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July 8 - 14, 2020

# CityPULSE

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## NO EXCUSE VOTING THE 2020 PRIMARY ELECTION GUIDE

See page 9



Thank you President Brent Knight for your service to Lansing Community College

— Andrew P. Abood



Attorney Andrew P. Abood and Lansing Community College President Brent Knight



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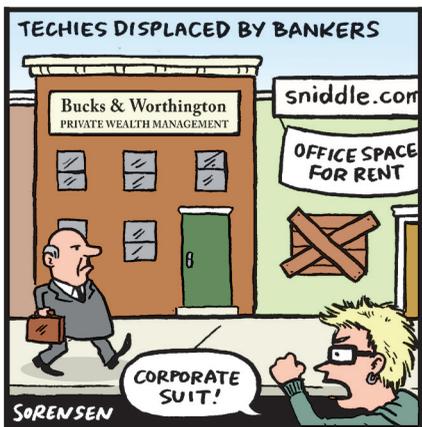
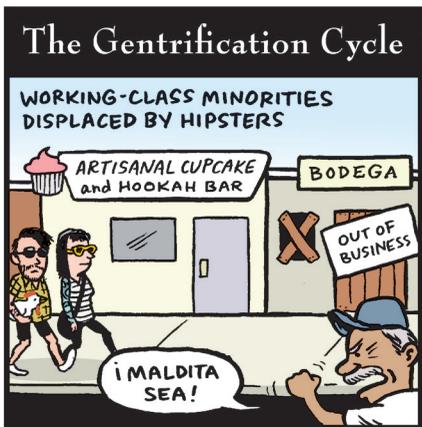
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Absentee ballots for August 4 primary



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Lamsterdam in Review: Stateside Wellness edibles



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New in Town: American Bistro's new takes on classics



**Cover Art**

Illustration by Kimberly Lavon

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

**THIS WEEK: A SPECIAL PANDEMIC FUN GAME!**

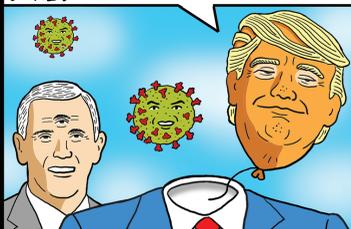
### SPOT THE MISTAKES

We've inserted several deliberate errors throughout the following panels. Can you find them all? Answers at the end--but *no peeking!*

1. February 26: Trump assures nation that his administration has the pandemic under control.

1. February 26: Trump assures nation that his administration has the pandemic under control.

"BECAUSE OF ALL WE'VE DONE, THE RISK TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE REMAINS **VERY LOW**...WHEN YOU HAVE FIFTEEN PEOPLE, AND THE FIFTEEN WITHIN A COUPLE OF DAYS IS GOING TO BE DOWN TO **ZERO**, THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD JOB WE'VE DONE!"



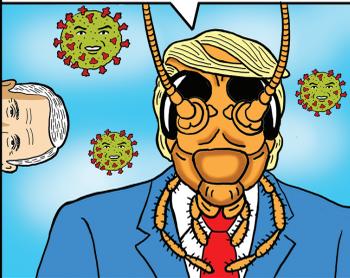
2. April 2: Trump laments the ineffectiveness of antibiotic treatments, which do not kill viruses, on the coronavirus.

"ANTIBIOTICS USED TO SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM. NOW ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS THE WORLD HAS IS THE GERM HAS GOTTEN SO BRILLIANT THAT THE ANTIBIOTIC CAN'T KEEP UP WITH IT!"



3. April 23: Trump proposes alternative treatments for COVID-19.

"I SEE THE DISINFECTANT THAT KNOCKS IT OUT IN A MINUTE! IS THERE A WAY WE CAN DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT BY **INJECTION** INSIDE, OR ALMOST A **CLEANING**? ...IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO CHECK THAT OUT!"



4. June 15: As nine states report record coronavirus cases, Trump explains the clear downside of widespread testing.

"IF YOU DON'T TEST, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY **CASES!** IF WE STOPPED TESTING RIGHT NOW, WE'D HAVE **VERY FEW CASES--IF ANY!**"



#### DID YOU SPOT THE MISTAKES?

**Panel 1:** The mistake here is that Donald Trump ever became president. Whoops!

**Panel 2:** Trump was not removed from office during impeachment, nor has the 25th Amendment been invoked. Oh well!

**Panel 3:** A deranged narcissist in cognitive decline is in charge of our pandemic response. Whoops again!

**Panel 4:** Did we mention that Donald Trump is president? Also, his hands are too big in that drawing.

TOM TOMORROW © 2020

# Harper's folly

Call it a sneak preview of the highly anticipated new reality show: "COVID Goes to College." Foreshadowing what is all but certain to happen again and again if 40,000 undergrads return to the MSU campus this fall, the recent COVID-19 outbreak at Harper's Restaurant and Brew Pub in East Lansing is a textbook case of how not to contain a pandemic.

There is plenty of blame to go around.

Young people are the primary culprit, clearly having bought into the notion that catching the coronavirus is no big deal. Statistically speaking, they're not wrong. The COVID mortality rate in Michigan for the 0-19 age bracket is a mere 2 deaths per million and just 17 per million for ages 20-29. By comparison, COVID kills almost 6,800 per million among people aged 80+. Of course, the biggest problem isn't young people getting sick, it's the consequences of spreading the virus to family and friends, perhaps infecting an elderly grandparent or an immunocompromised brother or sister. Evidently this basic concern for the well-being of others is only a passing consideration, as we have seen writ large among people of all ages who refuse to wear a mask in public.

That said, we remember being young and reckless, which is why the adults in the room — the establishment's owners — get to shoulder most of the blame for purposefully packing their bar with maskless kids. They also win a special prize for Trumpian disingenuity, claiming in a statement manufactured by their public relations firm that they took "every measure to not only meet, but exceed, local, state and federal guidance for reopening during this COVID-19 health pandemic." This, of course, is demonstrably false. Eyewitness accounts and multiple videos posted on social media confirm that neither patrons nor employees were wearing masks and that social distancing was nonexistent.

Initially, Harper's owners claimed they didn't know they could require customers to wear masks, suggesting they have never read the governor's executive orders, which is a necessary precursor to complying with them. Their subsequent attempt to shift attention to the line outside the bar, complaining that they have no control over how people



public officials. Saying that the agencies charged with protecting our lives don't have the resources to do their job suggests a certain lack of urgency that seems out of step with the gravity of the situation. If Governor Whitmer had said we're going to rely on personal responsibility because the state doesn't have the resources to do testing and contact tracing, she would have been appropriately ridiculed.

To her credit, Vail eventually issued an order limiting capacity at Ingham County bars to 50% of capacity or 75 people, whichever is less. Two days later, Whitmer

wisely stepped in to shut down indoor alcohol service at bars across southern Michigan. Public officials across the nation took note, issuing their own crackdowns on nightclubs jammed with young people, which have now caused significant COVID outbreaks in numerous states.

It's almost embarrassing to note that in Texas, of all places, the state liquor board suspended the license of 17 bars over a recent weekend after undercover agents found they had failed to comply with masking and social distancing requirements. If Texas can do it, so can Michigan.

All of which leads us to several conclusions: First, MSU should delay bringing students back to campus until next spring. The risks to the university community, especially faculty and staff, are simply too great. Second, state and local officials need to figure out who is responsible for enforcing the governor's executive orders and come up with the resources needed to make it happen. Rules without enforcement are no rules at all.

Finally, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, failing to wear a mask in an enclosed public space, whether it is a bar or a grocery store, should carry the same misdemeanor penalty as every other violation of Whitmer's executive orders. Too many people have demonstrated that they are completely incapable of exercising personal responsibility or showing the least bit of concern for the well-being of their fellow citizens. It's time to take a tougher approach before Michigan joins Texas, Florida, California and other states where COVID-19 is once again raging out of control.

## The CP Edit

### Opinion

behave on the public sidewalk is a diversion from the real issue, which was their knowing choice to allow people through the doors without a mask and failing to make any effort to enforce social distancing.

While we've been generally impressed with her leadership during the pandemic, we have to say that Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail's initial response to the Harper's outbreak was underwhelming. Despite clear, publicly reported evidence of egregiously unsafe behavior inside and outside the establishment from the day it reopened, Vail waited until a formal complaint was filed with her office more than a week later to take action. In the meantime, at least one of the young people who partied at Harper's hosted a summer soiree at a parent's house in Grosse Pointe Woods, causing yet another outbreak in multiple Metro Detroit communities. At last count, 170 COVID infections scattered across 16 Michigan counties have now been linked to Harper's.

We were especially put off by Vail's statements that "people will be people. We have to rely on personal responsibility" and that her department and local police agencies "don't have the resources" to enforce the rules. When it comes to pandemics, we favor a more aggressive approach by our

**Send letters to the editor on this editorial or any other topic to [letters@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:letters@lansingcitypulse.com). Please limit them to 250 words.**

# Siemon: Justice requires second chances — even for murderers

## Prosecutor doubles down on offering plea deals to first-degree killers

Ingham County Prosecutor Carol Siemon isn't backing down from her fervent belief that nearly all murderers deserve a second chance at freedom, regardless of the heinous nature of their alleged crimes. And that philosophy isn't sitting too well with the families of their alleged victims.

Authorities arrested 27-year-old Kiernan Brown, of Delta Township, in May in the killing of Kaylee Ann Brock, 26, of Holt, and 32-year-old Julie Ann Mooney, of Williamston. Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth said their deaths were the "most gruesome homicides" he'd ever investigated.

Brock and Mooney reportedly died from blows to the head with a blunt object. Wriggelsworth said Brown was on a "killing spree." Siemon said it was among the more "hideous and heinous" homicides to pass by her office. The incident meets all of the factual elements of first-degree murder, a charge that carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole, she said. Michigan does not have the death penalty.

But Brown doesn't have to face that possibility. Siemon's office offered him a plea deal this month to second-degree murder, a charge that could theoretically net life in prison but would at least ensure him an opportunity to appear before a parole board, perhaps in a few decades.

He hasn't accepted the deal, Siemon said. And if Brown and his lawyers reject it, there's always the possibility that a first-degree murder charge could be handed down by a jury after the trial. But Wriggelsworth (and reportedly Brock's family) want to see him locked behind bars forever.

Anything else is a miscarriage of justice, Wriggelsworth contended. After learning of the plea deal, he petitioned Attorney General Dana Nessel to take over the prosecution of Brown's case, though officials at Nessel's office — after consulting Siemon — have since rejected the request.

"I tried to sit down with the prosecutor but it didn't really get anywhere," Wriggelsworth said.

"I absolutely think that there are some people that commit heinous crimes

where the only option is to lock them up for the rest of their lives. I understand some people may disagree with that, but what Kiernan Brown did to those two girls was absolutely horrific," he added. "I try to stay in my lane. I really do. I'm not the prosecutor, but this would not bring justice to these families."

Kaylee's father, Roger Brock, also pleaded with Siemon to reconsider, he told the Lansing State Journal. His only ask: "Justice as the state of Michigan allows for murder in the first degree." But Siemon will keep the plea deal on the table, she insisted in an interview Tuesday.

"I'm not in any way saying this is a

"It's the right thing to do. And when I ran in 2016, I promised that I would always do what I think is the right thing."

— Ingham County Prosecutor Carol Siemon

"I'm not the prosecutor, but this would not bring justice to these families."

— Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth

case where I'm supporting a reduced sentence because of my compassion for the defendant," Siemon explained. "This is a philosophical approach, and I want to be consistent, but at this point in time, this isn't a case where we're questioning the facts. This is a clear-cut first-degree murder by all elements of the crime. It's factually strong."

Siemon's arguably lenient approach to prosecuting murder cases made waves earlier this year when City Pulse first reported on her second-chance prosecutorial policies and plans to review decades-old Ingham County cases of convicted lifers and make efforts to set some of them free.

The basic idea: everyone, even murderers, deserves a second chance for redemption in Ingham County. Decades in prison can be a powerful rehabilitator. Only some people can be reformed, but everyone deserves the opportunity. After Siemon was elected in 2017, nearly all murder defendants have had the chance to plead to a lesser charge to second-degree murder.

"I think it's a humane thing to do. I think it's the right thing to do. And when I ran in 2016, I promised that I would always do what I think is the

right thing," Siemon told City Pulse. "It's not always popular, but I can't care about that. It's not that I don't care about the victims, their families or what people think, but I can't let it influence me to do the wrong thing."

Siemon apologized to families of murder victims shortly after announcing plans to possibly seek commutations for some of the lengthier sentences from Ingham County, promising to be more "considerate" to victims and their families as she proceeds with her plans.

"My apology was not for saying that this policy makes sense. It was for saying that I don't want to hurt family



Although there were several good guesses, the light fixture featured in the last Eye for Design column was not identified by a reader. It is part of the remodeled Dean Apartments (below), 727 N. Capitol, near downtown Lansing. In fact, this building was featured as an Eye Candy in November 2013.

This month's Eye for Design (above) can be found at the one of the farthest edges of Ingham County. Wind power, and windmills like this one, became popular on Midwestern farms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries until about the 1930s when electricity became available more readily in rural areas. If you know where this detail can be found, you could win an Eye for Design mug. Send me an email at carriesampson@micourthistory.org.

— CARRIE SAMPSON



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

members and victims," Siemon added. "That holds true. Families of victims carry a great deal of weight, but it's not dispositive. I also have a separate obligation to try to do justice."

Siemon pointed that the United States comprises 5% of the world's population but about 45% of the world's prisoners. The American justice system is also responsible for about 40% of the world's life sentences and 83% of life sentences that offer no opportunity for eventual release, Siemon said. She said she wants to reduce those numbers.

Siemon believes Brown, like others charged with murder, will still need decades in prison, even though the possibility of a lesser charge like second-degree murder. She recognizes that her predecessors and others might not be so lenient, but it's what she was elected to do, she said.

"I've also had a lot more positive feedback on this approach, ultimately," Siemon added. "The backlash that came up publicly was there, and I believe people have a right to discuss their thoughts and their anguish, but I did get many, many positive remarks about this philosophy."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

# Betz proposes 50% cut in police budget as ‘first step’

## Funds would be spent on social equity needs

The city of Lansing would redirect half the police budget into social equity programs under a plan unveiled today by Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz.

Betz’ proposal, which he designed in cooperation with the local chapter of Black Lives Matter and other Council members, would cut at least 20% from the Lansing Police Department next year with plans to halve the departmental budget — a \$23 million cut — over the next five years.

“Black and brown communities and the working class have been victimized by police violence for years and Lansing has its own history of racist violence and discrimination on behalf of the police,” Betz said from a “Liberate Lansing” lectern set up in front of City Hall.

“This is not a time for half-measures or small reforms,” Betz told reporters. “We have to stand for justice and fundamentally change the way we think about public safety.”

Betz, who has participated in multiple protests in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, announced the plan in tandem with Angela Waters Austin, cofounder of the Lansing chapter of Black Lives Matter, and activists Michael Lynn Jr. and Tashmica Torok.

He called the proposal the “first step” in stopping discriminatory police brutality in Lansing.

The resolution would create an ad hoc committee on “Public Safety Transformation,” which would focus on reallocating the LPD budget to unnamed programs and city services.

And with a budget of about \$46.5 million this year, more than \$23 million could be up for grabs.

“In Lansing, we began researching the data on police contact with young Black folks in particular several years ago. It may seem like this defund campaign came out of nowhere, but it came from years of understanding and studying where the barriers in our system were, and how our young Black people were being targeted in this community,” Waters Austin said.

In nearly 28,000 traffic stops in Lansing over the last three years, about 33% of drivers were Black, statistics showed. They were also about



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz announcing his resolution in front City Hall.

three times more likely to be searched or arrested compared to white drivers in the capital city. Betz said his proposal will reduce discrimination while stopping short of a total abolition of the Police Department in Lansing.

Betz said he was aiming for a total police divestment, but the 50% mark was much more “politically feasible” and allows for the city to continue funding about \$10 million in pensions. Still, he recognizes it will put local cops out of a job. And that’s the best path forward, he said.

“We figure this is the first step in a longer-term process. We need to prove that this step is effective first before we go to 100% defunding,” Betz said. “This is the first step in the process.”

The committee would also be designed to issue recommendations on how to administer public safety with the reduced funding levels by assembling a “New Priorities Report” by

February. The goal: systemic transformation, compassion, liberation for marginalized people and racial equity.

“The committee will be tasked with the responsibility of finding ways to reduce the police budget and reinvest those funds into other city programs through a process that centers community input and those adversely affected by over-policing,” according to Betz’ resolution.

The subsequent budgeting process, the resolution says, would be conducted with “broad and deep participation” from the Black community and all others negatively impacted by police “without undue influence” from Mayor Andy Schor, who has repeatedly been asked to resign by Black leaders across Lansing.

Betz entertained a discussion about Schor’s resignation, but he stopped short of demanding it.

“If the Black community is calling for it, then it’s something we should talk about,” Betz said when asked whether he’s also demanding Schor’s immediate resignation. “I need to work with the mayor who is currently in office, and it would be detrimental for me, particularly, to start calling on him to resign. I think Andy Schor needs to get his act together.”

Police officers nationwide, including in Lansing, have been expected to fill the void left by shrinking mental health services. Studies show that up to 20% of police encounters involve mental health issues or alcoholism. An astonishing one in four people with mental illness has been arrested. Reformers have called for “unbundling” these services from law enforcement.

Records show that about 80% of LPD’s annual budget heads directly to payroll and benefits. Betz’ resolution would invariably remove local officers from city streets, if it comes to fruition. City officials and other Council members have, at least so far, been hesitant to make cuts.

“The process must commit to uprooting the false belief in racial hierarchy and investing in community health services, youth programs, transformative justice, and other programs to repair the decades of harm caused by racism in our community and reduce dependence on police,” according to the resolution, which could be introduced to Council as early as Monday night.

Council President Peter Spadafore

See Betz, Page 8

### CITY OF LANSING NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Hearing will be held on Monday, Monday, July 13, 2020 at 7 p.m. during the regularly schedule City Council Meeting, via ZOOM Conferencing, Meeting ID 874 3937 9068 for the purpose of considering:

An Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan re-adopting the Codified Ordinances of the City of Lansing.

Governor Whitmer declared a statewide State of Emergency due to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to provide essential protections to vulnerable Michiganders and this State’s health care system and other critical infrastructure, it is crucial that all Michiganders take steps to-limit in-person contact, particularly in the context of large groups. Therefore, the public hearing will be conducted via audio/video conference.

The public hearing will be electronically in accordance with the Open Meetings Act in an effort to protect the health and safety of the public. A Michigan Executive Order provides temporary authorization of remote participation in public meetings and hearings. Members of the public wishing to participate in the meeting may do so by logging into or calling into the meetings using the website <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87439379068> (Note: this option requires downloading Zoom software. If you have not already installed the software, this may take a few minutes) or by calling 646-876-9923 and entering Meeting ID: 874 3937 9068

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

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

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/CMMC  
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CP#20-159

#### STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT COUNTY OF INGHAM NOTICE TO CREDITORS Decedent’s Estate File No. 20-305-DE

Estate of Vickerlean Poku. Date of birth: 3-14-1958.  
TO ALL CREDITORS: NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Vickerlean Poku, died February 21, 2020. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Theresa Tippins, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

6-29-2020  
Theresa Tippins  
627 Sadie Court #79  
Lansing, MI 48906  
517-574-6797

CP#20-158

# Betz

from page 7

said the agenda for Monday's meeting hasn't been set.

In the remaining police budget, the task force would be tasked with examining policies on police deescalation, racial biases and a zero-tolerance approach to racism within the department. The results of that review would be compiled in a "Public Safety Transformation Report" by February.

Citing that Lansing is 20% African American, the local Black Lives Matter chapter demanded last month that a similar percentage of the LPD budget — about \$9.6 million — be redirected

to the needs of the Black community. Betz' proposal would more than double that divestment.

"We need a new approach to building our beloved communities of color. The Black community has long given up the notion that police are there to protect and serve," added the Rev. Sean Holland. "We have everything we need in our own community to serve our community."

Although no action on the budget has been taken, Schor has already rolled out a series of proposals on "Racial Justice and Equity Community Action" that includes the hiring of a diversity officer and plans for the city's first diversity, equity and inclusion plan.

Betz said the results and recommendations that eventually come

from the proposed ad-hoc committee would still almost entirely rely on Schor's office to weave them into a working budget proposal for the next fiscal year. Council can only amend existing mayoral budget plans.

The city's Police Board of Commissioners also meets tomorrow evening to discuss proactive changes on use-of-force protocols in Lansing. Police Chief Daryl Green has also committed to officers no longer initiating traffic stops for defective equipment and other minor traffic violations.

Spadafore said he "appreciates the effort" from Betz, but he also maintained that the City Council already has appropriations and public safety committees that handle this work.

"I'm not a fan of prescribing costs

this early on, but I'm willing to talk about these ideas," Spadafore said, noting that Betz didn't consult him in crafting the recent police divestment proposal. Spadafore only found out about it yesterday.

Betz said he had conferred with Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar. He said he anticipates he can win the six votes for passage he needs from the eight-member Council.

Betz said this particular change must be addressed outside the existing Council structure.

"This is going to take more research and thought than what can be held in just one committee," Betz explained. "I really think we need a separate one to specifically focus on these issues."

— KYLE KAMINSKI



# CityPULSE

## LOCAL EXPERTS

### FINANCIAL PLANNING

#### It is about who you are, not what you have

Things - stuff - possessions, they make us feel good at initial purchase or acquisition. Next thing you know, the purchases that brought so much joy, eventually become another unused item in our home.

In financial planning, one of the hardest habits to overcome is instant gratification. It is fine to want things, but when does our wanting create a detriment to our future self? How do we balance work and family, healthy habits and the occasional donut, financial needs of today and our needs for tomorrow? Start by asking yourself these two things:

1. Who am I? 2. What's important to me?

I'm a father and a husband. What's important to me is ensuring that my family feels a sense of safety, love, belonging, self-respect, and respect for those they encounter on their path. All of which is more crucial than ever, and has nothing to do with the size of our TV, the newness of a car, or the square footage of our house. It's about who I want to be, not what I have. What I do have are plans and tools to guarantee that if something catastrophic was to happen to me, those I love are taken care of and can live on in my absence. Life insurance, disability insurance, college and retirement savings, an estate plan to provide for my family, and charitable causes I hold near and dear to my heart. This, and helping clients navigate these plans is what gives me instant gratification. When you are ready, I am here.



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### GIFTS

#### Custom framing in Old Town

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

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

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

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

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



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# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4



## Polls are open — no pants required

Absentee voting spike puts paper at the cutting edge of state elections

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Not long ago, an absentee ballot was a curiosity to be scrutinized and envied, a doctor's note letting Grandma vote in her favorite chair while the rest of us dutifully waited in line.

No more. The potent combination of COVID-19 fears and no-reason absentee voting, approved by Michigan voters in 2018, is revolutionizing voting patterns across the state, including greater Lansing, in 2020 and probably for good.

City and county clerks who work on the front lines of democracy have lobbied to little avail for more time and better tools to process the growing mountain of 2020 ballots. Their pleas have gotten no traction with the Republican-controlled state Legislature, but the clerks are determined to do their best with the tools they have, hoping the public will roll with the delays and uncertainties ahead.

"Michigan is going to be in a spot where a lot of states are already, where you might have projections and partial results on Tuesday," Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope said. "But I think the time of having full results on election night is a thing of the past."

2020 is an interesting year to be a clerk.

"Oh, my God, you have no idea," Delta Township Clerk Mary Clark said. "The numbers are a little overwhelming some days, but this is a very exciting time. I'm optimistic because people are engaged. Complacency is not good for us as a country."

### 'We're inundated'

By Thursday (July 2), Swope's office had received more absentee ballot applications for this August's primary election than the total number of ballots counted, both absentee and at the polls, in the 2018 August primary.

Statewide, clerks report receiving more than 1.3 million absentee ballot applications by July 4 — a million more

### CITY PULSE PRIMARY ELECTION GUIDE

It's called "No Reason Absentee Voting" — but if there was ever a reason to do it, it's COVID-19.

Voters are taking full advantage of the absentee voting reform approved by referendum in Michigan two years ago. Clerk after clerk in Greater Lansing is reporting a huge uptick in processing absentee ballots for the Aug. 4 primary election. Thus, with voters already voting, City Pulse offers you its look at selected races in this week's issue, nearly a month before election day. Look for more coverage in the remaining weeks.

**To request an absentee ballot online go to: [michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote)**

than they received a month before the August 2016 primary. And that's for an election Swope said would normally be "low turnout."

"In 2018, we had a gubernatorial primary in both parties, a hotly contested congressional Democratic primary — a lot of contested offices," Swope said. "This time, there are very few contested offices."

Top-of-the-ticket buzz is not driving the turnout, because the presidential primary was already held in March.

Nevertheless, the absentee ballot applications keep pouring in. Meridian Township Clerk Brett Dreyfus expects to haul in about 9,000 absentee ballots this August — about 75-80% of the vote.

Dreyfus, a vocal and enthusiastic proponent of voting by mail, is rolling in all this paper, like Scrooge McDuck in his counting house.

"We're inundated with ballots, and I love it," Dreyfus said. "It shows that people are concerned about the political landscape we all live in, and they want their voices heard."

Dreyfus said many people are discovering the convenience of absentee voting this year, and a lot of them will never go back.



(Left) Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope communes with a scanner he'll use on Election Day to process absentee ballots.



Photos by Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

(Above) Voters can drop off their absentee ballots in this box at the Lansing city clerk's office at 2500 S. Washington Avenue.

"Instead of 19 polling locations on one day, why not have 20,000 polling locations for 40 days? Every household becomes a polling location," Dreyfus said.

"Our old way of voting was archaic," Swope agreed. "You had to go to a specific place on a specific day during specific hours, and that's not the way we live."

In Delta Township, the largest municipality in Eaton County, Clerk Mary Clark's office was flooded by nearly 9,000 absentee ballot requests by the end of June. By comparison, fewer than 4,000 ballots were returned in the entire August 2016 primary in Delta Township.

"No-reason absentee voting is engaging voters that have not been active voters before," Clark said. "I had a gentleman bring in an application. He's not voted in over 10 years."

But for city and county clerks, August is just a warm-up for the big presidential election in November. Clark expects to receive 12,000 to 14,000 absentee ballots in the fall general election — in a municipality with 26,345 voters.

There are signs that the changes rolling across the electoral landscape will not be reversed in years to come, by a COVID vaccine or anything else.

Many voters are requesting to be placed on the permanent absentee voter list and may never go back to a polling place for the rest of their lives.

"My total voter count on the permanent absentee voter list is 9,847," Clark said. "I was just under 6,000 for the March primary."

She paused for about two seconds as she tracked the numbers on her screen.

"Now it's 9,848."

### Let 'er rip

In March, Mary Clark's office bought a fancy \$2,000 letter opener to help with the tedious job of opening absentee ballot envelopes. On Election Day, Clark's absent voter counting board will expand to 40 people, who'll sequester with face masks and takeout food and buckle down to work.

That same day, in Meridian Township, Dreyfus' absentee voter counting board of 14 will break up into teams: envelope openers, ballot-puller-outers, flatteners, tabulator feeders and error spotter/

# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

## Absentee

from page 9

handlers.

This year, social distancing will complicate the job.

In Lansing, Swope has requested more space for his absentee ballot counting team of about 60 people, so he can spread them out, “but it’s hard to keep a safe distance between those folks,” he said.

“They are sequestered, so we feed them, and you can’t wear masks when you’re eating,” he said. “It’s a complicated undertaking.”

Clark is more worried about Swope than she is about her own office in Delta Township.

“Chris has 45 precincts, three times my size, but he’s given the same amount of time as I am to process my ballots,” Clark said.

By state law, absentee ballots can’t be processed or counted until the morning of Election Day, no matter how many of them pile up in the weeks before.

“There’s a song, right? ‘You Don’t Always Get What You Want,’” Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum said. “I personally wanted to start tabulating days before. Some states do it.”

Processing absentee ballots before Election Day is permitted in 28 states, according to Michigan State Rep. Vanessa Guerra; 16 of those states allow ballots to be counted before Election Day.

In February, Guerra introduced a bill that would allow local clerks in Michigan to count absentee votes seven days before an election, but the bill went nowhere.

Byrum said that with all of the safeguards available, early counting shouldn’t scare people. Tabulators can be programmed not to produce results until the polls close. “We can sequester workers, just like we sequester jurors. This is not new stuff,” Byrum said. “It doesn’t appear as though the Republican Legislature is willing to go anywhere near that.”

Swope visited Denver after the 2018 election to see how ballots are counted there.

“They start counting a couple weeks ahead,” Swope said. “They seal everything up and don’t see results. They’re broken into teams, so any one election inspector only sees a small proportion.”

With Guerra’s bill dead in the water, Clark and Swope both testified before

the state Legislature in favor of letting their workers start opening, but not counting, absentee ballots on the Monday before the election.

“Just to be able to open them and remove them from the return envelope, leaving them in the secrecy sleeve, would make the process faster,” Clark said.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey said in February that opening ballots a day before the election is “the nose of the camel underneath the tent toward early voting, early counting, which I’m very opposed to,” according to the Detroit Free Press. Shirkey said in several interviews that early processing would set a “dangerous precedent” and he’d rather count on local clerks to use their ingenuity to deal with the situation.

Swope seems resigned to do just that. “As we get to the timing crunch and the volume of things we’re going to have to deal with on Election Day, the Legislature is not trying to make it easy,” Swope said.

Swope prefers understatement, but Clark is not shy about reading between the lines of Republican resistance to voting by mail.

“They’re saying, ‘Let’s see how creative clerks can be,’” Clark said. “I translate that as, ‘Let’s see if we can make it a failure.’”

Many local and state offices in Michigan, from clerks up to the governor, are filled at present with “strong Democratic women,” Clark said, and delays and debacles at the polls would give Republican lawmakers “evidence that they should be gone in 2022.”

“I’m speaking only for myself, but I think there’s a long line behind me that feels the same way,” Clark said.

Dreyfus said that as of Monday, early processing of absentee ballots was still “in limbo.” “Nothing has moved,” Byrum confirmed.

Clark is girding for whatever comes. “The House and Senate elections committees are the powers that be,” she said. “If they’re comfortable with it, I am. We will do quality work. Quality and ethics come first. The results will be there when they’re there.”

### The ultimate end run

Besides suiting up for the count of their lives, local clerks are also fighting messaging from high places, including President Donald Trump, that absentee ballots are more vulnerable to fraud than votes cast at the polls.

Byrum asserted that voting by mail



Courtesy photo

Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum checks on the ballot tabulator awaiting duty in the closet.

is “absolutely safe.” “I will never discuss all of the safely precautions we take, because that would be delivering an opportunity to attack on a silver platter, but there are a number of procedures that are done,” Byrum said.

Voter signatures on absentee ballot requests are matched with the voter’s signature on the outside envelope of the actual ballot. Each voter is assigned a ballot stub number to control inventory.

“There are so many checks and procedures that I am confident in the integrity of our elections,” Byrum said.

Dreyfus said the township counting board and precinct chairs and co-chairs “are always balanced with D’s and R’s.”

“We’re already in a secure facility and we have people who are sworn to uphold the law,” he said.

Another level of safeguards kicks in as soon as the polls close.

“The next day, two Democrats and two Republicans sit in a room for days on end, going through the election to make sure that for very ballot voted, there was a voter that voted it,” Byrum said. “They are the ones that certify the election. And even after that, random election audits are done.”

In the year of COVID-19 and widespread protests against systemic inequality, electoral reforms are sprouting in Michigan that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Last week, Sterling Heights, the state’s fourth largest city, set aside \$25,000 to pay return postage for its residents’ absentee ballots in November. The city will also provide secure boxes at fire stations where people can drop off the ballots without mailing them.

Lansing, to date, has one secure drop

box, at City Hall. Swope said the city is considering adding four more secure drop boxes, at the city’s four community centers, by November.

Sterling Heights Mayor Michael Taylor, a Republican, brushed off President Trump’s warnings that absentee balloting would lead to massive voter fraud.

“My response would be stop listening to Donald Trump,” Taylor told The Detroit News. “Have an independent thought and do what’s best for the voters and the residents.”

Swope said there’s no movement afoot to bring postage-paid voting in Lansing, but Dreyfus is pushing for it in Meridian Township, with ballots mailed automatically for all future elections as long as the voter is at the same address.

The cost of postage, Dreyfus said, would be offset by savings in equipment and pay for poll workers, but that’s not the most important benefit.

“It solves all issues of economic barriers, transportation barriers — and there’s even equipment for remote marking devices for disabled people,” Dreyfus said. “Once your voter registration form is filled out and your residence is verified, you never need to fill out a form again.”

To Dreyfus, the cost-benefit calculus is screamingly obvious. The April 2020 election in Wisconsin, when voters waited for hours in the middle of a pandemic to get into only five polling places in Milwaukee (and a U.S. Supreme Court decision muddied the count of absentee ballots) is one of many ominous signs of chaos and disarray waiting in the wings in November.

Dreyfus sees voting by mail as the ultimate end run around multiple barriers to voting and myriad forms of voter suppression — benefits that, to his mind, vastly outweigh speculative fears of scattered fraud. Dreyfus started a website, Michigan-vote-by-mail.com, to inform voters and advocate for voting by mail.

“Voter suppression is real, and voter fraud is not real, and voter suppression is eliminated with vote by mail,” Dreyfus said.

Get him warmed up on the subject, and he rises to a peroration worthy of William Jennings Bryan.

“The process is flawed through and through,” Dreyfus said. “The pandemic is showing that we need to evolve past the concept of elections as we see it now and move totally toward the universal vote by mail.”

# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

## Unheralded field looks to face Slotkin in November

By KYLE MELINN

Republicans swung and missed when it came to recruiting a top-tier candidate to run in Ingham County's 8th Congressional District, leaving those leaning the GOP's way a choice among four lightly funded political neophytes.

The emerging political might of freshman U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin is the main reason. The former CIA analyst has shined in nearly every aspect of the job — policy knowledge, public engagement, competency and fundraising.

The latter can't be understated. Slotkin is raising U.S. Senate-like money, far more than any other congressional incumbent or challenger in Michigan.

Up to now, Paul Junge is doing the best in terms of raising money and generating any outward support. He raised close a quarter of a million dollars in the first quarter of 2020, which is double that of his three opponents combined.

But to put it all in perspective, you could take Junge's haul, multiply it by four and still not get what Slotkin raised in that same period.

Junge, 53, has been endorsed by the Orion Township (Oakland County) supervisor, former state Rep. Bill Rogers (older brother of former Congressman Mike Rogers), U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, the Livingston County sheriff and the American Conservative Union, among others.

The National Republican Campaign Committee also put the former FOX47 news anchor in its "contender category," which means they're keeping an eye on him.

The Brighton Republican has lived in Michigan off and on throughout his life. Prior to moving back to Michigan he was investigative counsel for U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley and served in the Trump administration within U.S.

Citizenship and Immigration Services.

He worked on Terri Lynn Land's 2014 U.S. Senate campaign and spent some time as a deputy district attorney in Ventura County, Calif.

It was the latter experience that his political adversaries are honing in on in their political criticism. Back in 1994, Junge "barged into a defense attorney's office to subpoena" a witness in a domestic violence case, according to the Los Angeles Times.

The judge declared a mistrial when he learned what happened and the District Attorney's Office ended up having to apologize to the Public Defender's Office about the incident.

"Elissa Slotkin and the Democrats are licking their chops at the prospect of facing a carpetbagger like Paul Junge, especially as we learn more about the inappropriate behavior he engaged in as a Los Angeles deputy district attorney," said Junge opponent Kristina Lyke, also an attorney who has represented domestic violence victims in the past.

Lyke, 43, runs an East Lansing law firm that specializes in family and criminal law. Originally from Pinckney, the Eastern Michigan University graduate worked for the Livingston County prosecutor as she attended law school at Cooley.

She served on the Pinckney City Council from 1999-2001. At the time, she was the youngest person to be elected to the board. She's worked as a legislative assistant to former Rep. Paul DeWeese and an assistant to then-Lt. Gov. Dick Posthumus.

She is framing herself as the most conservative option in the Republican field. Lyke supports term limits for members of Congress. At a forum earlier this year, she questioned whether women who seek illegal abortions should be prosecuted along with the doctors. Lyke also questioned how anyone could be Christian and not be pro-life.

Her political consultant is Scott Hagerstrom, who was the Michigan head of the Trump 2016 campaign and one of the state's pre-eminent conservative authority figures, having also worked several years for Americans for Pros-

perity.

But it may be hard to go farther right than Mike Detmer, a darling of grassroots conservatives. Endorsed by former gubernatorial candidate Patrick Colbeck, Detmer has a rock-solid core of supporters, which bring with it a reliable network of folks to help him spread his message. It also brings some concerns.

During the April 30 liberty protest, the 42-year-old Howell man posted a Facebook photo of himself with a group of a dozen protesters. A "Proud Boys" sign can be seen on the roof of a car behind the crowd. The Southern Poverty Law Center has dubbed Proud Boys as an extremist organization, although the group bills itself as "anti-political correctness" and "anti-white guilt."

At a recent American Patriot Rally he



Detmer



Slotkin



Junge



Lyke

### Rick Jones for Eaton County Sheriff

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See 8th, Page 12

# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

## Rick Jones returns to the campaign trail

By KYLE MELINN

What a difference 20 years can make. What a difference four months can make, for that matter.

Rick Jones is back knocking doors this week in his bid to return to public service as the Eaton County sheriff, but the political atmosphere couldn't be more different than it was when he made his first political run in 2000. Or when he announced he'd challenge incumbent Tom Reich in May 2019.

The coronavirus pandemic is changing the reaction Jones and other politicians are receiving.

"A lot of people don't want to open their doors," said Jones before embarking on another round of walking on a 90-degree afternoon. "I leave literature, but I don't want to force anyone to open the door. I believe I've built up a lot of trust with the people over the years. They know me."

After his one term as sheriff, Jones served six years as a state representative and eight years as state senator.



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

Rick Jones speaks with voter Jim Smith at his home on Gull Street.

The populist Republican's tenure was marked by the prolific number of his bills that were signed into law and his public accessibility.

Jones has a Republican primary against private attorney G. Michael

Hocking, who represented Reich in a 2016 divorce. Hocking previously served as an Eaton circuit judge in the 1990s, but he was voted out of office in 1996 after a controversial term marked by tough sentences and unorthodox courtroom mannerisms that earned him some Judicial Tenure Commission attention.

Hocking previously served as Eaton County prosecutor, earning the nickname "cowboy," according to the Lansing State Journal.

On the Democratic side, incumbent Tom Reich has no primary opposition after former candidate Joe Jager dropped out amid the hubbub caused by his "Eaton County Cannot Afford A Third Reich Term!" mailer.

Outside of the unique logistical challenges presented by COVID-19, the

focus of Jones' campaign has shifted because of the recent attention paid to the death of George Floyd and how police treat Blacks, in general.

How wayward deputies treat the public was always going to a focus of his campaign, but the Floyd death put the issue under a sharper focus. Jones decried how a former Eaton County deputy should have faced charges for assault. Instead, the deputy was allowed to resign. He was picked up by another sheriff's office and allegedly committed additional assaults, Jones said.

The 2015 death of Deven Guilford at the hands of an Eaton County sheriff remains a sore spot for some in community, as well.

One of Jones' fliers focused on how an Eaton County deputy allegedly harassed a Black military veteran who apparently was doing nothing but jogging around his neighborhood. Jones' message: "People will not be treated differently" based on race, religion, LGBTQ status, or any other demographical factor if he's elected to another term.

Jones said he's vowed to push deescalation and racial bias training as sheriff, as well. He told the Eaton County Board of Commissioners he is willing to work for \$70,000 less than the incumbent, who is paid \$103,000 a year, so the money can go toward putting another deputy on the roads.

Jones said the public does not believe police services should be defunded, but they do want more accountability for law enforcement, who aren't living up to their oath to protect and serve.

The flier vowing to create a new atmosphere in the Eaton County Sheriff's Office received pushback from some resident, to which Jones said deftly, "That's OK. I don't need the racist vote."

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- We need to take action to see that proposed new developments are only approved after an intense and thorough review process. For residential, the review process must consider the need to provide increased opportunities for families with lower incomes to be able to rent and own homes in Meridian Township.
- We need to take action to establish a plan to provide for increased Communication through Conversation.
- We need to take action to see that music and the arts are a part of why our residents and our visitors love being in Meridian Township.

Please visit the website: [johnesserformeridiantrustee.com](http://johnesserformeridiantrustee.com)  
or on Facebook: John Esser for Meridian Trustee

Paid for by A Committee to Elect John Esser | 5448 Okemos Road, East Lansing, MI 48823

## 8th

from page 11

production label and a consulting company. Hoover has a compelling personal story, being raised by his mother who was constantly fleeing from abuse.

The Marine lived in 16 different cities in his youth. Hoover ran for the River Rouge City Council fresh out of high school and went into the military after he was unsuccessful in that bid.

He's lived off and on in the 8th District for 12 years, nine years straight as an adult. He and his wife, Lara, have

three children.

Hoover has earned the endorsement of the Michigan Republican Assembly. Interestingly, despite being the last of the field to hop into the race, Hoover he raised the second-most amount of money to Junge in the first quarter with \$50,000.

To, again, put it in perspective, Slotkin raised 20 times more.

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



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## 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

# Challenger seeks to unseat Clerk Byrum

*Incumbent Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum, a Democrat, is seeking a third four-year term, running against Democratic challenger Dekeea Quinney-Davis, a political newcomer and daughter of Ingham County Register of Deeds Derrick Quinney. The winner of August's Primary Election is expected to prevail against East Lansing Republican candidate Joseph W. Warner.*

**By KYLE KAMINSKI**

DeKee Quinney-Davis, 48, grew up in south Lansing, attended Lansing Community College and works as an administrative assistant for the Building and Planning Department at Meridian Township. She's the daughter of Ingham County Register of Deeds Derrick Quinney, previously staffed the Ingham County Clerk's Office in Lansing and also did outreach work for St. Casimir Catholic Church.

Quinney-Davis, with endorsements from Lansing City Council members Adam Hussain and Patricia Spitzley, cited a passion for community outreach as a reason for her jump into the race.

"With having worked there before, I really know everything there is to know," she told City Pulse. "And this office is so important. It helps residents from the cradle to the grave and everywhere in between. The office really needs more community exposure as to the value it can really hold."

Quinney-Davis said Byrum is a good friend, and she's certainly no enemy of the "Barb Byrum machine." But a little friendly competition never hurts, she explained. And she also believes she has the experience necessary to make some positive changes as Ingham County's new clerk.

"I'd say nine of 10 people can't tell you what this office does, and that's a problem," she explained. "I can also tell you right now that the Black and

brown community doesn't know the services available through this office and how we can be valuable and find a way to help them."

Quinney-Davis' top priorities if elected: community outreach, increased efforts to ensure younger residents are registered to vote and more affordable rates for essential services.

"There are a lot of hardships going on right now, and residents need some type of reassurance that if they don't have the money for things like birth certificates and marriage licenses that go through this office, that we have and get the resources available to help them," she added. "The other thing is accessibility: Everyone in this office really needs to be courteous, compassionate."

Byrum, 42, of Onondaga, is wrapping up her eighth year as Ingham County clerk. She carries endorsements from the UAW, the Lansing Area Human Rights Campaign and various local labor unions that represent carpenters, plumbers and pipefitters and other local trade workers.

She previously served as a state representative (succeeding her mother, Dianne Byrum) and owns Byrum Hardware in Charlotte with her husband, Brad Delaney, a county sheriff's detective.

"There's still more work to be done," Byrum said. "I've been able to elevate this office to become more accessible



Quinney-Davis



Byrum

to the public and updated election system technology, but we also need to be paying attention to cybersecurity risks and electronic records management."

Byrum said she added another staffer to the Lansing office branch since she took office, therefore enhancing accessibility. She also helped to perform the first same-sex marriage ceremonies in the county, and cited a few key priorities if reelected to another term.

Among them: enhanced election security and a system that allows for easier access to both printed and digital county records like birth and death certificates and other vital records. Byrum also cited transparency and more local service efficiencies as other top priorities in Year Nine.

"Election security must remain the top focus of any election administrator. We're also always striving to serve the public better," Byrum said. "I usually make decisions by bringing others to the table and talking it out, and that's how things will continue during another term as clerk."

Byrum also strongly supports absentee ballots and no-reason absentee voting and opposed the law passed by the Republican Legislature that requires voters have a picture ID to cast a vote. She remains committed to overseeing a redesign of the clerk's website, fighting to ensure that every county resident is able to access his or her right to vote and bolstering customer service.

"There's no reason that someone in Lansing should need to drive down to Mason to handle business when they should be able to do it in downtown Lansing," Byrum said in a statement.

### ELECT L. BRUCE PORTER FOR EATON COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONER EATON COUNTY SOIL EROSION CONTROL AGENT EATON COUNTY PARK BOARD MEMBER



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- Stop drain consolidations to prevent unfair assessments, unfair engineering and legal fees
- Work with the entire drain staff to prepare fair and proper assessments
- Attend all meetings
- Resume cooperation with Eaton County Road Commission
- Mark all county vehicles - prohibit private use
- Eliminate high cost of consultants for drain reviews, inspections, preparing assessments and development reviews
- Obtain engineering proposals when engineering services are needed (proposals are not being obtained now)
- Roll back the cost of doing business with the drain office that has doubled and tripled

- Experience**
- 8 Years City of Indianapolis - Assistant Engineer of Street Design
  - 11 Years Drain Office - Deputy Drain Commissioner and Chief of Engineering at Ingham & Eaton Counties
  - Obtained grants for culvert replacements
  - To serve as county soil erosion control agent, my MDEQ certification for soil erosion inspections, permit reviews and issue soil erosion permits will be renewed. The current commissioner has never been certified to review applications, plans and issue permits.
  - 32 Years of civil engineering design experience
  - Designer of 15 low cost county drain projects in 5 counties
  - Past member of county park board and zoning board of appeals

*If elected, I will replace the pipe to reduce flooding at Columbia and Canal Roads, with the cooperation of Eaton Rapids Township, as soon as weather permits in 2021. The new pipe flow capacity will be more than 200% of the existing pipe when it was new. The current commissioner has known about this problem for 7 years and told land owners this could have been done 5 years ago.*

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VOTE August 4, 2020



Bob Peña

candidate for  
Ingham County  
Commissioner,  
District 10

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# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

## Democratic insider challenges Fletcher in Delta Township

### Lyman looks to unseat three-term township supervisor in primary

*Incumbent Delta Township Supervisor Ken Fletcher, a Democrat, is facing Democratic challenger Joshua Lyman for a four-year term. With no Republican challenger filed in the General Election in November, the winner in next month's Primary Election takes the seat.*

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Ken Fletcher, 54, has been a Delta Township resident for more than 20 years and is seeking a fourth term as its supervisor. He's a graduate of MSU's James Madison College and has worked for various advocacy, union and nonprofit groups in the legislative and political arena for decades — including some lobbying type work for the American Lung Association and the AFL-CIO.

He previously served two terms on the Ionia City Council and is an appointed member of the Ingham County Parks Commission. He's also a township-level representative on the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and an active parishioner at St. Gerard Catholic Church.

"This is the community where my wife and I chose to raise our family, and we wanted to make sure it remained a good place to work, live and raise a family. That's ultimately why I ran for office and why I continue to run for

this office," Fletcher said.

Fletcher named top priorities if elected to another term. The first: infrastructure improvements — including an efficient overhaul of the township's wastewater treatment plant and an assessment of other aging township buildings, like the local Police Department offices and several others.

"Assuming we don't end up in a long COVID-19 recession, now is the time to look at those things," Fletcher said. "Infrastructure needs are a priority. We need a real plan of action."

Fletcher's other named priorities included streamlining and promoting economic development projects within the township and providing additional financial support to local businesses that have suffered — and continue to suffer — from the coronavirus pandemic in Greater Lansing.

"In the short term, I also think we need to have some serious discussions about the future of the Lansing Mall," Fletcher added. "And honestly, I really don't think it's going to be around forever."

Fletcher also mentioned a desire to diversify the Police and Fire departments. He also primarily touted his decades of experience as reasons for voters to elect him to another term — including enacting the township's first ethics and revised purchasing policies to allow for competitive bids.

During his tenure, the township reportedly saw \$800 million in commercial and industrial investment, and even more since hiring a staff member dedicated to economic development.

"I believe in collaboration, gathering those ideas and coming up with a consensus that's right for our community,"

Fletcher said. "Experience is my selling point. I've been involved in policy and government, brought a lot to the table and truly live to serve this community. With so much outside cash coming into this race, it makes you wonder what other promises are being made."

Challenging Democrat Josh Lyman, 33, grew up in Greater Lansing, moved to Delta Township five years ago, and works as a policy adviser in the Michigan House of Representatives.

Lyman has a bachelor's degree in political science and is working on his master's in public administration but has never before held an elected office. He is a member of St. Gerard Catholic Church, the Knights of Columbus Council No. 788 and Kiwanis Club of Delta Township.

Lyman also enjoys spending his volunteer time coaching youth sports. His campaign has been endorsed by Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 333 and former State Rep. Scott Diandra.

The supervisor slot — though it has been held by Fletcher for 12 years — seemed like the best place to jump into politics, Lyman said. His top priorities if elected: Higher salaries for Delta Township firefighters, competitive bidding opportunities on local development projects, more support for senior citizens, a lean Parks Department and a rigid review of township spending.

"We have a billion dollars in development, but a lot of our local contractors aren't able to bid on those jobs,"



Lyman

Lyman told City Pulse. "We need a responsible bidding ordinance to ensure they have the ability to work on those projects. They don't want a preference. They just want a shot."

In addition to providing more support for local companies and their respective unions, Lyman wants to redirect more money to a Fire Department he said is understaffed and underpaid. Existing local parks should also be updated before any new projects are started, he said.

"I believe in being directly involved with the people," Lyman added. "We just don't have a good connection at the township level. There are too many issues that have gone on uncovered and too much wasteful spending. Really, there are just too many issues to ignore at this point."

Lyman lauded the township's anti-discrimination policies but said more needs to be done to bring together underserved communities and local officials to drive necessary changes on topics like racial justice and social equity. Wasteful spending at the Police Department, in particular, may also need to be dealt with, but Lyman would rather look elsewhere to find those resources.

"For too long, we've had someone in this supervisor position just coasting along and doing what they wanted, and now we don't have one, two or three issues. We have a plethora of them," Lyman said. "I want people to know they'll never get less than 100% from me, and this township doesn't need anyone who gives anything less than that back to this township and its residents."

Fletcher, who touted his excellent relations with local labor unions, suggested that he lost support from the pipefitters due to a "personal vendetta" tied to tax incentives at a local hotel. He also suggested that "dark money" was helping to float the ongoing campaign against him.

"I've always been somebody who stood up and put what is best for the residents and the township first," Fletcher responded. "I have a proven record of doing what's best for Delta."

### How to Safely Vote in the 2020 Elections From Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum

Making sure your vote is counted is my top priority.

All qualified and registered voters have the option to choose to vote in-person at their polling location or via absentee ballot.

Given the outbreak of COVID-19, I am doing everything possible to make sure that Ingham County voters do not have to choose between exercising their right to vote and their health and safety.

Please use the below checklist to safely vote:



#### Checklist

- ✓ Check your voter registration information at [mi.gov/vote](https://mi.gov/vote)
- ✓ Apply for an absentee ballot online, via email or postal mail
- ✓ Track the status of your absentee ballot at [mi.gov/vote](https://mi.gov/vote)
- ✓ Return your completed absentee ballot to your local clerk before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day

For assistance, please contact:

**Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum**

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# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

## Five-way race brews to unseat Wagner as Eaton Co. drain commissioner

Three Democrats, two Republicans file for drain commissioner in August primary

*Incumbent Republican Drain Commissioner Richard Wagner is facing Republican challenger Larry Wicker in this year's primary. The winner will go on to face one of three Democratic candidates in the General Election: Bruce Porter, Will Pitylak or Branden Dyer. Wagner didn't return calls and emails; his challengers all think they can do a better job.*

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Larry Wicker is a 64-year-old retired Republican who moved from Lansing to Eaton Rapids in 1990. He studied at Concordia and Lansing Community colleges before launching a series of private construction companies that focused largely on civil engineering work.



Wicker

"That's why I decided to run: I have this background in civil engineering. That's what I did for 20 years — designed and installed underground pipes, built subdivisions and did the sitework and things like that. I've been involved with drains for my entire professional life," he said.

Wicker has twice run unsuccessfully for county drain commissioner against Wagner.

"This time, I'm getting frustrated because I see all these roads being shut down because the drains haven't been maintained properly," Wicker said. "We need a report on every single drain so we can go out and fix them before they all fall apart. That's the job, and it's not being done."

Wicker's top three priorities are drain maintenance, environmental protection and total transparency, including a monthly newsletter that

details drain-related matters in the county. He also wants a "real plan" to assess pollutants entering waterways across Eaton County.

"I'm retired, seeing these problems, and still want to participate in my community," Wicker added. "I know I can do the job and fix these problems. That's what it all boils down to. That, and saving taxpayer dollars by no longer ignoring so many big maintenance projects."

On the Democratic side, Bruce Porter, 73, was born and raised in Eaton Rapids. He graduated from ITT Technical Institute, worked as a street engineer for the city of Indianapolis and later returned to Greater Lansing to work at the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office. Porter worked at various private engineering firms and recently served for more than a year as the Eaton County deputy drain commissioner before he was fired under Wagner's administration.



Porter

"The drain commissioner is not getting the job done — plain and simple," Porter explained. "We're spending too much on engineering firms and legal fees, which is doubling the cost of maintenance work. This man can't review a set of plans without paying a consultant to do it."

Porter spent the bulk of a 30-minute interview criticizing Wagner rather than explaining his own qualification for the job. His top priorities included spending less on outside firms and to physically come to work on a daily basis, something that he alleged Wagner doesn't usually do.

"I'm much more experienced, I'm familiar with the drain code and I've done civil engineering work for over 30 years," Porter added. "This man just doesn't get it. People are getting

tired."

Porter seeks to slash maintenance costs by 50%, use sealed bids for all maintenance projects, block drain consolidations and prevent unfair assessments. He also vowed to reduce flooding at Columbia and Canal roads, as weather permits, in 2021.

Will Pitylak, 32, is among the younger candidates in the race but contends he has more real-world experience on the job than anyone else in the field, including the current commissioner. He grew up in Dimondale, lives in Charlotte, and is licensed in construction and waste treatment.



Pitylak

Pitylak, a farmer who owns an excavating company, said he isn't afraid to get his hands dirty. Among his priorities: assess every single drain in the county for maintenance priorities.

"We've had quite a few fields that have started to flood, and with some of the interactions people have had with the drain office, they're just not performing or really doing anything about it," he explained. "There's this general consensus that they're just skating by with bare minimums."

Pitylak's priorities also include better leadership, a rewritten drain code and transparency. He said the drain office has become a "punching bag" for the county and, if elected, he would serve as a "real leader" who shows up often, interacts with the community and answers all questions.

"I believe I'm the only candidate who is dealing with these problems every single day," Pitylak added. "I have the knowledge and the experience and I know all of the protocols. The other candidates, in my book, just don't have enough practical experience. They lack common sense."

Pitylak said the next drain commis-

sioner will need to serve for eight to 10 years to make significant progress — and repair the damage of the existing status quo. He's willing to take the challenge.

"The drains are in such bad condition," Pitylak said. "We need someone with a long-term vision."

Dyer, 30, of Charlotte, is the youngest candidate in the race. He has a bachelor's degree from Olivet College and a graduate certificate from Oakland University and serves as a manager at an undisclosed nonprofit in Lansing. He's also serving a second term on the Charlotte City Council.



Dyer

"Environmental conservation is one of my passion areas, and this office deals a lot with environmental concerns," Dyer explained. "I've also always had a passion for public service."

Dyer's top three priorities for the office, if elected, would be to enhance fiscal responsibility and transparency, promote environmental conservation and bolster communication with the public — including local residents who want to ensure their tax and assessment dollars are well spent.

"There's a bit of concern out there with the bidding process that the current drain commissioner is using, and he is receiving a number of campaign contributions from current vendors. There's just a lack of communication, and the community needs someone willing to engage with them."

Dyer said that his Democratic challengers haven't been elected to public office and might struggle to build relationships with residents and listen to their concerns. And if voters want someone who can beat Wagner in November, then Dyer bills himself as the "clear choice."

## Meridian Township clerk of eight years faces new opponent

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

In Meridian Township, incumbent Clerk Brett Dreyfus is facing a challenger for the Democratic nomination, Deborah Guthrie, the township's former director of communications. She faces a tough battle against Dreyfus, who has served as clerk for eight years now. In 2016, Dreyfus received more votes than any other candidate for local office in Meridian Township.

Guthrie, 48, went to Lansing Community College and then transferred to Michigan State University, graduating from the College of Communication Arts & Sciences. She started out as an intern for Meridian Township in 1996 before moving to ESPN in 1997. Since successfully inter-



Guthrie

viewing for a managerial position with Meridian Township in April 1998, she continued to work in local government until she resigned last December.

"Keep in mind, I was a single mom with two kids. I was ecstatic to get that position. I really wanted to be home with my kids," said Guthrie. She eventually worked her way up from a production manager at HOMTV to communications director.

Guthrie claimed that her experience working with the township has prepared her for the job. "The township clerk is a department manager. They oversee staff," said Guthrie. "I oversaw the most diverse staff in the township for 20-plus years." Guthrie also said she has extensive experience with recruiting, training and mentoring students.

"I am the only one running with this amount of experience," she said.

Years of working within local government has given her a strong understand-

ing of interdepartmental government workings, Guthrie said. She worked with the East Lansing City Clerk last fall and worked with the Lansing city clerk this year. Guthrie said a former East Lansing city clerk, Marie Wicks, and Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum have endorsed her.

"Being a positive ambassador for the township is important to me," said Guthrie. "I will conduct myself in a civil manner."

Guthrie said that her first priority in office would be to administer elections according to state law. First, she said she would work with the secretary of state to do a full audit of the clerk's office election protocols. That, she said, would help organize and streamline the voting process to ensure the integrity of Meridian Township's elections.

"The current clerk is getting paid full time and showing up part time," said Guthrie. "I will treat people with respect

and listen to them." Her personal phone number is on her campaign website, and she claimed that she has no intention of changing it. "We have an incredible, diverse community. We need someone in the Clerk's Office who understands that."

Dreyfus's response to the idea that he is paid full time to show up part time: "That's a myth perpetuated by my political opponents," he said. "Typically, I work from 10 to 6."

"My office is renowned for great customer service. This is a political agenda directed against me. This is a longstanding public relations campaign on behalf of my political opponents to paint an



Dreyfus

# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

## Six candidates vie for three slots on Board of Commissioners

Contested primary heats up against incumbents

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Two incumbents, a Democrat and a Republican, are vying for another term on the Ingham County Board of Commissioners in the 10th and 14th districts as the commissioner in the 9th District leaves open a seat for another Democratic woman to presumably take her place.

All candidate spoke with City Pulse to on their visions for Ingham County. They all think they can do the job better than their competition. Voters decide next month.

### 9th District — Democrat vs. Democrat

As Ingham County Commissioner Carol Koenig leaves the board to pursue a race to be an Ingham County circuit judge, two Democrats have filed to take her place: Erin Graham and Pam Weil. In the heavily Democratic 9th District, which comprises parts of East Lansing, Michigan State University and Meridian Township, the winner of next month's Primary Election is expected to beat Republican candidate Crystal M. Grantham in November.

Graham, 37, who has lived in East Lansing for seven years, is an assistant professor at MSU. She has a doctorate degree in Latin American history and a graduate certificate in women's studies and is a recent graduate of East Lansing's "Emerging Leaders" program, as well as president of the East Lansing Board of Education, on which she has served for five years.

Graham is endorsed by four county commissioners, its clerk and prosecutor and every City Council member and trustee of both East Lansing and Meridian Township, among several others. She also has a "very positive" rating from the political action committee of the LGBTQ rights organization LAHR.

"On the school board for the past five years, I learned a lot about governance, policy-making, and providing oversight to a large multi-mil-

lion-dollar budget," Graham said. "I believe that the experience and expertise I bring can help to provide high-quality services to all residents."

Among Graham's top priorities are balancing the budget amid significant COVID-19 induced shortfalls while maintaining quality services to residents. Her priority, she explained, would be to work collaboratively and focus on health and human services, parks, housing and infrastructure.

Her other top focus: bolstering resources at the Ingham County Health Department, which has faced challenges because of the pandemic.

"We need to continue to diversify our regional economy," Graham added. "This will help insulate ourselves when there is another recession. The county should also explore regional approaches to infrastructure, which save money and deliver better results than projects done in piecemeal."

Graham also vowed to disrupt systemic racism and touted her past work with restorative justice programs at local schools to reduce racial disparities in student discipline. She also believes the county should consider reallocating Sheriff's Department funding to proactive social services.

"I ask questions and will put in the hard work needed to get the job done," Graham added.

Weil, 57, who has lived in East Lansing for 20 years, worked as a certified recovery professional in the field of information technology. In retirement, she runs a general information technology consulting company that focuses largely on website development. She has also served as the only person of color on the county's Parks Board for decades, she told City Pulse.

"It's a good time for me because I'm not working a regular, full-time job and I'm in complete charge of my



Graham

schedule again," Weil said. "I've always been really interested in civic responsibilities and always been willing to participate on boards and commissioners."

Her top priorities include transparency in public data and bolstering public resources for health care, mental wellness and other community programs. She also wants to make sure her IT skills are put to use through a more thorough analysis of the county's technological capabilities.

"I believe it's the government's role to create a baseline that allows people to make informed choices, and good data is part of that," Weil added. "On top of that, these conversations all need to begin and continue in a safe, secure and fear-free environment. I'm always open to dialogue."

Weil recognized that there are "clearly issues" with police culture and would like to see more done to bolster social services that underpin psychiatric issues affecting local residents. She'd also like to see if services at the Sheriff's Department could be redirected to other agencies.

"I'd have to see the numbers, but conceptually, yes, I support divestment very much," Weil said. "We need police, but we also need quality, professional people that help in these other areas."

Weil bills Graham as the "legacy" replacement for Koenig with the backing of the traditional, Democratic establishment whereas she's a more radical, Bernie-type candidate, she explained.

"I think it's just healthy to have two people running," Weil added. "Erin is a decent person. She's younger than me, and much more of an academic. I see myself as more of an operational-type person. I'm not here to get to another office. I'm here to get involved and help the community."



Weil

### 10th District — Democrat vs. Democrat

A familiar primary is brewing in Ingham County's 10th District on Lansing's east side. Democrat Bob Pena, for the second consecutive election cycle, is challenging



Morgan

Thomas Morgan, a Democrat who defeated Pena two years ago and is seeking a second full term on the board. The winner is expected to defeat Republican candidate Kelly Christopherson in November.

Morgan, 40, of Lansing, has had a productive two years on the Board of Commissioners — including a byline on the county's new health services millage, which expands the existing county millage to include mental health services, as well as the new senior services millage.

He also successfully stopped a scheme to privatize jail medical services to a profit-hungry corporation with a shoddy record of patient care and led the rewrite of the county's new ethics policy, which improves government transparency and holds officials accountable for their emails.

"Everything I've done has been through the lens of two considerations: helping people who need help and reforming government to increase transparency," Morgan said. "I've been able to get a lot of things done, but there is still a lot more to do. We need to keep up the momentum."

Morgan's top three priorities for a second term are expanding health care services despite a challenging economic forecast tied to COVID-19, improving government transparency and finding other operational efficiencies by bolstering regional cooperation with cities like Lansing.

"We've had a lot of change with this new group of younger, liberal members who have shaken up the status

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inaccurate picture of me and my image in the community." Dreyfus said that the number of votes he's received over the years proves that he has public approval and support.

Dreyfus graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in political science. He was a director for several nonprofit organizations, primarily focused on helping people with disabilities. He also worked as a communications and marketing manager for a technology firm.

For 25 years now, Dreyfus has lived in Meridian Township. He started working at the township at the plan-

ning commission in 1999. Then, he spent a few years on the zoning board of appeals. After that, he was elected as a trustee. In 2012, Dreyfus became the first Democrat elected as clerk in over 50 years.

Preserving Meridian Township's quality of life is Dreyfus' main priority, he said. "I will get what I call true community sustainability. That means smart land use planning," Dreyfus explained. "Being very careful about doing zoning changes and about doing special use permits. And making sure that, whenever there's an increase in density, we protect the environment."

Dreyfus said that he is a strong advocate of green space protection and protecting Meridian Township's natural features, including wetlands, flood plains and its wooded areas. He said that it is important to balance commercial development with preserving the

community's natural beauty.

Besides that, Dreyfus emphasized that he is — like Guthrie — a proponent of safe and transparent elections. He said he has managed 16 elections as clerk. Dreyfus said that he has always advocated for absentee ballots. He also said that he helped the township get all new election equipment.

"In 2018, I ensured that Meridian was fully compliant with all aspects of voter registration up through election day at 8 p.m.," he claimed. "No-reason absentee voting, changing all the forms, making sure we had expanded hours. I also kicked off numerous voter registration drives for students and the elderly."

Dreyfus said that he is concerned that other board members and people working in the township don't engage in full transparency for various reasons: for political reasons, to protect the image of the administration, to protect the image

of board members.

"We don't always reveal issues and problems that need to be discussed, such as losses against the township," said Dreyfus. "In my role, I work as a watchdog. I safeguard the Open Meetings Act as well as handling Freedom of Information Act requests."

Experience is what differentiates him from his opponent, said Dreyfus. As the incumbent, he feels much more qualified for the position. "I've been involved in all aspects of township government," said Dreyfus. "My opponent has mainly worked in the TV studio."

Dreyfus said that he has worked on basically any problem that affects his constituents. "From land use to roads, public safety, election management, taxes and millages. All that stuff is in my toolkit," he said.

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## Ingham County

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quo and attempted to reset county government to make it work better for everyday people,” Morgan added. “It’s all really exciting, and I’ve been proud to be a part of that work.”

Revenue sharing payments from the state are in jeopardy, Morgan said, and it’s going to get worse. By forming a more regionalized approach to community services, duplicated efforts can be reduced. “The average person doesn’t care who is doing it, as long as it gets done,” he said.

Morgan said his responsible stewardship of tax dollars as chairman of the board’s Finance Committee is reason enough for small business owners to support his campaign. And he also wants to continue taking strides toward a more racially equitable future in Greater Lansing.

“I’m glad the spotlight is finally being put on racial injustice, but I won’t be one to stand on a soapbox and puff out my chest to make sure I look woke,” Morgan said. “I’m fully committed to doing what it takes to improve, but I’m also making sure the mic is on and I’m handing it over.”

Morgan said police budgets in Greater Lansing are too high and that local departments need “serious reform.” Part of the solution is a reallocation of resources to other community services. But that also takes a coalition of support and bridge building in local neighborhoods, he said.

“I’m not one to try to make everyone happy. I think that’s impossible. I just try to keep it as real as much as I can, and I think that type of honesty, on balance, is respected,” Morgan added. “I’ve got a lot done these last two years, and think I can get a lot done over the next two years.”

Pena, 57, who has lived in Lansing for 35 years, is a licensed civil engineer. He has no prior experience in elected office but served as a board member for Capital Region Habitat for Humanity and the Capital Area Food Council. He’s challenging Morgan because he believes he has the skills to further “streamline” county government and reduce broad inefficiencies.

Pena’s top three priorities are

ensuring residents have access to quality food, bolstering housing opportunities for all income levels and maintaining local roadways. He also wants to ensure local businesses are supported during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“A lot of times, in government, you have this duplication of resources,” Pena explained to City Pulse. “I’ve been working long enough as a civil engineer that I have some idea how to spot and correct those things, at least when it comes to transportation and infrastructure in the county.”

Pena wants to ensure rural farmers receive the support they need to grow the food-supply chain in the region while ensuring that the product stream finds its way into urban areas across Lansing. Housing opportunities are also important, as are the roads to connect them, he added.

“County government is dynamic, and it’s something that needs to be reviewed constantly,” Pena added. “If you just wrote rules and walked away, you wouldn’t need the commission. Things change, needs change. That’s the real job: Sometimes policy adjustments must be made.”

If elected, Pena said he plans to work to keep taxes and millages flat for local residents while taking a magnifying glass to the county’s overall budget and looking for ways to save money. He didn’t offer many specific suggestions for change, but said he has a willingness to learn more.

“I’m not a dictator. I’m a team player. I work with people. I listen to people. If I don’t have the answers, I’ll do my homework. I’ll think and try to figure out the root of any problem,” Pena said.

### 14th District — Republican vs. Republican

**Incumbent** Republican Commissioner Robin Naeyaert, of Mason, is seeking her third two-year term on the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, facing off next month against Republican challenger Gary Gierke. Without a Democrat challenger on the ticket, the winner takes the seat.



Pena

Naeyaert, 57, has lived in Mason her entire adult life, hasn’t requested campaign contributions, carries no endorsements and said her voting record alone makes her worthy of another term. She worked as a legislative director in the state House of Representatives for almost 30 years, working with nine state representatives and is also a Realtor, largely serving rural Ingham County.

Naeyaert also served on the Mason City Council for more than a decade, serving as mayor and mayor pro-tem, and though she is a Republican, she has refused to endorse Donald Trump.

“I think, I listen and I only form my opinion only once I’ve heard all sides of a story or an issue, I’m also not reluctant to speak my mind and stand up for my beliefs,” she told City Pulse. “While I represent the entire county, I’m also elected by the people in my district, so it’s about balance.”

Naeyaert’s largest priorities, if elected to another term, include opening her mind to a number of progressive issues, supporting senior citizens and a more judicious review of county spending.

“I also want to look at bringing back health care to rural areas in the county,” Naeyaert added. “While I’m not a fan of the Ingham Health Plan, as long as it continues to make a difference to underserved residents, I’ll continue to grit my teeth and vote for it. It’s also about compromise.”

But it’s not all compromise. Naeyaert declined to comment on whether she thinks law enforcement disproportionately targets people of color, uses the phrase “all lives matter,” and doesn’t believe that human-created climate change is a problem that warrants immediate action.

“I have an issue with singling out any race,” she added. “We’re all human. It’s a human race.”

Gierke, 55, who has lived in Mason for 25 years, is a member of the Trump-supporting “All Lives Matter” crowd, though he recognizes police discrimination. He owns a tree trimming company, served in the U.S. Army and is an active member of the



Naeyaert

County Fair Board, the Optimist Club in Mason and his local Lions Club, among other groups.

“I would like to see some changes, and if you want changes, it’s good to get off your soapbox and get them done,” Gierke explained. “My biggest priority is to help run this county much more efficiently. When it comes to county operations, I just see a lot of wasteful spending going on.”

Gierke said county employees often waste gas driving around unnecessarily, though he couldn’t point to any other specific spending problems. He also wants to protect the Ingham County Fairgrounds based on rumors that county officials might look to “sink it” sometime in the future.

“I think we also need to change some services,” Gierke added. “I know a lot of people out there are playing the system. That’s another way to help save dollars. There has to be some hard decisions made to curb costs, and some services will have to go. Times are tough right now.”

Gierke didn’t elaborate on what cost reductions must be made, but he also voiced a desire to lower taxes for residents and businesses that “are currently being taxed out of existence.” A more specific plan can only be generated after a careful review of current county spending, he said.

“I see myself as a strong leader that leads by example,” Gierke said. “I let people have input, but ultimately, it’s going to fall on my shoulders to make these decisions. I will be the guy on the board that stands up and really digs his heels in over an issue for my constituents.”

Gierke contends that Naeyaert, over the last two terms, hasn’t done enough to engage with rural residents and act in their best interests. In many cases, she’s just not visible enough in the community, he argued, noting that he’ll make a larger effort to engage with rural neighborhoods.

Naeyaert, for her part, said she has a full-time job that prevents her from going to community events on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays but is otherwise an active county leader.



Gierke

# 2020 MICHIGAN PRIMARY AUGUST 4

## Republicans have primaries in rural Ingham, Eaton state House seats

By KYLE MELINN

Unless you're a Republican in south Lansing, rural Ingham County or Eaton County, your primary election choice for state representative couldn't be easier.

There will be one name on the ballot. Your only other option is to write-in your name or somebody else's. But unless somebody filed a write-in campaign with the local clerks, that vote won't count.

That leaves the following two races in the Lansing area.

### 67th House District - South Lansing, most of rural Ingham County

For the right to face Rep. Kara Hope, D-Holt, in the fall, Grand Ledge High product Nate Ross, 27, is up against Lansing native and two-time candidate Clyde Thomas, 47.

Ross has lived in Mason for the last couple of years after a brief stint in Huntsville, Ala., where he worked for Asahi Kasei Plastics. The Michigan State University graduate is now a senior analyst for Dart Container.

A member of the Ingham County Republican Executive Committee, Ross has never held a polit-

ical office. According to his campaign's website, Ross advocates for allowing "families quality choices in education and healthcare." The native is married and has two young children.

Thomas, who hails from Dansville, runs a licensed and bonded freight shipping and trucking company along with Cornerstone Contracting. In 2018, Thomas fell in the Republican primary to Leon Clark with 35% of the vote.

In 2014, he studied constitutional law and economics in preparation for a career in politics. If elected, Thomas wants to offer an online platform for constituents to exchange feedback with him while voting on bills.

Republicans periodically make varying degrees of attempts to win this Ingham County seat, but the heavy Democratic influence in Delhi Township and south Lansing have thwarted them since 2002 with Dianne Byrum, Barb Byrum, Tom Cochran and current officeholder Kara Hope.

Back in the 1990s, the Republicans won with Paul DeWeese and Dan Gustafson, but unless the 2021 redraw takes out south Lansing and adds more rural area, this isn't a realistic possibility for the R's.

### 71st District - Most of Eaton County outside of Charlotte

In the GOP primary, former Eaton County Commissioner Christine Barnes

is angling toward a rematch with Rep. Angela Witwer in this politically competitive seat, but she has her work cut out for her with first-time candidate Gina Johnsen, the director of the Michigan Capitol House of Prayer.

Barnes, 51, of Mulliken, is a National Rifle Association instructor who served on the county's planning, zoning and EATRAN boards at various points. Originally from Delta Township, Barnes has lived most of her life in Eaton County.

Barnes was born in RAF Lakenheath, England — "a proud Air Force brat." She has a background in finance and accounting. After starting out as an Accountemp employee, she ultimately became a chief financial officer. She's served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. She's a member of the local Kiwanis, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Meals on Wheels and Sunfield Fire Auxiliary.

Johnsen worked with the Patrick Colbeck gubernatorial campaign in 2018, first as a prayer team leader and then coordinator for the campaign's 2,400 volunteers. Colbeck immediately endorsed her state House bid, saying, "She has my unequivocal endorsement in her run. She will be a bold, Godly servant on behalf of the citizens of Michigan."



Barnes



Johnsen

For 17 years, the Wellesley College graduate worked with Otsuka Pharmaceuticals as a program manager. Prior to that, she worked 14 years as a neuroscience specialist. After working briefly in the Senate as a policy director, she was a marketing director for Applegate Insulation.

Johnsen jumped out of the gate last year by dropping \$39,000 of her own money into the race, which she's used to boost her name ID.

Politically, the former seat of Tom Barrett, Rick Jones, and Deb Shaughnessy is slowly pulling away from Republicans as Delta Township continues its suburban Lansing growth of educated white-collar workers. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer won this district by 10 points last year after President Donald Trump eked out a 2-point win in 2016.

Republicans claim they plan to make taking out Witwer a focus, but the freshman was the state's top House fundraiser in 2019, kept her voting record defensible and stayed as pragmatic as is possible in these hyper-partisan days. Would Gina Johnsen be too conservative for this district? Does Barnes have fire in her belly two years after a personally taxing campaign?

We'll see as we move closer to November.



Hope



Ross



Thomas

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- 5 years Meridian Township Zoning Board of Appeals • 4 years Meridian Township, Board Member
- 2 years Meridian Township, Supervisor "Pro-Tem"

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# ARTS & CULTURE

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## Braving the coronavirus with ink and needles

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Since the coronavirus outbreak began, chances are your favorite tattoo shop has been through hell. Lumped in with other personal services such as hair and nail salons, tattooing was completely shut down until mid-June. The pandemic sent a potent shockwave through the tattoo industry and local shops had to get creative to survive.

Sean Peters, owner of Eclectic Art Tattoo Gallery, said many challenges arose due to the unique business practices that can come with running a tattoo shop. For example, the artists at Eclectic are independent contractors, which made it impossible for Peters to get loans based on the number of employees.

“There weren’t any layoffs, which kind of screwed us when we tried to get any small business loans,” Peters explained. “The first question they ask is, ‘Are there 500 people or less at your business?’ All of that money went to bigger businesses.”

Unable to rely on emergency loans, Eclectic kept its lights on by reaching out to the community with giveaways such as tattoo raffles. Customers paid \$25 for a chance to win a four-hour tattoo session, which normally costs \$500. Eclectic received many tickets, and announced the six winners on Facebook.

In an email to City Pulse, Kris Lachance, owner of Splash of Color Tattoo and Piercing Studio, and communication director Anne Lux said the shop’s employees are not classified as independent contractors and were thus able to avoid many of the complications faced by shops like Eclectic. Splash of Color was able to furlough its 15 employees without any permanent layoffs.

“This meant they were able to receive unemployment without many of the delays, hiccups and headaches some of our other industry friends experienced,” Lachance and Lux said. “It wasn’t a totally smooth process, but it could have been worse. Everyone was brought back once we were given the green light to reopen.”

Peters said the tattoo industry is



Courtesy Photo

A tattoo booth at Splash of Color Tattoo & Piercing Studio. PPE used by Splash of Color includes KN96 face masks, face shields, fluid-resistant lab coats for tattoo artists and surgical masks for clients and staff while in common areas.

very protective of its own in braving the coronavirus, citing a website and Facebook group named “Tattooing Beyond COVID-19” that was formed by fellow tattoo artist and shop owner Geary Morrill. The group is a helpful resource for tattoo artists to find personal protective equipment and share solutions with one another. Lachance and Lux said Splash of Color used the platform to share its own preparedness plan and to help other shops get through the pandemic.

“It’s a shared space for artists to say, ‘Hey, this is what’s going on with us; this where you can find masks,’” Peters added. “There’s a communal effort to help each other reopen. We were one of the last to close, and one of the last to open. Having people in your corner sharing information is priceless.”

Tattoo shops are legally open again, only with rigorous new safeguards. Eclectic now requires clients

to provide their own masks and wear them all times while in the shop. Clients must also take a temperature test, provide their own hand sanitizer and sanitize their hands upon entry. Eclectic’s full list of requirements is available on its Facebook page. Splash of Color’s requirements are also online.

“We all follow guidelines, pay licensing and care about the safety of our clients. That’s one of the scary things about reopening during COVID-19,” Peters said.

Even with shops open, Lachance and Lux said it is by no means an indicator that the pandemic has gone away. Splash of Color is still staring down a score of financial difficulties.

“There will be financial ramifications and we won’t be making money like we’re used to, but we want to ensure we aren’t faced with illness or additional closures,” Lachance and Lux said. “In the long term, we’ll

have to contend with things like more employee absenteeism, changes in consumer spending, what campus will look like in the fall, possible supply chain disruption, and maybe even another state mandated shut down if we see a resurgence of COVID-19 cases.”

While the shops were shut down, some people resorted to homemade self-tattoo techniques, the most common of those being the stick and poke. A stick-and-poke tattoo is typically done with a sewing needle and vial of India ink, which can be purchased at hobby shops. City Pulse reported on the local culture of stick and poke tattoos, perhaps without enough emphasis on the legality and health risks, much to the chagrin of shops like Eclectic Art Tattoo Gallery and Splash of Color — both of which made widely shared posts to their Facebook pages decrying the unsanitary practice.

“As soon as you start doing that on other people, you’re dealing with cross-contamination. There’s hepatitis, HIV — it’s just gross. In this industry, we pride ourselves on doing what we need to be considered legal,” Peters said.

“They are always unsafe,” Lachance and Lux added. “I know that there will always be someone who says they got one and it turned out fine, but they are the exception, not the rule. The risk of disease and infection is too great with homemade tattoos.”

Homemade tattooing is addressed by Michigan’s Public Act 375, which was enacted in December of 2010. It states: “Individuals shall not tattoo, brand, microblade, or perform body piercing on another individual unless that tattooing, branding, microblading, or body piercing occurs at a body art facility licensed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.”

Amanda Darche, communication specialist at the Ingham County Health Department, said local residents are encouraged to only use a licensed body art facility for tattoos.

Visit *Tattooing Beyond COVID-19* at [www.tattooingbeyond.org](http://www.tattooingbeyond.org)

# Smoke weed. Eat weed. If you're brave, try them both at once.

Reviewing dank products from Stateside Wellness — and White Castle

By KYLE KAMINSKI

I couldn't let this weekly weed review guide go on for too much longer without including some of the delicious, cannabis-infused edibles rapidly finding their way to the Lansing marijuana scene. They usually make for a longer lasting, stronger and more complex sort of buzz. They're also less intimidating to the uninitiated smoker, and tend to taste much (much) better than a blunt.

Stateside Wellness on Kalamazoo Street usually has a solid stock of edible products. And of course, I couldn't just pick one. I also had to smoke a joint while I waited for them to kick in.

## Wana Mango Sour Gummies

Price — \$20/10-piece pack  
THC content — 100 mg (10 mg per piece)

These Starburst-sized gummies are packed with flavor, none of which includes the aftertaste of marijuana. They're tangy, puckery and covered in



## Lansterdam in Review: Stateside Wellness

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sugar. They're also vegan and gluten free. I haven't tried the other flavors (like grape, raspberry and orange) but I can vouch for the mango.

Think gummy worms, but a bit more firm. And nothing overwhelmingly sour, despite the label. The jar advises to start with one piece or half of one piece. I had five on an empty stomach.

I'm not getting into the science behind THC absorption, but it has a lot to do with fat content and individual tolerance. Just know that these are sativa-based gummies — and you'll likely feel that energetic head rush that usually accompanies a potent sativa about an hour after you eat them.

## RedBud Roots Night Terror OG

Price — \$14/1g  
THC content — 18.84%

I didn't want to wait an hour for the gummies to kick in, so I smoked a joint to help pass the time.

Plus, with a heavy metal name like "Night Terror OG," on Stateside's menu, I had to try it out. This relaxing hybrid indica clocks in at 19% THC. And the gummies were just kicking in.

At this point, the familiar body high that only edibles can produce was coming on fast, but was accompanied by a stimulating little bump of energy that I can attribute only to the sativa-based gummies. The sleep-inducing Night Terror OG, surprisingly, provided a nice balancing effect.

A combination of strains of Blue Dream and Rare Darkness, Night Terror OG leans hard toward a straight indica and is known for relaxing, unwinding and solid late-night smoke sessions. For me, it was a stress-reducing combo that killed all remaining anxiety at the end of a work day.



A gram of these dense, crystalized buds were brimming with orange and white hairs. It was a denser, more pungent smoke that made me cough. It carried a strong, fruitlike flavor on the front end — maybe grapes or watermelons or plums — with an herby, piney sort of finish on the back.

A round of extreme cottonmouth was quickly followed by an extreme case of the munchies, exacerbated by the absence of lunch earlier in the afternoon. That's when I found a ride and jammed out to at least 40 minutes of Motown on the backroads to White Castle in Howell.

I wouldn't normally mention dinner, but White Castle is basically a footnote in stoner history at this point and those juicy little sliders are the absolute best possible ending to a stoned car ride. Warning: Either this bud or the gummies may induce extreme hunger. I had eight hamburgers.

*Lansterdam in Review is a new column written by Kyle Kaminski, a City Pulse staff writer and cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Kaminski samples some of the best bud in Greater Lansing, gets real high and writes about it.*

## Favorite Things

### Jeff Hiatt and his fat bike

*Some people choose stationary hobbies, like playing video games or playing cards. Jeff Hiatt chose a pastime that gets his blood pumping in new and remote locations across the state. The Bath native, who now lives in Lansing, works a day job in inventory control — but to truly see him in his element, you'll have to visit some of the area's wooded trails and parks, ones with rideable trails. Here's what Hiatt, 38, had to say about his favorite thing:*

My favorite thing is my Specialized Fatboy fat bike. I purchased it back in 2017 from Denny's Central Park Bicycles in Okemos. I named it General Sherman, which is from a "Simpsons" episode.

I wanted a fat bike so I could ride year-round on the snow and dirt. They ride very well on sand, too. Basically, it's the perfect Michigan bike!

Growing up, I'd always been into riding bikes as a kid and was pretty much fearless on one. That said, I was a pretty decent rider right away. About six years ago, I sold a guitar I rarely played and finally bought my first mountain bike. I was instantly hooked.

I started riding almost every day — though, when I first started, I couldn't do more than 10-20-mile rides. I first started exploring the Lansing River Trail, then local parks with single-track trails specifically for mountain biking — places like Anderson Nature Park and Burchfield Park.

So far, my Specialized Fatboy is holding up, but the technology moves so fast in the industry that it is already obsolete. It's also much heavier than the new fat bikes on the market.

Today, I still ride almost every day, though my rides now range from 20 to 100 miles. When I'm not riding

locally, I am usually at the DTE Foundation Trail in Chelsea, Yankee Springs in Hastings, or some other more advanced mountain biking trail system. I also "bikepack" now, which is basically camping on a bicycle. I like doing that in the Manistee National Forest and other remote locations.

Hitting up spots like those allows me to get out into nature and truly appreciate it. It's also a fun and easy way to stay healthy. I would absolutely recommend anyone get a Specialized Fatboy. They are a blast all year, but truly shine on groomed singletrack.

For me, it's all about the adventure of it all. I love exploring new places you can't get to by car. It's meditative. It's thrilling and relaxing all in one. It also keeps me in good physical shape.



Beyond health benefits, cycling literally is the best thing I could have ever done for myself. It helped me kick addictions and mental demons. It's also connected me with amazing people all over the country that I would have never met otherwise.

*(Favorite Things was edited by Rich Tupica)*

# Donovan Hohn gets spellbound by the water of Michigan

By **BILL CASTANIER**

If you grew up in Michigan, moved here or vacationed here, it's likely you spent some time on the water.

It's not an accident or braggadocio that Michigan is known as the Great Lakes State, sometimes referred to as the "Water Wonderland" or "The Third Coast."

Not only do the Great Lakes provide Michigan with the second longest coastline of the states — only Alaska's coast is longer — Michigan is dotted with inland lakes, creeks and rivers offering unprecedented access to water.

Water has also been inspiration for innumerable Michigan writers, such as Jim Harrison, Ann Marie Oomen, Linda Nemec, Jerry Dennis and David Dempsey. Even Herman Melville found inspiration on a harrowing trip across Lake Erie.

Author Donovan Hohn's new book, "The Inner Coast: Essays," draws heavily on the power and importance of water. From his essay, "Snail Picking," about collecting snails as a small child, to "Midwest Passage," about the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which combines engineering with ecology, to "Zealot," about Marc Edwards, the environmental engineer who delved into the Flint water crisis.

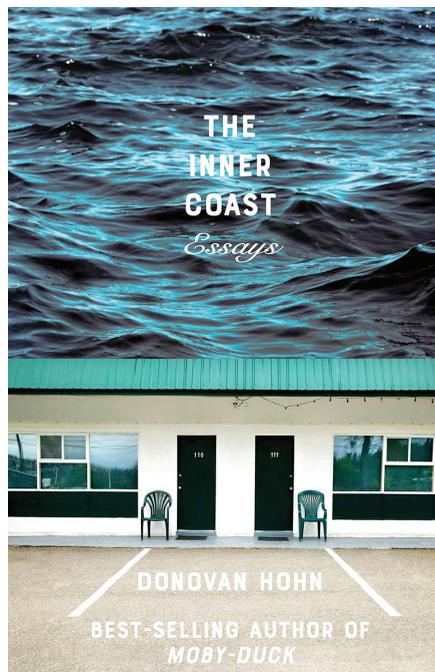
This is not the first time Hohn has found inspiration in water. His 2012 book, "Moby-Duck: the True Story of 28,800 Bath Toys Lost at Sea and the Beachcombers, Oceanographers, Environmentalists and Fools, Including the Author, Who Went in Search For Them," took him on a trip across the world in search for these rubber duckies. Ocean currents took them on far-flung trips.

Although Hohn didn't grow up in Michigan, his family spent summers visiting a family farm (on the Wisconsin side) not far from Lake Michigan. After attending graduate school at the University of Michigan, he lives in Ann Arbor, which is less than 45 minutes from Lake Erie and on the Huron River.

Hohn has a day job teaching writing at Wayne State University, which he enjoys immensely.

"Most of my students are either first-generation Americans or first-generation college students. I have an inherent love of the public university," he said.

Hohn, who grew up in San Francisco, said, "I had a love of the ocean from a very early age."



"When I relocated to the Midwest, I grew homesick for the sea. It's a mystery why I love bodies of water. It's why I dove to the bottom of Lake Michigan," Hohn said. He recounts that tale in his short story, "Watermarks."

He also finds solace in rivers. "Whenever I visit a river, I have the urge to follow it," he said.

However, not all his short stories revolve around water. In the extremely poignant, personal and intimate essay, "Falling," he writes about growing up with his mother, who has moods of unhappiness and sometimes abandons the family.

"It took years to write, and it was hard to write for many reasons. But it was something I needed to write about my childhood," he said. "To me, there is a lot of grief in the essays."

At one point he asks his mother to

read her diary. She photocopied it for him.

He writes: "I had hoped to find in this document clues that could solve the mystery I have spent most of my life investigating — the mystery of my mother's unhappiness — and her diary raised as many questions as it answered."

Hohn said he likes "slow boats." He once took a container ship across the Atlantic and has paddled the last 70 miles of the Mississippi from Baton Rouge to New Orleans.

He also admits he is a slow writer. The essays were about 15 years in the making, with each appearing in major publication previously.

In his essay "Watermarks," he explores what he calls the history of writing about water, including works by Herman Melville, John McPhee and Norman McClean.

He writes about the rivers and streams and how "the journey of a river from a source to mouth resembles our own journey from birth to death."

He also muses with amazement at how early French settlers traversed the Midwest beginning in the early 1600s.

Hohn is also a genius at bringing life to obscure ideas and popular culture.

In "A Romance of Rust," he tells of his mother's sisters' husband who, in addition to teaching biology at an Ann Arbor High School, was an obsessive collector



Hohn

of tools — collecting more than 25,000 tools — 18,000 of which are wrenches.

Donovan's uncle takes him on a tour of an outbuilding filled with tools.

Hohn observes: "What struck me most was how zoological Tom's tools seemed. Certain pliers bore striking resemblance to beaks of birds, certain wrenches to the jaws of lizards."

When Donovan asks his uncle, "Why tools?" his uncle answers, "I guess I just find them beautiful." In "Romance of Rust," Hohn finds the existential beauty of the tool in society, and he does the same with the exploration of coastlines and riverbanks.

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# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

**"Gilded Age"-- theme answers surrounded by gold.**

By Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 "Abnormally Attracted to Sin" singer Tori
- 5 Interest
- 9 Helped out at a rave, e.g.
- 13 Draw from a pen
- 14 "\_\_\_ a dull moment"
- 16 Bank
- 17 Turn-of-the-century style
- 19 \_\_\_ Stanley Gardner (author whose Perry Mason character inspired the 2020 HBO series)
- 20 Comparatively chilly
- 21 Activity with tanks
- 23 Lamentable
- 24 Vowel sounds in "naysay"
- 26 "I identify with that GIF"
- 28 Romantic duet in "The Phantom of the Opera"
- 34 Drugstore container
- 37 Actress Kendrick
- 38 Eighth day of Christmas figures
- 39 Age verifiers
- 40 Edison's \_\_\_ Park
- 42 One-all, for one
- 43 Hitchcock film named for a gem
- 46 Tiniest of noises
- 47 Jury member
- 48 Where to order individual items
- 51 Take back
- 52 They help you get a handle
- 56 Glass of "This American Life"
- 58 Take up broom?!
- 62 Jack of kids' rhymes
- 63 Latvian capital

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13				14			15	16				
17				18				19				
20					21			22		23		
24				25			26	27				
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39					40			41		42		
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48					49				50			
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56	57			58		59	60	61		62		
63			64		65			66				
67					68					69		
70						71				72		

- 65 Super Mario World 2 character that pops up from underwater
- 67 Important work
- 68 Profession deserving of nightly applause (at a minimum)
- 69 Clickable pic
- 70 Part of CSNY
- 71 Slightest bit
- 72 Grandmotherly nicknames
- Down**
- 1 Be of assistance
- 2 "Polo" preceder
- 3 Agree to participate
- 4 Dakar's domain
- 5 Bearded grassland grazer
- 6 Pushes the engine
- 7 "Voulez-vous coucher \_\_\_ moi ce soir?"
- 8 Jeff Bridges's brother
- 9 "Black-ish" father
- 10 Newark resident, slangily
- 11 "Enchanted" Anne Hathaway role
- 12 Turned green to gold?!
- 15 Early 1980s craze creator
- 18 Type of exam
- 22 Chemistry class model
- 25 Poetry competition
- 27 Advanced deg. for musicians
- 29 Bumbling
- 30 "Bonne \_\_\_!" ("Happy New Year!" in French)
- 31 Home of my Oregon alma mater
- 32 Slobbery dog of the comics
- 33 Software buyer
- 34 "La Dolce \_\_\_" (Fellini film)
- 35 Symbol of immunity, on "Survivor"
- 36 Spears on the table
- 41 Play before the main act
- 44 One in a deck
- 45 Hits with a laser
- 47 Gourd used in some Thai curries
- 49 "Blackadder Goes Forth" star Atkinson
- 50 Space shuttle letters
- 53 "Loveroot" author Jong
- 54 Boca \_\_\_, Florida
- 55 Gobsnacks
- 56 Metal for old skillets
- 57 Kelly of "Live! With Kelly and Ryan"
- 59 Prefix before "distant" alma mater
- 60 Currency introduced in 1999
- 61 Before times, so to speak
- 64 Forest fire output
- 66 "Back to the Future" costar Thompson

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Answers Page 28

# SUDOKU

# Beginner

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

## 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 24

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

July 8-14, 2020

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** "As beautiful as simplicity is, it can become a tradition that stands in the way of exploration," said singer Laura Nyro. This is practical advice for you to heed in the coming weeks. According to my analysis, you're scheduled to enjoy an extended engagement with rich, fertile complexity. The best teachings won't be reducible to a few basic lessons; rather, they'll be rife with soulful nuances. The same is true about the splendid dilemmas that bring you stimulating amusements: They can't and shouldn't be forced into pigeonholes. As a general rule, anything that seems easy and smooth and straightforward will probably not be useful. Your power will come from what's crooked, dense, and labyrinthine.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** You may think that playing heavy metal music and knitting with yarn don't have much in common. And yet there is an annual contest in Joensuu, Finland where people with expertise in needlework join heavy metal musicians on stage, plying their craft in rhythm to the beat. The next Heavy Metal Knitting World Championship will be July 15-16, 2021. This year's event was canceled due to the pandemic. If it had been staged, I bet multiple Tauruses would have been among the top ten competitors. Why? Because you Bulls are at the peak of your ability to combine things that aren't often combined. You have the potential to excel at making unexpected connections, linking influences that haven't been linked before, and being successful at comparing apples and oranges.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** In 1848, Danish King Frederick VII agreed, under pressure from liberal agitators, to relinquish some of his absolute power. Thereafter, he shared his decision-making with a newly formed parliament. He was pleased with this big change because it lightened his workload. "That was nice," he remarked after signing the new constitution. "Now I can sleep in every morning." I recommend him to you as an inspirational role model in the coming weeks. What so-called advantages in your life are more boring or burdensome than fun and interesting? Consider the possibility of shedding dubious "privileges" and status symbols.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Cancerian author Mary McCarthy provides you with a challenge you'll be wise to relish during the rest of 2020. She writes, "Everyone continues to be interested in the quest for the self, but what you feel when you're older is that you really must make the self." McCarthy implies that this epic reorientation isn't likely until you've been on earth for at least four decades. But judging from the astrological omens, I think you're ready for it now—no matter what your age is. To drive home the point, I'll say it in different words. Your task isn't to find yourself, but rather to create yourself. Don't wait around passively for life to show you who you are. Show life who you are.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Some night soon, I predict you'll have an agitated dream while you're asleep: a nightmare that symbolizes an unresolved conflict you're wrestling with in your waking life. Here's a possible example: A repulsive politician you dislike may threaten to break a toy you loved when you were a kid. But surprise! There'll be a happy ending. A good monster will appear in your dream and fix the problem; in my example, the benevolent beast will scare away the politician who's about to break your beloved toy. Now here's the great news: In the days after your dream, you'll solve the conflict you've been wrestling with in your waking life.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** "Love is the best school, but the tuition is high and the homework can be painful," writes author Diane Ackerman. I'm guessing that in recent months, her description has been partially true for you Virgos. From what I can tell, love has indeed been a rigorous school. And the tuition has been rather high. But on the other hand, the homework has been at least as pleasurable as it has been painful. I expect these trends to continue for the foreseeable future. What

teachings about intimacy, communion, tenderness, and compassion would you like to study next?

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** "A single feat of daring can alter the whole conception of what is possible," wrote Libran novelist Graham Greene. His words can serve as a stirring motto for you in the coming weeks. I sense you're close to summoning a burst of courage—a bigger supply of audacity than you've had access to in a while. I hope you'll harness this raw power to fuel a daring feat that will expand your conception of what is possible.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** "It's not always easy to tell the difference between thinking and looking out of the window," wrote poet Wallace Stevens. That's a problem you won't have to worry about anytime soon. The coming weeks will be a favorable phase for you to both think and gaze out the window—as well as to explore all the states in-between. In other words, you'll have the right and the need to indulge in a leisurely series of dreamy ruminations and meandering fantasies and playful explorations of your deepest depths and your highest heights. Don't rush the process. Allow yourself to linger in the gray areas and the vast stretches of inner wildness.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** The coming weeks will be a favorable time to undertake a transformative vision quest, even if the exigencies of the pandemic require your quest to unfold primarily in your inner realms. The near future will also bring you good fortune if you focus on creating more sacredness in your rhythm and if you make a focused effort to seek out songs, texts, inspirations, natural places, and teachers that infuse you with a reverence for life. I'm trying to help you to see, Sagittarius, that you're in a phase when you can attract healing synchronicities into your world by deepening your sense of awe and communing with experiences that galvanize you to feel worshipful.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** "To love well is the task in all meaningful relationships, not just romantic bonds." The author and activist bell hooks wrote that. (She doesn't capitalize her name.) In accordance with the highest astrological potentials, I'm inviting you Capricorns to be inspired by her wisdom as you upgrade your meaningful relationships during the next six weeks. I think it's in your self-interest to give them even more focus and respect and appreciation than you already do. Be ingenious as you boost the generosity of spirit you bestow on your allies. Be resourceful as you do this impeccable work in the midst of a pandemic!

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** "One-half of knowing what you want is knowing what you must give up before you get it," wrote author Sydney Howard. Now would be a perfect time to act on that excellent advice. Is there any obstacle standing in the way of your ability to achieve a beloved dream? Is there a pretty good thing that's distracting you from devoting yourself wholeheartedly to a really great thing? I invite you to be a bit ruthless as you clear the way to pursue your heart's desire.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Author Ellen Goodman writes, "The truth is that we can overhaul our surroundings, renovate our environment, talk a new game, join a new club, far more easily than we can change the way we respond emotionally. It is easier to change behavior than feelings about that behavior." I think she's correct in her assessment. But I also suspect that you're in a prime position to be an exception to the rule. In the coming weeks, you will have exceptional power to transform the way you feel—especially if those feelings have previously been based on a misunderstanding of reality and especially if those feelings have been detrimental to your mental and physical health.

Go to [RealAstrology.com](http://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

## LOCAL MIX: A TRACKLIST OF OBSCURE MICHIGAN-MADE SONGS FROM THE 1960S

Since music venues across the map are still empty, this week *Turn it Down!* once again digs back into Michigan's '60s music scene. *Spotlighted here are a few rare singles worth checking out on YouTube (buying vinyl copies would set you back hundreds, as they are all hard-to-find releases). Read on, and listen along.*

### The Renegades "She's Your Find" — 1966

The Renegades — aka The Renegades IV and Renegades V — formed in 1963 and released its debut Fenton Records single in 1964: "Greensleeves" b/w "Autumn Night," both instrumentals. The following year, the Grand Rapids-based band decided to add some vocals to the mix after taking some cues from local rock heroes The Kingtones. From there, the East High-based band released another single, this time on Dubonay Records — a Fenton offshoot. The A-side is a fiery take on "Wine, Wine, Wine," a Nightcaps cover. The single is steeped in the energy of late-'50s rock and topped off with dubbed-in crowd screams. One last single appeared in 1966, "She's Your Find" b/w "Raving Blue" via Cambridge Records. This obscure garage-rock gem is the band's most polished work on record. Vocalist Scott Vanderleest and guitarist Fitz Green collaborated on "She's Your Find" and crafted a passionate pop hook. It's a fine example of how a potent chorus can get stuck in your head for days. The track, of course, also included bassist Craig Menees, Dave Heth (keys) and drummer Rick Idema. Another incarnation included Brian Bracken on keys. While all of The Renegades' singles made local charts (WERX and WLAV), the band parted ways soon after its swansong effort, "She's Your Find," faded from the airwaves.



### Kross of the Moon "Speak Softly to the Wind" — 1967

This tune from the obnoxiously rare Kross of the Moon 45 was released on the Wildcat label, a Detroit-based subsidiary of Big Mack. Led by Fortune Records alumni Maury Dean (and Big Mack vice president), the Wildcat label didn't last long. After releasing a small stack of wax,



including the rugged 1967 "Enchanted Island" single from the Crosstown Bus, Dean fled Detroit shortly after the '67 riots. The imprint fizzled and its releases, like Kross of the Moon's "Speak Softly to the Wind," slipped into vinyl oblivion.

### Fabulous Shantels "Remain Unknown Girl" — 1967

While the Fabulous Shantels, who formed in 1964, will forever be attached to the Ohio and northern Kentucky music scene, the Cincinnati-based foursome also formed some Michigan ties. Just after Thanksgiving 1966, the group headed north to Sound Incorporated Studios in New Haven, a town 40 minutes north of Detroit. While in Michigan, the Fabulous Shantels performed at a high school dance and recorded this piercing track, along with three others. The single was rushed to the pressing plant and released in early 1967 via the Sound imprint.



### The Blues Company "I'm Comin'" — 1968

Featuring the swirling, scorching lead guitar work of Tim Ward, this 1968 track, released on the group's Pear label, is another gem courtesy of Great Lakes Recording Studio in Sparta. This Bay City-based band is a prime example of a garage band's conversion into the heavier, LSD-fueled realm of bluesy psych-rock. After three mind-altering singles, the group split up in 1969. Ward later released one solo LP.

### The Barons "Try A Love With Me" — 1965

The Barons, one of the first teen-garage bands to form in Grand Rapids, got together in 1963 and played its first gig that Halloween — a string of shows followed. Soon, there was no shortage of venues to play in West Michigan. Along with the burst of British-obsessed garage bands came a surge of newly opened, all-ages teen clubs willing to host these well-attended, dance-friendly concerts. Prior to this, all of the local music venues were 21-and-over. And when The Barons was not honing its live set, which — like all teen bands from this era — consisted mainly of hot Top 40 covers, the band was working on original tunes, which would be peppered into

each live show. With its early formation, the group's "Try a Love With Me" b/w (backed with) "Don't Come Back Here No More" single boasts a chirpier, pre-Beatles-teenybopper sound. Think Buddy Holly or Del Shannon.



The 1965 record was released on Jafes Records, a Fenton offshoot-imprint named after the band's manager, Jim "Jafes" Kent. The Barons, which recorded in Kent's home studio, comprised guitarists Dick Steimle, Dave Rutkowski, Bill McNamara (bass) and drummer Steve Carpenter, aka "Mandrill Fern." A high point for the band was opening a show for the legendary Chubby Checker. After the guys parted ways, Steimle went on to play in The SoulBenders while Rutkowski joined up with The Pedestrians in 1967.

### CITY PULSE'S MITTEN MUSIC QUIZ

1. This "Because the Night" singer lived in St. Clair Shores with her late husband, Fred "Sonic" Smith of the MC5.
2. The 1979 hit "My Sharona" was performed by The Knack, who was fronted by this Michigan native.
3. Don Brewer is the drummer of this long-running, hit-making Flint band.
4. In 1984, this Detroit native scored a hit with the "Ghostbusters" theme song.
5. In 1937, this jazz musician — the widow of John Coltrane — was born in Detroit.

Answers on page 28

### NOTICE

The Board of Review of the City of Lansing will meet in regular session at City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48933, on July 21, 2020 beginning at 9:00 am. The Board is authorized to make corrections to the assessment roll under the authority of MCL 211.53 only. These corrections are limited to qualified errors, mutual mistake of fact, clerical errors, Principal Residence Status and Veteran's Exemptions. For 2020 only, by Executive Order 2020-87; taxpayers may appeal the 2020 valuation of their property if they were unable to attend in March due to Covid-19. Taxpayers are strongly encouraged to make their appeal in writing. The written appeal must be received by July 20, 2020. Please call the City of Lansing Assessor's Office at (517) 483-7624 for information about your assessment and/or to make an appointment.

Sharon Frischman, City Assessor

CP#20-157

### 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, JUNE 23, 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 June 9, 2020.
- Agenda approved.
- Approved renewal of police chief employment agreement.
- Approved fire department letter of agreement in substantial form.
- Adopted Resolution 20-08: Resolution declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis in Lansing Township.
- Approved budget amendment.
- Approved Claims.
- Executive Session held to discuss attorney-client privileged communication.
- Board returned to regular session.
- Approved bond payment from general fund.
- Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor  
Susan L. Aten, Clerk

CP#20-160

# OUT ON THE TOWN

Events must be entered through the calendar at [lansingcitypulse.com](http://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.

[facebook.com/riverwalktheatre](https://facebook.com/riverwalktheatre)

**Barbara J. Brown Family History Seminar** - to promote family history and offer genealogical learning. Sponsored by the Archives of Michigan and the Michigan Genealogical Council. 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. [facebook.com/MichiganHistoryCenter](https://facebook.com/MichiganHistoryCenter)

**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](https://facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing)

## Sunday, July 12

**East Lansing Farmers Market** - 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Valley Court Park, 300 Valley Court, East Lansing. [cityofeastlansing.com](http://cityofeastlansing.com).

## Monday, July 13

**Grand Opening! Amer1can Bistro** - Live music. Don Middlebrook, 4-7 p.m. 2328 Showtime Dr., Lansing.

**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 6-7 p.m. [facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing](https://facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing)

**Sunfield Virtual Fun Run** - 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Sunfield Fire Department, 162 Main, Sunfield. [facebook.com/pg/sunfieldcolorfunrun](https://facebook.com/pg/sunfieldcolorfunrun)

## Tuesday, July 14

**Fairy Tale Storytime** - Join us for virtual fairy tales and adventures via Zoom! Grand Ledge Area District Library Facebook page.

**July Virtual Member Mixer** - Lansing Chamber of Commerce. 4 p.m. 4-5:30 p.m. Lansing. [facebook.com/LansingChamber](https://facebook.com/LansingChamber)

**Myths & Legends** - Join us for a virtual exploration of Myths and Legends! 1 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library Facebook page.

**Sunfield Virtual Fun Run** - 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Sunfield Fire Department, 162 Main, Sunfield. [facebook.com/pg/sunfieldcolorfunrun](https://facebook.com/pg/sunfieldcolorfunrun)

**Tech Tuesday** - Tech Tuesday is an online event. 5:30-7 p.m. For info., go to [facebook.com/pg/EatonRapidsAreaDistrictLibrary](https://facebook.com/pg/EatonRapidsAreaDistrictLibrary)

**Your Money Your Goals Webinar** - Michigan State University Extension is offering free financial empowerment training for social workers, case managers, and other front line staff. 2-3:30 p.m. [canr.msu.edu](http://canr.msu.edu)

## Wednesday, July 8

**Allen Farmers Market** - 2:30-7 p.m. Allen Farmers Market 2020, 2100 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing.

**ARTpath | Public Art on the Lansing River Trail** - 8 a.m.-9 p.m., along the Lansing River Trail. 517-374-6400. [lansingartgallery.org](http://lansingartgallery.org).

**4-H Children's Gardens Virtual Tour** - Virtually visit the 4-H Children's Garden at East Lansing. 4hgarden.msu.edu

**Virtual Code Club** - on Zoom. Coders can chat about coding. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library Facebook page.

## Thursday, July 9

**Bath Township Farmers Market** - 3-7 p.m. James Couzens Memorial Park, 13751 Main St., Bath. [shopbfm.org](http://shopbfm.org).

**Dimondale Farmers' Market** - 3-7 p.m. Village Square, 136 N Bridge St, Dimondale. 517-646-0230. [villageofdimondale.org](http://villageofdimondale.org).

**Health & Safety Protocols in the Hospitality Industry** - hosted by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. 10-11 a.m. Zoom link on Chamber Facebook page.

**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 6-7 p.m. [facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing](https://facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing)

**South Lansing Farmers Market** - 3-7 p.m. Casimir Catholic Church, 800 W Barnes Ave, Lansing.

## Friday, July 10

**Barbara J. Brown Family History Seminar** - to promote family history and offer genealogical learning. Sponsored by the Archives of Michigan and the Michigan Genealogical Council. 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. [facebook.com/MichiganHistoryCenter](https://facebook.com/MichiganHistoryCenter)

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

## Saturday, July 11

**Annual Membership Meeting** - will be held virtually. 1-2 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, Lansing.

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## SUDOKU SOLUTION From Pg. 22

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

# FOOD & DRINK DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

## New diner remixes comfort food classics

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Amer1can Bistro, which holds its grand opening Monday (July 13), is a new take on classic comfort food, from your favorite breakfast dishes — omelets, pancakes and waffles — to time-tested diner staples such as Reuben sandwiches and burgers.

“A group of us sat down and discussed what we felt was missing from Lansing’s restaurant scene. We came up with Amer1can Bistro to be a mod-



### Amer1can Bistro Grand Opening July 13

Monday - Thursday,  
6 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Saturday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Sunday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
2328 Showtime Dr., Lansing  
facebook.com/  
amer1canbistro,  
(517) 708-8803

ern take on a classic diner,” owner and operator Scott Berman said. “We see those values as being welcoming to a diverse audience and serving what we call real food.”

Amer1can Bistro’s menu runs the gamut of comfort food classics. It offers a wide range of options for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Customers can get custom omelets, skillet entrees, pancakes and waffles. For lunch and dinner, gourmet salads, soups, burgers and sandwiches are offered. Special entrees include char-grilled salmon, New York strip steak and turkey pot pie pasta.

Berman, a Lansing resident, has been involved in the food industry for much of his life. He’s owned McDonald’s and Culver’s locations across Greater Lansing and Michigan as a whole. “I’ve done everything from operating multiple McDonald’s restaurants to owning other family-style restaurants,” Berman said. Berman was also president of U.S. Foods in



Courtesy photo

A plate of breakfast from Amer1can Bistro.

Cleveland, Ohio. Amer1can Bistro will bring approximately 40 to 50 part- and full-time jobs to Lansing.

Berman plans to open a second Amer1can Bistro location, on the west side of Lansing, later this year. Amer1can Bistro will employ the services of corporate chef Kurt Kwiatkowski, recipient of the Chef of the Year Award from the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine Association in 2018.

The grand opening will have the same limitations that other restaurants must comply with thanks to

Michigan’s coronavirus mandates, but Berman still has special activities prepared, such as live music on the patio and social media giveaways that customers can participate in. If you take a photograph of a dish from Amer1can Bistro and share it on social media with the restaurant tagged in the post, you will be entered to win a \$25 gift certificate. The grand opening will also feature \$5 shareables, all-day happy hour drink specials and a free breakfast pastry with the purchase of any dessert entree.



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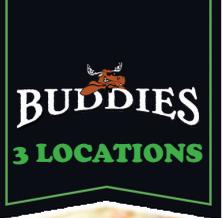
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# Appetizers

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**MITTEN MUSIC QUIZ ANSWERS**  
from page 23

1. Patti Smith
2. Doug Fieger
3. Grand Funk Railroad
4. Ray Parker Jr.
5. Alice Coltrane

**Classified Rates**  
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Each additional line is \$6.  
**EXTRAS. Boldface Type:** \$7 per line  
**HEADLINE:** \$11 per line  
**Border:** \$11  
**LOGO:** Space needed

Contract rates available, all rates net. Classified ads also appear online at no extra charge. Deadline for classifieds is 5 p.m. Monday for the upcoming Wednesday's issue. You can also submit your classified ad to Suzi Smith at 517-999-6704 or at suzi@lansingcitypulse.com.



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### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 22

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



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