were blind to; as if the secrets of our souls' codes are no longer secret."

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): In the course of your life, how many people and animals have truly loved you? Three? Seven? More? I invite you to try this Valentine experiment: Write down their names on a piece of paper. Spend a few minutes visualizing the specific qualities in you that they cherished,

and how they expressed their love, and how you felt as you received their caring attention. Then send out a beam of gratitude to each of them. Honor them with sublime appreciation for having treasured your unique beauty. Amazingly enough, Libra, doing this exercise will magnetize you to further outpourings of love in the coming weeks.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): [Warning: Poetry alert! If you prefer your horoscopes to be exclusively composed of practical, hyper-rational advice, stop reading now!] Happy Valentine Daze, Scorpio! I invite you to copy the following passage and offer it to a person who is receptive to deepening their connection with you. "Your healing eyes bless the winter jasmine flowers that the breeze blew into the misty creek. Your welcoming prayers celebrate the rhythmic light of the mud-loving cypress trees. Your fresh dreams replenish the eternal salt that nourishes our beloved song of songs. With your melodic breath, you pour all these not-yet-remembered joys into my body." (This lyrical message is a blend of my words with those of Scorpio poet Odysseus Elytis.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The poet Virgil, a renowned author in ancient Rome, wrote three epic poems that are still in print today. His second was a masterpiece called the "Georgics". It took him seven years to write, even though it was only 2,740 lines long. So on average he wrote a little over one line per day. I hope you'll use him as inspiration as you toil over your own labors of love in the coming weeks and months. There'll be no need to rush. In fact, the final outcomes will be better if you do them slowly. Be especially diligent and deliberate in all matters involving intimacy and collaboration and togetherness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): [Warning: Poetry alert! If you prefer your horoscopes to be exclusively composed of practical, hyper-rational advice, stop reading now!] Happy Valentine Daze, Capricorn! I invite you to copy the following passage and offer it to a person who is ready to explore a more deeply lyrical connection with you. "I yearn to earn the right to your whispered laugh, your confident caress, your inscrutable dance. Amused and curious, I wander where moon meets dawn, inhaling the sweet mist in quest of your questions. I study the joy that my imagination of you has awakened. All the maps are useless, and I like them that way. I'm guided by my nervous excitement to know you deeper. Onward toward the ever-fresh truth of your mysterious rhythms!"

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Aquarian author Derek Walcott had a perspective on love that I suspect might come in handy for you during this Valentine season. "Break a vase," he wrote, "and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole." I urge you to meditate on how you could apply his counsel to your own love story, Aquarius. How might you remake your closest alliances into even better and brighter versions of themselves?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Piscean poet Saul Williams wrote a meditation I hope you'll consider experimenting with this Valentine season. It involves transforming mere kisses into SUBLIME KISSES. If you choose to be inspired by his thoughts, you'll explore new sensations and meanings available through the act of joining your mouth to another's. Ready? Here's Saul: "Have you ever lost yourself in a kiss? I mean pure psychedelic inebriation. Not just lustful petting but transcendental metamorphosis, when you became aware that the greatness of this other being is breathing into you. Licking your mouth, like sealing a thousand fleshy envelopes filled with the essence of your passionate being, and then opened by the same mouth and delivered back to you, over and over again—the first kiss of the rest of your life."

TURN IT DOWN!

A SURVEY OF LANSING'S MUSICAL LANDSCAPE

BY RICH TUPICA

Friday, Feb. 14

HIP-HOP LEGEND RAKIM HEADS TO LANSING



Rap legend Rakim headlines Friday at The Loft. (courtesy photo)



Starting with 1987's "Paid In Full" LP, Eric B. & Rakim changed hip-hop forever. (courtesy photo)

Iconic member of Eric. B & Rakim headlines The Loft

Friday, Feb. 14 @ The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. All ages, \$30, \$25 adv., 7 p.m.

A historic Lansing hip-hop show happens Friday, as the legendary Rakim performs at The Loft alongside a roster of local openers, including: AOTA Creative (Ozay Moore, Jahshua Smith, Y'Z, Sareem Poems and James Gardin), AON, Sincere Sinatra, DJ Ruckus, Edicius, Izydope CEO & Dirtsound Affiliates (Jae Vet, Beneficial and Karm4).

Known as an influential architect of rap lyricism, Rakim, a Long Island native, first started making waves back in 1986 with his duo: Eric B. & Rakim. The New York pair's first 12-inch single, "Eric B. is President," was recorded at Marley Marl's studio and soon after landed on wax via Zakia Records, an indie imprint. However, after the track made waves across the city, the pair inked a deal with 4th & B'way, a subsidiary label of Island Records.

The follow-up smash single, 1987's "I Know You Got Soul," helped make their debut LP "Paid in Full" a mainstream success—hitting No. 58 on the Billboard Top 200. The groundbreaking album, stacked with now-iconic lyrics and hooky, sample-filled beats comprised the singles "I Ain't No Joke" and, the landmark title track, "Paid in Full." Before his come up on the scene, hip-hop lyrics were often simple from a structural standpoint. So—while standing in the shadows of Grand Master Flash & the Furious Five and Run-DMC—Rakim provided a new, poetic template for emcees to follow: a complex and cerebral style of rhyming that changed rap music forever. Along the way, his artistic use of metaphors and stoic delivery heavily influenced soon-to-be industry trendsetters like Jay-Z, 2Pac, Nas and Eminem.

Born William Michael Griffin Jr., aka

Rakim, now 52, went on to produce three more successful albums with producer/DJ Eric B., including "Follow the Leader" (1988), "Let the Rhythm Hit 'Em" (1990) and 1992's "Don't Sweat the Technique"—all are now considered hip-hop standards. Since then, in 2006, MTV named Eric B. & Rakim's "Paid in Full" as the Greatest Hip-Hop Album of All Time, while Rakim himself was ranked No. 4 on MTV's list of the Greatest MCs of All Time. In 2012, The Source ranked him No. 1 on their list of the Top 50 Lyricists of All Time. In 2011, Eric B. & Rakim were even nominated for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

While Eric B. and Rakim spent a bulk of the '90s and 2000s working on solo albums and touring the world independent of each other, the duo reunited in 2017 for the first time in decades at Harlem's Apollo Theatre. The show was

in celebration of the 30th anniversary of "Paid In Full." Since then, the two have played select reunion concerts across the map.

Late last year, Rakim also published "Sweat the Technique: Revelations on Creativity from the Lyrical Genius," the 236-page book is part memoir and part writing guide. The emcee offers insight into how he thinks about words, music, writing and rhyming. It's a perfect "how to" for rookie rappers. Beyond rhyming, he divulges stories from his youth on Long Island and his come-up as a renowned emcee. Of course, he also shares plenty of amazing anecdotes about his various cohorts, like L. L. Cool J. and Dr. Dre, among others.



Upcoming show? Contact Suzi@lansingcitypulse.com

DESTINATION	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
The Avenue Café , 2021 E. Michigan Ave.	Trivia Night: Zombies 10PM	All Request Party Free 9PM	Winter Halloween Karaoke 9PM	Tease A Gogo 9PM
Crunchy's , 254 W. Grand River, East Lansing	North of Five 8PM	Karaoke 9PM	Karaoke 9PM	Karaoke 9PM
The Exchange , 314 E. Michigan Ave.		Old School - DJ Jalese 8:30PM	Smooth Daddy 9PM	Smooth Daddy 9PM
Green Door , 2005 E. Michigan Ave.		Karaoke	Miranda & the M80s 8:30PM	Miranda & the M80s 8:30PM
Lansing Brewing Co. , 518 E. Shiawassee			Live Music with Off the Ledge 8PM	Winter Warrior 1PM/Latin X/Verde 10PM
The Loft , 414 E. Michigan Ave.	Astronomy On Tap 7:30PM		Rakim 8:30PM	Homegrown Throwdown 7PM
Mac's Bar , 2700 E. Michigan Ave.			Bitter Sometimes 8PM	Pet Me 7PM
Robin Theatre , 1105 S. Washington			Audio Theatre Valentine's Special 7PM	
Spiral , 1247 Center St.			Thot or Not 9PM	Kiki Saturday 9PM
Urban Beat , 1213 Turner St.		Fareed Haque 8PM	Goran Ivanovic Trio 7PM	
Unicorn , 327 Cesar E. Chavez, Lansing	Open Mic 9:30PM		Live Music with Time 2 Play 9PM	Live Music with The Corzo Effect 9PM
Wildlife Pub , 6380 Drumeller Rd., Bath			Open Mic 7:30PM	
Zoobies , 1200 N. Larch			Alex Teller 8:30PM	Matthew Shannon 8:30PM

From Page 24

“Casablanca”. 7-8:30 p.m. The Robin Theatre, 1105 S Washington, Lansing. 517-881-9746. audioairforce.com.

Friday Clay Lab - 4:30-6:30 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. www.reachstudioart.org.

Into the Woods - 8-10:30 p.m. Fairchild Theatre, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. 517-355-1855.

MSU Libraries’ Special Collections Pop-Ups - 12-2 p.m. MSU Library, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing.

Robin Hood - 7 p.m. All-of-Us Express Children’s Theatre, 819 Abbot Rd, East Lansing.

Teen Studio: Portfolio. 3-6 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Unnecessary Farce - 8-10:30 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

MUSIC

Gallery Suite Jazz Series - 8-10 p.m. La Fille Gallery, 336 E Michigan Ave., Lansing.

Jingyi Han, piano - 6 p.m. Cook Recital Hall, 333 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. events.msu.edu.

Sweet Water Warblers - 7:30-10 p.m. MSU Community Music School, 4930 S. Hagadorn, East Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

Saturday, February 15

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Building an Inclusive Church Workshop - Free training. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. University United Methodist Church, 1120 S Harrison, East Lansing.

DIY Gardening - 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Hunter Park GardenHouse, 1400 E Kalamazoo St, Lansing.

Valentine’s Day Yoga - 4-7 p.m. Michgrain Distillery, 523 E Shiawassee, Lansing.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Staged Reading of rUSt: A Showcase of Scripts from Ixion’s Wheel. 12-3 p.m. CADL Downtown, 401 S. Capitol, Lansing.

Winter Reading Bingo - Sign up for 2020! 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main, Eaton Rapids. eradl.org.

Writing the Land: A Poetry Workshop. 1-3 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

EVENTS

2020 Winter Warrior Patio Party - Join us in the Stadium District! 5 p.m. Lansing Brewing Company, 518 E Shiawassee St, Lansing.

Artisan Fine Chocolate & Artisanal Tea Tasting Experience - 2-3 p.m. Deb’s Sereni-Tea Lounge, 115 E. Walker, St. Johns.

Contra and Square Dance - 7-10 p.m. Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Ave, Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

Guided Evening Snowshoe Walk - 7-8 p.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd, Okemos. 517-349-3866. meridian.mi.us.

Scavenger Hunt Saturdays at the Michigan History Museum - 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Michigan History Center, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing.

Sensory Friendly Saturday - 10 a.m.-12 p.m. MSU Museum, East Lansing. events.msu.edu.

STEAM Club - (Grades K-3). Explore science, technology, engineering, art and mathematical concepts. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main, Eaton Rapids.

Third Saturday Contra Dance - 7-10 p.m. Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Ave, Lansing. lgmaa.org.

Tun-Dra Dog Mushing (All ages) - Meet some live sled dogs. 10-11 a.m. CADL South Lansing, 3500 S. Cedar St., Lansing.

Tun-Dra Dog Mushing (All ages) - Meet some live sled dogs. 1-2 p.m. CADL Williamston, 3845 Vanneter Rd. #1, Williamston.

Winter Farmers’ Market - JCPenney wing at the Meridian Mall, Grand River Ave., Okemos.

ARTS

Inspirational Animal Posters! Print and take Workshop. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. ALT Printing Co, 1139 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. altprintingco.com.

Into the Woods - 8 p.m.-12 a.m. Fairchild Theatre, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. 517-355-1855. events.msu.edu.

Print Your Own Valentine’s Day Underwear - 4-6 p.m. ALT Printing Co, 1139 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. 517-388-3558. altprintingco.com.

Robin Hood - 3 p.m. All-of-Us Express Children’s Theatre, 819 Abbot Rd, East Lansing.

Unnecessary Farce - 8-10:30 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

MUSIC

Children’s Concert Series - 11 a.m. East Lansing Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing. cityofeastlansing.com.

Night At The Movies - Experience music from the greatest movie soundtracks of all time. 7:30 p.m. Wharton Center for Performing Arts, 750 E Shaw Ln, East Lansing. 517-353-1982. lansingsymphony.org.

Old-time String Band Fiddle Tunes Repertoire with Mike and Mary Ross - 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Elderly Instruments, 1100 N Washington, Lansing. 517-372-7880. elderly.com.

Sunday, February 16

CLASSES AND SEMINARS

Juggling - Learn how to juggle! 2-4 p.m. Orchard Street Pumphouse, 368 Orchard St., East Lansing.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Black History Month Event - National African American Read-in (Age 10 & up). 3-4 p.m. CADL South Lansing, 3500 S. Cedar St., Lansing.

EVENTS

The Great Teen Bake-off (Grades 7–12) - Enter in our contest! 3 categories: cookies/bars (bring at least 24), cupcakes (bring at least 24) and cake (bring one). 2-3:30 p.m. CADL Okemos, 4321 Okemos Rd., Okemos.

Harry Potter House Party - 5-7 p.m. Ellison Brewery + Spirits, 4903 Dawn Ave, East Lansing.

Scandinavian Society of Greater Lansing Meeting and Potluck - 2-5 p.m. Bretton Woods Covenant Church, 925 Bretton Rd., Lansing.

We-Love-Giant-Monsters Movie Day (Ages 13–18) - Join us for movies with giant monsters! Titles will be rated PG-13. 12:30-5 p.m. CADL Holt-Delhi, 2078 N. Aurelius Rd., Holt.

Winter Snowshoe Hike - 2-4 p.m. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mt. Hope, Lansing. mynaturecenter.org.

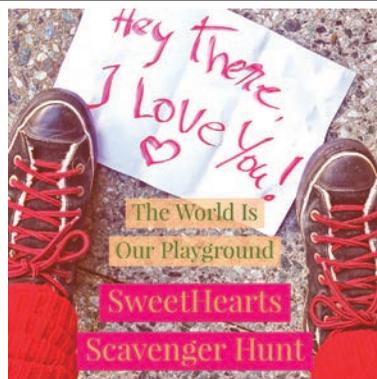
ARTS

Into the Woods - 2-4:30 p.m. Fairchild Theatre, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. 517-355-1855.

Robin Hood - 3 p.m. All-of-Us Express Children’s Theatre, 819 Abbot Rd, East Lansing.

See Out on the town, Page 28

SATURDAY, FEB. 15 >> SWEET HEARTS SCAVENGER HUNT



The World is Our Playground and several other Lansing area organizations are putting on a community scavenger hunt. The hunt consists of “challenges, finding things, meeting people, visiting businesses and “helping your community.” Visit The World is Our Playground’s Facebook page for more information.

Saturday, 1 p.m.
Various locations in Lansing.
facebook.com/TheWorldIsOurPlayground517
(517) 482-8845

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 25

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 25

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SUNDAY, FEB. 16 >> LOVE LANSING FUNDRAISER FOR ELEMENTARY ART



Over the past five years, Love Lansing has raised over \$31,000 to provide art materials, summer art camps and scholarships to elementary students in Lansing. Its annual party features live music, art and other entertainment.

\$10 suggested donation, Sunday, 2:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Green Door Bar & Grill
2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
facebook.com/lovelansingart

From Page 27

Unnecessary Farce - 2-4:30 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

MUSIC

Bath Community Drum Circle - Come jam with us! 2-4 p.m. Bath Community Center, 5959 Park Lake Road, Bath. bathtownship.us.

The Men of Orpheus Choir - 3-4 p.m. Mayflower Congregational Church, 2901 W. Mt. Hope Ave., Lansing. 517-484-3139.

Monday, February 17**CLASSES AND SEMINARS**

Aqua Fitness - Fun for all fitness levels. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece: Dr. Devin E. 8-9:30 p.m. Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, 219 S Harrison Rd, East Lansing. 517-432-3493.

Business Model Workshop - 9-10 a.m. Gaynor Entrepreneurship Lab, 651 N. Shaw Ln, East Lansing.

Button Making Party (Age 8 & up) - Make custom buttons using our button maker. 2-4 p.m. CADL Williamston, 115 N. Main St., Williamston.

Drop-in Homework Help (Grades 1-8) - Free tutoring in general subjects. 5-7 p.m. CADL Okemos, 4321 Okemos Rd., Okemos.

Group Dance Class - Beginning Hustle. 7:15-8:05 p.m. The MAC, 2900 Hannah Blvd, East Lansing. 517-364-8888.

Group Dance Class - Beginning Nightclub 2step. 8:15-9:05 p.m. The MAC, 2900 Hannah Blvd, East Lansing. 517-364-8888.

Homeschool Study Group - 1-4 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

OrganizingTogether Workshop - 6-7 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St, Lansing.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Jump Into Reading - Early Literacy Event (Ages 0-5). 11-11:30 a.m. Eaton Rapids District Library, 220 S. Main, Eaton Rapids.

EVENTS

Black History Month Event - Films by Black Artists (Adults). Popcorn provided. 5:30-7 p.m. CADL South Lansing, 3500 S. Cedar St., Lansing.

CanHope support - 6:30 p.m.-7:45 a.m. Allve, 800 W Lawrence Ave., Charlotte.

Game Night at the Fledge - board and card games. 7 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka, Lansing.

517-203-9287.

Refuge Recovery Lansing - 6-7 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St.,Lansing.

ARTS

Quilting Club - Learn everything you need to know about quilting. 2-6 p.m. Eaton Rapids District Library, 220 S. Main, Eaton Rapids.

Tuesday, February 18**CLASSES AND SEMINARS**

Aqua Fitness - Fun for all fitness levels. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

Build Your Own Business Website - 10 a.m.-2 p.m. LCC, 309 N. Washington Square, Lansing. 517-483-1921. clients.sbdcmichigan.org.

Group Dance Class - Beginning West Coast Swing. 8:15-9:05 p.m. The MAC, 2900 Hannah Blvd, East Lansing. 517-364-8888.

Humorous Illustration - Learn the basics of humorous illustration/cartooning. 1-3 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. 517-337-1113.

Zumba - Join us for Zumba fitness classes. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Federated Polish Home, 1030 W. Mt. Hope Ave., Lansing. 517-882-2838.

LITERATURE AND POETRY

Paws for Reading at GLADL - Come and read to a therapy dog! 6-7 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

Preschool Storytime - 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014.

ARTS

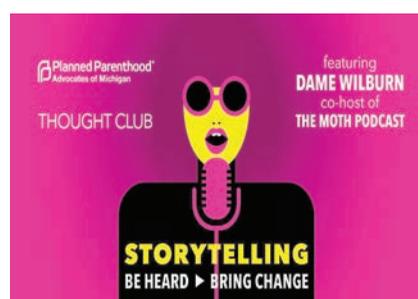
Adult Clay Winter B - 6:15-9:15 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Gymnasium: Archiving the City in Comics - 6:30-8:30 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle., East Lansing.

Into the Woods - 7:30-10 p.m. Fairchild Theatre, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. 517-355-1855.

Mixed Media: Adult - 6:30-8 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Mixed Media: Teen - 4:30-6 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

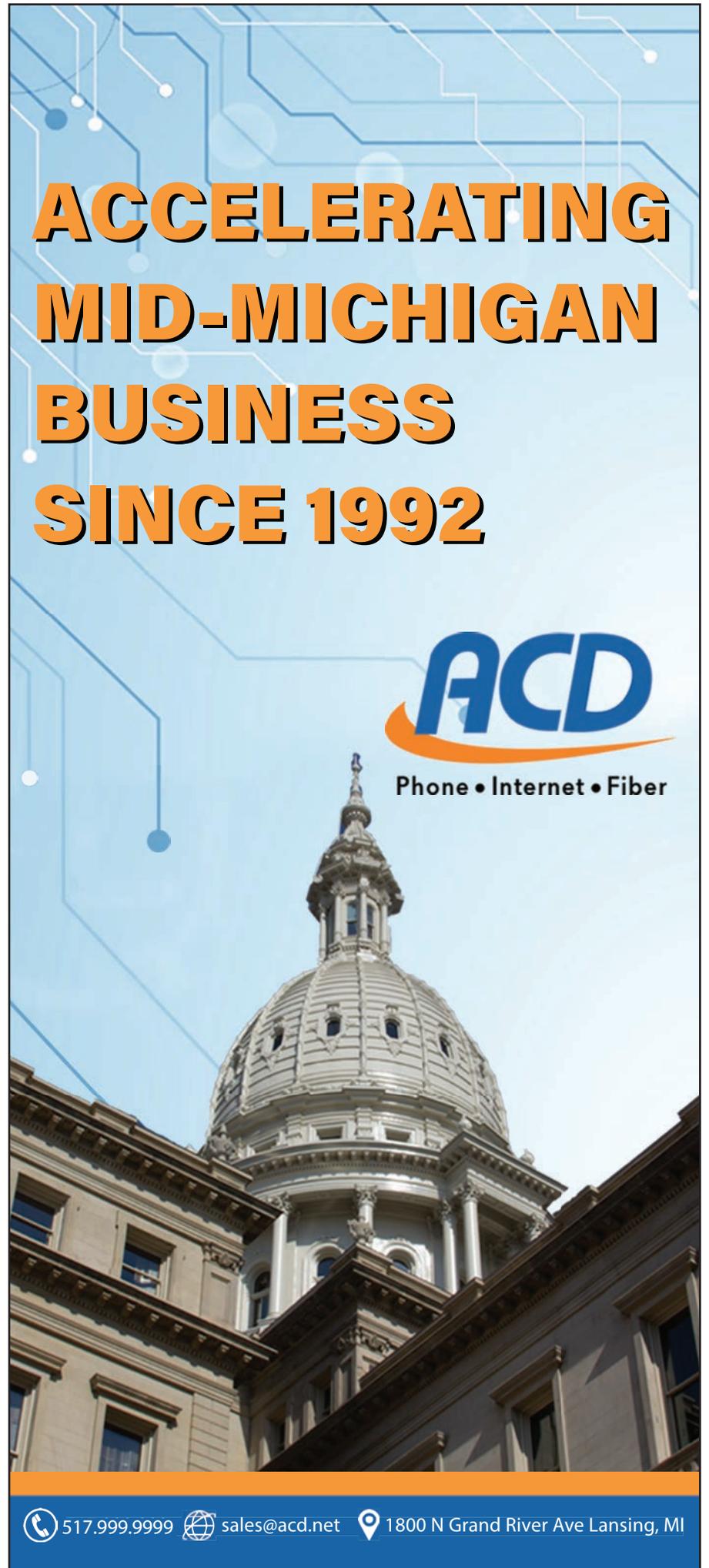
**SATURDAY, FEB. 15 >> STORYTELLING: REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND LGBTQ REALITIES**

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan and The Thought Club have partnered to host Storytelling: Reproductive Rights and LGBTQ Realities at the MichiGrain Distillery. The night will consist of LGBTQ-focused storytelling with a focus on reproductive experiences.

Saturday, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
MichiGrain Distillery
523 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing
(517) 220-0560, Michigrain.net

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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Getting fancy at Black Cat Bistro

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

There are two “Cat” eateries near the MSU campus in East Lansing just doors apart. HopCat is a beer and burger place that’s an ideal hangout for college students. Then there’s Black Cat Bistro — a perfect place for a fancy dinner with Mom and Dad.

The inside of Black Cat Bistro is cozy and quiet. There are long, pulled-back curtains on the windows and mini-chandeliers on the ceiling. Its food is as classy as the room.

I chose the Wild Mushroom and Spinach Spaghetti. It was served in a unique dish — the kind I’d expect to find inside Picasso’s cupboards — and garnished with a purple, edible orchid. The flower tasted like



a mild-yet-elegant lettuce.

The angular bowl and the spaghetti mixture were served steaming hot. Both stayed wonderfully warm all through an unrushed dinner.

The thick spaghetti was infused with saffron. It was not enough to dramatically color the pasta but enough to add flavor. It was cooked just right.

Mixed throughout the ragout sauce were random leaves of warm spinach. They tasted very fresh and not overcooked. Though, I would have enjoyed more of them.

The stew-like ragout had chunks of tomatoes and onions, and hints of garlic. Everything was covered with thick, hand-shredded Parmesan.

The stars of the meal are the wild mushrooms. They come from a Traverse City supplier that uses fresh-picked Michigan fungi that vary according to

the season. My bowl was filled with succulent Portobello, Enokie, Crimini and Trumpet mushrooms.

Having “Wild” in the dish’s name made me apprehensive. I don’t like mushrooms with a strong, gamey flavor that taste like a forest bed. Happily, the tastes were subtler, nuttier and satisfying.

My gourmet vegetable spaghetti was \$20. Chicken, salmon, or steak could be added for \$7, \$8 and \$9 respectively. With those prices, hopefully Mom or Dad will pick up the check.



David Winkelster/City Pulse

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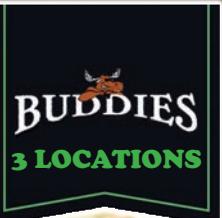


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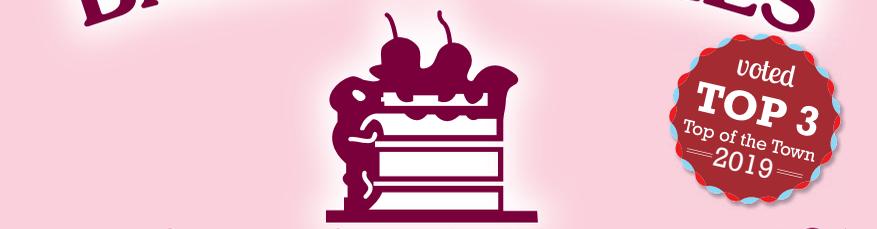
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