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June 10 - 16, 2020

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LANSING'S SOCIAL EQUITY MOVEMENT

Who is Paul Birdsong?
What needs to be done?
Why did Schor fire an African American?

Stories begin on P. 6

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Restaurants are slowly coming back



Cover Art

Photo by Skyler Ashley

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION DISPATCHES FROM THE NEW NORMAL

1. THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED PAGE WAS FORCED TO RESIGN AFTER RUNNING THE PROVOCATIVE EDITORIAL, "FASCISM IS GOOD, ACTUALLY!"

WHY ARE LIBERALS SO AFRAID OF A REASONED DEBATE?



2. TO PROTECT AND SERVE

WE'RE HERE TO MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD--TO PROTEST THE SYSTEMIC RACISM AND BRUTALITY THAT TREATS BLACK LIVES AS DISPOSABLE!

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4. SHAVING WITH OCCAM'S RAZOR

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5. A VERY MANLY STRONGMAN

I'LL SHOW THEM WHO'S IN CHARGE! I'LL SEND IN THE ARMY! I WILL DOMINATE! NO ONE MAKES TRUMP LOOK WEAK!

SIR, PROTESTERS ARE GETTING UNRULY--WE'D BETTER GO DOWN TO INSPECT THE BUNKER AGAIN!

LET'S BUILD A BIG, BEAUTIFUL WALL--AROUND THE WHITE HOUSE!



6. IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

SEDITIONOUS TRAITORS PROTESTING THE SUPREME LEADER'S DECISION TO DISREGARD THE FAKE ELECTION RESULTS ARE BEING TAKEN TO RE-EDUCATION FACILITIES, WHERE THEY WILL LEARN USEFUL NEW SKILLS--

--SUCH AS MANUFACTURING IVANKA'S LATEST LINE OF FASHIONABLE HANDBAGS AND DRESSES!

ALL HAIL THE SUPREME LEADER AND HIS GLORIOUS OFFSPRING!



TOM TOMORROW © 2020

Debating defunding

A week after Lansing police unleashed tear-gas canisters on rioters and bystanders in downtown Lansing, the city's growing protest movement against police brutality has taken a welcome turn toward the kind of constructive engagement and dialogue that has a chance to get meaningful results. We're proud to stand with the activists, led by the strong new voice of Paul Birdsong, who stepped up to regain control of the narrative, wisely distancing themselves from the small number of troublemakers who turned a peaceful march against police brutality into an ugly outburst of violence and shattered windows. We commend them for their restraint, for their clarity of purpose and vision, and for aggressively pushing an actionable agenda that should be the starting point for a robust, sustained dialogue between the city's elected leaders, police officials, and the community they serve.

We are concerned, though, that one of their principal tenets — that the City of Lansing should “defund” its Police Department — is too easily misconstrued and then used as a rhetorical weapon to dismiss the demand as unreasonable. We strongly recommend a change in semantics that clarifies the purpose and goals of the defunding agenda. In its most radical form, defunding the police literally means cutting the department's budget, which inevitably translates into fewer police officers on the streets. This approach runs squarely into the countervailing populist demand for safer streets and the age-old political campaign calculus that makes strengthening public safety a required talking point for candidates seeking to curry favor with voters. Few candidates have ever run on a platform of slashing the police budget, if only out of fear for being labeled “soft on crime.” The perception of rising crime, even as statistics demonstrate significant reductions in violent crime over the past 30 years, reinforces the demand for more cops on the street and makes the call to defund police seem, on the surface, like a particularly bad idea.

In its more pragmatic form, defunding police means shifting the city's spending priorities over time from law enforcement and incarceration toward community-building, social justice and economic empowerment initiatives that address the underlying ills of a society that still relegates people of color to second class status and still bears painful witness to incidents of police brutality. From this perspective, defunding the police is not an event, it is a long-term process that realigns the city's spending priorities. First Ward Councilman Brandon Betz has proposed phasing



The **CP** Edit

Opinion

in a 10 percent reduction in the police budget over the next five years. We support that process and its end goals.

While we are pleased to see citizens joining together to make their voices heard, we're disappointed to note that in the face of growing unrest and escalating demands for action, Mayor Andy Schor's leadership has been underwhelming. At the height of the chaos in downtown Lansing, the city's chief executive and chief law enforcement officer, who holds all the powers of a sheriff under the City Charter, went home to “be safe” rather than commanding the situation from the front lines. A few days later, Schor was invited by Black Lives Matter activists to attend a virtual meeting with other community leaders. The mayor's defensive and tone-deaf performance was painful to watch, even for his most ardent supporters, and quickly gave rise to calls for his resignation. Schor pledged to listen but rejected the idea of defunding the city's police department. He had to

apologize for being “unprepared.”

Two days later, as protesters readied to march from the State Capitol to Schor's home on Moores River Drive for the second night in a row, he intercepted them downtown and offered to take \$100,000 from the police budget. On first blush, the mayor's impromptu proposal smelled more like appeasement than a plan. Yesterday, he wisely followed up with a more substantive approach, pledging to create a new Racial Equity and Anti-Racism Fund to direct additional resources toward meeting the protester's goals. He pledged \$170,000, largely from the police budget. City Council approval will be required to formally establish the fund and guide its investments.

We're encouraged by this development, but it's important to acknowledge that the city's COVID-induced financial crisis, which has already resulted in an \$800,000 cut to the police budget, severely limits the options for the mayor and the Council to direct additional resources to the new fund. That's why it is heartening to see Capitol National Bank step up to lead a community effort. We applaud their commitment and call on the city's business and philanthropic community to the effort.

Real solutions to police brutality won't come easily or quickly. Perhaps the most important conversations need to happen within the ranks of our law enforcement agencies and police unions, which are too often resistant to reform and too often inclined to side with officers who shouldn't wear a badge. Union and department leaders across the Lansing region need to think long and hard about how they can break down the Blue Wall of Silence that afflicts the profession and undermines both trust and accountability. Police leadership should be less concerned with protecting bad cops and more concerned with increasing racial and cultural sensitivity, training officers in de-escalation strategies, and abolishing chokeholds and other dangerous tactics that too often end in tragedy.

We also hope Mayor Schor learns from his missteps and does a better job leading the city through these tumultuous times.

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Why Pizza Week matters to City Pulse

By **BERL SCHWARTZ**

Today marks the beginning of City Pulse's first Pizza Week.

Who doesn't love pizza, right? But that's not all there is to it.

Times are tough for ad revenue. So, we decided to try something new: pay us by the pizza.

By which I mean that for every coupon a pizzeria receives, City Pulse receives \$1.

We're not going to get rich on that, but, hey ... a few bucks here, a few bucks there and soon you're talking about ... well, a few bucks.

OPINION



BERL SCHWARTZ

Actually, we don't know how many. We've never sold anything this way before.

The pizzerias aren't going to get rich on this deal, either. Pizza lovers get \$2 off, and we get \$1 more. Three bucks is a lot of discount on a pizza — especially if someone applies it to a special.

(You can do that ... but please don't.)

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Now, let's all sing along:

"When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie ..."

Black lives matter: It's time for action

By **BRANDON BETZ**

Across the country, people are standing up and demanding major changes to our policing system in the wake of George Floyd's murder. Lansing has to take bold action to address the problem of police violence and support our Black and brown communities. We are facing a crisis of leadership on this issue. There is a lot of information circulating and I want to clarify our position on what we need to do going forward.

Cities across the country are looking at bold actions related to the institution of policing, cities like Minneapolis are working on plans to disband the police force and establish an entirely new public safety agency. New York and Los Angeles have committed to major cuts in funding to their police departments. All options are on the table.

Defunding police departments may be an unfamiliar approach to many, but this approach is common sense. In the last three years in Lansing, we've increased the police budget at double the rate of our public services and have

decreased our human services and parks budget. We have to reinvest in programs that improve people's lives, particularly in our Black and brown communities. Instead of increasing spending on punitive approaches, we need to address the root causes of poverty and crime by investing in our people.

A majority of us on city council have expressed support for or are open to ideas about changing our funding priorities. We have to take this issue seriously and put forward bold solutions. Thus far, we have not seen the leadership needed on this issue. Mayor Schor has only committed to a tiny amount of funds to reinvest, has authorized the use of tear gas on protestors, and has had a troubling record of racial discrimination revealed by former employees.

We are committed to working with local Black organizations like Black Lives Matter to create major changes to our police department, including reducing our police budget and reinvesting in our communities. Now is the time for action and we are calling on the mayor to clean up his act and get to work with us on real solutions. If this does not take place in the immediate future, Mayor Schor needs to step down.

(The writer represents the First Ward on the Lansing City Council.)



Betz

'A fire that has been burning for years'

Lansing residents push for police divestment amid racial equity movement

Lansing has had enough.

A protest against police brutality in the wake of George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis took a violent turn two Sundays ago when rioters burned a car, broke windows, beat up protesters and threw water bottles at police, who put a stop to it with tear gas.

Since then, protesters have marched daily, twice to Mayor Andy Schor's house, where he finally met with them a week after the violence.

The local Black Lives Matter group and other advocacy organizations are demanding changes. BLM's leader and protesters are pushing for Schor to resign. (Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz almost agrees. See his viewpoint, P. 6.)

At least two dozen people pleaded with the Lansing City Council Monday to pursue police reforms during a four-hour virtual meeting that continued until almost 11 p.m. It is increasingly clear that something meaningful must be done. But is Greater Lansing prepared?

"Sometimes people forget that the experience of African Americans in this community reflects African American experiences across the country," said State Rep. Sarah Anthony, the Lansing Democrat who replaced Schor in the Legislature. "Images of black men and women dying are constantly looped in the media. It's traumatizing, and in many ways, only feeds a fire that has been burning for years in black folks nationwide."

Only time will tell how local leaders respond to the growing unrest, but many are already putting plans for reform into motion. Ingham County officials have labeled racism a public health emergency. Officials in Lansing and East Lansing have called for changes to their police forces.

Lansing officials are quick to point out: Reversing centuries of racial inequities is no simple task. Dismantling multi-million dollar agencies supposedly geared toward public safety is a hard sell. But officials in Lansing have reached a unanimous consensus: Change begins with an open ear.

"This is about recognizing that what we're doing isn't working," Anthony added. "Nothing can be off the table. This is a time, right now, for every leader to be held accountable. We all really



Paul Birdsong at the mayor's house addressing the crowd.

need to take this moment to pause, listen and think critically about what can be done differently.

Local resident Paul Birdsong has become a sort of community commander who for several days has led a battalion of protestors — some armed — across downtown Lansing to call for reforms. Their biggest demands: Police funds must be shifted into other priorities. And Schor needs to resign.

Lansing's Black Lives Matter chapter has distanced itself from Birdsong's group over the last week. But while the delivery might be different, their message is similar.

First: Police departments — including LPD — need an overhaul, if not abolition.

A national dialogue on defunding police has simmered for years while hundreds of African Americans have been systematically killed and disproportionately targeted by authorities. The concept evokes imagery of unanswered 911 calls and cities filled with unchecked violent crime, but, at least in theory, the idea is grounded in recognizing that simple reforms are inadequate.

"If there was one way to encapsulate all of this energy, it's that the status quo is not good enough anymore. Plain and simple," said Ingham County Commissioner Derrell Slaughter. "We need to be more bold. This is about changing policies and budgets."

The Lansing Police Department, with a budget of about \$46.4 million, accounts for about a third of the city's total annual expenditures of \$136.5 million. Activists think that money could be far better spent.

Some want the cash kept in the Police Department but shifted away from road patrols into community engagement and social work. Others would rather see the money support educational and mentorship opportunities for black

youth to proactively prevent crime.

"We understand how difficult it is to imagine a world without armed, violent policing because that is all Americans know," according to a statement from local BLM organizers. "This is not what policing looks like everywhere. There is a huge difference between policing and public safety."

Proponents aren't necessarily suggesting police shouldn't exist, but rather they should shrink the scope of their responsibilities and shift public safety to entities that are better equipped to meet that need through continued investment in mental health care, housing and the expansion of community mediation and other programs, writes Christy Lopez in the Washington Post.

Lansing City Councilman Brian Jackson would rather police avoid traffic stops altogether unless it's for a "serious" moving violation to prevent unnecessary and potentially violent police contact. He also wants to make sure the city has an accessible system to file complaints against officers.

"Our Police Department is better than most in the area, but we're not perfect," Jackson said. "There has to be some changes. It's not so much our Police Department as it is police culture."

Added Councilman Brandon Betz: "We need to divest in the Police Department and spend that money to support black communities. As an ally, it's my job to take up those demands. More police on the street will likely lead to more police violence. The only answer is divestment."

Nationally, suggestions for reforms have included wholesale changes to use-of-force policies, demilitarizing the police and providing more community reinvestment into jobs and education. The "My Brother's Keeper Alliance," for example, calls for four major areas of municipal reforms:

- Review use of force policies.
 - Engage communities for a diverse range of input.
 - Report findings to the community and seek feedback.
 - Reform use of force policies in community police departments.
- Birdsong has also outlined a series of demands that he said he'll address with the next mayor.

— Reopen and financially support community services like those provided by Shabazz Public School Academy and Black Child & Family Institute — the former defunct, the latter on life support.

— Provide weekly mentorship programs at city parks in every ward. Birdsong has also asked the mayor to personally attend these programs for at least two months.

— Provide de-escalation training for cops and let the public watch. These should also involve real community interactions, Birdsong emphasized, not just webinars and videos.

— Move Police Department funds into mental health and social workers. "We don't want a police force. We want a public safety force," Birdsong has explained.

"I get the sense that people aren't necessarily looking for us to lead on this right now," added Lansing City Council Vice President Adam Hussain. "They're looking for us to listen. And while this conversation is being had, we need to be actively reviewing our policies and procedures."

Schor floated a \$100,000 police divestment plan to protesters earlier this week, and cemented it in an initiative to funnel that money into a new Racial Equity and Anti-Racism Fund. The city also plans to collectively pitch in another \$70,000 and launch a community fundraising effort.

It's only the beginning of a much larger and overdue conversation on racial equity, Schor said. But for many, it's an empty gesture that divests less than two-tenths of 1% of the police budget.

Schor said Lansing must invest in a "safe, inclusive and equitable community," but he has stopped short of charting further divestment from the police. Both he and Police Chief Daryl Green have expressed some concerns for public safety should those funds be further reduced.

Schor's latest budget proposal actually adds three more officers to the local Police Department.

"I don't support defunding the Police Department. If anything, I think about supporting the Police Department with more resources," Green said at a press conference Monday, his first since the downtown unrest. "We're already doing a lot of the things that many of the protesters are asking, and we'll do our best to do better as police."

Other City Council members are also concerned about the concept of "defunding" the police. Some would rather see the department undergo some additional training on racial inequities and social justice, or hire more highly trained social workers in the city. And that all takes cash.

"If we're talking about eliminating the police budget, that's not a reasonable

Former staffers claim racial tension in Mayor's Office

Former IT director says Schor administration 'targeted' several black employees

Accusations of workplace toxicity and veiled racism against black employees are boiling up again against Lansing Mayor Andy Schor as activists continue to call for his immediate resignation.

In a series of explosive interviews on the local podcast "Merica 20 to Life Live," two former black employees of the mayor's administration contended this week their ideas for diversity were diminished and alleged that black employees were routinely dismissed.

Former Chief Information Officer Collin Boyce, who resigned last year, said he and other black employees who dared to challenge Schor's authority were quickly pushed aside or fired. Boyce said he only resigned after Schor refused to value his work and "forced" him to leave.

"This isn't Ku Klux Klan racism, you know with white sheets and burning crosses. It's 'Negro: You have to stay in your place,' Boyce said. "And if you don't leave when they want you to leave, then they're going to find a way to nudge you out the door."

Boyce, who was one of the city's highest paid officials, contended Schor didn't often consult with him on key adminis-



Courtesy photo

Collin Boyce, former chief information officer for the city of Lansing, spoke out against racial tensions in Mayor Andy Schor's office during a recent episode of "Merica 20 to Life Live."

trative decisions, only speaking to him once or twice a year. And the few times they spoke, the situation was "hostile."

His story largely mirrors that of former Fire Chief Randy Talifarro, who told City Pulse last year that black department heads were "prejudged or completely disregarded" by Schor in 2018.

Boyce, who works now in Arizona, recalled suggesting to Schor that his administration needed to improve relations with the black community. Schor responded defensively and flatly dismissed the concept, Boyce alleged. He also claimed that Schor was influential in the disproportionate removal of several other black employees during the transition from former Mayor Virg Bernero's administration in early 2018.

"Part of the reason I remained silent

is if you say something, they're going to assassinate your character. They have a press release ready for you, and they're going to attack you and your family," Boyce said, alleging that several staffers were targeted by Schor.

Boyce said that many of the employees who left the city since Schor took office all share a common theme: They're African American. And they didn't have problems before Schor arrived.

"I didn't like how I was being treated there," Boyce told City Pulse earlier this year. "It got to the point where I was taking so much blame for every problem and constantly defending myself. The environment became so toxic to where it started to have an impact on my health."

Planning Director Bob Johnson and Human Resources Director Mary Riley weren't rehired after Schor took office.

Former Housing Commission Director Martell Armstrong, who did not report to Schor, resigned under pressure. Boyce said he was pressured out of the job. All are African Americans.

Boyce also said that Schor's administration "targeted" former Director of Human Relations and Community Services Joan Jackson Johnson, another black employee who left under Schor. During a cabinet meeting, technology staff were asked to comb her online records, Boyce said.

"The goal was to find anomalies and attack her," Boyce explained during this week's interview.

Federal and state authorities are still investigating the alleged financial missteps that enabled city officials to push Jackson Johnson out of a job and into an early retirement last year. But six months later, no criminal charges have been filed and no problems have surfaced.

The other former city employee to speak out this week was Natasha Atkinson, who worked on Schor's staff as scheduling and events coordinators. Atkinson, a black woman, was hired into his office last August and fired in February without explanation. City officials have since declined to say why.

Atkinson alleged that her ideas for

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Demands

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request," said Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley. "I'm willing to talk about shifting to more community and social outreach, but I certainly don't want to have a defunded Police Department when crimes are being committed in this city."

Schor's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council plans to hold a town hall to solicit for community feedback. The Council also plans to host a series of "listening sessions" in the coming weeks.

Betz is exploring plans to trim the police budget by 10% over the next five years and instead divert that funding to community organizations that support local black residents. A discussion on the topic is expected to continue at upcoming City Council meetings.

Nothing has been scheduled. Schor declined multiple requests for an interview with City Pulse. And in the meantime, dozens of residents have made another demand: the mayor must

resign.

Black Lives Matter Lansing co-founder Angela Waters Austin was among the first to make the request during a video conference call with Schor. Protesters have echoed it in the streets.

Both alleged that Schor's heavy-handed police response to Sunday's protests — paired with his alleged failure to meaningfully connect with the black community — requires him to step down. Schor responded by saying that he was "not planning to resign right now."

"How dare you get on here and act like you care about my people? We said we'd get behind you. We told you we'd show up for you. And look how you showed up for us: You put our children on the firing line," Waters Austin said to Schor.

"You already had a chance to do these things," Waters Austin told him. "We brought money. We brought people. We brought a team that could've helped. You could've been a champion."

Schor has since apologized for being "unprepared" for the video call with Black Lives Matter. Still, many residents

haven't accepted his apology. Schor must leave for meaningful change to move forward, said activists like Waters Austin, Birdsong and local firefighter Michael Lynn Jr.

"He didn't want to hear from our community," Lynn said. "He fails to realize that there's a black community out there that is upset with the way things are being handled. It was clear he was unprepared, and if he's not prepared to tackle these issues then we don't need him in this job."

"He has a vote of no confidence from Black Lives Matter Lansing and Black Lives Matter Michigan," according to a statement on the group's Facebook page. "That will not be resolved with phone calls from advocates, apologies or town halls. It is time for a transition plan."

To move forward, the Ingham County commissioners this week considered a resolution to declare racism a public health crisis.

Officials expected it to be passed unanimously Tuesday (too late for City Pulse's deadline) after County Health Officer Linda Vail, among others,

pushed for the move during a virtual call last week with Black Lives Matter activists.

"I declare racism a public health emergency in Ingham County," Vail said. "Though my power is broad and public health is my duty, as a state appointed health officer, they're words you hear from me and words I believe but words alone are not enough to remedy 400 years of inequity."

Slaughter, who proposed tonight's resolution, said it was necessary but also recognized that words only go so far. The largely symbolic gesture will only lead to meaningful results if the local community — and its elected officials — stay focused on bridging longstanding racial devices.

"Dismantling systemic racism requires vigilance, oversight, accountability, transparency and a willingness to take a hard look at some of the worst parts of ourselves," said County Prosecutor Carol Siemon. "Only through aggressive and intentional action can we find solutions and heal."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

Tension

from page 8

diversity were dismissed, white staffers ignored her and that her desk was ransacked at least twice. And Schor only fired her when she voiced complaints, she said.

“As black people, we deal with these situations every day. Most of these covert racist acts happen over our heads,” Atkinson said. “We don’t carry it as a chip on our shoulder. It’s just when it becomes so heavy that you can’t bear it anymore. It just wasn’t an open place.”

Atkinson also contended Schor was dismissive when Black Lives Matter activists attempted to confront him over black teenagers who were violently arrested by local police last year. And when she tried to step in to offer help, she said Schor and his staff only diminished those concerns.

“Black Lives Matter is just a dog without a bone,” Atkinson claimed a mayoral staffer told her. She said not only did it compare the activists to dogs, it said they did not have a real purpose.

A few months later, a few members of the mayor’s staff were loading new music with mostly white artists into the city’s downtown playlist. When she suggested some more diverse tunes, Schor’s staff only dismissed the idea. The response was just “negativity,” Atkinson recounted.

“It’s just not an open place where you can have these conversations,” Atkinson added.

After watching unhealthy racial undertones develop in Schor’s office for months, Atkinson said she suggested the creation of an office or city department dedicated toward inclusion. The idea never generated any results. And that’s when the Mayor’s Office became real quiet, she said.



Courtesy City of Lansing

Natasha Atkinson serves refreshments at Gardner Middle School in early August 2019.

“None of the white people were talking to me at all,” Atkinson said.

Atkinson later arrived at her desk to find her belongings scattered across the floor, she said. All of the drawers were opened. Schor suggested that a cleaning crew might have done it. But that wasn’t the first time her desk was trashed, she said. It would happen again before she was fired.

“This time I had a witness,” Atkinson said. “They said this is internal. And this is personal.”

Schor has mostly dodged questions on those “personnel” issues. But when asked about recent grievances from former staff again earlier this week, he flatly refused to acknowledge a problem.

“I treasure the diverse voices of my staff and cabinet. They are hardworking and dedicated people focused on serving the residents of Lansing, and I learn from them every day. I seek feedback and advice from all of them, without micromanaging so they can do their jobs.”

As for the several people of color that have suggested otherwise? “My team and I take the policies and ethical standards of the city very seriously, and we follow them,” Schor added.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

CORONAVIRUS

TIPS FOR PREVENTION

Stay home.

Wash your hands.

Frequently clean surfaces.

Wear a mask if you go out.

Stay 6 feet away from others in public.

HD.INGHAM.ORG | 517-887-4517

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF EAST LANSING
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Application

Notice is hereby given of a public hearing to be held by the East Lansing Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 7:00 pm. The hearing will be for the purpose of accepting comment on a proposed application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for a Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. The grant is requesting funds to reconstruct the tennis and pickleball courts at Patriarche Park, 960 Alton Road.

This hearing will occur electronically and a notice of the means of participation in that hearing will be published in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and any relevant Executive Orders. All interested persons will be given the opportunity to be heard and can find information on how to participate at: <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/2096/Public-Meeting-Notices-for-Electronic-Me>.

The meeting will also be available for public viewing online with closed captioning at <https://cityofeastlansing.civicweb.net/portal/>.

For additional information, contact Wendy Wilmers Longpre, Assistant Director of Parks, Recreation and Arts at (517) 319-6940.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk CP#20-132

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING
SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED MINUTES

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING WAS HELD VIA A ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING UNDER THE GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN’S EXECUTIVE ORDER 2020-75 ON TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Hayes, Clerk Aten, Treasurer Rodgers
Trustees: Broughton, Harris, McKenzie, Bankson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Gresens, Attorney

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD:
Meeting called to order by Supervisor Hayes.
Approved minutes of the meeting held on May 12, 2020.
Agenda approved as amended.
Approved Lansing Township’s Re-engagement Plan.
Approved budget amendment for account #810.
Approved Claims.
Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor
Susan L. Aten, Clerk CP#20-133

Marches, disturbances and protests in Lansing history

By BILL CASTANIER

On Feb. 2, 1996, Edward Swan, a 40-year-old African American man, died while in the Lansing City Jail. He was arrested and shackled after an attempted break-in. The 225-pound Swan was placed on his stomach in a holding cell and was under video surveillance. He died alone, unable to breathe.

Swan's death precipitated the formation of March for Justice, a community group seeking justice and changes in the Lansing Police Department. March for Justice, founded and led by the late Rev. Lester Stone, longtime pastor at Friendship Baptist Church in Lansing, conducted several peaceful marches to denounce racism, police harassment and misconduct.

The first march, on September 28, 1996, traveled from Lansing Sexton High School to the State Capitol, where 1,000 marchers listened to speakers for 90 minutes. Stone then led several smaller marches to Lansing City Hall, pledging to keep marching until there was police reform. It was also the beginning of a contentious relationship with then Mayor David Hollister.

This was not the first time the African-American community responded to police harassment. In February of 1964, Richard Letts, director of the Lansing Human Relations Council, told a church group "many of the elements which foment race riots are present in Lansing."

On Friday, June 19, 1964, a group of young African Americans coming home from a house party near Logan Street (now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard) were stopped by the police, according to George Davis, who was 17 at the time. Police reports say officers were responding to a fight at a party on Sycamore Street. One thing led to another and ultimately more than 700 mostly African Americans took to the street. Two police officers, including the police chief, received minor injuries. Seven men were arrested.

Davis said what happened that night was different from what was recorded in the newspaper. Davism who worked at the old Schmidt's, a grocery store on St. Joseph Street, and remembers standing with others to prevent the store's windows from being smashed. More than 130 police from area departments were called out.

A contemporaneous news article at

THE STATE JOURNAL HOME EDITION
U.S. Warbler Report
Lansing, East Lansing, Michigan, Saturday, June 20, 1964
ONE HUNDRED-TENTH YEAR
PRICE—TEN CENTS

700 Riot; Police Chief Hurt

Senator Ted Kennedy Injured in Air Crash

West Side Violence Is Quelled

Aide, Pilot Lose Lives; Two Hurt

Civil Rights Law By July 4 Is Aim

Districting Issue Back With Court




THE STATE JOURNAL HOME EDITION
U.S. Warbler Report
Lansing, East Lansing, Michigan, Monday, August 6, 1966
ONE HUNDRED-TWELFTH YEAR
PRICE—TEN CENTS

Police Curb Rioting Youths

U.S. Plane Loss Sets Record

Downtown In Uproar Five Hours

Moon Orbit Launch Slated for Tuesday

Whites Again Jeer Chicago Marchers

Cause Sought




the time said: "Hundreds of rioting Negroes resorted to mob violence on the city's west side Friday night."

The street in front of East Lansing City Hall was the site of a peaceful sit-in on May 24, 1965, resulting in the arrest of 59 community members, students and professors who were protesting the city's refusal to take action on an open housing policy. At the time, MSU President John Hannah was head of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. He provided university buses to transport the prisoners to Ingham County Jail. The arrestees were represented by Stuart Dunning, a Lansing attorney who had been retained by the Rev. John Duley and Frank Beeman, MSU professor and tennis coach.

On Aug. 7, 1966, an alleged fight on Washington Avenue on Lansing's north side resulted in a much more serious disturbance than Lansing's 1964 altercation. Throughout the night the disturbance escalated and more than 300 police officers were called in to assist Lansing Police. The disturbance continued the next night with a crowd of 200 youth being dispersed by tear gas, likely the first time it was used in Lansing.

At least four bystanders were injured by gunfire and two police vehicles were struck by what was called sniper fire. Twenty people, white and black, were arrested for charges including carrying weapons and shouting obscenities. A grocery store on Butler Boulevard was damaged and car windows at Sully's Drive-In on W. Saginaw Street were broken.

Public officials blamed outside influencers for precipitating the riot, including so-called "night cruisers"

THE STATE JOURNAL HOME EDITION
U.S. Warbler Report
Lansing, East Lansing, Michigan, Tuesday, August 9, 1966
ONE HUNDRED-TWELFTH YEAR
PRICE—TEN CENTS

Four Shot in Violent Night

Little Stir Created By March of Labor

Leaders' Appeals Ignored

Romney Hits City Rioting

House OK Of Rights




who would drive to Lansing to "cruise the gut" on Washington Avenue. Some city leaders proposed the city should build a drag strip for the "cruisers."

Lansing clergy played a prominent role in the riots, taking to the streets to calm the waters, and in subsequent meetings. Kenneth Faiver of Cristo Rey Church complained that police brutality "puts the officer in a deplorable image as far as the Negro is concerned."

After a community meeting with Mayor Max Murningham, civic leaders and clergy, held after the first night of the disturbance, police stopped using bayonets for crowd control.

In 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King, a large group of African Americans peaceful-

ly marched to the Capitol, while more than 1,000 marchers led by Robert L. Green at Michigan State University peacefully honored the spiritual leader's death.

These are only a sampling of race-related demonstrations held in the Lansing area. There are many more, including several actions by a group calling for MSU disinvestment in South Africa a demonstration led by MSU Student and member of the Little Rock Nine Ernie Green at an East Lansing Drug Store in the early 1960s, and several demonstrations and marches by Black Lives Matter.

(Bill Castanier, who is City Pulse's book editor, is president of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.)

'I'm Malcolm X'

Paul Birdsong is leading civil rights protests. Paul who?

Paul Birdsong didn't plan to attend last Sunday's protest in response to the police murder of George Floyd.

A week later, Birdsong, 34, has emerged as a vital and unyielding voice in Lansing, leading hundreds in peaceful daily protests at the state Capitol and facing off with Mayor Andy Schor on the mayor's doorstep. He draws proudly upon the principles of Malcolm X in the town where he grew up and got his first taste of racist brutality more than 90 years ago.

Birdsong said he went to Sunday's protest to protect his girlfriend, Sheretta Collins. The protest began peacefully, but it erupted around dusk into chaos. Police confronted protesters with clouds of tear gas. Before long, he got into a fight with a cop.

"He grabbed me first," Birdsong recalled. "I will punch you if you touch me. So, he grabbed me, and I swung. I'm not Martin Luther King, I'm Malcolm X."

It's a distinction Birdsong made pointedly at protests throughout the week.

After witnessing the chaos on Sunday, Birdsong decided to try out his own form of protest. With his hands behind his back, he laid on the ground and shouted "I can't breathe!" and "Loosen my handcuffs, please!" — the same words George Floyd shouted as he died.

"I just didn't think that anybody got the point for real," he explained. "So I came back on Monday and did that instead."

People saw Birdsong on the ground and joined in, despite the rain and cold. Five others lay down on the ground with him. The numbers have been steadily increasing since. At times the protesters number over 200.

On Thursday, the fourth straight night of protests, Birdsong looked out at a crowd of over 100 people.

"I thought, 'This makes me feel like I got work to do,'" he said. "And I better be careful to do it the right way. I have to be responsible and careful."

For guidance, Birdsong turned to one of his political heroes, Malcolm X, and decided, like Malcolm, that progress comes from militance, careful strategizing and a stubborn unwillingness to concede.

Like Malcolm X, Birdsong pulled himself out of a rough life on the streets of Lansing and in prison. When he was younger, he joined the Bloods, a pri-



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

Paul Birdsong (left of center, black shirt) leads protesters in a march on Moores River Drive en route to Lansing Mayor Andy Schor's home.

marily black street gang founded in Los Angeles. He was the self-admitted "runt" of his gang.

"I was a little, skinny kid, but they all followed behind me. By the time I got locked up, I ran where I was at. I wasn't all super huge," he explained. "I don't know why, man, but since I was a kid, people have gravitated towards me and followed me."

Birdsong described his younger self as mean, violent and hating everything around him. To make it worse, his dad instilled a "fight-fight-fight" attitude in him. Eventually, he racked up four different inmate ID numbers.

"The prison didn't offer me no counselors or anything," he said. "I grew up bad, and I changed myself."

Learning and growing is simple, he declared, as long as you dedicate yourself to it.

"I'm really good at cooking," he said. "How did I learn? I asked them to turn on the cooking channel in prison. I just listen to people and mimic them."

A decade out of prison, Birdsong spends much of his time talking with local youth, from personal experience, about the dangers of gang life. He said that the church has also urged him to help out because of his credibility and influence.

When he's not out in the streets, Birdsong lives in a home near Waverly Road and Mount Hope Avenue. He spends his downtime answering Facebook messages from new connections. He leads a fairly normal life, working a job in "transit logistics" which he declined to define, and watching over his

kids on the weekends. Sometimes, he goes out to speak at prisons in the area.

Last week, Birdsong worked diligently with fellow protesters to make sure the Lansing marches were safe and effective. They want their voices heard, but they don't want to cause violence.

"Malcolm X was never tear-gassed," Birdsong told protesters Friday. "The cops wouldn't dare shoot nothing at him. His people were armed to the teeth, and they knew the law. They held the cops accountable."

To keep protesters safe as they marched to Schor's house Saturday, Birdsong asked protesters to drive four cars to escort the crowd, two in front and two in back.

If the protesters had to cross an intersection, the cars in front would block it off for them. Then, the cars from the back would drive up to the front of the crowd to take their place. It was a game of vehicular leapfrog that ensured the protesters were never in harm's way.

Birdsong took another cue from Malcolm X: always keep a legally owned firearm or two around. "Don't worry. If somebody gets out of their truck, we're going to have to call an ambulance for them," he told a group of marchers. "If one of them pulls out a gun and you hear a boom, keep going. We can take care of it."

Yet Birdsong worked hard to make sure last week's protests stayed peaceful. When the crowd got too rowdy, he worked to calm them down. If they spoke over Schor, he would call for silence. Birdsong even banned smoking marijuana at the marches. When some-

one sparked up on the mayor's lawn, he had them put it out before they could get in a second puff.

Before a march begins, Birdsong makes sure everyone has a bottle of water in their hand. Dehydration having made him seeing stars on the first night, he wanted to make sure that others got enough.

Birdsong is leading a march of liberation, not conquest, but his acts recall the story of Alexander the Great pouring water out of a helmet, refusing to drink until his troops had water first.

Like Alexander's legions, Birdsong's supporters have stuck with him. After days of painful marching in a pair of Chuck Taylors, he received a pair of Nike Lebrons from his fellow marchers. The Converse shoes had left him with bruises and blisters.

"Look at these bruises," he said, showing off the damage to a group of people crowded around him. "This is what happens when you march in Chuck Taylors."

Throughout the week, protesters have provided pizza, fried chicken, chips and fruit too. With ample supplies, they are able to keep up their stamina on their long walks from the Capitol to Schor's house and back.

It's not every day you see hundreds of people munching on Little Caesar's on the street outside the mayor's residence, directly across from the Country Club of Lansing. The purposeful protesters seemed almost Photoshopped into the serene, suburban-style surroundings.

James ignoring media outside of Fox News, and why it matters

It started about a year ago or so, it being U.S. Senate candidate John James' open disdain toward any media that's not Fox News.

The Michigan Republicans' "rising star," John James, had a sold-out gathering of Mid-Michigan party faithful eating out of his hand.

Sitting in the back of the Crowne Plaza meeting room was me, the only reporter in the room, waiting to get a minute or two with the candidate. He hadn't announced for the U.S. Senate, yet, and there were rumors he may be looking at Congress or some other office. Could I get a minute or two with him?

After the program. Hold tight. Busy schedule. I waited by the exit just in case. He snuck out a different door. He had a sick kid at home. Or was it he was sick? It was one of the two.

Three days later, James announced for the U.S. Senate on Fox News. Frank Beckmann at WJR got him later in the day. Conservative talk show host Steve Gruber got him a week later.

No local talk show circuit. No media tour around the state. No meet and



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

greet. No nothing outside of a press release that some received and others did not.

A few months later was the Republican Mackinac Leadership Conference at the Grand Hotel. Oh, and John James was the Big Deal. He stood on porch, a halo three people deep of gawkers circling him.

Outside of Mike Pence showing up in a seven-car motorcade, John James was the story. But he didn't want to talk.

Republican friendly Detroit News columnist Ingrid Jacques shined him up with glowing prose. He agreed to one interview with MLive. And that's about it. All sorts of media ready and willing to talk with him. He was too busy.

And so it's gone. John James' disinterest in talking with the media has continued for a year. In 365 days, John James, the presumptive Republican U.S. Senate nominee, has done zero press conferences.

Let that sink in a minute. This is not hyperbole. This isn't an exaggeration.

Ever since he was an official U.S. Senate candidate on June 6, John James has done zero press conferences.

We're in the midst of a global pandemic. We've had protests in the

streets. John James has not only blown off media or avoided public events, his campaign has browbeaten the chosen few he has graced with his time with post-interview criticism.

Clearly, James is under no obligation to talk to anyone, but openly showing contempt for the working press sets a precedent.

This isn't like President Donald Trump, who treats reporters as a foil for his "Fake News" schtick. This isn't Terry Lynn Land in 2014 who trembled at the sight of a tape recorder.

James is ignoring the press and their tough questions altogether. No statewide candidate has employed this tactic in 20 years (maybe longer, but 20 years is as far back as I go).

This is a campaign taking message control to the extreme. James is counting on social media and paid TV/internet ads to broadcast his message, period. His campaign sees little value in traditional media.

You could say the campaign doesn't want James to say something he'll later regret (like being 2,000% behind Trump).

But James isn't even showing up on friendly formats. Gruber, who has enormous reach throughout West and Northern Michigan, has interviewed

the President of the United States as often as John James in the past year.

If James, who was 14 points down to U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, D-Bloomfield Twp., in the latest EPIC-MRA/Detroit Free Press poll is successful, the press corps can expect this to be the new normal. Campaigns and public officials shutting off the press, refusing to answer questions or being hostile when a tough one comes their way.

Because why bother? If you can get away with one-way social media posts and rare, carefully crafted interviews on specific topics, why do anything else?

Why show up in public or interact? Make people fall in love with a contrived "rising star" persona created in a nicely lit studio released carefully in selected bits and pieces.

Tucker Carlson did a segment with John James the day before he lost to Debbie Stabenow in 2018 titled, "Media ignoring GOP Senate hopeful John James?"

Eighteen months later, the script has flipped. "GOP Senate hopeful John James ignores media."

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

Birdsong

from page 11

At the end of each night, Birdsong made sure to add every newcomer on Facebook, helping to build a network of people who post about the protests, livestream them and share articles about them the next day.

To Birdsong, these are the people who really matter.

"People keep coming because of the passion and the cause. It's not me," he said. "I don't really have anything to do with it. I'm probably just the first one they've seen stand by himself in front of a group of cops."

He is wary of being given too much credit for this movement.

"I was just the first one to lay down," he said. "When people saw that, they got involved. Then they see more than one person doing it, then other people join in and then other people. It's gaining momentum."

His only complaint about his current situation is that he only gets to see his kids on the weekend.

"You know where I've been this weekend? Right here," he said, pointing at the ground. "I miss them, and they miss me."

In the coming days and weeks, Birdsong and the masses of people who joined him will be waiting for Schor to respond to their demands. Among them are weekly mentorship programs for black kids in each side of the city, the reopening of Lansing's two Shabazz academies, greater funding for the Black Child and Family Institute, de-escalation and non-bias training sessions for the police that are open for public viewing and more mental health professionals involved in policing — all to be paid for with money from the police and public services budget.

Until those demands are met, as Birdsong has said all week, "We'll be back here the next day, the next day, the next day and the day after that."

— COLE TUNNINGLEY

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Coping with COVID: A photo essay



Scott Keith, the president and CEO of Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority (which runs the stadium), stands inside an empty Cooley Law School Stadium on June 1. All Lansing Lugnuts games, and other special events, are on hold due to COVID-19.

ALL PHOTOS BY NICOLE RICO

Farther apart, please

A group photo of greater Lansing in lockdown

Wherever there's a get-together, there's a photographer urging everyone to cram into the frame for "just one more." Move closer in!

You smile at the wrong time, mill around awkwardly, smile again. Are we done? Then it's back to the chips and beer. You smell like Aunt Frieda's perfume for a while, but it wears off.

The years burnish those annoying group photos into irreplaceable records. You begin to measure life's short span by a series of gatherings with family and friends — all too few.

The album that follows is the opposite of all that. The pandemic of 2020 was no get-together. It was the ultimate stay-apart.

Photographer Nicole Rico has spent the past several weeks trying to catch the strange spirit of a time Lansing has not experienced since 1918.

Barren streets, "closed" signs, mask-wearing figures furtively slipping in and out, grabbing take-out or a porch package and disappearing back into the house — those are the dominant images of the spring of 2020, when COVID-19 pandemic reached its first peak.

At the height of quarantine, under "shelter at home" orders from Gov. Grechen Whitmer, ducks openly walked the streets downtown. Street dust gathered on empty patio tables. You could ride a bike up and down Capitol Avenue in mid-afternoon, wrong way, diagonally, crosswise, without a care. At the malls,

in the neighborhoods, intrepid walkers encountered time-frozen images out of a post-apocalyptic movie.

In the middle of June, the City Pulse box outside the Golden Harvest Restaurant still displays a cover image from late March: a masked face and the words "It's Here."

Until the city began to open up in late May, the only significant street life in Lansing came in the form of raucous anti-lockdown protests, complete with Trump signs, Confederate flags and repulsive effigies of the governor as Hitler.

Knowing that the lockdown was a global phenomenon — a condition shared with people in London, Milan, Moscow, Beijing and Mumbai — only made it more surreal.

Monday, the return of dining-in at restaurants and bars marked the latest phase of reopening in Lansing. Nobody knows whether this extraordinary experience is over or we are only getting a reprieve until the virus roars back.

These photographs are unlikely to be treasured, but they may help with a more basic function: to remind our incredulous future selves, and our kids, that all of this weirdness really did happen.

They may also help us to get back together, with extra appreciation, when the time is right, to crowd in with the gang so closely that Aunt Frieda's perfume takes a week to wear off.

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO



Nicole Rico is a Lansing-based photographer specializing in fine art, photo journalism and commercial projects. View her work at nicoricophoto.com



This project is paid for by readers like you through contributions to the CityPulse Fund for Community Journalism. To contribute, please go to lansingcitypulse.com/donation.

SIGNS OF OUR TIME



Since the onset of the pandemic, new signage spread across commercial spots everywhere. From Perry to Lansing and everywhere in between — nonessential businesses have been either fully closed or only open for curbside pick up. Some have real estate signs in windows, due to permanent closure. These photos were captured throughout May and early June. (From the top, L to R): Schuler Books & Music, Frandor Deli (now closed), NCG Cinemas, Lansing Urgent Care (Haslett), Perry VFW Post 4063, Target (Okemos).



DRIVE THRU EVERYTHING



While area restaurants and retail outlets temporarily closed due to the pandemic, other businesses had employees put on masks and changed the way they operated. Drive-thrus have been packed and others even set up makeshift outdoor sales areas. These images were shot May 19-20. (From top to bottom, L to R): Sparrow FastCare Frandor, Preuss Pets, Lansing Mall, Eastside Fish Fry & Grill, Best Buy (Okemos).

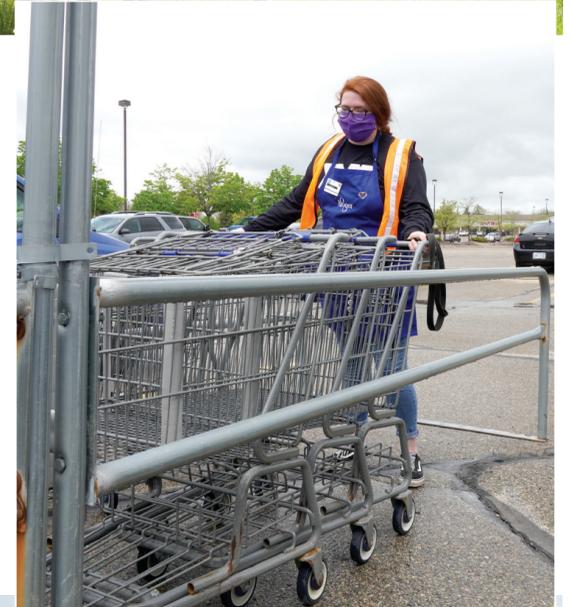
THE NEW NORMAL



Page 16:
(Top Left): The Cheese People set up shop May 23 at the Meridian Township Farmers Market. The event started a couple of weeks back with social distancing practices in place, and plenty of masks and gloves.

(Left): Motorists drive past the Lansing Mall on May 23 wearing masks inside their vehicle. While some refuse to wear personal protective equipment inside area businesses, others go above and beyond.

(Bottom Left): Customers line up on May 23 at Van Atta's Greenhouse and Flower Shop in Haslett. As the weather warmed up, cabin fever led many locals to work in their yards causing long lines at the full-service garden center.



Page 17:
(Top right): Rod and Mary Sickles dine May 20 at the edge of the Olive Garden parking lot in Okemos. With indoor dining at a halt, them and others have been seen tailgating with takeout orders in parking lots across the region.

(Left): Meridian Township Police presence is seen at the Meridian Township Farmers Market.

(Right): A Kroger employee works through the pandemic, collecting carts while wearing PPE on May 23.

(Bottom): Since re-opening during COVID-19, King Kone in Perry, as seen here on May 23, has steadily served long lines that stretch down South M-52.



SUMMER BEGINS



(Top): The increasingly warm weather has brought about an influx of beach goers and sun seekers, as seen here, relaxing and swimming at Lake Lansing Park South on May 24.

(Middle): El Oasis, a takeout hotspot on Lansing's east side, has stayed busy throughout the pandemic. This was May 23. Its Okemos and Haslett locations have also remained open.

(Left): Masked shoppers browse the Meridian Township Farmers Market.



(Bottom): Locals at Groesbeck Golf Course hit the green on May 23. Gov. Whitmer allowed courses to reopen in late April.



WORKING FROM HOME



(Top): On May 26, Lansing Mayor Andy Schor works from his home office, while his children also do school work across the house in the den. The mayor said he does have to frequent his proper workplace office, but has spent ample time Zooming from his home.

TAKING TO THE STREETS



(Top left): Dan Stokes of Salem Township dons his red MAGA hat while protesting stay at home orders on May 20 near the Capitol.

(Top middle): Downtown Lansing has been a hotspot for multiple protests. From the May 20 protest about needing a haircut during a pandemic, to police brutality following the death of George Floyd. Signs were also hung downtown remembering locals who've lost their lives due to COVID-19.

(Top right): A protester walks down Beech Street in East Lansing during an early afternoon protest June 7 for George Floyd.

RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL REEMERGE



(Top): Jon Howard, Flat, Black & Circular manager, reopened the vinyl and CD shop on June 1 after weeks of being closed. He and customers are required to wear masks, and customer capacity is limited to 10 people.



(Right top): Peanut Barrel bartender Jessica Bunner pours drinks on June 5 for guests waiting outside on the patio. According to its management, the East Lansing fixture only closed for two business days amid the coronavirus outbreak.

(Right bottom): Larry and Kathy Gut decided to dine out for the first time in months at Mitchell's Fish Market in Eastwood Towne Center. Larry just completed his first round of chemo the same day, June 8.



(Bottom): Dewey Lawrence, an employee at Schuler Books & Music, rings up customers on June 8 from behind newly installed glass shields. The store, located inside the Meridian Mall, has been open for curbside pickup throughout the pandemic, but reopened its doors to the public Monday. The store is limiting customers to 50.



The civil rights protest in photos



Photos by Skyler Ashley of City Pulse

(Above): Paul Birdsong (center, arms stretched out) leads protesters down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, June 6.

(Far Right): A group of protesters with signs and banners reading "Black Lives Matter" stands outside of East Lansing City Hall on June 2.



(Right): A protester with a Black Lives Matter flag helps block traffic while protesters march on St. Joseph Highway on June 6.



(Far Right): Protesters march peacefully on Capitol Avenue, May 31.



(Right): A woman walks on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard with her daughter on June 6, carrying a sign reading, "All mothers were summoned when George Floyd called out for his mama."





Photos by Skyler Ashley of City Pulse

(Top): Protesters sit outside of Mayor Schor's home on June 7.

(Right): Paul Birdsong (center, with red armband) discusses the protesters' demands with Lansing Mayor Andy Schor.

(Bottom): Protesters lay down in the street on Capitol Avenue on June 7 as part of a demonstration decrying the death of George Floyd at the hands of police.



ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Shock and aftershock

Symphony's new season offers big old bangs and new echoes

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Is it a mirage or the real deal? Only time will tell.

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra's 2020-'21 line-up, announced today,

For the whole 2020-2021 line-up, go to lansingsymphony.org

is packed with new music by young American composers and major blockbusters from the likes of

Beethoven, Brahms, Shostakovich and Richard Strauss, along with two world premieres from composer-in-residence Patrick Harlin.

Among the top-drawer soloists scheduled to perform are fiery pianist Jonathan Biss, MSU cello master Suren Bagratuni and multi-talented violinist-actress Lucia Micarelli, famous for the HBO series "Treme."

From the near side of a pandemic summer, all that promise shimmers like an oasis. Maestro Timothy Muffitt is diving in as if it were 20 feet of cool water.

"We have no idea what things are going to be like in the fall," Muffitt said. "I feel like, 'Let's be ready to put our best foot forward,' and that's to go full symphonic, right? Let's be ready."

To no one's surprise, the orchestra's 2019-'20 season finale, pushed to June 26 in hopes of a reprieve from the COVID-19 virus, has been canceled.

Consolation will come, if the fates allow, Oct. 9, as the orchestra celebrates Beethoven's 250th birthday with his Symphony No. 7 and the madly bashing "Coriolanus" Overture.

It's the kickoff of what Muffitt called a "mini-festival" celebrating the composer who pushed the decorous formulas of Western music into a rough-and-tumble arena where passionate individual expression took over, and still rules.

"I wanted to do something that

wasn't just playing the most famous pieces," Muffitt said. "I wanted to look at what led up to him and what was the aftershock."

The reverberations will come from Georgia composer Carlos Simon's magisterial "But Fate Now Conquers," inspired by an entry in Beethoven's notebook. Simon described the music as "a mix between Beethoven's voice and my voice." The pre-tremors will be provided by guest pianist Konrad Hao, playing Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Minor.

A major reverberation is set for the second concert of the season, Nov. 7 — "Watermark," a piano concerto by the youngest musician ever to win a Pulitzer Prize for music, Caroline Shaw.

Among many other things, "Watermark" is a response to Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto, and even dares to imagine what happens in the universe after those hammering final Beethoven chords are over. The piece was premiered in Seattle in 2017 by world-renowned pianist (and Beethoven specialist) Jonathan Biss, who followed up with the Beethoven third concerto, of course.

Muffitt asked Biss if he would bring both works to Lansing.

"It never hurts to ask," Muffitt said. "He was available and he wanted to do it." The concert will finish with an epic tapestry of Brahms' First Symphony, sometimes called "Beethoven's Tenth" because the music is the fruit of Brahms' long and agonizing effort to follow Beethoven.

The combination promises one of the more memorable nights in the orchestra's history.

"It's all anyone can ask for," Muffitt said. "Two extraordinary masterworks, a great guest artist, a beautiful piece by a living composer and a thread that runs through the whole concert. It's just perfect."

Muffitt grouped the first two orchestral concerts, along with the October entry in the LSO's chamber series, a Beethoven "mini-festival."

The chamber concert will feature



Courtesy photo



Photo by Kait Moreno



Courtesy photo

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra's 2020-'21 season, announced this week, includes music by American composers (left to right) Carlos Simon, Caroline Shaw and the LSO's composer-in-residence, Patrick Harlin.

string quartets by Beethoven and Mendelsohn.

"There's not a lot of time in only three concerts to say much, but I think we're going to say a lot," he said.

The Jan. 9 concert, anchored by Antonin Dvorak's Sixth Symphony, will feature MSU cello master Suren Bagratuni playing a work dear to his heart, Dmitri Shostakovich's searing first cello concerto. The theme, implicit in much of Beethoven's music as well, is the tug of war between the individual soul and the authoritarian state. At the same concert, LSO's composer in residence, Patrick Harlin, will provide a world premiere work — the first of two next season.

(Muffitt plans to program "River of Doubt," Harlin's tropical nightmare tapestry scheduled for this month's canceled MasterWorks concert, for some time in 2021-'22.)

The LSO's March 20 concert, anchored by Robert Schumann's Fourth Symphony, will feature violinist Lucia Micarelli, a post-modern, multi-talented artist who also sings and acts and is known to many HBO viewers as the busker Annie Talarico in the "Treme" series. Like a few thousand other people, Muffitt was floored by Micarelli's grand YouTube mashup of the Sibelius Violin Concerto and Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir."

The sparks Micarelli threw around in the opening cadenza gave Muffitt an irresistible urge to hear her play the whole concerto, minus the

Zeppelin.

"Her classical violin playing is absolutely magnificent," Muffitt said. "She's a unique voice, almost without limit on the violin." The concert will open with a bang: John Adams' "The Chairman Dances," which Muffitt called "one of the greatest hits of the 20th century."

For a big finale May 20, the LSO will tackle Richard Strauss's "Also Sprach Zarathustra" — the whole thing, not just the "2001: A Space Odyssey" part — Tchaikovsky's throbbing First Piano Concerto, and another world premiere by Harlin.

Taken as a whole, the season promises a lush orchestral oasis, but it's hard to keep it in focus in the haze of uncertainty gripping the world in 2020.

But Muffitt feels that even if the music sifts through his fingers for another year, just putting a slate of music is a "catalyst for thought."

"I feel like Lansing has always had a strong sense of community, but I feel like, all across the globe, more and more, we're going to be circling the wagons and getting an even stronger community focus," he said.

"We, as the Lansing Symphony, want to help develop community pride and create a conversation, and what better conversation starter than to put some ideas about music out there for people to enjoy and listen and be inspired by?"

Favorite Things

Tim Lane and his art collection

Tim Lane is an athletic specialist for the City of East Lansing and the assistant coordinator of the East Lansing Art Festival. He is a husband and father. Aside from that, Lane is also an artist, writer and poet—and his favorite thing fully reflects that creative passion.

My wife and I have lived on the East Side of Lansing for 25 years. We rented for a couple of years before buying a house. Once the house was bought, we began collecting artwork.

In the summer of 2017, the sink in our upstairs bathroom malfunctioned. Over the course of an unsuspecting night, water filled the upstairs and began to work its way to the ground floor and basement through the ducts, outlets, stairs and ceiling. The place was a water park, and we were ultimately displaced for six months.

Miraculously, very little of the artwork hanging on our walls was damaged. A few pieces were. Several pieces had to go. Over the years, our personal art collection has become one of my favorite things.

Our collection began with a couple of pieces I had inherited from my aunt who was a graphic artist. One year, early on, we spent our income tax return on a series of collages our good friend, Detroit artist Teresa Petersen, had made. We established a relationship with Patrick Turner and began to collect his work, as well, around this time. Turner was an artist from Milwaukee who had won awards at the East Lansing Art Festival.

Sometimes artists trade work. As an artist, myself, I have traded work with artists who have become some of my good friends. We have a Travis Black in our dining room, an Aaron Curtner in our living room — both local, homegrown artists. I have a beautiful allegorical painting of a winter woods in my work office that was painted by Mike Clark of Silver Spring, Maryland.

One of our largest paintings is a painting by Jayme Theis. Jayme and I had a two-person show at Otherwise Art Gallery in Old Town back in 2003. When the show ended, Jayme and I traded. The trade



commemorates my first exhibition of paintings. Prior to that, my first show had been an exhibition of collages at Todd Mack's, where I befriended Alison Alfredson, another exceptional local artist.

One day, a large package arrived. It turned out to be a portrait of me that our friend, Mike Clark, had painted from a photo. I had no idea he had been working on it. I was speechless.

Our most recent acquisitions are two prints by Pete Martens, a local printmaker. I bought them for my wife on our 25th wedding anniversary. One print echoes our love of Lake Michigan — the other depicts the Michigan State University Chapel, where we were married.

When our house flooded, we had to pack quickly. There was no time for a ton of organization. Boxes were stuffed in various safe places. For the past three years, we have been searching for the box where we stored a sculptural piece by local artist Ingrid Blixt. We finally found it just last week. It was in the attic. Once on the upright piano in the living room, it is now on the Art Deco chifforobe in our dining room.

(Favorite Things was edited by Rich Tupica)

New upscale apartment complex opens in downtown Lansing

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Metro Place Apartments, a newly opened mixed-use development owned by Lawton Group first announced back in 2017, is officially open for business. Marketed primarily as upscale living for young professionals, it replaced the old YMCA building, which was in operation from 1951 to 2003 and was demolished to make way for Metro Place.

"We purchased this property in 2007, so Metro Place is the fruition of many years of planning, regrouping, long hours and hard work," said Julie Lawton-Essa, head of Lawton Group. "I think the building looks beautiful and truly revitalizes this part of downtown Lansing."

Metro Place is located right next to Reutter Park on Lenawee Street. It's a quick jog away from the Capitol building, Lansing Community College and all the restaurants and bars downtown has to offer. While it already has tenants moved in, there's still a lot of space for new applicants. There are 145 units and six different options which range from studio apartments, with the smallest at 436 square feet, dubbed "The Council," to 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom configurations, of which the largest is 1353 square feet, known as "The President." Rent ranges from \$890 for the cheapest studio apartment to \$2,000 for the most expensive 2-bedroom option.

Apartments feature wood-style vinyl floors, polished, dark granite style kitchen counters, walkout balconies and new GE appliances, including



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

The entrance hallway and kitchen area of Metro Place Apartments' studio option.

Metro Place Apartments

301 W. Lenawee St., Lansing
(517) 333-1635
For more information or to fill out an application, visit:
metroplaceapartmentslansing.com



a washer and dryer. The units also have energy efficient features, including LED lighting and climate control heating/cooling. Community-wide amenities for residents include bike racks, on-site management and "rapid response" maintenance request service, free dry-cleaning pickup and delivery and trash and recycling, among others.

The retail space on the first floor has yet to be occupied, but Julie Lawton-Essa, head of Lawton Group, said they have been talking to several potential businesses, such as Michigan-based coffee shops.

Tenants are responsible for the cost of electricity, water and sewage.

Internet is available in the lobby, but it is not a provided amenity across each apartment. Residents can also pay \$35 per month to access a storage unit, and \$65 per month for an assigned parking spot. Pets are welcome on designated floors, with certain breed restrictions, and come at a cost of a one-time \$500 fee and then a \$50 monthly fee. Metro Place is currently offering a referral program, which gives a resident \$300 off next month's rent if they refer a friend who becomes a fellow resident.



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

The living room area and kitchen island of Metro Place Apartments' premium 2-bedroom apartment.

Michigan libraries slowly reopen with new restrictions

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Last week, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued an executive order giving libraries across Michigan the green light to reopen on Monday. Wait — not so fast! You will be able to get a haircut before you can check out a book.

After talking last week with the head librarians at the Library of Michigan and at the East Lansing and Capital Area District Library systems, I learned that reopening won't come overnight, but will be more like watching tomato plants grow.

Generally, libraries will follow rules similar to those given to retailers, which require social distancing, employee and customer safety and myriad other reopening requirements.

But as CADL chief Scott Duimstra, Kristin Shelley, East Lansing chief librarian; and state librarian Randy Riley all agree: "Things are not going back to normal any time soon."

Libraries across Michigan have canceled all in-person events for an undetermined time, and those cuddly corners for children are all but closed with the stuffed animals packed away. All library patrons will now be required to wear masks.

Duimstra said there is a lot of work to do before libraries can be hands on again.

"We've been closed for three months with no employees or patrons in the building. We have to install things like sneeze barriers and arrange for social distancing," he said.

He also said all CADL system's 250 employees at 13 branches will have to undergo safety training.

A major problem for libraries will be arranging for the books and other media to be returned.

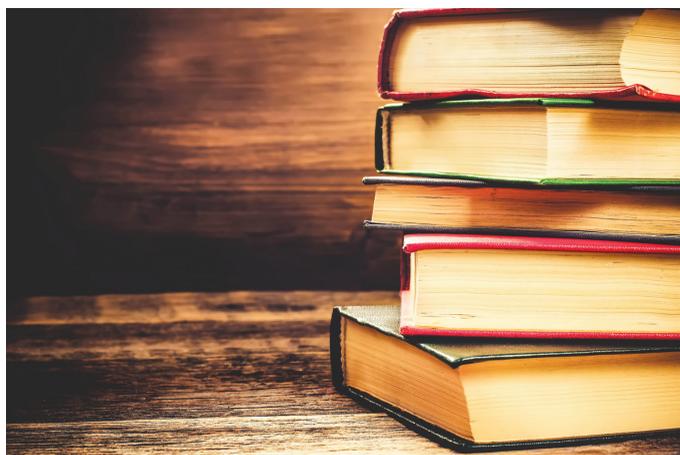
"All returned material will have to be quarantined for 72 hours to assure there is no active virus," Duimstra said.

Shelley said space is a problem for the East Lansing Library when it comes to quarantining books and to assure employees safety.

"There are narrow hallways and desks are close together," she said. "The maker space and public meeting space will be closed. The bookstore, staffed by volunteers, will also be closed for the time being," Shelley said.

One problem with reopening might be the scarcity of personal protective equipment, or PPE.

"PPE is very expensive and difficult to find," Shelley said. "We also will need mouse and keyboard covers for patron



Check online with your favorite library to see when it reopens, and what restrictions it might have in place.

safety."

Both library systems expect to spend the first week reorganizing and reconfiguring their buildings. Barring any problems, both systems will first implement contactless pickup. The East Lansing Library will implement curbside pickup Monday and mail delivery the following week.

The CADL Library systems will allow patrons to begin returning books and media on Monday with curbside or door pickup commencing on June 22 with limited hours. Check both system's websites for detailed information.

"We will have contactless door pickup or pop-the-trunk to help create a safe space for employees," Duimstra said. CADL and East Lansing libraries are requiring employees to self-administer health screening tests.

"People are apprehensive about coming back," he said. That may be a good thing, since patrons will be limited to 30 minutes in library buildings after they are allowed back. Both library systems are fluid about the timing for limited and full reopening plans, which require extensive reconfiguration.

Duimstra said it's important to real-

ize libraries have some unique circumstances — the most obvious being patrons take books and media with them and then return them. Also, CADL libraries generally have patron computers on top of each other, which will change dramatically.

Local libraries have turned to the Library of Michigan and the Michigan Library Association for advice on reopening. Both organizations have been working with the governor's office on reopening, sharing experiences and ideas on Zoom. There are an estimated 650 public libraries in Michigan and another 397 academic and Tribal libraries.

"Libraries are so different," said Debbie Mikula, executive director of the Michigan Library Association. "All libraries have to abide by federal and state regulations including the open meetings act and privacy guidelines."

Mikula said libraries have to deal with falling revenues, including potential reductions in funding from state aid, the penal fund and millages.

State librarian Riley said all libraries will have to consider whether stacks will be open, and if librarians will go back

to a time when they retrieved books on call for patrons. Also, under review is how Libraries will be able to allow safe access to archival material.

Librarians universally agree, according to Mikula, that libraries will have to accelerate "shifting resources to a digital age." By this she means high-speed digital access for patrons.

"It isn't an option anymore — it's a must have. We learned during this crisis so many people don't have digital access at home," Duimstra said.

During the crisis, both the East Lansing Library and CADL left their Wi-Fi on 24 hours a day, so people could pull into the parking lots to access the web.

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Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Take Two"—one of each to connect.

By Matt Jones

Across

- 1 "Interstate Love Song" band, briefly
- 4 "Fiddler on the Roof" dance
- 8 Frenzied
- 14 Some old Chryslers
- 16 Former Georgian president Shevardnadze
- 17 *Pioneering video game company founded in 1972
- 18 Egyptian goddess of love
- 19 Like almost all restaurant orders these days
- 20 Plate
- 22 Lennon's second wife
- 23 *Japanese variation on a frozen dessert

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14			15					16				
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59			60	61			62		63	64		
65							66					
67							68				69	

- 56 Freudian error
 - 59 Is untruthful with
 - 62 *Former TLC reality show about tattooists
 - 65 Candle material
 - 66 "Go easy on me"
 - 67 Bequeaths
 - 68 Show that moved from Fox to ABC, familiarly
 - 69 "I just finished the puzzle!" exclamation
- Down**
- 1 "Get a move on, Mitters!"
 - 2 "The Wizard of Oz" dog
 - 3 Down-to-earth
 - 4 ___ polloi
 - 5 Sash for a kimono
 - 6 "Amazing" magician famous for debunking
 - 7 PC character system used for some "art"
 - 8 Laugh from Beavis
 - 9 "When Your Child Drives
- You Crazy" author LeShan
 - 10 Partner of paste
 - 11 Lake between two states
 - 12 Richie Rich's metallic, robotic maid
 - 13 Format for Myst, back then
 - 15 Emulate Pavlov's dogs
 - 21 ___ Brothers Records (longtime label for "Weird Al" Yankovic)
 - 24 Invention of new words
 - 25 "House Hunters" cable channel
 - 26 Did a Cuban ballroom dance
 - 27 Cassowary's cousin
 - 28 Kennel noises
 - 29 Chef Matsuhisa who co-owns a restaurant with Robert De Niro
 - 33 Be really mad
 - 34 Comm. from some translators
 - 36 Characteristic of Schonberg's music
 - 37 "Boys for Pele" singer Amos
 - 38 "It's either hunt ___ hunted"
 - 40 "Just joking around"
 - 41 Publisher's multi-digit ID
 - 46 Macaroni shapes
 - 48 "Mr. Mojo ___" (repeated words in The Doors' "L.A. Woman")
 - 49 Nick of "Cape Fear"
 - 50 Dasani rival
 - 51 Handle with skill
 - 52 Fancy way of saying "feet"?
 - 53 Covered with green creepers
 - 57 "Lost ___ Mancha" (2002 documentary)
 - 58 It's seen near the hyphen
 - 60 Traffic sign warning
 - 61 Pull along
 - 63 It may come after long
 - 64 Blanc behind Bugs

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Answers Page 31

SUDOKU

Beginner

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

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 31

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

June 10-16, 2020

ARIES (March 21-April 19): During her 90 years on the planet, actor and singer Marlene Dietrich reinvented herself numerous times. She had superb insight into the nature of shifting rhythms, and a knack for gauging the right moment to adapt and transform. Good timing, she said, came naturally to people like her, as well as for "aerialists, jugglers, diplomats, publicists, generals, prize-fighters, revolutionists, financiers, and lovers." I would add one further category to her list: the Aries tribe. Make maximum use of your talent in the coming weeks.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Author and theologian Frederick Buechner writes, "There is treasure buried in the field of every one of our days, even the bleakest or dullest, and it is our business to keep our eyes peeled for it." In alignment with current astrological potentials, Taurus, I'll name that as your key theme. More than usual, breakthroughs and revelations and catalysts are likely to be available to you in the midst of the daily slog—even when you're feeling bored. Make it your business to be on high alert for them.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): According to novelist Octavia E. Butler, "Positive obsession is about not being able to stop just because you're afraid and full of doubts." That's what I wish for you in the coming weeks, Gemini: positive obsession. It's also what I expect! My analysis of the astrological omens suggests that you will have the pluck and craftiness necessary to veer away from murky, disturbing versions of obsession. Instead, you'll embrace the exhilarating kind of obsession that buoys your spirit in moments of uncertainty. I foresee you making progress on your most important labor of love.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): William Thomson, also known as Lord Kelvin (1824-1907), was a Cancerian physicist and mathematician who contributed to the understanding of thermodynamics and other areas of scientific and engineering knowledge. Despite his considerable intelligence, however, he was myopic about the possibility that humans might one day fly through the air while seated inside of machines. In a 1902 interview—a year before the Wright Brothers' breakthrough experiment—he declared, "No aeroplane will ever be successful." I suspect you could be on the verge of passing through a Lord Kelvin phase, Cancerian. You may at times be highly insightful and at other times curiously mistaken. So I urge you to be humbly confident and confidently humble!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Author Marianne Williamson tells us, "Spiritual growth involves giving up the stories of your past so the universe can write a new one." And what exactly does it mean to "give up the stories of your past"? Here's what I think: 1. Don't assume that experiences you've had before will be repeated in the future. 2. Don't assume that your ideas about the nature of your destiny will always be true. 3. Even good things that have happened before may be small and limited compared to the good things that could happen for you in the years to come. 4. Fully embrace the truth that the inherent nature of existence is endless transformation—which is why it's right and natural for you to ceaselessly outgrow the old plot lines of your life story and embrace new ones.

VRIGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Philosopher and astrologer Marsilio Ficino wrote, "Mortals ask God for good things every day, but they never pray that they may make good use of them." I hope that in the coming weeks, you Virgos will disprove that cynical view of human beings. As I see it, you will be more likely than usual to actually receive the blessings you ask for. And I hope—in fact, I predict—that when you receive the blessings, you will then aggressively seek the help of God or Life or your deepest wisdom to make good use of them.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): I was hiking under a blue sky in a favorite natural location: the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, just north of San Francisco, where sublime vistas provide views

of ocean and mountain. Although I was in a good mood, at one point I spied empty Budweiser cans amidst the wild jewelflowers. "What kind of nature-hater was so careless as to despoil this wonderland?" I fumed. For a few moments I was consumed with rage and forgot where I was. By the time I recovered my bearings, the bobcat and red-tailed hawk I'd previously been observing had disappeared. That made me sad. My anger was justified but wasteful, irrelevant, and distracting. It caused me to lose touch with some glorious beauty. Don't be like me in the coming days, Libra. Keep your eyes on the prize.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "I have more memories than if I were a thousand years old," wrote poet Charles Baudelaire. Was he bragging or complaining? Did the weight of his past feel like a burden or did it exhilarate him and dynamize his creative powers? I'm hoping that in the coming weeks your explorations of your past will feel far more like the latter—a gift and blessing that helps you understand aspects of your history that have always been mysterious or murky.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you're primed to navigate your way through a sweetly gritty, tenderly transformative, epically meaningful turning point in the history of your relationship with your favorite collaborator or collaborators. If that sounds too intense, you could at least accomplish an interesting, stimulating, educational shift in the way you fit together with your best ally or allies. It's up to you, Sagittarius. How much love and intimacy and synergy can you handle? I won't judge you harshly if you'd prefer to seek the milder version of deepening right now. Besides, you'll probably get a chance to go further later this year.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Actor Emma Thompson tells us, "I wish I wouldn't have to say this, but I really like human beings who have suffered. They're kinder." Adding to what she observes, I'll say that for many people, their suffering has also made them smarter and more soulful and more compassionate. Not always, but often, it's the pain they've suffered that has helped turn them into thoughtful companions who know how to nourish others. I urge you to make a special point to converse with people like this in the near future. In my estimation, you will benefit from intense doses of empathetic nurturing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Lake Elsinore is a city in southwestern California. Last spring, torrential rains there caused a "superbloom" of poppies. Millions of the golden-orange wildflowers covered many acres of Walker Canyon. They attracted another outbreak of beauty: thousands of painted lady butterflies, which came to visit. The magnificent explosion was so vast, it was visible from a satellite high above the earth. I wouldn't be surprised if you're experiencing a metaphorical superbloom of your own right now, Aquarius. I hope you will find constructive ways to channel that gorgeous fertility.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Lucumi is an Afro-American religion with Yoruban roots. Its practitioners worship their ancestors, and seek regular contact and communion with them. According to Lucumi priestess Luisah Teish, "Sometimes the ancestors deem certain information so important that they send it to the subconscious mind without being consciously asked." It's my belief that all of us, whether or not we're members of the Lucumi religion, can be in touch with the spirits of our ancestors if we would like to be—and receive useful guidance and insight from them. The coming weeks will be a time when you Pisceans are especially likely to enjoy this breakthrough. It's more likely to happen if you have an intention to instigate it, but it may come to pass even if you don't seek it.

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

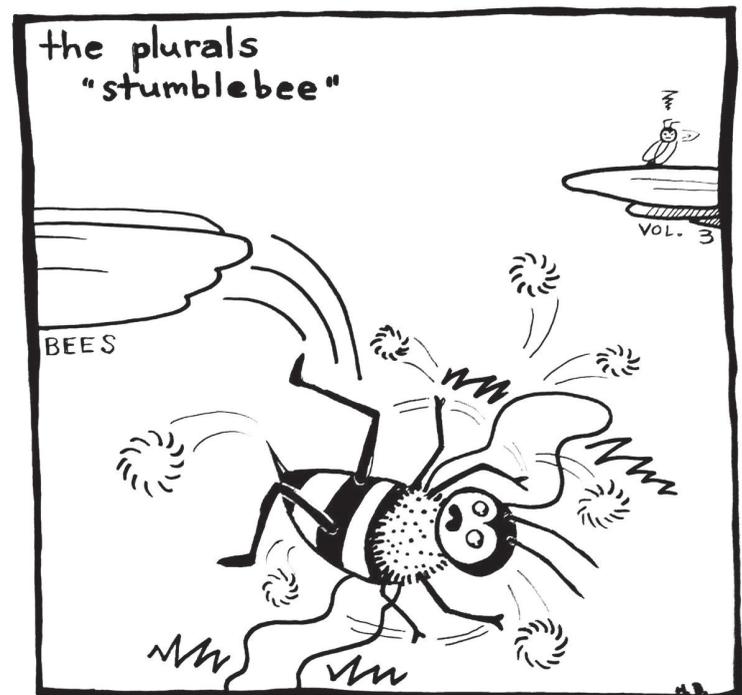
TURN IT DOWN!

BY RICH TUPICA

A LOOK AT NEW, LOCALLY-MADE MUSIC



Conspicuous Bystanders "Hand in Hand"



The Plurals "Stumblebee" EP

NEW SINGLE FROM CONSPICUOUS BYSTANDERS, AND A SURPRISE EP FROM THE PLURALS

This week, *Turn it Down!* dishes dirt on new releases hot off the press from two local bands. The first is a soulful digital single, the second is a raw EP recorded remotely while all band members separately self-quarantined.

REVIEW: Conspicuous Bystanders "Hand in Hand" (digital single)

Back in April, Lansing's own Conspicuous Bystanders dropped its latest single, "Hand in Hand." The moody yet groovy track exceeds the five-minute mark, allowing the band in all of its sonic glory. Guitarist Emmet McGuire kicks off with some distorted riffin' and a little hooky, John Frusciante-esque guitar noodling. From there, lead vocalist Jenna Roark commands the track with her ominous, soulful snarl. The rhythm section of drummer Zachary McKinney and bassist Duncan Tarr hold it down with expert-level precision. A strength of this local outfit is its ability to shift gears seamlessly within one track. They let the song breathe and go where the mood takes it. "Hand to Hand" may start as a low-key funky jam, but then builds into an ethereal Pink Floyd's "The Wall"-style ballad, before swiftly exploding into rock 'n roll hugeness that would make "Use Your Illusion"-era Slash proud. The Conspicuous Bystanders don't follow the

rules on this single while simultaneously sounding tighter than ever. If you're ready to rock, this single is on all streaming platforms.

The Plurals "Stumblebee" EP: Tommy McCord explains new release

Last week, The Plurals dropped a surprise new EP, "Stumblebee." The six-track digital release (recorded remotely by each band member and then mixed together later) was intentionally unveiled on June 5, the day Bandcamp.com allowed artists to keep all proceeds from the download. However, The Plurals have decided to donate the funds to Black Lives Matter Michigan / Liberation PAC. The release is posted on theplurals.bandcamp.com and gtrecords.bandcamp.com. Tommy McCord (guitar/vocals) offered some insight on the new release and what his band's been thinking about this year.

"A little over a year ago, we released the first in a series of EPs that we plan to comprise the fifth full-length Plurals album, 'BEEES,'" McCord explained. "Plurals drummer Hattie had a baby last summer, so we took a break and reconvened in the fall to release the second volume, which features a song about police brutality called 'merican dreamin' — the chorus of that song is the phrase 'I Can't Breathe' over and over.

"We were singing about Eric Garner then and the fact this phrase has been said by multiple black people who have been murdered in police custody is beyond heartbreaking," he added. "The serialized process of making and releasing these new recordings has allowed for these instances of fluid meaning in the songs."

And while this release was pieced together during a pandemic, McCord said "Stumblebee" was initially supposed to be a fully engineered and produced EP — so the band hopes to eventually re-release final versions of the songs. In the meantime, McCord said this release is a reflection of what's been on their mind in 2020.

"I wrote the leadoff song '18-49' in mid-March after Bernie Sanders lost the Michigan Democratic primary," McCord said. "It was conceived as a call-to-arms to my generation to look beyond the distractions and divisions of the world and unite to end the stranglehold of Republicans, bigotry and white privilege that are a scourge on our society. There's a line in there about COVID-19: 'We'll be so loud, right after we don't have trouble breathing.' That now only makes me think of George Floyd."

"This is a song that was written about an election that now seems like the distant past — but it feels like I was writing about

the ongoing protests against police brutality," he added. "Though if I were to try to write a song about it at this moment it would likely just be one sustained, unintelligible scream."

CITY PULSE'S MITTEN MUSIC QUIZ

1. Scott Morgan led this Ann Arbor-based '60s rock band
2. In the 1940s, this "Boom Boom" blues legend worked at Detroit factories while recording Michigan-made hits like "Boogie Chillen."
3. This Motown legend, during her earliest days of fame, went by the first name of Diane.
4. This black leather clad rocker was known for her music and appearances on the TV series "Happy Days."
5. This "Devil With the Blue Dress On" band was led by this blue-eyed soul singer

Answers on page 22

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, June 10

Afternoon Science Snack - Join the Science Festival for presentations and demonstrations across the STEAM disciplines for all ages! 3:30-5:15 p.m. events.msu.edu for FB link.

Allen Farmers Market - Fresh produce and other delicious products. 3-6:30 p.m. 1611 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. 517-999-3911. allenneighborhoodcenter.org.

ARTpath | Public Art on the Lansing River Trail - 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Lansing River Trail, 100 North St., Lansing. 517-374-6400 for info.

MSU Museum Virtual Learning and Activity Resources - Visit museum.msu.edu/virtualresources/ for links to MSU Museum resources and great things that other museums are offering right now. All week!

Virtual Code Club - on Zoom! Chat and share what projects you are working on. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. Find us on FB for link.

Wednesday Workdays at Capital City Bird Sanctuary - 9 a.m. Capital City Bird Sanctuary, 6001 Delta River Dr., Lansing, MI 48906, Lansing.

Thursday, June 11

Bath Township Farmers Market - 3-7 p.m. James Couzens Memorial Park, 13751 Main St., Bath. shopbfm.org.

Dimondale Farmers' Market - 3-6 p.m. Village Square, 136 N Bridge St, Dimondale. 517-646-0230. villageofdimondale.org.

Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual) - 6-7 p.m. facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing

Friday, June 12

Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual) - 7:30-8:30 p.m. facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing

Saturday, June 13

Meridian Township Farmers' Market - 8

a.m. Meridian Township Farmers' Market, 5151 Marsh Rd, Okemos.

Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual) - 10:30-11:30 a.m. facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing

Virtual Mayor's Riverwalk and Run - With the uncertainty that lies ahead we have decided to make the Mayor's Riverwalk a virtual event this year. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Lansing Parks and Recreation, Lansing.

Sunday, June 14

East Lansing Farmers Market - The East Lansing Farmer's Market, a growers-only market, is located in an inviting, open-air park atmosphere just steps away from the MSU campus and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Valley Court Park, 300 Valley Court, East Lansing. www.cityofeastlansing.com.

Monday, June 15

4-H Spin Club - Make Plant Based Spa Products (Registration Req) - This program is tentatively scheduled. We will publish updates if/when needed. Love bath bombs, sugar scrubs, and more? 3 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. www.facebook.com.

Advanced LEGO Robotics - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Curious Chemist - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Reading Workshop - 10-11 a.m. The Well Education Center, 1473 Haslett Rd., Haslett. 517-927-1501.

Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual) - 6-7 p.m. facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing

Slime Entrepreneur - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

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

Video Game Science - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Tuesday, June 16

Fairy Tale Storytime - Virtual fairy tales and adventures via Zoom! Grand Ledge Area District Library facebook.com for link.

Myths & Legends - Join us for a virtual exploration of Myths and Legends of many lands and cultures during our Summer Reading Program. 1 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library FB page for link.



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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Michigan restaurants begin the slow process of reopening

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Dining rooms statewide finally reopened Monday, albeit with several coronavirus-specific precautions in place. Restaurants are limited to 50 percent of their normal capacity, customers must be six feet apart, workers must wear face masks and there are several new guidelines regarding sanitation.

The scene in Lansing saw customers joyously return to their favorite eateries, whether by themselves, as a couple, or in small groups. At Soup Spoon Café on Michigan Avenue, both diners and staff were elated to enjoy a delicious restaurant-cooked meal, while following the proper precautions, of course. They ate sandwiches and conversed about their favorite albums. Projects of alternative metal icon Mike Patton were a particular focus of the conversation. I ordered a cajun chicken sandwich and ate my first meal inside of a restaurant in several months. It felt kind of surreal.

Soup Spoon general manager Keith Buchele has worked in the service industry for 27 years and at Soup Spoon for eight, and he's been eagerly awaiting



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

Two men enjoy sandwiches at Soup Spoon Café. They entered as a single party and thus were able to sit next to each other.

the day he could finally return to his passion.

"We've been waiting for this day for the last couple of months; we've been working toward this the entire time. Today was the endgame for everything that was going on before," Buchele said Monday. "For us, luckily, it wasn't a huge change, because we've already put

a lot of plans in place."

Buchele said Soup Spoon's constant communication with its staff helped reopening become a more seamless process. His staff went through the coronavirus procedural training offered online by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"In the restaurant industry, a lot of this stuff is second nature to all of us," Buchele said. "We've already been doing so many of these procedures that, for now, it wasn't a huge change." The only big change, he said, is the requirement to wear masks.

Though restaurants have permission from the state to reopen, some are opting to stay closed until the 50 percent restriction is lifted. Justin King, owner of Bridge Street Social in DeWitt, said it's simply not practical to reopen while only permitting 50 percent capacity and that he will wait until Bridge Street Social can fire on all cylinders before making a comeback.

"We will open when it feels right. It doesn't feel right yet. Opening at 50 percent capacity is not profitable. It's not

really sustainable," King said. "When we are all comfortable with it, that's when we open. No sooner."

King mentioned his disappointment that, for many, the choice of whether to reopen has gotten sucked into partisan politics.

"We have no interest in bringing harm via a novel virus to our crew, our customers, or their family. Masks matter. Hand washing matters," King said. "It's insane to me that this is remotely political. I know we are in dynamic times, but safety is non-negotiable, no matter what YouTube video somebody's watching."

Meanwhile, in downtown East Lansing, large crowds were spotted at popular student bars such as Harper's Restaurant & Brewpub. Judging by the lines of students waiting to enter, many were not taking social distancing seriously. Footage that later surfaced on Twitter showed the scene was not much different inside the actual club either. But next door, things were quiet at the Black Cat Bistro, which had its outdoor and indoor seating amply spaced apart.

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(517) 203-0096
- Aladdin's**
208 S. Washington Sq., Lansing
300 N. Clippert St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in (Washington Lunch only)
Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
Washington Square: (517) 346-8700
Clippert Street: (517) 338-8710
- Amancer Mexicano**
2418 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
Outside dining Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 574-4461
- Art's Pub**
809 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 977-1033
- Athenas Diner**
3109 S. Cedar St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 977-1033
- Backyard Bar-B-Q**
2329 Jolly Road, Okemos
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 381-8290
- BAD Brewing Co.**
440 S. Jefferson St., Mason
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 676-7664
- Black Cat Bistro**
115 Albert St., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in
(517) 580-3821
- Blue Owl Coffee**
1149 S. Washington Ave., Lansing
213 Ann St., Suite C, East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
Washington Avenue: (517) 575-6836
Ann Street: (517) 67906959
- Brick Haven Brewing Co.**
200 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No

WHAT'S OPEN?

- (517) 925-1319
- Buddies Pub & Grill**
3048 E. Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing
1937 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos
2040 N. Aurelius Road #13, Holt
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
Lake Lansing Road: (517) 333-9212
Grand River Avenue: (517) 347-0443
Aurelius Road: (517) 699-3670
- Cancun Mexican Grill**
OPEN for dine in - all locations
(517) 347-8114
- Cask and Co.**
3415 E. Saginaw St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 580-3720
- Chapelure**
4750 Hagadorn Road, East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 721-1500
- Charlie Kang's**
109 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 332-4696
- Cleats Bar & Grille**
5801 Aurelius Road, Lansing
(Hope Sports Complex)
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 574-4008
- Coach's Pub and Grill**
6201 Bishop Road, Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 882-2013
- Coral Gables**
2838 Grand River Ave., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 337-1311

- Corey's Lounge**
1511 S. Cedar St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in - Reservations only Carryout: Yes
Delivery: No
(517) 482-3132
- Crunchy's**
254 W. Grand River Ave., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 351-2506
- Dagwood's**
2803 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 374-0390
- Dusty's Tap Room and Wine Bar**
1857 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos,
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 853-8840
- EagleMonk Pub and Brewery**
4906 W. Mount Hope Hwy., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 708-7350
- El Azteco**
1016 W. Saginaw St., Lansing
225 Ann St., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
Saginaw: (517) 485-4589
Ann Street: (517) 351-9111
- Ellison Brewery + Spirits**
4903 Dawn Ave., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 203-5498
- Falsetta's Casa Nova**
138 S. Waverly Road, Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 323-9181
- Fernando's Cafe**
1587 Haslett Road, Haslett

- OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(DoorDash)
(517) 339-1886
- Fidler's on the Grand**
4805 N. Grand River Ave., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 580-7202
- Fleetwood Diner**
2211 S. Cedar St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 267-7606
- Foster Coffee Co.**
196 Albert St., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 679-0303
- Good Truckin' Diner**
1107 S. Washington Ave., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 253-7961
- Harry's Place Bar and Grill**
404 N. Verlinden Ave., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 484-9661
- Jalapeños**
307 S. Washington Sq., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 482-2326
- Kewpee's**
118 S. Washington Sq., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 482-8049
- Klavon's**
318 W. Kipp Road, Mason
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 604-6565
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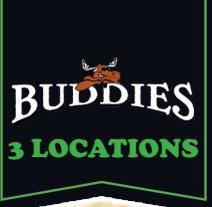


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518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 371-2600

Leo's Coney Island
333 Albert St., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 708-8580

Looking Glass Brewing Co. and Big Guy Foods
115 N. Bridge St., DeWitt
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(Grub Hub and Uber Eats)
(517) 668-6004

Midtown Brewing Co.
402 S. Washington Sq., Lansing
OPEN for dine in starting Friday Carryout: Yes
Delivery: Yes
(517) 977-1349

Mitchell's Fish Market
2975 Preyde Blvd., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 482-3474

The Nuthouse
420 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 484-6887

Peanut Barrel
521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 351-0608

Pizza House
790 Hagadorn Road Stes 114-116, East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 336-0033

Red Cedar Spirits
2000 Merritt Road, East Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 908-9950

Saddleback BBQ
1147 S. Washington Ave., Lansing
1754 Central Park Dr. G2, Okemos
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
Washington Avenue: (517) 306-9002
Central Park Drive: (517) 306-9002

Sanctuary Spirits
908 E. Saginaw Hwy., Grand Ledge
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 925-1930

Soup Spoon Café
1419 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No

(517) 316-2377

Spag's Bar & Grill
1268 E. Grand River Ave., Williamston
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 655-4888

Spagnuolo's Restaurant
662 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: No
(517) 349-9605

Stateside Deli & Restaurant
3552 Meridian Crossing Dr., Okemos
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 853-1100

Tony M's Restaurant
3420 S. Creyts Road, Lansing
OPEN for dine in Carryout: Yes Delivery: Yes
(517) 322-2069

Woody's Oasis
2398 Jolly Road, Okemos
1050 Trowbridge Road, East Lansing
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From Pg. 26

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

From Pg. 26

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

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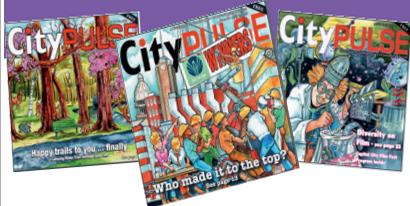
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- From page 27
1. The Rationals
 2. John Lee Hooker
 3. Diana Ross
 4. Suzi Quatro
 5. Mitch Ryder
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