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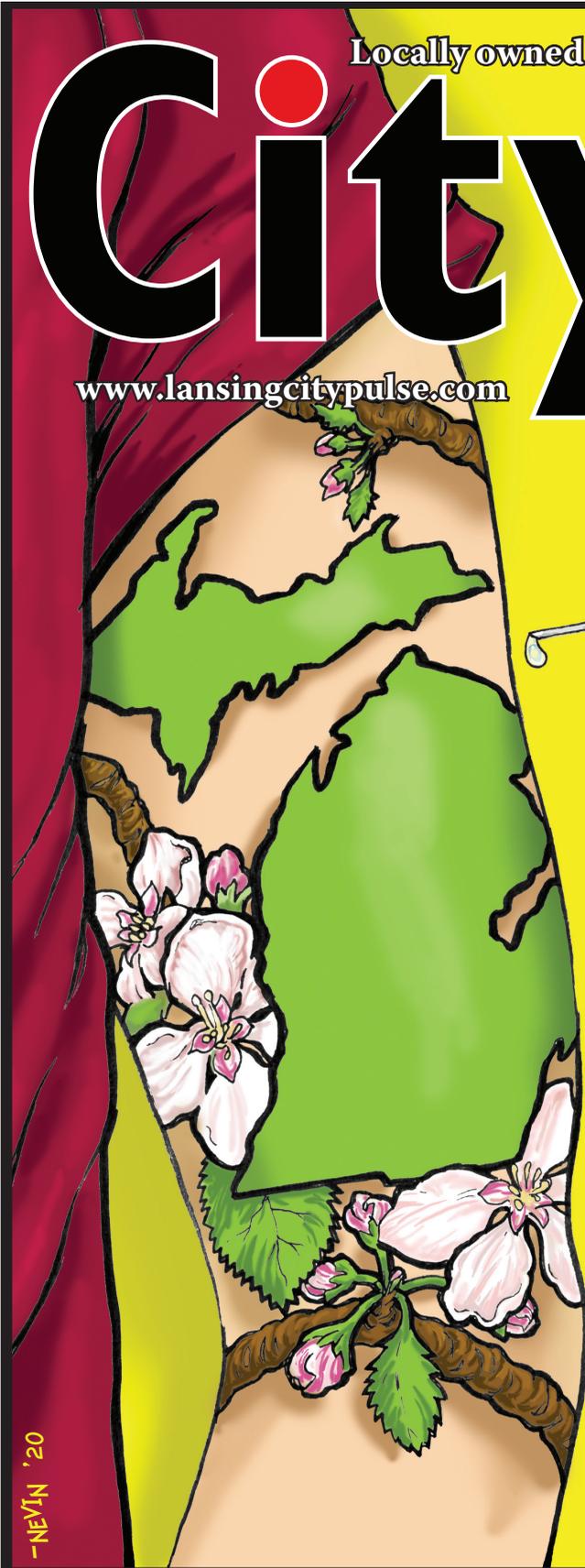
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December 9 - 15, 2020

# CityPULSE

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A newspaper for the rest of us



## How do you inoculate a state?

See page 13

-NEVIN '20

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# ‘Giving can do good, and be good for your taxes’

By **BERL SCHWARTZ**

*(The writer is the editor and publisher of City Pulse.)*

The headline above caught my attention last month in The New York Times. Like I am sure many people, I was unaware that every taxpayer can receive a \$300 deduction on their 2020 taxes for donating to charity.

That is true even if you itemize, which is usually not the case. As the story explains, Congress included the special deduction in the CARES Act for pandemic relief last March.

It's a nice break for taxpayers, especially because every taxpayer can take it, even those who take the standard deduction — which is most of us. The vast majority of us benefit more from taking the standard deduction rather than itemizing. But changes in the tax code three years ago that made the standard deduction more beneficial overall for filers hurt charities because contributions couldn't be included. Now, for this year at least, everyone can get up to a \$300 reduction in their adjusted gross income. That's an "important number," the Times' story explains, "because it determines your eligibility for tax credits and other deductions."

The limit is \$300 total for the year, not \$300 per charity. How much that will benefit you will depend on your overall circumstances.

Besides benefitting you, of course, it will benefit



## Look for the envelope in this issue of City Pulse to donate to our 501(c)3 Fund

qualified charities. They must be 501(c)3's, and you must give in cash (including checks and credit cards), not in-kind.

We happen to have a 501(c)3 right here for your consideration: the City Pulse Fund for Community Journalism.

The IRS approved the Fund last January. Since then, we have raised nearly \$46,000, mostly in small donations. The average donation from 496 gifts has been \$52.18. That's after taking out of the equation a \$20,000 gift from the estate of one donor, the Realtor Jim Noble.

If you're a regular reader of City Pulse, you'll notice some stories carry a postscript that they were paid for by the Fund. Your contributions have allowed us to expand our coverage even in a financially challenging year.

If you gave to the Fund, you should have received a receipt. Hold onto it in case the IRS has a (very unlikely) question. (If you cannot find it, please contact Suzi Smith at (517) 999-6704 or [suzi@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:suzi@lansingcitypulse.com) for another.)

It's unclear if a couple filing jointly can take \$600. Some say yes, others say no. Worth a try?

And it's unknown if Congress will carry this over to 2021 when/if it gets around to extending the CARES Act.

If you choose to give \$300, you can split it up however you wish. We at City Pulse hope you'll give to us — but more important this year is to give. It's a tough year for many charities: Demand for charitable services is up and support is down ... because demand is up.

To do so, you may send a check in the envelope included in this week's issue. (If it's missing, the address is City Pulse Fund, 1905 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing 48912.) Or stick in a note with how much you're giving and include your credit card info: Name, billing address, card number, expiration date and 3- or 4-digit security code. You can also pay by credit card at [lansingcitypulse.com/donation](http://lansingcitypulse.com/donation). Or call Suzi Smith at (517) 999-6704. However you donate, we will send you a receipt.

If you don't care about the tax break, then please give directly to City Pulse. Gifts to the Fund may be used in a limited way, such as for content. Gifts directly to City Pulse can literally help pay the rent, or any other expenses. Again, contributions to City Pulse are not deductible. If you want to give directly to City Pulse, please just make out your check to City Pulse (leaving off Fund) or indicate that desire with your credit card information.

However you give, thank you. And happy holidays.



a 501(c)3 nonprofit approved by the Internal Revenue Service.

## DONATIONS ARE EASY!

# LOOK

## FOR THE ENVELOPE IN THIS ISSUE

**CORRUPTION CODDLERS**

PREDICTABLY, WE'RE NOW STARTING TO HEAR THIS:

TRUMP SHOULD NOT BE PROSECUTED—IT WOULD TEAR THE NATION APART.

BIDEN MUST BE A SOOTHING, ALOE-SCENTED EMOLLIENT.

**A. PEASER**  
Serious Political Expert

FUNNY HOW THE REST OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM DOES NOT SEEM TO WORK THIS WAY.

I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T PROSECUTE THIS BANK ROBBER.

HE HAS TOO MANY FRIENDS WHO WOULD GET UPSET.

ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE BLACK.

SELLING LOOSE CIGARETTES, I SEE!

I SAY WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE, OLD CHAP—FOR THE GOOD OF THE REPUBLIC!

CARRY ON!

MEANWHILE, IN AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE WHERE A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT IS ACCUSED OF EVEN A MINOR CRIME...

NAIL HIM TO THE WALL.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO RESTORE DECENCY TO THE WHITE HOUSE!

**SORENSEN**

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# CityPULSE

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The Dish: Red curry ramen at Ruckus Ramen

**Cover Art**

Illustration by Nevin Speerbrecker

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

AH, WEASEL FACE AND HOT DAUGHTER! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME! I'M WORKING ON THE MOST IMPORTANT CASE EVER! I WAS JUST TELLING WHITE-HAIRED GUY, THE FATE OF THE NATION HANGS IN THE BALANCE!

SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY UNBALANCED, SIR.

SAY WHAT?

ER, NOTHING, SIR.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR TRUMP TO HAVE LOST THIS ELECTION! THERE WERE BOAT PARADES AND RALLIES! THE ONLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION IS FRAUD ON A SCALE NEVER BEFORE SEEN, COORDINATED AMONG MILLIONS OF SCHEMING DEMOCRATS--AND THE MEDIA!

WHOOOSH!

I DON'T CARE WHAT THAT NO-GOOD TURNCOAT BILL BARR SAYS--THIS ELECTION WAS RIGGED! WHITE-HAIRED GUY, GET THE SUPREME COURT IN HERE--I WANT TO ORDER THEM TO THROW OUT ALL THE BIDEN VOTES SO I WIN EASILY!

HEY, WHERE'D WHITE-HAIRED GUY GO?

AH, HE'S PROBABLY OFF TRYING TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT DOMINION VOTING MACHINES, WHICH ARE PROGRAMMED TO SWITCH TRUMP VOTES TO BIDEN--AS MY INVESTIGATIVE ALLIES AT ONE AMERICA NEWS HAVE INFORMED ME!

I RECEIVE SECRET REPORTS THROUGH THE SPECIAL TALKING PICTURE BOX ON THE WALL!

**OAN** PHOENIX CANNIBALS STEAL ELECTION #WGTW20

NOT ONLY THAT--MY TRUSTED CONFIDANT ROGER STONE HAS UNCOVERED EVIDENCE THAT NORTH KOREA SMUGGLED IN BIDEN BALLOTS THROUGH A HARBOR IN MAINE! THIS MAKES PERFECT SENSE AND IS TOTALLY HOW ELECTIONS WORK!

THERE'S SO MUCH FRAUD, IT'S BEYOND EVEN THE CAPACITY OF MY SUPERIOR BRAIN TO COMPREHEND!

BUT THE SOLUTION IS ELEMEN-TARY! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I'LL NEVER CONCEDE--AND WE CAN KEEP MILKING DONATIONS FROM MY SUPPORTERS FOR YEARS!

VERY GOOD THINKING, SIR.

SO, CAN WE GET OUR PARDONS SOON?

EH, MAYBE. IF I FEEL LIKE IT.

HEH, HEH.

Tom TomMcRow © 2020 ... www.thismodernworld.com ... twitter: @tomtomorrow

# Vax the nation

The global campaign to vaccinate as many humans as possible against the ravages of the coronavirus is officially underway. Not surprisingly, it didn't start in the U.S.A. but in England, where a 90-year-old Coventry woman became the first person to be injected with Pfizer's recently approved vaccine. Second in line was none other than William Shakespeare, an elderly British chap who said after getting his shot, "Thou hast stricken the plague from thy being, verily." We're kidding about the quote. We're not kidding about the most profound public health imperative since 1918 — vaccinating hundreds of millions of people as the only surefire way to stop the COVID scourge before it takes countless additional lives.

Most countries will have no trouble vaccinating a large portion of their population for, well, obvious reasons. No place else on Earth has an anti-vaccine movement as virulent as the U.S., and no other nation's populace is so sharply divided that even the simplest act of human decency — wearing a mask during a pandemic — has devolved into a morass of partisan political insanity. Between anti-vaxxers spreading their misinformation and regular citizens understandably afflicted with "vaccine hesitancy," we think it will be a long while before even half the U.S. population is vaccinated, and that spells trouble for the incoming Biden Administration's efforts to create and implement a national COVID strategy.

The anti-vaxx movement isn't a new phenomenon. Despite the fact that immunization is one of the most significant public health achievements in human history, all but eradicating diseases like smallpox, polio, mumps and diphtheria, history is replete with examples of anti-vaccination crusades here in the U.S. and elsewhere. Shortly after Edward Jenner developed the first smallpox vaccine in England in the early-19th century, opposition sprung up from all directions. Religious leaders objected because they didn't trust science or medicine. In an all-too-familiar refrain, others objected because they believed it impinged on their personal freedom, surely an affirmation that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Anti-vaccination leagues were formed and protests were held. The movement gained even more steam when the British Parliament adopted a mandatory vaccination law in 1853 to stem the tide of smallpox.

Lest you think our government doesn't have the authority to mandate vaccination, think again. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1905 that states have



## The CP Edit

### Opinion

the power to compel their citizens to get vaccinated in a public health emergency. In today's hypertoxic political climate, it is wildly improbable that any governor or state legislature will even contemplate such an action. But we never say never: If the pandemic continues to spiral out of control, mandatory vaccination may become an increasingly attractive option to defeat COVID, just as it was in the fight against smallpox 150 years ago.

Today, the anti-vaxx torch is held high by brainless B-list celebrities like Jenny McCarthy and faux-experts who inflame people's opposition to vaccines by trading in conspiracy theories and debunked studies that claim to have established causal links between vaccines and all manner of maladies, including autism and Attention Deficit Disorder. We can already picture their heads exploding at the thought of government-mandated vaccination.

Just as today's anti-vaxxers are the proximate cause of new outbreaks of diseases like measles and whooping cough, those who agitate against vaccination and their followers will be the proximate cause of COVID continuing its reign of death and economic destruction. Predictably, they will blame

others, just as those whose reckless actions continue to drive the pandemic by refusing to wear masks or avoid social gatherings blame everyone but themselves for overwhelmed ICU wards and government-ordered lockdowns.

Thankfully, the COVID vaccine is finally on its way to a health clinic near you. According to Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail, widespread availability of the vaccine for rank-and-file citizens isn't likely until at least next spring, which suggests we will be masking and distancing for quite a while yet. We have no argument with the CDC's recommended approach to prioritizing who should be first in line to receive the vaccination. Frontline health care personnel are the tip of the spear in the fight against COVID and need immunity as soon as possible to continue doing their jobs and protecting their own families. Residents of long-term care facilities will also be at the head of the line.

Essential workers, including first responders like police and firefighters, will be a high priority so they can interact with the public without fear of getting infected. Senior citizens and those with high-risk, pre-existing conditions that make them more vulnerable to the coronavirus will come next.

Still, after four years of the anti-intellectual, anti-government carnage wrought by Trumpism, we think it's going to be a good long while before America's belief in science and faith in government is strong enough to sustain widespread immunization and an effective national strategy to beat COVID. It seems that COVID deniers only acknowledge reality when the disease directly impacts their own families. We shake our heads with pity every time we read a story about a COVID denier whose last words before succumbing to the disease expressed deep regret for not having believed the coronavirus was real.

Don't let yourself or your family suffer the same fate. When the coronavirus vaccine becomes available, step up to the plate and get the shots. Do your part to advance the ubiquitous immunity that is essential to slowing down and eventually defeating COVID. Encourage your family and friends to do the same so we have at least some hope that 2021 will be a harbinger of normalcy rather than yet another disheartening, deadly chapter in our long, national COVID nightmare.

Send letters to the editor to [letters@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:letters@lansingcitypulse.com).

Please limit them to 250 words

## LETTERS to the editor

### Slotkin criticized for nuclear vote

Representative Slotkin recently voted against prohibiting funding for the Trump administration to test nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons testing has not taken place in the U.S. since 1992, and for good reason: there is objectively no benefit to testing nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons testing is an environmental disaster and disproportionately affects the health and well-being of marginalized communities. While an amendment to prohibit funding for nuclear weapons testing passed in the House, Slotkin's lack of support is alarming.

This past Thanksgiving made overwhelmingly clear that Americans are suffering. We are living through a time of great food insecurity and financial uncertainty, which makes Slotkin's prioritization of the nuclear budget inexcusable. Voting for funding to test nuclear weapons is voting against the best interests of Slotkin's constituents. The money Slotkin would allocate towards nuclear weapons testing would be allocated away from education, healthcare, and other essential and underfunded work. The U.S.'s nuclear budget is already bloated: over the next 30 years, the U.S. is planning on spending \$1.7 trillion on nuclear weapons. Americans need food and healthcare, not another nuclear arms race.

Slotkin comes from a military and intelligence background; she could lead the way for a sensible nuclear weapons policy and budget. Her voice would carry far, if she chooses to use it. I urge Representative Slotkin to rein in nuclear weapons spending, and, in the future, to vote against needlessly deploying bombs.

**Sarah Vamvounis**  
East Lansing

### Let's win the war

I just read an article about Lorna Breen, a Virginian E.R. doctor in Manhattan. "Her smile was radiant and she lit up every room I'd ever been in with her," said a friend. "Lorna was so brave, compassionate and dedicated in her position as a doctor."

Recovering from COVID-19 resulted in her having time to think about what she had seen, what she had had to do. She killed herself.

Half our doctors and most of our nurses are women. Make no mistake, our country is in a war, every

bit as murderous as any military war we've been in. But this time it's our wives, our mothers, our sisters, our daughters who are doing the fighting.

President-elect Biden, Senators Stabenow and Peters, Representatives Walberg and Slotkin: we need to be hanging stars in our front windows (maybe red instead of blue) when we have a family member serving in this medical war!

And of those who come home, many will be permanently damaged. Every day we are losing several soldiers and marines to suicide, who have come home from the Middle East. PTSD happens afterward, not during. The wave of PTSD among our nurses and doctors will be horrific.

No truly patriot person would put anyone through this kind of hell unnecessarily. True patriotism is willingness to sacrifice for your neighbor. Even give your life for him or her, if necessary. Our doctors and nurses, like our military, have earned the right to wave our flag.

Have you earned the right to wave our flag? For us non-combatants, it's not that hard. Sacrifice for your neighbor by wearing a mask and staying home whenever possible!

There was a World War saying about the dangers of carelessness, of foolishness: "Loose lips sink ships." A careless release of even seemingly innocuous information could doom a shipful of troops.

An off-campus party or an extended-family Christmas get-together will put a bullet in the brain of some nurse, just as surely as, for we Christians, a willful sin is a swing of the hammer driving a spike into the Cross through the hand of Jesus.

Vaccine is only a few months away. Please, let's all do our duty for our Country (and for our neighbor). Then we win the war, and it's over! We'll lose many more doctors and nurses, but let's all do our part to save every one we can. Mask up and stay home!

**Charles Haynes**  
Lansing

**Have something to say about a local issue or an item that appeared in our pages? Now you have two ways to sound off:**

**1.) Write a letter to the editor.**

• E-mail: [letters@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:letters@lansingcitypulse.com)

• Snail mail: City Pulse, 1905

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MI 48912

• Fax: (517) 371-5800

• At [lansingcitypulse.com](http://lansingcitypulse.com)

**2.) Write a guest column:**

Contact Berl Schwartz for more information: [publisher@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:publisher@lansingcitypulse.com) or (517) 999-5061

(Please include your name, address and telephone number so we can reach you. Keep letters to 250 words or fewer. City Pulse reserves the right to edit letters and columns.)

## A call for light in dark times

I dread clicking into my Twitter feed. I secretly hope the snide, clever, cutting remark from some lightly informed blowhard hiding behind some gutless pseudonym won't be there.



**KYLE MELINN**

**POLITICS**

I always swipe away disappointed. Between this and news reporters eagerly giving away their hard work to dark souls who salivate at the chance to spin 280 characters of news into some gif or quip bent on bullying others.

It's not just the comments, either. It's the number of people who "heart" the swipes, that people are finding joy in piling onto the verbal destruction of another.

Political attacks aren't new. Social media didn't invite them. Twitter and Facebook, to an extent, only empowers people to constantly pop off on a public bulletin board under a cloak of anonymity. Unless you pledge to commit a crime, you can say whatever you want without repercussions.

If you're crafty enough with your words, you get followers. The more followers you get, the more people who agree with your message, the more empowering it is.

Is the information 100% accurate? That's a secondary concern. If it's one at all.

COVID has made it worse. We're isolated. We don't talk to others. We're supposed to stay 6 feet away. We're fleeing to our iPhones to share our inner most thoughts.

We're finding out that someone else on this planet secretly thinks the way you do, no matter how unsettling it might be. Those who don't? Who cares. Unfriend them. Block them. "Ratio them." Because you have your clan. You and your posse are correct. Others are wrong and they need to know that.

Don't just tell them. Be a disruptor. Rock the boat. Protest it. Shout it. Take it to them! Go to their doorstep! Fight! FIGHT HARDER! MAKE THEM BEND TO YOUR WILL!

That's right. Win. Prove you are right. Your view on things must win. Win at all costs. Embarrass the "others." They are the opposition. Threaten them. Threaten their family. But be smart about it. Use fake

names. Protect yourself from the cops. The cops don't get it. The people don't get it. You and your posse do.

Oh, my God, what is happening to us?

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson can't read a bedtime story to her kid. State Canvasser Norm Shinkle can't prepare for a meeting? State representatives — Republicans and Democrats — need State Police protection after numerous death threats? High-powered rifles being paraded around the state Senate gallery? Betsy DeVos and Lansing Mayor Andy Schor's front lawns are home turf for bullhorn-carrying, bucket bangers well after sundown?

A homegrown militia was shooting guns in the woods — at the very least — with a fantasy that they would kidnap the governor ... at a minimum.

This is our new normal. It must end. Before someone is killed. Seriously. It must end.

Calling out the "other side" for over-the-top tactics is easy. Looking the other way when "your side" engages in intimidation and bullying is cowardly.

These days, I'm not seeing a lot of courage. Political courage in unsettling times is not striking fear into the hearts of others. It's not keeping the base motivated until the next election. It's not fueling rage, hate and misunderstanding with a "heart" or a retweet.

It's not calling out people with your version of "the facts," as if political nuisances of facts haven't been a standard since time immemorial.

Courage is putting yourself in political risk. It's turning down the temperature of "your people." It's helping inform the underinformed without being condescending or belittling or snide or petty. It's showing some compassion for their hurt.

Why do people feel the way they do? What is causing the pain? Is there anything you can do? Anything you can say? Or can you listen to another member of the human race vent.

Like you're doing right now. Thank you.

Being kind is courageous.

Being kind won't get you 13,900 Twitter followers, but maybe it will make the day of one a little lighter.

We're all hurting. We all are.

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

# REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI



## Mystery monolith appears in Old Town

A mysterious monolithic structure is catching some attention in Lansing after it mysteriously appeared on the sidewalk on Turner Street in Old Town Tuesday. The otherworldly art project appears to be wooden and resembles a widely publicized metal monolith that was discovered in — and later disappeared from — a remote southern Utah desert late last month. Its nameless creators sent a message to City Pulse: “We have come to observe, and perhaps interact. Our mission is to spread kindness, happiness and perhaps a little chaos.” Since the monolith isn’t blocking the sidewalk, Mayor Andy Schor has decided to let it stay put. “Lansing often gets visitors from all over the world and now I’m happy to see we’ve expanded these visitors to parts unknown,” Schor said in a statement. “We welcome our new visitor.”

## Toplessness allowed under new East Lansing laws

The East Lansing City Council voted unanimously last week to amend the city’s disorderly conduct laws, removing language that made it illegal for women to publicly expose their breasts. City officials said the change was about gender equality and ensuring that women won’t be unfairly charged with crimes that men cannot commit. Other recent changes included removing the ability for people to be arrested simply for taunting or chanting at police officers — all part of much broader efforts to reform policies and procedures and ensure equitable laws for residents.



## Help wanted:

### Lansing School District superintendent

The Lansing School District will reportedly relaunch its search for a new superintendent over the next several weeks after the process stalled amid the pandemic earlier this year. The Board of Education is expected to select its next set of candidates in February for interviews in March.

### Hertel weighs congressional campaign

Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr., D-East Lansing, told City Pulse last week that he’s considering making a run for the U.S. House of Representatives after records showed his campaign team registered the domain names “curtisforcongress.com” and “curtishertelforcongress.com” in November. Exactly when and where, however, remains to be seen. Hertel said he isn’t even sure what his next move will be. He also insisted that he would never run against U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin.



Hertel

### Lansing Promise board member faces criticism

Linda Lee Tarver, a board member for the Lansing Promise scholarship program, former state civil rights commissioner and a former vice-chairwoman of the Michigan Republic Party, faced criticism last week after she told the Michigan State Oversight Committee that Black communities were more susceptible to election fraud. “The larger the jurisdiction which are people of color, people who look like me, the more fraud

that can be inserted into stealing an election,” Tarver testified. The remark drew immediate criticism, including from fellow Lansing Promise board member and Lansing City Council President Peter Spadafore, who demanded she resign.

## Outdoor recreation projects planned in Lansing

Greater Lansing would reportedly receive more than \$1 million for outdoor recreation projects next year under a list of grants recommended by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board. Ingham County will receive about \$350,000 for two projects, with most of that going to boat launch and parking lot improvements at Lake Lansing Park South, while East Lansing gets \$300,000 for tennis courts at Patriarche Park. The balance of the \$1,008,500 funding is going for projects in the village of Dimondale and in Meridian and Delta townships.



## U.S. House passes pot legalization bill

The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation last week that aims to decriminalize marijuana on the federal level and formally remove it from the list of scheduled substances, also creating the potential to expunge pot-related criminal records for those arrested under old laws. The bill goes to the Senate, where it is expected to languish.

## BWL kills power for thousands

The Lansing Board of Water & Light has quietly shut off service to almost 2,400 customers since the pandemic started, according to reports in the Lansing State Journal. Though many utility companies reportedly paused shutoffs this spring, many, including BWL, have since resumed. The LSJ found that BWL actually ramped up shutdowns in October as coronavirus cases reached record-highs, partly in an attempt to collect on \$11 million in outstanding customer bills. As a result of the shutoffs, the city of Lansing has since red-tagged 59 homes for lack of utilities or “safety issues resulting from the lack of utilities.” That designation means residents must immediately vacate the property until all code enforcement violations have been corrected.



Last month’s Eye for Design (below) went unidentified by correctly by any of our readers. The detail reveals the arch over the north-facing entrance to J.C. Penney at Meridian Mall. The chain filed for bankruptcy in May and the Okemos store closed after 40 years. It had replaced the J.W. Knapp store, which was in that location from the opening of the mall on November 6, 1969, to 1980. The soaring two-story concrete arches resemble the Brutalist architecture that typified public buildings of the time.

This month’s Eye for Design (above) is holiday-themed and can be found with a popular Eye for Design location in the background. If you can identify the location of this detail, send an email to carriesampson@micourthistory.org and you could win an Eye for Design mug. Happy Holidays!

— 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.

# Schor looks past checkered past in hiring Lansing's new city treasurer

## Reports: Desiree Kirkland ousted from recent jobs in Wayne, Ingham counties

Desiree Kirkland may have brought some baggage with her to the capital city, but Lansing Mayor Andy Schor is confident that his latest pick for city treasurer will exceed all expectations.

Kirkland, who was appointed in late September as the third treasurer in Schor's administration — was fired last year from her deputy treasurer job in Wayne County. In 2017, she quit a similar role in Ingham County after facing criticism over botched financial filings.

But despite the checkered employment history, Kirkland "excelled" in a job interview, Schor said.

"Desiree is extremely qualified to serve the city of Lansing as its treasurer," Schor said Tuesday. "We spoke with officials who worked at the county with her and she received very positive reviews. Her credentials and references were all reviewed prior to hiring her. I am very confident that she will continue to be a great city



Kirkland

treasurer."

After leaving a grant accounting job at the Michigan Department of Community Health and Services, Kirkland was hired as chief deputy treasurer in Ingham County, a position she held from 2013 to 2017 before she quit to take a similar job at

the Wayne County Treasurer's Office.

Kirkland reportedly first learned that Ingham County officials wanted her gone at a Board of Commissioners' meeting at which Treasurer Eric Schertzing said she "was not up to the task." Schertzing's office, at the time, was taking heat for an audit that found discrepancies between treasury reports and the county's general ledger. Auditors later billed \$51,000 to fix the books.

"I can tell you that accounting is complex, and those complexities sometimes play out in the public eye," Kirkland explained. "I worked very closely to resolve those issues, but, unfortunately, they're often played out in the public. At the end of the day, there were no missing funds."

Kirkland left the position voluntarily, but Schertzing still offered mixed reviews this week.

"There were things that needed to have been done better that were not getting done better. Rather than sort it out, she decided to move on," Schertzing said this week. "I think she would've been more successful in her role with the county had she only applied herself."

An initial complaint by Kirkland (and her attorney, Teresa Bingman, whom Schor appointed last summer as coordinator of the administration's efforts to improve racial and social equity in Lansing) that ultimately never developed into a lawsuit at the time suggested that complaints against Kirkland could have been racially motivated. Officials said this week that once-generous severance packages that had previously been extended to white men were not afforded to Kirkland before she left.

"I was able to move on and continue service in my community," Kirkland explained this week.

After leaving Ingham County in 2017, Kirkland took another deputy treasurer job in Wayne County — and she was fired less than two years later last August, reports The Detroit News.

Wayne County officials didn't offer a public explanation for Kirkland's firing. In an interview this week, Kirkland also refused to shed much light on the situation.

"As we know, public servants in these political positions are at-will employees. It's a risk that we all take in those types of government jobs. We recognize that they're not always long-term positions," Kirkland said, noting that her departure had nothing to do with poor job performance.

"I have a good professional track record," Kirkland insisted.

Kirkland is the latest to enter the revolving door of the Schor administration. After \$2.5 million in federal fines were assessed (and later forgiven) against the city for botched financial filings to the IRS, longtime Finance Director Angie Bennett announced her resignation last September.

Bennett's duties, in the meantime, were filled by former chief strategy officer Shelbi Frayer, who quit in July after less than a year with the city. Frayer was then replaced by former Treasurer Judy Kehler, who now serves as chief strategy officer and was replaced by Kirkland.

After leaving Wayne County, Kirkland took a job as assistant treasurer for Barton Hill Village in Ann Arbor. She said the unsolicited opportunity to return to Lansing, where she has lived for the last 30 years and raised four children, was one that she simply couldn't afford to pass up.

Kirkland earns \$98,000 annually in Lansing, down from \$133,000 in Wayne County.

"I'm a public servant. I've been in Lansing for 30-plus years and I've raised my family here. All four of my sons graduated from high school here. I'm tied to this community and I'm actively involved in this community," Kirkland added. "It was just a good opportunity and a perfect fit."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

### NOTICE SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF LANSING'S 2019 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 7/1/2019 – 6/30/2020 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG-CV-3)

Notice is hereby given that the City of Lansing is preparing another substantial amendment to its FY 2019 (7/1/2019 – 6/30/2020) Annual Action Plan for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to include additional CDBG funds specific to the coronavirus pandemic (CDBG CV). CDBG CV may be used to meet one of the three (3) National Objectives: (1) Benefit to persons of low-moderate income; (2) Elimination of slum and blight and (3) Urgent community need. Activities funded with CDBG-CV dollars must be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES ACT) made available \$1,203,250 in CDBG-CV for the first round of funding for the City of Lansing, MI. Under the CARES ACT, there are additional regulatory flexibility/waivers for CDBG-CV. In order to administer the use of these funds, which are to prevent, prepare for and respond to the coronavirus pandemic, the City of Lansing must make a substantial amendment to its FY 2019 Annual Action Plan. The substantial amendment is subject to CDBG-CV Citizen Participation and Consultation (CP/C) Requirements and the community will have to provide public notice and reasonable opportunity to comment for no less than 5-days.

In the third round of funding allocation of CARES ACT Funds for CDBG-CV, the City of Lansing will receive \$647,118 for CDBG-CV-3. More specifically, the City of Lansing is partnering with the Capital Area Housing Partnership (CAHP) for Homelessness Prevention activities. CAHP will use the funds to prevent homelessness for residents whose incomes are between 51% and 80% of AMI and will include the payment of housing expenses such as mortgage payments, rents and utilities for up to 3 months on behalf of those households.

A summary of the substantial amendment is posted on the city's website at [www.lansingmi.gov/development](http://www.lansingmi.gov/development)

The City of Lansing followed its Citizen Participation and the CARES ACT waivers in terms of developing the substantial amendment for CDBG-CV which requires a 5-day comment period.

The comment period for the substantial amendment will commence at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 10, 2020 and expire at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 16, 2020. The proposed amendments and a summary of the comments received will be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

For further information regarding this notice or if you wish to comment on the plan, please contact Doris Witherspoon, Senior Planner, City of Lansing, Michigan, Department of Economic Development and Planning via e-mail at [doris.witherspoon@lansingmi.gov](mailto:doris.witherspoon@lansingmi.gov)

CP#20-304

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# Lansing Catholic High pushes back against COVID-19 orders

## State records 10,000 deaths while pandemic rages

A lawsuit filed in part by Lansing Catholic High School aims to get thousands of Michigan students back in the classroom as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread statewide.

The Catholic Diocese of Lansing joined a federal lawsuit this week with the Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools against Robert Gordon, director of the state Department of Health and Human Services. Their claim: State orders that closed high schools and prohibited in-person instruction through Dec. 20 violate First Amendment rights to practice religion.

The diocese's school superintendent, Tom Maloney, claimed the state decided to close schools "without regard to the obvious and proven efficacy" of local mitigation plans.

The federal lawsuit, filed this week in the Western District of Michigan, named Pastor Gabriel Richard High School in Ann Arbor as well as Lansing Catholic High School as plaintiffs. It seeks an injunction to allow all members of the Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools to reopen.

A diocese statement announcing the lawsuit Monday claimed that prior safety protocols were adequate and that state orders are "scientifically, educationally and constitutionally unjustified."

### In related news ...

Michigan ticked past 10,000 coronavirus-related deaths Tuesday. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer ordered flags to be flown at half-staff for the next 10 days — representing one day for every 1,000 reported deaths. More than one out of every 1,000 Michiganders has now died from the coronavirus.

Under state orders issued this week, only two households may gather inside at any given time through at least Dec. 20. Masks should still be worn and residents are encouraged to pick only a small group to see regularly. Bars and restaurants remain closed for dine-in service, along with casinos, movie theaters and group exercise classes.

McLaren Greater Lansing and Sparrow reported bed capacities higher than 90% this week as rising numbers of COVID-19 cases strained

them. Statewide, ICU bed capacity reportedly topped 80% this week with more than 2,500 patients.

Several people who were at the Michigan State Capitol Wednesday (Dec. 2) to hear election testimony from Rudy Giuliani have been ordered by the Ingham County Health Department to quarantine themselves until at least Saturday (Dec. 12) after Giuliani was hospitalized with COVID-19.

Under the order, those who did not wear a face covering to the meeting — as well as those who were within 6 feet of Giuliani for a cumulative 15 minutes — must remain quarantined at home.

Meanwhile, state health and safety officials are reportedly investigating the Michigan House of Representatives for possible violations of workplace COVID-19 regulations. An employee complaint triggered the probe, according to the Detroit Free Press.

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission suspended a liquor license this week held by Royal Scot in Lansing for allegedly allowing non-residential gatherings, providing in-person dining, failing to require face coverings for staff and patrons and failing to prohibit congregations. An administrative law judge will decide whether additional penalties should be imposed this week.

Saturday's football game between the University of Michigan and Ohio State University has been canceled after at least 40 players were reportedly expected to miss the game either because of a positive COVID-19 test, related quarantine, contact tracing or an unrelated injury.

In partnership with the CDC, Delta Air Lines will begin coronavirus contact tracing for those arriving in the U.S. beginning on Tuesday (Dec. 15). Inbound travelers will be asked to provide their name, email address and phone number to better facilitate followup efforts with local contact tracers.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced this week that the state's newly created Task Force on Racial Disparities has made "significant progress" on protecting communities of color from the coronavirus. Reports show that more than 24,000 tests were administered in recent months across 21 neighborhood testing sites in previ-

| CORONAVIRUS IN MICHIGAN |          |          |               |  |  |         |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|---------------|--|--|---------|
| BY THE NUMBERS...       |          |          |               |  |  | WEEK 39 |
| MICHIGAN                |          |          |               |  |  |         |
|                         | 12/01/20 | 12/08/20 | WEEKLY CHANGE |  |  |         |
| <b>CASES</b>            | 360,449  | 410,295  | ^14%          |  |  |         |
| <b>DEATHS</b>           | 9,134    | 10,138   | ^11%          |  |  |         |

| GREATER LANSING |          |          |               | EATON CO.     |          |          |               |
|-----------------|----------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|----------|---------------|
|                 | 12/01/20 | 12/08/20 | WEEKLY CHANGE |               | 12/01/20 | 12/08/20 | WEEKLY CHANGE |
| <b>CASES</b>    | 14,895   | 16,629   | ^12%          | <b>CASES</b>  | 3,079    | 3,526    | ^15%          |
| <b>DEATHS</b>   | 186      | 219      | ^18%          | <b>DEATHS</b> | 44       | 59       | ^34%          |

| INGHAM CO.    |          |          |               | CLINTON CO.   |          |          |               |
|---------------|----------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|----------|---------------|
|               | 12/01/20 | 12/08/20 | WEEKLY CHANGE |               | 12/01/20 | 12/08/20 | WEEKLY CHANGE |
| <b>CASES</b>  | 9,149    | 10,105   | ^10%          | <b>CASES</b>  | 2,667    | 2,998    | ^12%          |
| <b>DEATHS</b> | 119      | 131      | ^10%          | <b>DEATHS</b> | 23       | 29       | ^26%          |

ously underserved communities.

From March and April to September and October, the average cases per million per day for Black residents dropped from 176 to 59. In the same period, the number of probable deaths per million per day among Black residents also dropped significantly, from 21.7 to 1, reports state.

The Michigan National Guard will stay focused on its COVID-19 response through March 31 after federal officials agreed this week to approve pay and benefits that were set to expire this month. State officials lauded the move in anticipa-

tion of rapid vaccine approvals this month.

Following updated guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control, state officials released last week a new set of guidelines for COVID-19 quarantine periods. An existing 14-day recommendation has been reduced to 10 days after data showed that 99% of all infections develop within 10 days. The 14-day quarantine can now be reduced to 10 days if daily monitoring continues for the full 14-day period and the person does not develop any symptoms of COVID-19 during that period.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING  
SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED MINUTES**

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING WAS HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. IN COMPLIANCE WITH MICHIGAN PUBLIC ACT 228, THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM PLATFORM.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Supervisor Hayes, Clerk Sanders, Treasurer McKenzie  
Trustees: Brewer, Ruiz

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Trustees Broughton, Harris

**ALSO PRESENT:** Michael Gresens, Attorney

**ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD:**  
Meeting called to order by Supervisor Hayes.  
Approved minutes of the meeting held on November 10, 2020.  
Agenda approved as amended.  
Approved budget amendments.  
Approved Claims.  
Executive Session held to attorney-client privileged communication.  
Board returned to regular session.  
Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor  
Susan L. Aten, Clerk

CP#20-303

# CityPULSE



## LOCAL EXPERTS

### INSURANCE

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Thank you for making this past year so amazing! Thank you for your trust and your patience (who scheduled Michigan no-fault reform and COIVD to happen simultaneously?!). Thank you for putting up with our jokes and our explanations of Michigan insurance laws! Thank you for sharing your greatest (insurance related) concerns and for listening to our best advice! Thank you for being you!

And as 2021 greets us, we here at Mid-Michigan Insurance Group (sentimental fools that we are) are again pledging our fidelity and reaffirming our gratitude to our partners.

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### GIFTS

#### 3 Points to Consider When Framing

- Always consider the value of the piece you are going to frame. The value should be considered both emotional and economic. Also consider how easy it would be to replace the piece you wish to frame; and how long you anticipate having the piece. If it is something that can not be replaced, spend more money on the framing. A reputable framer should "do no harm" and everything should be completely reversible for how they handle the piece.

- Use of quality materials. There are various grades of materials on the market today. Chemistry is also very important in framing. "Archival" is a legally regulated term by the Library of Congress and therefore is a better gauge for the quality of materials you are using. Higher quality materials tend to be worth the added cost, in my honest opinion.

- Glass should NEVER touch what's in the frame. Think of glass as being a living thing. Ultimately it will stick to whatever it is touching. There should always be at least a 2mm space between the framed piece and the glass; the larger the piece, the more space that should be allowed as the glass bows toward the artwork in the middle. Acrylic pieces do not require this spacing.



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**CITY OF EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN  
NOTICE OF ADOPTION**

THE CITY OF EAST LANSING ORDAINS:

Section 26-52 of Chapter 26 of the Code of the City of East Lansing is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 26-52. - Prohibited acts.**

No person shall:

(1) Be intoxicated in a public place and be endangering directly the safety of another person or property. A peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe a person has violated this subsection may ask the person to consent to a preliminary chemical breath analysis or other acceptable blood alcohol test. The results are admissible in a prosecution to determine whether the person was intoxicated. A person whose body alcohol content is equal to or greater than 0.08 grams per 100 milliliters of blood, per 200 liters of breath, or per 67 milliliters of urine, at the time of testing shall be presumed to be intoxicated.

(2) Willfully expose one's buttocks or genitalia in any public place.

(3) Discharge any firearms, air rifle, or slingshot, nor shall any person have any air rifle or sling shot in their possession in any street, or park, except the same be securely wrapped or encased.

(4) Engage in peeping in the windows of any inhabited place or prowl about the private premises of any other person without authority or the permission of the owner of such premises.

(5) Reserved.

(6) Swim or bathe in the nude in any public place.

(7) Willfully and intentionally accost/molest, either by touching or by word of mouth, or by sign or motion, any person in any public place with intent to interfere with or abuse that person.

(8) Urinate or defecate on any street, sidewalk, alley, park, parkway, parking lot or structure, public carrier, or upon any public building or place of public assemblage or upon any other public or private property of another open to public view, or upon any private property of another without the consent of the owner, except where an approved sanitary facility is provided and used.

(9) Disturb the public peace and quiet by engaging in any fight or brawl in any public place.

(10) Assemble or act in concert with four or more other persons for the purpose of engaging in conduct constituting the crime of riot, or be present at any assembly that either has or develops such a purpose and remain thereat with intent to advance such purpose. For purposes of this section, a person, other than an on-duty law enforcement officer, remains at a riot with the intent to advance its purpose if they participate in the riot by committing or attempting to commit any of the following acts:

a. Throwing or propelling or causing to be propelled any object of sufficient weight or of dangerous or noxious substance to cause harm to a person or property which includes, but is not limited to, discharging fire extinguishers or deploying fireworks as defined by MCL 750.243a(1)(a)

b. Damaging, destroying, injuring or defacing any public property or private property not their own.

c. Meddling with any deployed riot control agent.

d. Pushing or running through a police line for the purpose of obstructing the police in the discharge of their lawful duties.

e. Remaining on a street, sidewalk or other public property where a riot control agent has been deployed within that area or returning to said street or sidewalk or other public property within two hours after a riot control agent has been deployed in that area other than to directly traverse the area to get to a destination outside of the area.

f. Remaining on a street, sidewalk or other public property after a public announcement has been made over a loud speaker that an assembly on that street, sidewalk or that public property is an unlawful assembly or returning to a street or sidewalk or other public property within two hours after such an announcement has been made other than to directly traverse the area to get to a destination outside of the area.

g. Starting a fire or placing combustible items onto a fire.

(11) Reserved.

(12) Reserved.

(13) Knowingly attend, frequent, or operate any place where prostitution, gambling, the illegal sale of intoxicating liquor, controlled substances, or any other illegal business or occupation is permitted or conducted. Gambling includes, but is not limited to: keeping or maintaining a gaming room, gaming table, or any policy or pool tickets, used for gaming; knowingly suffering a gaming room, gaming tables, or any policy or pool tickets to be kept, maintained, played, or sold on any premises occupied or controlled by him/her except as permitted by law; conducting or attending any cock fight or dog fight; or placing, receiving, or transmitting any bet on the outcome of any race, contest, or game of any kind whatsoever.

(14) Reserved.

(15) Reserved.

(16) Reserved.

(17) Reserved.

(18) Physically obstruct, resist or hinder any member of the police force, any peace officer, or

firefighter in the discharge of their lawful duties.

(19) Reserved.

(20) Knowingly summon, without any good reason therefor, by telephone or otherwise, the police or the fire department or any public or private ambulance to go to any address where the service called for is not needed.

(21) Reserved.

(22) Throw or propel any snowball, missile or object toward any person or automobile with the intent to cause injury or harm to persons or property or cause any glass object to break or shatter on any public street, sidewalk, or place of public travel

(23) Discharge a fire extinguisher in public or on the premises or in the residence of another, without permission of the owner or occupant thereof, other than with the intent to extinguish a fire.

(24) Reserved.

(25) Make a false report, by telephone or otherwise, to any public official which may be reasonably expected to cause the evacuation or closing of a building or place open to the public.

(26) Impersonate a police officer, firefighter, or housing, building or zoning code enforcer for the purpose of gaining entry to private property, or access to private records, or access to public records which would not otherwise be subject to public disclosure under the law.

(27) Invite, entice, coax, persuade, or induce by threat, any minor child under the age of 17 years to enter any motor vehicle, or conveyance, or private property or place, except where the parent or guardian of said child has given that person his/her express prior consent; this section shall not prohibit school personnel, peace officers, or public health, or social welfare personnel from carrying out the normal duties of their employment.

(28) Reserved.

(29) Furnish to a peace officer false, forged, fictitious, or misleading verbal or written information either identifying the person as another person or falsely misrepresenting a material fact about the person including, but not limited to, the person's date of birth or correct spelling of their full name, if the person is detained for a violation of the law, is temporarily detained for the purpose of issuance of an appearance ticket or civil infraction citation, or has an outstanding warrant for their arrest.

(30) Furnish or use any false, fraudulent, or misleading verbal or written information identifying the person or his/her age to any agent or employee of any licensed establishment which sells or furnishes alcoholic liquor for the purpose of purchasing or consuming alcoholic liquor or to gain entry to the establishment. Any written information which the licensee or his/her agent or employee has reasonable suspicion to believe is false, fraudulent, or misleading shall be seized by the licensee and delivered to the East Lansing Police Department no later than 12:00 p.m. of the next business day following seizure. A suitable sign describing this section shall be posted in a conspicuous place in each room of the establishment

(31) Knowingly or intentionally remaining on a public sidewalk, public street, private property open to the public, or the unenclosed private property of another within 300 feet of a structure fire, vehicle fire, or unlawful fire, after a fire or police official determines a public danger exists and orders individuals to vacate the area and a reasonable period of time has elapsed which permits individuals to leave the area. No person shall remain on a public sidewalk, public street, private property open to the public or unenclosed private property of another between a fire truck parked adjacent to a structure fire, vehicle fire or unlawful fire that fire officials are seeking to contain after being ordered to vacate the area.

a. These provisions do not apply to persons attempting to put out or contain the fire prior to the arrival of police or firefighting personnel.

b. These provisions do not apply to firefighters, other emergency personnel and police officers discharging their duties, or to persons traveling directly to or from a structure out of a necessity.

c. These provisions do not apply to persons to whom any on duty fire or police official has given express permission to remain unless that permission is revoked by the on-site fire incident commander or on-site supervisor of the police department.

d. For purposes of these provisions, an unlawful fire does not include any cooking fire contained in a grill designed for that purpose on private property or any fire that is in a contained outdoor fireplace on private property. An unlawful fire does not include lit lighters, lit matches or lit candles or lawfully deployed emergency flares used for their intended purpose, but it does include all other fires, flames or combustible materials not authorized by law and lit matches and lighters used in an attempt to ignite an unlawful fire.

(32) Direct a verbal, physical or electronic act against the person, family or property of any individual who complains of or witnesses a violation of the East Lansing City Code for the purpose of intimidating or retaliating against that person for the exercise of the right to complain or testify to a violation of this Code.

(33) Being an employee of a licensed liquor establishment, knowingly allow admittance of a person less than 21 years of age into said establishment, or allow admittance by failure to make a diligent inquiry as to whether the person is less than 21 years of age, at any time when the liquor establishment's special use permit or official policy prohibits entry of that person. For purposes of this subsection an official policy shall mean a policy on file with the East Lansing Police Department and posted at the entrance to the establishment specifying at what times persons under 21 years of age are not allowed in the establishment.

Jennifer Shuster  
City Clerk

**CP#20-305**

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# Questions and concerns surface as COVID-19 vaccine nears approval

## Health officials expect safe vaccines to arrive in Michigan before Christmas

By **TODD HEYWOOD**

Even officials like Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail have had moments where they've questioned the efficacy of a fast-tracked COVID-19 vaccine for residents in Greater Lansing.

Vail is a staunch believer in vaccination. She understands the science behind how they work and has been involved in the development of drugs (and the FDA approval process) as a former employee at Pfizer. Still, the rapid development of the vaccine has given her pause, she said.

Dr. Adenike Shoyinka, Ingham County's chief medical officer, has also had her reservations about the vaccines as they were driven through clinical trials and testing. And her professional specialty is in infectious diseases, which for decades have been well controlled by vaccinations.

Then, last month, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and other leading health professionals threw support behind the vaccine trials.



Vail

"As soon as they came out strongly in support, and strongly supporting the efficacy, the safety, the process that this vaccine has gone through, I don't have any concerns anymore," Vail said.

Vail and Shoyinka, who have led Ingham County's response to the pandemic, participated in a 37-minute video interview with City Pulse last week. That video is available on our website.

Despite two vaccines — one produced by Pfizer and the other by Moderna — on the cusp of approval by the FDA, polling still shows that over half of Americans harbor some reluctance about the coronavirus vaccine, much like the original hesitations voiced by Vail and Shoyinka.

Trial data shows that each vaccine is at least 95% effective in preventing an infection with the virus. And even for those who contracted the virus after vaccination, the disease was less severe.

Those vaccines could begin being administered in Michigan as soon as Tuesday (Dec. 15), officials said.

And even as federal regulators prepared to approve the Pfizer vaccine for an emergency-use authorization this week, the country was still facing some of the largest spikes in COVID-19 cases and numbers of those hospitalized (and put on ventilators) since the pandemic began.

This week, Michigan confirmed 410,295 cases of COVID-19 and 10,138 deaths — including 16,629 cases in Greater Lansing and 219 deaths in Ingham, Clinton and Eaton counties.

### Who's first in line?

Last week, the federal Centers for Disease Control vaccine advisory board voted to provide the vaccine first and foremost to frontline medical workers. Residents and staff at long-term care facilities were next in line.

"Our first priority will be to keep our healthcare systems operating, and to protect those who are the most vulnerable," according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

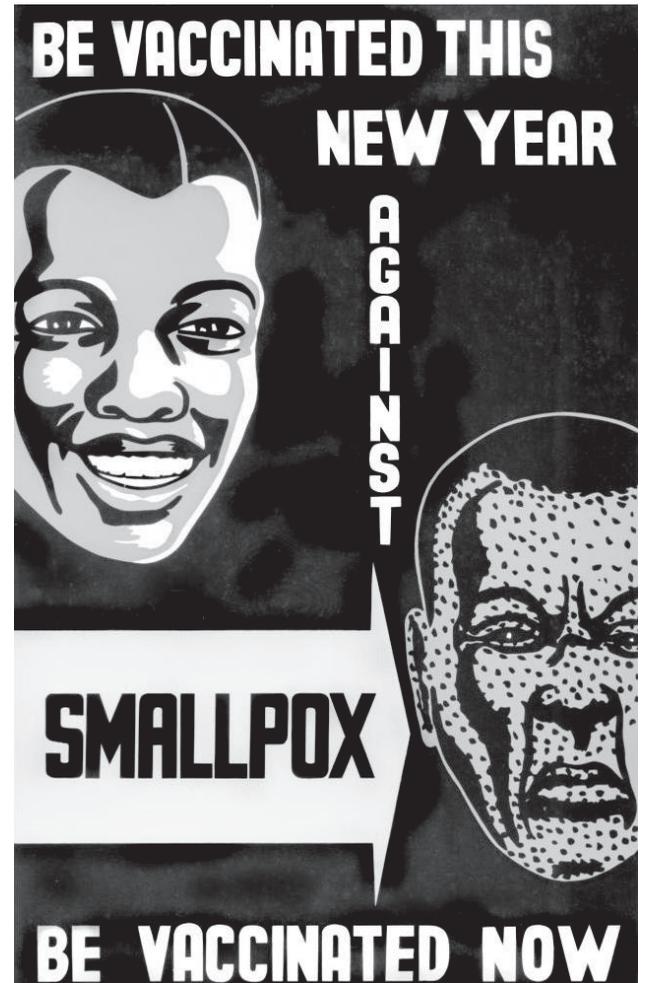
State officials still aren't sure how many doses of the vaccine will be available in Michigan, but they already know it won't cover everyone on the CDC's priority list. A spokeswoman said the hope is to have vaccines for all staff at congregate care facilities — like group homes for those with disabilities and skilled nursing facilities — by January. At-risk populations will be prioritized.

With limited initial supplies, those first batches will go to frontline healthcare workers. Broad community availability is not expected until late spring 2021. That will delay a return to "normal," state officials said, until 2022. Vail was optimistic for a return to "normal" in mid-2021.

Shoyinka disagreed; only time will tell. And public acceptance of the vaccine will be paramount.

"Let's just say I'm trying to be realistic and optimistic at the same time," Shoyinka added. "Again, like we said, we don't know how well or how long this vaccine will induce immunity."

The process requires two shots a month apart. Shoyinka suggested that



A poster from Lagos, Nigeria, to promote the worldwide smallpox eradication.

"full immunity" won't kick until the second dose. Even then, the duration of that immunity is uncertain, she said.



Shoyinka

"Is this something that we're going to have to take annually or biannually? We still don't know," Shoyinka added. "So yes. We still have a long way to go. I would say a minimum is a year."

The distribution plan for the coronavirus vaccine is also different from the H1N1 vaccine in 2009. That vaccine was sent from the state to local health departments, and then to patients and long-term care facilities. This time around, the vaccine will be distributed

## Getting geeky: How mRNA vaccines work

With approval of two vaccines for the coronavirus pending before the Food and Drug Administration—and an approval expected as soon as this week—there's a lot of confusion about how the vaccine might work.

The COVID-19 vaccines developed by Moderna and Pfizer each use only a portion of the virus to deliver RNA that develops a protein essential to coronavirus' ability to infect people. Ingham County Chief Medical Officer Adenike Shoyinka labels it a "harmless piece" of the virus.

"The mRNA vaccine works in a specific way. It does have a genetic code that kind of directs production of a portion of the COVID virus," she explained. "Really, it's not the virus itself."

The RNA is delivered into cells. Like a computer code, it binds with individual cells and DNA. The code directs the cell to resume its regular functions—and create a coronavirus protein. This "spike protein" uses the virus' code to block access to the cell so the virus cannot replicate.

Certain immune cells, in turn, grab a hold of the protein and send messages to other immune cells to find a way to neutralize the invader. The body develops a specialized Y-shaped protein called an antibody that then attaches itself to the protein and closes off the cellular connection.

As antibodies multiply within the body, the immunity to the coronavirus continues to develop. And those who are infected after the vaccination have a unique weapon to stop it. The antibodies lock onto the spike protein on the virus' surface, preventing it from invading cells.

Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail is well versed in infectious diseases and vaccines, having worked at Pfizer. She said the mRNA vaccine encourages the body to do what it would do naturally by essentially turning the coronavirus' own infection processes against itself.

"The virus does not exist without basically hijacking the cells of your body to use the machinery that reproduce DNA, or RNA in this case, through the cells in your body," she said. "Because it doesn't have any of that. It uses all of that in yourselves in order to create more of itself."

— **TODD HEYWOOD**



## Vaccine

from page 13

directly to the long-term care facilities by the federal government through partner pharmacies, officials said.

Vail said the coronavirus vaccine also won't be distributed in congregate settings like flu clinics.

"We still need to vaccinate people rapidly. We can't bring people into rooms in large groups and cram them together in lines in order for us as a system to vaccinate them rapidly. So, in a sense, you do have to make sure that it gets out to a number of different places," Vail added.

MDHHS identified 48 hospitals and 12 health departments with freezers frigid enough to keep the Pfizer vaccine stored at a required -94 degrees Fahrenheit. Home freezers are set at -4 degrees. At -94 degrees, a pint of ice cream would freeze hard enough to break a spoon.

The Ingham County Health Department is one of those capable of storing the vaccine. Health officials said they are finalizing contracts for dry ice to ship them out statewide.

### Battling vaccine hesitancy

While the endorsement of leading health officials quelled any vaccine hesitancy for Shoyinka and Vail, the politics behind the virus—combined with a general sense of distrust of the government and vaccines—pose a significant hurdle for public health authorities to overcome.

Officials estimated that 70% to 80% of the U.S. population will need to be vaccinated in order to reach an immunity level to stop the coronavirus from spreading.

A Pew Research Center poll in May showed that

78% of respondents would take the vaccine. That rate declined by September with another poll showing that 49% would opt against the shot.

Those numbers are a little better in those between the ages of 50 and 80, according to another poll released last month by the University of Michigan, but those statistics also carried a huge caveat: Only 40% of Black participants and 51% of Hispanic participants said they would get a vaccine. And Black people have accounted for a disproportionate number of cases and deaths.



Public Health Image Library

This child is receiving a gun injection during an immunization campaign.

Those numbers don't bode well for the forthcoming battle for public health, officials explained.

"You have people of color who have a long history of certainly not trusting anything that comes out that seems experimental

after the Tuskegee experiment," Vail said, referencing the infamous experiment where Black men weren't told they had syphilis and had their disease left untreated.

"That has laid a path, rightfully so, of distrust in the Black community regarding lots of medicine and particularly anything that seems experimental," Vail added. "This is not experimental, so we're just going to have to work with a lot of that messaging in order to get past those barriers."

State health officials, in the meantime, are crafting public messaging to address the hesitancy.

MDHHS spokeswoman Lynn Sutfin described an

See Vaccine, Page 15



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# Coronavirus politics translate to vaccine politics in rural Michigan

## Poll: 60% Americans at least 'probably' considering COVID-19 vaccine

Pam Thayer hasn't hugged or kissed her daughter for nearly a year. That desire to interact with her family again is driving her willingness to get a COVID-19 vaccine. She's relying on science.



Thayer

"I don't need to know what's in it, just that it works," she said. "The scientists are the smartest people on this planet. They're going to figure out how to take care of the rest of the world."

Thayer, of Potterville, is one of a

growing number of Americans who have indicated that they will get the vaccine for the coronavirus just as soon as it becomes available. A Pew Research Center poll from last week showed that 60% of Americans would "definitely" or "probably" get one too. The other 39% answered that would "definitely" or "probably" skip the shot altogether.

Holt resident Tammy Garner said she would take the vaccine because she's diabetic, has two asthmatic children and also cares for her 82-year-old father-in-law. Their safety is too important.

"There are many people with immunocompromised conditions, and some that don't even know they have them. We

have to get a grasp on this before it gets worse," Garner said.

The pandemic has been politicized. It's only natural that its vaccine could be as well.

Heather Nation and her family in Charlotte aren't traditionally opposed to vaccinations, but they said don't plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine — at least while partisan politics remain at play. On Facebook, she alleged that the latest vaccine trials from Pfizer and Moderna are a "gimmick."

"If it didn't seem like a ploy to get Trump to lose, then just maybe we'd consider it," she said.

Nation's 11-year-old son has been roundly vaccinated since birth for such illnesses as chickenpox, measles, mumps and rubella. Still, she'd rather wait until

others test it out first.

"Maybe years down the road, when we've seen how it's affected other people," Nation added.

Charlotte resident Dave Guerra is also "doubtful" the vaccine will be as effective as planned — up to 95% efficacy, according to announcements from Pfizer and Moderna in recent months.

"We don't know the long-term impact of the vaccine," Guerra said, noting that he recently recovered from COVID-19. He also contends that Democrats used the virus for political gain.

Though polls showed confidence rates hovering at 60%, experts agree: 70% to 80% of the American population must be vaccinated to reach an efficient level of immunity.

— SEAN BRADLEY

## Vaccine

from page 14

ongoing "multi-prong research study" on the attitudes of and behaviors of residents. As part of that study, state officials asked questions about vaccinations and reviewed national studies to understand the resistance to vaccines.

Just as Vail and Shoyinka relied on trusted sources for understanding and accepting the vaccine, they said they'll need community partners to step up and serve in similar roles.

"We're going to have to create a lot of messaging targeted to specific populations of specific people related to the specific issues that they have that are causing that hesitancy," Vail

said, noting that local faith-based institutions can help work with health officials on public perception —, 'trust brokers' within those different populations and use that as a method of gaining public trust."

Vail said attitudes and pushback on pandemic responses from the government have also fed into a "distrust" of government in general. She used her powers as health officer to quarantine multiple buildings in East Lansing where people infected with COVID-19 were living and sharing common areas like kitchens, bathrooms and entertainment spaces — a rare move in Michigan.

### A vaccine mandate?

Vail's authority also allows her to mandate vaccinations, though that's

not in her plans, she said. Sutfin also said that mandatory vaccines aren't part of state officials' playbook on distribution. Vail said those mandates could only further erode trust between residents and health officials.

Still, Vail is expecting local health-care systems and other businesses to use their authority as employers to create policies regarding vaccinations for their staff. Hospital systems routinely require certain vaccines for employees; they can likely require the same for the coronavirus.

Steve Japinga, vice president at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, said he will be working with the ReLaunch Lansing taskforce to develop policy recommendations.

"Regarding the mandate and how it's going to look like, on whether an employer will mandate an employee to get a vaccination for COVID-19, we haven't got to that point yet," Japinga said of the ReLaunch Lansing effort. "But, of course, that's going to be something that we're going to be working on with the Ingham County Health Department, the state, and probably the feds to really get their guidance on how best to approach that subject."

## Costs and the economy

The vaccine may not cost much for local patients, but someone must float the bill. And state and local lawmakers are still busy figuring out how to pay for the vaccine and its pending distribution.

The federal government has already paid out billions to vaccine makers. In July, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Defense Department announced it had pre-paid Pfizer \$1.95 billion for 100 million doses. In August, Moderna was awarded a \$1.5 billion contract to deliver yet another 100 million doses of its own vaccine.

That's on top of an additional \$1 billion the feds gave Moderna to develop its vaccine. And if the U.S. government extends the contract, Moderna could collect another \$8 billion in the first year.

Sutfin said the state of Michigan has already received \$6.1 million for vaccine distribution from the federal government. Vail said she doesn't know how those costs will translate to Ingham County residents. While the vaccine itself may be free, some providers may charge added fees.

# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## Arts impact project installed after several years of planning

Southwest Lansing Arts Impact Project finally comes to life

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Beginning life in 2017 as a proposal by At-Large City Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar that received a \$75,000 grant by the Lansing Economic Area Partnership and the Arts Council of Greater Lansing, the Southwest Lansing Arts Impact Project is finally coming to life.

Located at the corner of Pleasant Grove and Holmes roads, the centerpiece of the project, which also includes space for a town square, is a sculpture designed and built by Lansing artists David Such and Fred Hammond. The sculpture, named “Encompass Lansing,” consists of four panels that form a compass shape. Each individual panel is adorned with unique visual elements that represent different aspects of the Southwest Lansing community. Discussions between Such and Hammond with local community members formulated the design. One panel features the phrase “You Are Welcome Here,” written in 12 different languages to celebrate the diversity of the area’s population, while another panel adorned with gears represents Southwest Lansing’s industrious spirit and work ethic. The other two panels include a hand to visualize families and a person gazing at the sky to represent the hopes of the city.

“I listened to what they thought about their neighborhood and what the art should represent,” Such said. “Based on what they told me, I made



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Encompass Lansing, designed by David Such and Fred Hammond, is installed on the corner of Pleasant Grove and Holmes roads.

some preliminary drawings and we came together again at a second meeting and I was given the go-ahead.”

Such and Hammond have been friends for many years and have collaborated on numerous projects. Such’s expertise saw him handling the design, while Hammond managed the technical aspects and the engineering. Alro Steel cut the metal used in the sculpture, and it was assembled over the course of three months in Hammond’s shop in Old Town.

“Between David’s creative skills and my technical skills, we make a perfect match and work together really well,”

Hammond said. “It was a lot of hard labor. We left at the end of the day sweating.”

But there was an immense amount of community groundwork that went into the formation of the placemaking project beyond just the initial grant from LEAP and the Arts Council. To actually install the sculpture and begin work on the town square, the property at the corner of Pleasant Grove and Holmes Road had to be purchased. The particular location was chosen because it’s the geographic center of the southwestern Lansing region. Much of the fundraising effort was pulled off by South

West Action Group, a local nonprofit formed by Southwest Lansing community members.

“We recognized that in order to have the greatest impact in southwestern Lansing, we had to organize as a group and become a nonprofit organization,” said Rachele White, president of the Southwest Action Group. “We realized that the property to be used, where it would have the greatest impact, would be unused parking space that was deteriorating.”

The nonprofit pulled together enough donations from the local community to purchase the space where the sculpture and town square were ultimately installed.

City Councilman Adam Hussain said another vital component in the long process of ultimately bringing the project to fruition goes back to the Southwest Lansing Initiative in 2016. The initiative, which was backed by a \$50,000 grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corp., resulted in an economic action plan that identified placemaking and public art as imperative to creating progress in the future development of Southwest Lansing. Public art projects like “Encompass Lansing” are important for building pride within a community, Hussain said.

“We knew that we wanted public art. Folks were supportive of that effort,” Hussain said. “We brought hundreds of people together to talk about who we are as a people in South Lansing. Those efforts in 2016 and 2017 is where it all begun. Now, people can point to the installation itself and say, ‘I took part in that; I helped planned that.’”

## Eco-friendly service aims to eliminate single-use plastic

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Does the over-reliance on single-use plastic products trouble you? Alexa Hecksel has the exact same concern; so she started Clean Refillery, a small business that replenishes bottles of laundry detergent, dish soap and other cleaning supplies.

“Clean Refillery is a refill store. Essentially it’s a place where you can come with empty containers, or I will provide an empty container, and I will refill it with the product,” Hecksel said. “My customers place orders and I switch out containers like the classic milk man would have.”

Hecksel said she decided many years ago that she wanted to reduce her carbon footprint by cutting back on the amount of trash she produces. “Each person leaves behind a big pile of garbage. I started eliminating things from lifestyle, like takeout



**Clean Refillery**

Check out Clean Refillery’s products and services at: [Cleanrefillery.com](http://Cleanrefillery.com)

containers and grocery bags,” Hecksel said.

While committing herself to this eco-friendly lifestyle, Hecksel noticed a lack of places to shop where she could purchase necessities, such as shampoo and other toiletries, without having to eventually create more plastic waste.

“I decided that I needed to make this service, because we didn’t have it here in Lansing. I didn’t think I was alone in that,” Hecksel said.

Hecksel purchases product whole-



Courtesy

Liquid Shampoo from Clean Refillery.

sale, utilizing as many Michigan-based companies as possible, and sells them to Clean Refillery’s customers using prices recommended by her suppliers. Customers get started with Clean Refillery by first placing

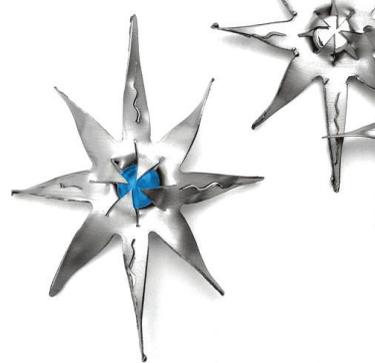
orders on its website, [cleanrefillery.com](http://cleanrefillery.com). Once they have used the entire product, customers return to the website to alert Hecksel, who will then pickup the empty container, refill it and drop it back off.

Hecksel, who also works in digital marketing and photography, has only been operating Clean Refillery since late October. She said an increase of free time, brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, was also responsible for Clean Refillery’s creation. Hecksel said she’s had no problem finding clientele who were also interested in drastically reducing their disposable plastic usage.

“People have been very supportive and understanding. This is a new thing I am still figuring out,” Hecksel said. “Lots of people have told me, ‘I’ve been looking for something like this but couldn’t find it.’”

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## Louise Heublein McCagg

Louise Heublein McCagg—artist, philanthropist, feminist, and mother—died peacefully, surrounded by her family, on November 26, 2020, after a heroic, 20-year struggle against Parkinson's Disease.

Louise was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on July 22, 1936, to Dorothy Duncan Whitney and Dr. Gilbert Whipple Heublein. She attended Renbrook School and Dana Hall School before moving to New York City. There she received her B.A. in English Literature from Barnard College in 1959 and studied printmaking and painting at The Arts Students League. She met and married William Ogden McCagg, Jr., during this time.

The McCaggs moved to East Lansing, Michigan, when Bill began his tenure at Michigan State University as a Professor of East European history. While raising their two daughters, Louise earned her M.F.A. in Sculpture from Michigan State University, graduating in 1971. As an aside, she was the first woman allowed to "pour" in the Sculpture department at MSU. That is metal, not tea!

She collaborated with friends and artists in building two Geodesic domes, one of which would serve as her studio and foundry. She participated in the East Lansing artist community and actively showed her work. Her sculptured pillar of "art supporters" stands in East Lansing, Michigan, as does "Beatrice" at Michigan State University's Wharton Center. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, Louise used her art and her voice to champion a variety of Civil Rights causes.

Her husband's work as a scholar of East European history included a number of sabbaticals that allowed the couple to live for extended periods in Europe, particularly Hungary. While living in Budapest—where Bill, an American and non-Jew, was the first scholar to be allowed into the Hungarian archives where he researched his books, including *The Habsburg Jews*—Louise and Bill developed lifelong friendships with the experimental artists and intellectuals of the time, not least Miklos Erdely and members of the *avant guard* theatre group, later known in New York as Squat Theater. Louise's work was deeply influenced by her Hungarian and East European friends, some of whom the McCaggs championed and helped to relocate to the United States.

When Louise was in her fifties, she and her husband returned to New York City where Louise continued her career and became a member of the A.I.R. gallery. Louise exhibited widely, both in the United States and internationally. She also collaborated with a new generation of Hungarians on many projects, one of them being part of the Hungarian Pavilion of the 2009 Venice Biennale.

In her work, Louise consistently fused her interest in a formal, figurative sculptural aesthetic with her own experience and relationships, bringing together both rigorous artistic structure and intimate, personal experience. Over decades, and around the world, she cast face masks of those important to her and synthesized them into larger visual works that told both a deeply personal, self-empowered narrative and, simultaneously, a larger, archetypal one: that we are all one, no matter who we are or where we come from.

Intellectually curious, always creating, ever courageous, Louise McCagg was herself a force of nature. As the Parkinson's Disease progressed, Louise fought her body's decline. Her endurance and refusal to stop working vividly demonstrated her deep love of life and evoked the provocative beauty of her life's creations. With her wildly generous spirit and love of humanity, Louise enriched the lives of hundreds of people.

When the coronavirus struck, she left her beloved New York City to live at the home of one of her daughters in New Hampshire, where Louise was living at the time of her death.

Louise is survived by her two daughters, Alexandra (Xanda) McCagg, and her fiancé Timothy S. Quinn, and Dorothy (Tory) McCagg and her husband Carl A. Querfurth, as well as many beloved extended family members. Due to the pandemic, there will not be an in-person gathering at this time.

If you would like to honor Louise, please consider a donation to A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn, NY ([airgallery.org](http://airgallery.org)) or to an organization that is working to find a cure for, or that supports people who have, Parkinson's Disease. Please visit [www.jellisonfuneralhome.com](http://www.jellisonfuneralhome.com) for more information.



# *Favorite Things*

## James Friend Hays and his Felix Gonzalez-Torres poster

*James Friend Hays, a self-described queer and disabled multimedia artist from Lansing, finds inspiration from long day trips to museums. Hays, who posts his art on his Instagram page @half-gallonofwater, said his favorite thing is a piece of interactive art he took home from the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago by artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres.*

My favorite thing is a poster I got from an art exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. It's a piece by Felix Gonzalez-Torres called "Untitled (The End)." In the museum, it's a big stack of paper and you can take one of the papers with you — it's like a poster. It talks about how art is different to different people, and how the public response changes the meaning of art. It also comments on the museum's responsibility with the artwork itself.

I visited the museum during a day trip to Chicago. I really like museums, so I went to the art institute while visiting the city. My goal for this year was to visit three new

art museums, but that ended up being impossible because of the pandemic. I love seeing art and I love art history. It's different to see art in a museum than it is to see it on a computer or on a TV. You go there specifically to look at the art; it's easier to absorb it without any distractions. I really like the Art Institute of Phoenix and the Detroit Institute of Art.

This was my first exposure to the work of Gonzalez-Torres, but



I've since gotten really familiar with them and I enjoy reading about them. They died of AIDS in 1996 and a lot of their artwork reflects upon losing their part-

ner to that disease and what it's like living with it. There's a particular piece they did that features two clocks next to each other. They are two things that are almost the same, even though they are mass-produced, but eventually their times will get out

of sync with each other. It's about losing people. I recently did a series recently inspired by dreams. I would dream the dream and wake up and paint the painting. In general, I try to capture specific emotions even if I can't put words to them.

*Interview edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley. If you have a suggestion for Favorite Things, please email [Skyler@Lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:Skyler@Lansingcitypulse.com)*



# Prefer blunts? Try these pre-rolled marijuana cigars

Luxury ‘migars’ and value flower on sale in East Lansing

**By KYLE KAMINSKI**  
**Jean Carlos Migars**  
**Sour Garlic Cookies**  
**Price – \$40/1g**  
**THC content – 26.24%**

Let me preface this week’s column by noting that I’ve always been more into smoking joints than blunts. Cracking open a White Owl certainly carries some nostalgic charm, but it also unnecessary masks the flavor of premium bud with an overt tobacco taste. Not my thing at all.

That being said, I just had to pick up this luxury Mari Slim “migar” — short for marijuana cigar — from Jean Carlos. This stubby little blunt was rolled entirely in cannabis leaves and filled with Sour Garlic Cookies, a major creeper of an indica sold by several other brands in Michigan.

If the \$40 price tag didn’t give it away, this pre-rolled blunt is also clearly designed to cater to high-end smokers and those looking for something unique for a special occasion. Gold lettering lined the ornate packaging. Inside was a corked glass tube, not unlike other high-end cigars.

Staff assured me it was “worth it” to shell out \$40 for a pre-roll that burns for about 45 minutes.

The beauty of the thing aside, I couldn’t be more disappointed in the product. The cannabis leaves sounded appealing, but they tasted eerily similar to tobacco. They also entirely masked the cheesy and distinct flavor profile of the Sour Garlic Cookies — one I’ve grown to appreciate.

Jean Carlos’ website noted that his company blends the newly legalized cannabis industry with lessons learned through four generations of Nicaraguan cigar makers. It’s a hell of a marketing pitch, but I’d rather have a blunt that would stay burning. I had to relight this thing six times.

Perhaps a regular blunt smoker would appreciate the migar, but for the price, I won’t be back for more. On the whole, however, this strain proved to be a great choice for a quiet evening at home trying out some new desserts. Just be careful, or you might eat a whole tray of cookies.

**Gud Nuff – Motor City Madness**  
**Price – \$30/3.5g**  
**THC content – 23.38%**

Don’t ask the staff at Pleasantrees in



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East Lansing about this mysterious new in-house strain. They truthfully don’t know much about this hybrid variety other than its impressive THC percentage and that it was grown in Macomb County. It’s also cheap and has a fun name.

The buds were small, dry and dense. The smell — though rich, earthy and herby — wasn’t overly potent. The fruitier, citrusy taste made up for its lackluster first impressions. Overall, it was an adequate smoke that left me coughing a bit more than usual after taking down a joint.

It’s also exactly what I expected from a \$30 eightr while most of the market is keeping its recreational prices near \$60: Not fantastic. Not great. But, like the brand implies, good enough.

Staff at the Pleasantrees other retail shop in Hamtramck identified Motor City Madness as a hybrid between Wedding Cake, a relaxing, indica-dominant hybrid and Kush Mints, an uplifting sativa with a distinct minty flavor profile. I’ve had both strains, and neither were apparent here.

This is some decent middle-of-the-road weed that admittedly leaves more to be desired. But especially for newbie smokers, this \$30 bag of bud still offers a happy and surprisingly long-lasting high. Two joints had me comfortably stoned from early morning to late afternoon.

Pleasantrees guarantees that its Gud Nuff lineup will “make you and your wallet smile” with a product that is “sorta, maybe” and “questionably, but probably the most premium indoor flower.” The brand also carries affordable sun-grown flower, vape cartridges and pre-rolled joints. Mission accomplished. It might not win any national awards, but it certainly gets the job done.

*Kyle Kaminski is a City Pulse staff writer and cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Every week, Kaminski samples some of the best cannabis products available in Greater Lansing, gets real high and writes about them.*

## A BETTER WAY TO MEAT FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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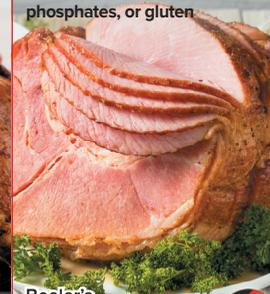
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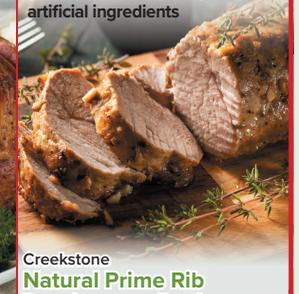


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# Art in the Sky billboard contest declares winners

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

Visual art can end up lingering in museums or galleries, seen only by those who seek it out. Six lucky Lansing artists were just awarded the opportunity to have their artwork displayed on billboards all across the city.

The Lansing Arts Council's Art in the Sky Billboard Project has been running for 11 years. The contest provides

## Art in the Sky

To check out the contest winners, visit: [Lansingarts.org/programs/billboard-project](http://Lansingarts.org/programs/billboard-project)

local artists a chance to have their art seen by a multitude of commuters every

day. The contest shows off the diverse body of art that Lansing has to offer while also giving the winning artists a chance to market their individual work.

A panel of virtual judges chose six finalists through a careful scoring process. This year's awardees are Cheryl Grabski, Laura Gajewski, Kelly Hansen, Sara Pulver, Stephanie Gregg and Jacob Erickson.

When Gregg found out that her piece was chosen as a winner in the 2020/2021 contest, she was both surprised and amused.



Courtesy/Kelly Hansen

Original artwork by Kelly Hansen that was selected as one of six winners in this year's Art in the Sky contest.

"At age 75, it is a boost to one's spirits to have one's art recognized. The year 2020 has been a year of isolation due to COVID-19 pandemic, plus canceled trips to visit our five grown children and our seven grandchildren," said Gregg. "It has also been a year of producing more meaningful art."

Gregg's piece for this year's contest was influenced by Maya Angelou. She titled it "A Brave and Startling Truth" because, in her opinion, 2020 revealed many brave and startling truths. The

piece features a figure holding a book and reclining on a bright red heart.

"The heart becomes a billboard-sized shout-out of admiration, respect, love and hope that together, 'We, the people, are the possible, the miraculous and the true wonder of the world. That is when, and only when we come to it,'" said Gregg, quoting Angelou.

Hansen, a professional graphic designer, museum exhibit designer and professor at Michigan State University, won the contest with a portrait of her son that sought to capture the realities of living through COVID-19.

"As weeks began to turn into months of quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic, I thought it was important to capture some of the realities of our experience — missed haircuts, boredom, over-reliance on phones, video games, computers, isolation and uncertainty, as well as resilience," said Hansen.

She felt grateful upon learning that her piece was one of the contest winners. For Hansen, Art in the Sky was a bright spot in a dismal year. It tickled to know her kid's portrait would be plastered all over the city. "My kids are all at an age where they don't even like me to take their picture. Now, one of them is going to be featured on billboards all over town," said Hansen.

When Grabski set out to create her contest entry, she looked to her dearest source of inspiration for help: her cat. Her piece is called "Sunflower Kitty," and it's inspired by her cat's tendency to snack on her houseplants.

"You like to eat my plants, kitty? Then, I'm going to turn you into one," said Grabski. "I like to keep my art lighthearted, cute and whimsical." The illustration features a cat in a sunflower costume sitting calmly in a row of other flowers.

"I am beyond excited about having my artwork displayed that large," said Grabski. "I've never had my work shown on that scale."

Gajewski's billboard piece is a continuation of an artistic thread that she's been following for decades now. Her piece features a decaying, abandoned house in stark black and white.

"With my drawings I hope to provoke thoughts of these subjects as witnesses to life, surviving as empty shells wrapped around the passage of time," explained Gajewski.

Two of Gajewski's solo exhibitions were canceled this year. She said that it's been a difficult year for everyone, not just artists.

"But artists — artists feel," said Gajewski. "So many of us are empaths; we feel deeply and fully. I have found it difficult to sit down in the studio this year, with heart and head hurting. Art is vital, and especially during this time — it's important to make art, to see art, and to share art. It's embedded in the fibers that weave us all together."

Throughout 2021, billboards in Greater Lansing and beyond will feature each artist's work individually for two months. The Art in the Sky contest creates a communal art experience, in which the city and the roadways that tie it together become an art gallery for all to appreciate — both longtime residents and those just passing through.

"The Art in the Sky Billboard Project is one of the most recognized public art initiatives in our region. People remember the billboards and look forward to their arrival each year," said Arts Council executive director Meghan Martin. "This year, they have even more significance, reflecting our experience of having to view art from afar and giving area artists the opportunity to truly have their work seen on a grand scale."

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# Hark! The Christmas books you must read

By **BILL CASTANIER**

“Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse ...” Or so begins one of the most enduring Christmas stories of all time.

This Christmas season why not start — or continue — a tradition of reading classic stories to your children?

Some of these books go back nearly two centuries, such as Clement Clarke Moore’s “A Visit from St. Nicholas,” while others, such as Chris Van Allsburg’s “The Polar Express,” are barely entering middle age.

Most baby boomers can still remember their parents reading Little Golden Books, a series that re-imagined tales like “Frosty the Snowman” and “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” right before bedtime. They’ll certainly also remember classics like “How The Grinch Stole Christmas.”

The department store Montgomery Ward is long gone, but it was responsible for “Rudolph” when it published the promotional book written by Robert L. May in 1949. May was inspired by a particularly cloudy day on Lake Michigan, after being assigned the task of writing this favorite Christmas book.

Inspiration for “The Polar Express” can be traced to Van Allsburg’s visit to Michigan State University as a child, when he saw the immense locomotive Pere Marquette 1225 sitting across from Spartan Stadium. The engine, which now calls Owosso home, became the centerpiece for the book and the journey of young boy looking for Christmas. It was adapted into an animated movie directed by Robert Zemeckis and starring Tom Hanks. Van Allsburg also authored another classic children’s book, “Jumanji.”

“The Nutcracker Ballet,” by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, was originally

based on the book “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King,” by author E.T.A. Hoffmann. Written in 1812, it had to be seen as a surrealistic, scary experience. Just like “Toy Story,” a child’s favorite toy, in this case a nutcracker, becomes alive.

One of the best versions of this tale is “Nutcracker,” published in 1984 and illustrated by Maurice Sendak.

Charlie Brown, the beleaguered character of Charles M. Schulz’s syndicated cartoon, is the hero of “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” which became one of the most recognizable children’s stories, after it was adapted as an animated television short in 1965. Popular myth has it that the movie was responsible for the demise of the then-popular aluminum Christmas tree. The movie rights were recently purchased by Apple TV, which — in the spirit of Christmas — donated the movie so it could be streamed on other platforms.

The Grinch, and all of its parodies — most recently a campaign ad for the Georgia Senate election — seem to have been around forever. But the book “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” by revered children’s author Dr. Seuss, first appeared in 1957. Since then, it has been adapted as an animated version for television but the 2000 film starring Jim Carrey is still the gold standard.

Although not technically a children’s book, Virginia Hamilton’s “The Bells of Christmas” can be read aloud by both parents and their children. The book is set against the backdrop of a middle-class Black family in 1890s Ohio, and focuses on 12-year-old Jason as he waits for Christmas day.

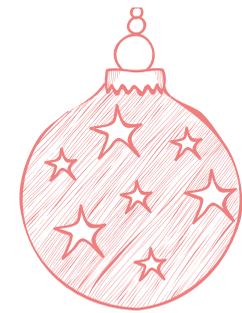
The quirky “Cajun Night Before Christmas,” illustrated by James Rice, is a delightful parody of Moore’s famous poem. Expect lots of gators.

It’s not just children who should be reading Christmas-related books this time of the season. “Blue Dog” illustrator George Rodrigue has written a memoir of his Christmas feelings in his little book, “The Blue Dog Christmas.” Christmastime inspired some of Rodrigue’s important paintings.

The Christmas story “The Melodeon,” by former MSU professor Glendon Swarthout, still remains a favorite Christmas read and movie. Another book, O. Henry’s “The Gift of the Magi,” also focuses on the unselfish nature of the holiday when folks do admirable acts for others inspired by the season.

Also for adults and teens is David Sedaris’ “Holiday on Ice,” which is a collection of essays on the holiday season. The most famous is “Santaland Diaries,” which follows Sedaris’ real-life experience as an assistant elf.

Alex Haley’s “A Different Kind of Christmas” and Truman Capote’s “A Christmas Memory” and “One Christmas” are books of significance that cry for reading at Christmastime. And then there’s the proverbial Christmas tales of “Miracle on 34th Street,” written in 1947 by Valentine Davies, and



the short-story “The Greatest Gift: A Christmas Tale,” also known by its movie name “It’s a Wonderful Life,” by Philip Van Doren Stern. Both

books were eclipsed by movies.

Two poetry books that stand out are Maya Angelou’s “Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem” and Dylan Thomas’ “A Child’s Christmas in Wales.”

Perhaps a hidden gem of a book is a small 1934 commercial printing of “Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus,” which retells the 1897 letter written to the New York Sun by a young girl inquiring if Santa actually exists. Francis P. Church’s editorial response reaffirmed that there is indeed a Santa.

The young girl, named Virginia O’Hanlon, had ended her letter to the Sun by asking: “Please tell the truth, is there a Santa Claus?”

And for those who can’t get enough of it, there is always “A Christmas Carol,” by none other than Charles Dickens.

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# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

**"You're Getting Sleepy"—some ways to get there.**  
by Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 Raccoon relative
- 6 BTS or Blackpink genre
- 10 Lawn mower's spot
- 14 "It's just \_\_\_ those things"
- 15 Edison's middle name
- 16 Jekyll's alter ego
- 17 Make yourself sleepy, in a way
- 19 "1917," for one
- 20 Writer Vonnegut
- 21 Thicke of "Growing Pains"
- 22 \_\_\_ Domingo (capital of the Dominican Republic)
- 23 Seed for flavoring soft drinks
- 25 Gp. with a Brussels HQ
- 26 "Whose \_\_\_ was this?"
- 27 "Well done"
- 30 Got angry
- 33 Concave cooker
- 34 Title said by Zazu in "The Lion King"
- 35 Tall prez, for short
- 36 Clothing item that I suppose could make you sleepy (if it's really comfy)
- 40 Poseidon's realm
- 41 Soften up
- 43 Acne medication brand
- 44 Tank covering
- 46 Synthpop duo that released an album of ABBA covers
- 48 Transport
- 50 Senatorial stretch
- 51 Snarky, but less fun
- 54 Lagoon locale
- 56 "Star Trek: TNG" counselor Deanna
- 57 Egyptian fertility goddess with a cow's head

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- 59 Rice-A-\_\_\_
- 60 Chemical in turkey that makes many people sleepy
- 62 ZZ Top, e.g.
- 63 Pueblo dwellers
- 64 "Once Upon a Time in the West" director Sergio
- 65 Email app folder
- 66 "Let's Roll" blues singer James
- 67 "Melrose Place" actor Rob
- Down**
- 1 Scar
- 2 Actress Aimee of "La Dolce Vita"
- 3 Brain surgeon's prefix
- 4 "Be honest"
- 5 Back, on a boat
- 6 Liqueur used in a Black Russian
- 7 Feature of some khakis
- 8 Major kitchen appliance
- 9 Soft food for babies
- 10 Sword holders
- 11 Demonstration where you might hear the line "You're getting sleepy ..."
- 12 Fix
- 13 Style from about 100 years ago
- 18 "Aladdin \_\_\_" (David Bowie album)
- 22 Give in to gravity
- 24 Tacks on to a friends list
- 25 "Swoosh" company
- 27 Go off in the kitchen?
- 28 Cookie with a jokey November tweet showing itself in mashed potatoes
- 29 Warm, in a way
- 30 Prominence
- 31 Service with an "Eats" offshoot
- 32 Supplement that can help make you sleepy
- 33 Method
- 37 Early bird's prize
- 38 Application file suffix
- 39 George's sitar teacher
- 42 "The Hollow Men" poet
- 45 "Follow me for more \_\_\_" (snarky meme of late)
- 47 Website necessity
- 48 Nearsightedness
- 49 "Get Down \_\_\_" (Kool & the Gang song)
- 51 Burial vault
- 52 "It's worth \_\_\_!"
- 53 "Big Little Lies" author Moriarty
- 54 Sunday newspaper section
- 55 Ripped (off)
- 56 Relaxed pace
- 58 1990s game console, initially
- 60 Chance \_\_\_ Rapper
- 61 Cheer for Cristiano Ronaldo

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Answers Page 24

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezshny

December 9-15, 2020

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** According to Taoist scholar Chad Hansen, "Western philosophers have endlessly analyzed and dissected a cluster of terms thought to be central to our thinking," such as truth, beauty, reason, knowledge, belief, mind, and goodness. But he reports that they've never turned their attention to a central concept of Chinese philosophy: the Tao, which might be defined as the natural, unpredictable flow of life's ever-changing rhythms. I think that you Aries people, more than any other sign of the zodiac, have the greatest potential to cultivate an intuitive sense of how to align yourselves vigorously with the Tao. And you're in prime time to do just that.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** What's the cause of the rumbling at the core of your soul? How do we explain the smoke and steam that are rising from the lower depths? From what I can discern, the fire down below and the water down below are interacting to produce an almost supernatural state of volatile yet numinous grace. This is a good thing! You may soon begin having visions of eerie loveliness and earth-shaking peace. The clarity that will eventually emerge may at first seem dark, but if you maintain your poise it will bloom like a thousand moons.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Author and student Raquel Isabelle de Alderete writes wittily about her paradoxical desires and contradictory qualities. In accordance with current astrological omens, I encourage you to ruminate about your own. For inspiration, read her testimony: "I want to be untouchably beautiful but I also don't want to care about how I look. I want to be at the top of my class but I also just want to do as best as I can without driving myself to the edge. I want to be a mystery that's open to everybody. A romantic that never falls in love. Both the bird and the cat."

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** What would it take for you to muster just a bit more courage so as to change what needs to be changed? How could you summon the extra excitement and willpower necessary to finally make progress on a dilemma that has stumped you? I'm happy to inform you that cosmic rhythms will soon be shifting in such a way as to make these breakthroughs more possible. For best results, shed any tendencies you might have to feel sorry for yourself or to believe you're powerless.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Novelist Tom Robbins says you have the power to change how you perceive the world. You can change reality—and how reality responds to you—by the way you look at it and interpret it. This counsel is especially useful for you right now, Leo. You have an unparalleled opportunity to reconfigure the way you apprehend things, and thereby transform the world you live in. So I suggest you set your intention. Vow that for the next two weeks, every experience will bring you a fresh invitation to find out something you didn't know before.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi was re-elected in 2019. During his campaign, the Virgo-born politician arranged to be photographed while wearing the saffron robes of a Hindu priest and meditating in an austere Himalayan cave. Why did he do it? To appeal to religious voters. But later it was revealed that the "cave" was in a cozy retreat center that provides regular meals, electricity, phone service, and attentive attendants. It will be crucial for you to shun this type of fakery in 2021, Virgo. Your success will depend on you being as authentic, genuine, and honest as you can possibly be. Now is an excellent time to set your intention and start getting yourself in that pure frame of mind.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** When author Ernest Hemingway was working on the manuscript for his novel "A Farewell to Arms", he asked his colleague F. Scott Fitzgerald to offer critique. Fitzgerald obliged with a ten-page analysis that advised a different ending, among other suggestions. Hemingway wasn't pleased. "Kiss my ass," he wrote back to Fitzgerald. I suggest a different

approach for you, Libra. In my view, now is a good time to solicit feedback and mirroring from trusted allies. What do they think and how do they feel about the current state of your life and work? If they do respond, take at least some of it to heart.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Mistletoe is a parasite that grows on trees, weakening them. On the other hand, it has been a sacred plant in European tradition. People once thought it conferred magical protection. It was called "all-heal" and regarded as a medicine that could cure numerous illnesses. Even today, it's used in Europe as a remedy for colon cancer. And of course mistletoe is also an icon meant to encourage kissing. After studying your astrological potentials, I'm proposing that mistletoe serve as one of your symbolic power objects in the coming months. Why? Because I suspect that you will regularly deal with potencies and energies that could potentially be either problematic or regenerative. You'll have to be alert to ensure that they express primarily as healing agents.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** I'm envisioning a scene in which you're sitting on a chair at a kitchen table. At the center of the table is a white vase holding 18 long-stemmed red roses. The rest of the table's surface is filled with piles of money, which you have just unloaded from five mysterious suitcases you found at your front door. All of that cash is yours, having been given to you no-strings-attached by an anonymous donor. You're in joyful shock as you contemplate the implications of this miraculous gift. Your imagination floods with fantasies about how different your life can become. Now, Sagittarius, I invite you to dream up at least three further wonderfully positive fantasies involving good financial luck. That's the medicine you need right now.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Boisterous Capricorn novelist Patricia Highsmith (1921-1995) once made the following New Year's Eve Toast: "To all the devils, lusts, passions, greeds, envies, loves, hates, strange desires, enemies ghostly and real, the army of memories, with which I do battle—may they never give me peace." Right now I suspect you may be tempted to make a similar toast. As crazy-making as your current challenges are, they are entertaining and growth-inducing. You may even have become a bit addicted to them. But in the interests of your long-term sanity, I will ask you to cut back on your "enjoyment" of all this uproar. Please consider a retreat into an intense self-nurturing phase.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** In the French city of Strasbourg, there's a wine cellar built in the year 1395. Among its treasures is a barrel filled with 450 liters of wine that was originally produced in 1472. According to legend, this ancient beverage has been tasted on just three occasions. The last time was to celebrate the French army's liberation of Strasbourg from German occupation in 1944. If I had the power, I would propose serving it to you Aquarians in honor of your tribe's heroic efforts to survive—and even thrive—during the ordeals of 2020. I'm predicting that life in 2021 will have more grace and progress because of how you have dealt with this year's challenges.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** There are too many authorities, experts, know-it-alls, and arrogant ideologues trying to tell us all what to do and how to do it. Fortunately, the cosmic rhythms are now aligned in such a way as to help you free yourself from those despots and bullies. Here's more good news: Cosmic rhythms are also aligned to free you from the nagging voice in your own head that harass you with fearful fantasies and threaten you with punishment if you aren't perfect.

# SUDOKU

# Advanced

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## 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.

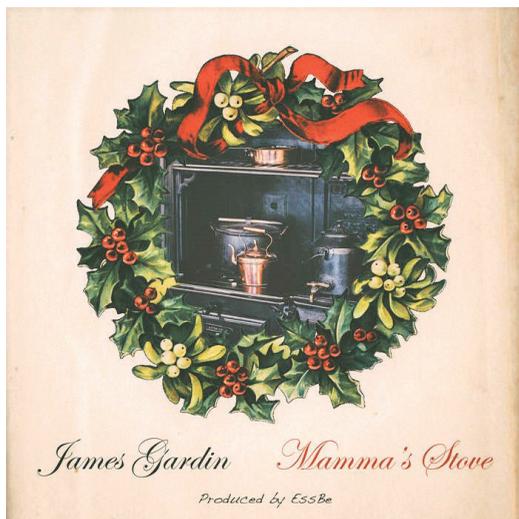
Answers on page 24

# TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

## MICHIGAN-MADE CHRISTMAS MIX VOL. 1



James Gardin's "Momma's Stove" features production from EssBe.



"What Child Is This Anyway?" by Sufjan Stevens is featured on this 2006 collection.



Stevie Wonder's "Someday at Christmas" (1967) features "What Christmas Means to Me."

### Lansing musicians and music buffs suggest top-notch, locally sourced holiday tracks

Sick of hearing the same Christmas tunes but don't have time for a deep dive into the abyss of often abysmal holiday tunes? Here is a locally curated playlist that'll usher in 2021 with good taste and melodies. Next week, more holly-jolly jams will be featured, so check back for Vol. 2.

**Ozay Moore**

**Emcee, All of the Above Hip Hop Academy (AOTA)**

**SONG PICK: "Momma's Stove," by James Gardin and EssBe**

Truth be told, Michigan has given us decades worth of Christmas classics. Many of my personal favorites are found in the Motown catalogue. Those who know me are aware of my "Christmas music" obsession and that I curate a playlist on Spotify called "Newstalgic Holiday Joints." Though, one of my favorite cuts from recent years comes from Lansing natives and AOTA crew mates James Gardin and EssBe. Their track, "Momma's Stove," is an instant classic in my book. It has a ragtime-juke joint modern bop to it. Such a well-orchestrated track. The keys feel like "family has just arrived," the guitar is like sipping eggnog and discovering it's spiked with rum, and the horns are something to toast to. James paints a picture of gratitude and love. Such a

centering song for the season.

**Ty Forquer**

**Strategy assistant at Michigan College Access Network, 517 Shirts founder, Lansing Facts contributor**

**SONG PICK: "What Child Is This Anyway?" by Sufjan Stevens**

With COVID-19 still raging through the country, it looks like a lot of us are in for a melancholy holiday without the traditional gatherings of family and friends. And the modern king of sad-ass Christmas music is Michigan's own Sufjan Stevens. His two holiday albums, "Songs for Christmas" and "Silver and Gold," are the shining stars atop the tree of seasonal depression. Even celebratory tunes like "Joy to the World" seem to carry somber undertones. One of my personal favorites is "What Child Is This Anyway?" — a doddering, mopey take on the Christian hymn "What Child Is This?" This seven-minute meditation on the birth of Jesus Christ is colored with downhearted tones, juxtaposed against lyrics like "the king of kings/salvation brings/let loving hearts enthrone him." The mix of playful nostalgia and undercurrents of uncertainty that flow through these albums, and through most

of Stevens' catalog, are perfect for those times you want to curl up in bed with some eggnog and fully lean into a doleful holiday mood.

**Sarah Spohn**

**Journalist, The Palm Reader**

**SONG PICK: "What Christmas Means to Me," by Stevie Wonder**

Written by Anna Gordy Gaye, George Gordy and Allen Story, this Tamla Records tune comes from the 1967 LP, "Someday at Christmas." At the start, when the sleigh bells kick in, you instantly know it's a festive holiday song and it puts you in a warm-hearted mood. It's an upbeat track, and a soulful one, thanks to The Funk Brothers' signature rhythm section. With the ever-smiling Stevie Wonder, you know it's going to be a happy one. Although I do love its counterpart, "Someday at Christmas," which is kind of Motown's nod to John Lennon's political holiday tune, "Happy Xmas (War is Over)," this one just gets me dancing.

Studies have shown that a song becomes 10 times better with a harmonica, and this one is no different. I'm kidding about the statistic, but not kidding about my love for the harmonica. This song evokes a pretty realistic view of wintertime,

especially in the mitten state: "Lots of snow and ice/ Everywhere we go." As much as Michiganders love to gripe about wintry weather conditions, we're also quick to complain about a lack of a white Christmas on Dec. 25.

Wonder belts out "I feel like runnin' wild / As anxious as a little child," which perfectly encapsulates the childlike wonder I sometimes feel around Christmastime. That belief that things you never imagined could be wrapped under the tree, or waiting just around the corner. What also comes to mind is picturing Will Ferrell in yellow tights with his newfound brother chasing each other in department stores and jumping on mattresses in the "Elf" movie — but that's a whole other story.

In short, "What Christmas Means to Me" utilizes a hopeful demeanor, wrapped up in a joyous package, topped with a bow. And on top of that bow — you guessed it — the harmonica solo. It truly makes this song an unforgettable gift.



# 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.

## Wednesday, December 9

**12 Days of a Not So Silent Night** - through Dec. 12th. Virtual. Reach Studio Art Center, 517-999-3643. [reachstudioart.org](http://reachstudioart.org).

**East Lansing Small Business Crawl** - through Dec. 12th. Sponsored by the Lansing Regional Chamber and the City of East Lansing. Info at [lansingchamber.org/smallbusinesscrawl](http://lansingchamber.org/smallbusinesscrawl)

**Hometown Family Christmas Kits** - 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St. [eradi.org](http://eradi.org)

**Special Collections Look Club:** Our theme this week is Music! 2-2:34 p.m. MSU Libraries, East Lansing. [bookings.lib.msu.edu](http://bookings.lib.msu.edu).

**Threads of Wisdom:** Summerlands - Join us on Zoom for a discussion of Summerlands - 6:30-7:30 p.m. [weaversoftheweb.org](http://weaversoftheweb.org).

## Thursday, December 10

**Holiday Bazaar | Michigan Artisan Made** - Thurs. & Fri. REO Market Place will be welcoming artisans. 1027 S. Washington.

**Hometown Family Christmas Kits** - 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main, Eaton Rapids. [eradi.org](http://eradi.org)

**Lansing Pagans Night Out** - 4-8 p.m. Panera Bread, 6310 S. Cedar St., Lansing. 517-275-9980. Info: [weaversoftheweb.org](http://weaversoftheweb.org).

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

**Santa's "Reindeer Food" Kits** - Pick up your free kit in the library, or ask for a kit to be included with book order for curbside. Grand Ledge Area District Library. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

**Studio (in)Process at Home: Upcycle Edition.** 9 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

## Friday, December 11

**Flash Sale Fridays** - Michigan Audubon will be featuring deeply discounted items for purchase online. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. [michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org).

**Holiday Sing Highlights, hosted by Sally Potter** - From the Archives: Audio from various Holiday Songs through the years will be streaming at [tenpoundfiddle.org](http://tenpoundfiddle.org).

**Hometown Family Christmas Kits** - 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St. Eaton Rapids. Info at [eradi.org](http://eradi.org)

**National Diabetes Prevention Program** - preventing type 2 diabetes. [canr.msu.edu](http://canr.msu.edu) for link

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

## Saturday, December 12

**A Jazzy Little Christmas** - Celebrate the season with the MSU Professors of Jazz and friends. 8 p.m. MSU. [music.msu.edu](http://music.msu.edu).

**Free Online Roast of Home Alone** - We will be roasting 'HOME ALONE' for FREE online and you are invited! 10 p.m. [frontrowfilmroast.com](http://frontrowfilmroast.com).

**Hometown Family Christmas Kits** - 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St. Eaton Rapids. Info at [eradi.org](http://eradi.org)

**Make it! Think Tank Workshops** - for ages 9-14. Build new skills and get creative with tools. 10 a.m. Info/register at [impression5.org](http://impression5.org). Impression 5 Science Center.

**Pancakes with Santa on Dec. 12th** - Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this will be curbside only. 10-11:30 a.m. Eaton Area Senior Center, 804 S. Cochran, Charlotte.

**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 10:30-11:30 [facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing](http://facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing)

**Winter Woodworking** - 10 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org).

## Sunday, December 13

**Christmas Gift Card Giveaway** - Tabernacle of David - Drive thru Gift Card Giveaway \$20 Gift Cards given to the first 1000 children. Gas cards for the first 100 cars. 1-3 p.m. Tabernacle of David Church, 2645 W. Holmes Rd., Lansing.

**Artist-Faculty Series** - Mozart's Horn Quintet, Sonatas for Winds and Strings, Puccini Arias, Ravel Piano Solos, and more. Enjoy an mix of past concerts. 3 p.m. [music.msu.edu](http://music.msu.edu).

## Monday, December 14

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

## Tuesday, December 15

**Virtual Science on a Sphere: Mystery of the Penguin Feather** - How might a penguin feather end up on a San Francisco beach? Join us in addressing a scientific mystery. 10-11 a.m. MSU Museum. [museum.msu.edu](http://museum.msu.edu)

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**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**  
From Pg. 22

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# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

### The partial enchilada

By **ARI LeVAUX**

Winter is the season for red chile enchilada sauce. You can almost smell the pinon and juniper smoke drifting from the leaky wood stove, as your mouth explores the profound depths of a good red chile made from scratch. It's good on potatoes, squash and other wintry foods, keeping you warm inside and out, from your spicy mouth to your sweating skin, and, for better or worse, everything in between.

You can find the ingredients for a good red chile nearly everywhere, from the bulk section of Whole Foods to the "Ethnic foods" aisle of a small town supermarket with little more than salsa, soy sauce and ramen.

We aren't going to call it "chili," by the way. The Mexican word for the plant from Mexico is "chile." Enchilada, meanwhile, is the past participle of enchilar, a Spanish verb that literally means "to put chile on something." In the popular dish enchiladas, named after that verb, the "something" to which chile is applied is corn tortillas.

In Spanish language slang, enchilada can mean red-faced and triggered, like a charging bear sprayed with mace. Meanwhile, researchers have determined capsaicin does indeed trigger endorphins, which give a rush that has been compared to those of sex, drugs, rock and roll and runner's high, depending on what you're into. The endorphins can dull pain, too, including, fortuitously, the pain of hot chile.

I used to feed cayenne powder to my chickens to make their yolks extra-red. Although they didn't taste spicy – the capsaicin doesn't make it to the eggs, even though the beta-carotene does – those yolks, grammatically speaking, were enchilados.

The world's first enchiladas were little more than tortillas dipped in chile sauce. Generations of Mexican chefs took this initial breakthrough in countless directions. Chips and salsa is one derivative, although some might argue the chips are actually entomatadas, aka treated with tomato. (Not to be confused with enfrijoladas, treated with beans).

I've got some red chile drying in my living room, strung up in ristras New



Mexico-style. The peppers are Italian Long Hots, a thin, crinkled chile is sometimes described as like playing Russian Roulette, because you never know when one will be searing. Mine are consistently sweet at the tips. You take a bite, feel the pungent power, and brace to be slapped, but you get kissed instead by that bright red sweetness. Encouraged, you keep eating, until you get slapped for real as you approach the seeds. It's a great pepper for red chile sauce, but any whole pod will work, preferably not too hot. When one eats as much chile as I do, one has to pace oneself. If you can't get whole pods, you can substitute ground chile; depending on its quality and freshness, that can turn out fine.

At some point folks like myself might as well concede that we aren't actually applying chile to this or that substrate, because chile IS the substrate. And all the other stuff like tortillas, chicken, cheese, et al, are all just different ways to season and decorate the chile. But until then, we'll keep calling it red chile sauce.

#### Red Chile Treatment

While most New Mexican red chile recipes are thickened with a little flour, I prefer corn masa, the same stuff tortillas and tamales are made of. Masa is a flour made from corn treated with calcium hydroxide. This ancient process (it used to employ wood ash) is called nixtamalization, and it gives the cornmeal a creamier texture.

I gently fry the masa in butter into a kind of roux. This masa-based roux is easier to manage than a flour-based, and has this fun, smooth foaming action that will eventually develop a nutty brown color and flavor, but isn't ea-



Courtesy/Ari LeVaux

Ari LeVaux's recipe for red chile enchilada sauce calls for dried red chile pods, garlic, oregano, butter, oil, masa and onion.

ger to burn. (To stay with this French saucy theme you could stir in some cream at the very end).

Just a few spoonfuls of masa adds a distinct dissolved tortilla flavor that is so noticeable I often skip making the "whole enchilada," if you will, and simply apply this thick chile sauce to my choice of protein. I'll garnish with onions, cilantro and avocado and call it good.

**1 quart chicken stock (1+ tablespoons Better than Bouillon paste in a quart of water, or equivalent)**

**1 ounce dried red chile pod, clean and devoid of seeds and stems**

**3 cloves garlic**

**1 tablespoon oregano**

**2 tablespoons butter**

**1 tablespoon oil**

**2 tablespoons masa**

**1 pound minced onion**

**Optional: cooked chicken meat, corn tortillas, grated jack or similar cheese for the entire enchilada; fresh onions**

Heat the stock to a simmer. Add the cleaned chile and simmer 10 minutes. Then let sit for an hour.

When it's cool, add to a blender with the oregano and garlic, and blend until smooth. It will coalesce into a magical, near translucent state of chile gel, and some cooks will call it good right here.

Heat the butter and oil in a saucepan on medium heat. Add the masa and fully stir it into the oil and butter. When it starts to brown, add the onions and a cup of water. Cook until the onions are translucent, stirring as necessary to prevent sticking; about ten minutes. Then add the chile blend and heat to a simmer. Keep it there 5-10 minutes, stirring often. Don't overcook. You want to keep that bright red hue.

To make enchiladas, stack or roll your tortillas (heat them first in a foil-wrapped stack if rolling). Heat the chicken in the chile sauce for a few minutes before building the enchiladas. Bake until the cheese melts, and serve garnished with raw onion.

*Flash in the Pan* is food writer Ari LeVaux's weekly recipe column. It runs in about 100 newspapers nationwide, nourishing food sections large and small with complete protein for the belly brain.

This story is paid for by readers like you through contributions to the CityPulse Fund for Community Journalism. Cash donations made this year to a 501(c)3 can be deducted when you file your taxes next spring! This expires after Dec. 31, so please act now. To donate, please go to [lansingcitypulse.com](http://lansingcitypulse.com).

# Red curry ramen from Ruckus Ramen

By SKYLER ASHLEY

A peculiar thing about the world of Lansing restaurants is that it seems to be quite the hotbed for gourmet ramen. No, I am not talking about the generic ramen you buy at the grocery store for pocket change. I am talking

## Ruckus Ramen

Located inside Avenue Café  
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Facebook.com/RuckusRamen

about traditional ramen, which features much higher quality noodles and several ingredients ranging from eggs, chicken, pork, bamboo shoots and bean sprouts.

Ruckus Ramen, which operates out of the Avenue Café, has a glorious take on the dish. Its broth, which almost has a creamy consistency, is made with spicy red curry. It's so darn delicious that I find myself drinking up the last drops even though the rest of the ingredients are gone. Along with the standard noodles, Ruckus Ramen includes your choice of crab, shrimp



or fried chicken. I go with the fried chicken, which pairs excellently with the spicy broth.

Another perk is that Ruckus Ramen is very generous. Each bowl of ramen is massive, and I don't think I could ever finish a bowl in one sitting. As a takeout dish, it's perfect to stash away as leftovers for later on in the day.

I'd recommend Ruckus Ramen as a jumping off point if you've yet to try out proper chef-prepared ramen noodles. The joint also has many side dishes that go very well with its signature meal. And, due to the pandemic, you can order cocktails from the bar to-go as well.



Ruckus Ramen's red curry ramen.

Courtesy

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CP#20-307

**B/21/041 MAINT PLANT SWITCHGEAR WWTP** as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing. The City of Lansing will accept sealed bids electronically on line at [www.mitn.info](http://www.mitn.info) or at the City Of Lansing Purchasing Office, at 124 W. Michigan Ave 8th Fl, Lansing, MI 48933 until **2:00 PM** local time in effect on **Dec. 17th, 2020** at which time bids will be opened. **Complete specifications and forms required to submit bids are available by contacting Stephanie Robinson at (517) 483-4128, or [stephanie.robinson@lansingmi.gov](mailto:stephanie.robinson@lansingmi.gov) or go to [www.mitn.info](http://www.mitn.info).** The City of Lansing encourages bids from all vendors including MBE/WBE vendors and Lansing-based businesses.

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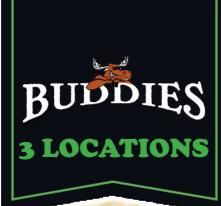
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