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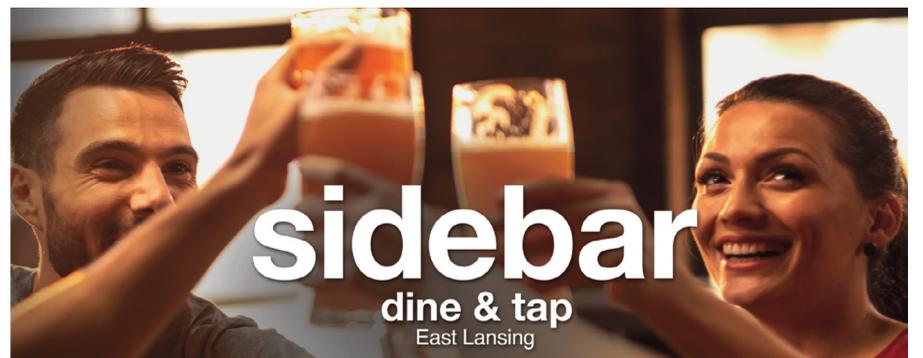


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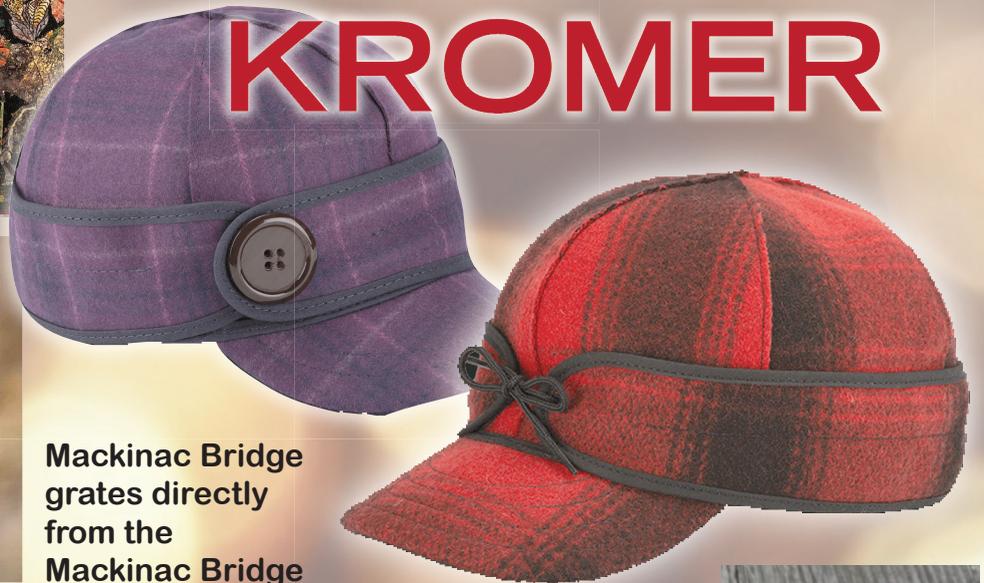
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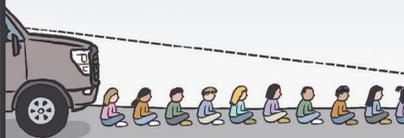
# CityPULSE

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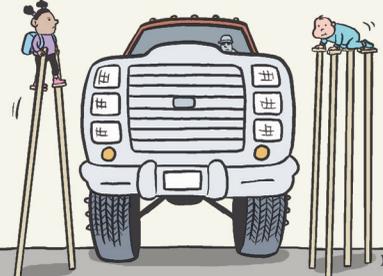
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Art exhibit created to oppose antisemitism lands at MSU



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Meet Riverwalk Theatre's Frog and Toad



**PAGE 26**

Magma sauce: the polymath of condiments

Cover photo by Lawrence Cosentino

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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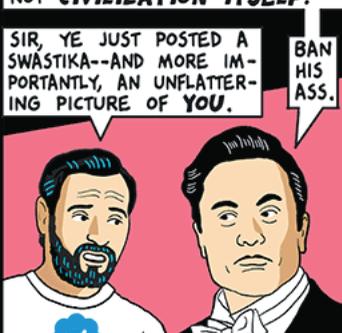


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# PULSE

# NEWS & OPINION

## Local opioid overdose deaths trending down since pandemic

Overdose deaths from opioids in Ingham County appear to be declining to a pre-pandemic level.

Eighty-one people died from opioid overdoses through November of this year, the Ingham County Health Department reports.

Ingham County saw 81 to 88 deaths from opioid overdoses per year from 2016 through 2019. In 2020 and 2021, opioid deaths were 117 and 125, respectively. Non-opioid drug deaths stood at 14 through November, compared to 23 for all of last year.

Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail said the decrease in deaths may be the result of individuals having more access to support in recovery as well as treatment options than when the state was shuttered to lessen the spread of COVID-19.

“It’s not that those options weren’t available, but there were barriers to accessing them,” she said. “I know a lot of groups moved to an online format, like Zoom, for peer support. But that’s just not the same as face-to-face peer support.”

With another respiratory pandemic possible, Vail acknowledged that overcoming the identified barriers that arose from COVID and impacted persons with substance use disorder would remain difficult.

The administration of naloxone by the Lansing Fire Department — the only local agency to report on its emergency use in Ingham County — also increased through the pandemic. In 2019, before COVID arrived in the state, naloxone was administered 330 times. In 2020, the number grew to 394, and in 2021 it hit 433.

Julia Miller of Punks Who Lunch, an eastside organization that works to reduce harm from drug use, said those numbers are a blurry “snapshot” of the use of naloxone, not only because only one municipality is reporting its use but also because many are revived with it by friends, reversals likely to go unreported in official data.

“To get a more accurate account on overdoses, we’d have to take all the info into account, including stats from Rap-

id Response, EMTs and harm reduction facilities that track data,” Miller said. “Both deaths and non-fatal overdoses aren’t getting reported accurately, and the public isn’t aware.”

Miller said her organization distributes about 150 boxes of naloxone a week through its offices, a self-serve box and through street outreach. That’s during the warmer months.

“I expect in the winter time our numbers will drop somewhat due to less people coming out during cold weather,” Miller said. “We plan to address this by making ourselves more accessible and increasing our mobile unit/street outreach efforts.”

Miller said that keeping tabs on how many people are saved by the drug and how many people die of an overdose is not just up to public health and law enforcement.

“It’s up to the public to be open and honest about it,” she said.

Punks Who Lunch also provides syringe exchange services, taking about 500 used needles every week. That doesn’t surprise Vail, who said there are likely still thousands more on the streets, but it’s an important step forward.

While needle exchanges have been criticized as “enabling” injection drug abuse, studies have found the programs reduce injection site infections, transmission of HIV and hepatitis and open a doorway to a potential recovery path. Miller and her volunteers spend time checking in with their clients on where their life is at. They also have conversations about how recovery is not necessarily always abstinence.

“Recovery can look different for different people,” Miller said.

While the bureaucracy tries to address barriers, Miller said it is important for families of people who have died of an overdose to be transparent about the cause of death. The stigma and shame of someone dying as a result of an overdose and struggling with a substance use disorder is often an issue family and friends obscure when a person dies, she said.

“So many people lose a loved one and

### DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS IN INGHAM COUNTY

Year	Opioids	Other Drugs	Total
2016	88	15	103
2017	81	27	108
2018	84	17	101
2019	89	22	111
2020	117	18	135
2021	125	23	148
<b>Total</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>706</b>

Source: Ingham County Annual Opioid Surveillance Report



don’t mention what the cause of death was. Silence equals death,” Miller said. “When people aren’t aware of how their friends, family members or even a stranger passed, it’s asking for it to happen to someone else.”

Another issue is the lag time in finding out about an opioid death.

For example, as voters were hitting the polls Nov. 8, the staff, volunteers and residents of New Hope Shelter on Larch Street struggled to revive a 29-year-old resident from an overdose. The fast-acting opioid antagonist naloxone was administered. He was revived and rushed to Sparrow Hospital.

Later that day, he was released from the hospital and returned to the shelter. There, he overdosed again. This time, naloxone didn’t work and he died. Lansing Police have not released the man’s name.

Vail said she was unaware of the overdose death until contacted by City Pulse.

The reason? Unlike other conditions, opioid or suspected opioid overdose deaths are not reported to the health officer. The county relies on data obtained from the medical examiner’s office. That causes county records on opioid-related deaths to lag weeks or months behind what is actually happening on the street.

“There is not a method for reporting of overdose deaths within 24 hours of the death, as identifying a cause of death is a complex science,” Michigan Depart-

ment for Health and Human Services spokesperson Lynn Sutfin wrote in an email. “Although there is value in exploring efforts to expedite the reporting of overdose deaths, the data reported needs to be accurate to be actionable. Ingham County, among others, participates in Swift Toxicology of Overdose Related Mortalities (STORM), which is a rapid toxicology testing program that operates out of Stryker School of Medicine, housed in Western Michigan University.”

STORM results are returned in about a week. It is a much broader toxicology test than would be done by a medical examiner, but Vail said the results can be limited.

“You may have someone who had a positive for cannabinoids, fentanyl and meth,” she said. “But there’s no way to determine if that is an accidental opioid use or if it is indicative of polydrug use, which is also not uncommon.”

In the last year, the STORM system has begun to identify xylazine in samples. It’s a potent animal sedative not approved for human use.

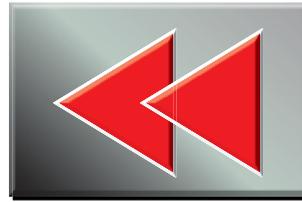
Vail said that in the last year, between one and seven samples per month from the county tested positive for xylazine. Metro Detroit and Grand Rapids are also seeing an increased trend in xylazine contamination in samples. The STORM system has been identifying this trend, Vail said.

— TODD HEYWOOD

# REWIND

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS

BY NICOLE NOEHEL



**Bishop David W. Maxwell, former director of the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives for the city of Lansing and pastor at Eliezer Temple Church in south Lansing, died Thursday at 66.**

Maxwell, who retired as director in August after 17 years, was instrumental in creating a response to the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement's 2006 rally at the State Capitol. He also advised former Flint Mayor Karen Weaver on responding to the city's water crisis. A "celebration of life" is set for 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday at Eliezer Temple, followed by a "homegoing celebration" at 10 a.m. Friday at Mount Hope Church on Creyts Road.

**Michigan State University Trustee Pat O'Keefe resigned Wednesday,**



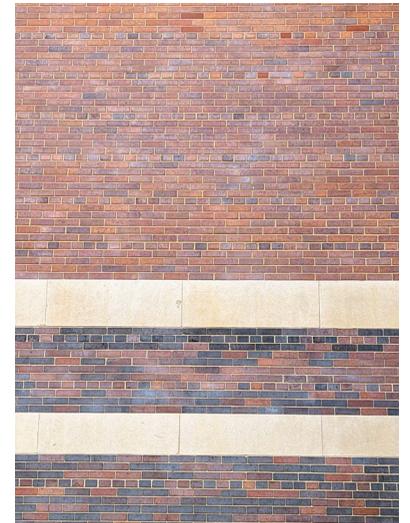
**citing transparency issues.** "Knowing the institution's history," he wrote Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, "I can no longer serve on a Board that purports to promote cultural change yet struggles itself to be transparent." He cited as a serious concern the forced resignation of Sanjay Gupta, the former dean of the MSU Broad College of Business who allegedly failed to report an incident of alleged sexual misconduct by an MSU business school staff member. O'Keefe and other board members pushed to investigate Gupta's resignation and the university's handling of Title IX reports, which led to numerous votes of no confidence from faculty and student groups.

**Lansing Township is taking steps toward avoiding bankruptcy.** Its trustees were scheduled to vote Tuesday night on a financial-solvency proposal that includes a new tax-sharing plan with Ingham County. Also, the township anticipates reaching a deal with the successors of Heights developer Mike Eyde, who are owed \$2.5 million. Meanwhile, Treasurer Kathy Rogers said the township has repaid \$3 million in overcharged taxes to Eastwood Towne Center tenants. For more on the story, see [www.lansingcitypulse.com](http://www.lansingcitypulse.com).



**Facing controversy, Lansing's Board of Education reversed itself and voted 6-1 to approve J-Dubbs as J.W. Sexton High School's new mascot, named for the late educator Jay Wesley Sexton.** Out of four choices,

J-Dubbs won the school's student mascot poll with 29.7% of the vote, but the school board first picked the Scorpions. The district hopes to have a new logo selected by spring and fully roll out the new mascot and logo by the 2023-'24 school year. J-Dubbs replaces Big Reds.



The last Eye for Design (below) was not identified by our readers. The detail — a curved panel of windows extruding from a brick wall — belongs to the old C.W. Otto Middle School on Old U.S. 27. The campus buildings feature brick and limestone details and pleasant symmetry. Suffering years of neglect and vandalism, optimism for the school's future increased following its sale to a nonprofit organization last year. The building is being renovated into a full-service community center.

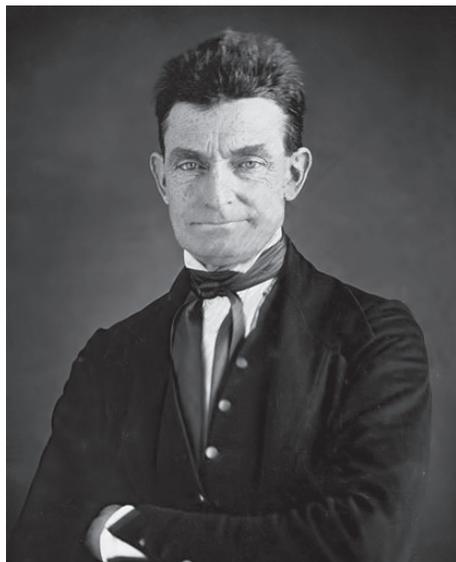
The Eye for Design for this week (above) is a good example of the power of second chances. If you know which building it is, send an email to [knarianj@mail.lcc.edu](mailto:knarianj@mail.lcc.edu) and you could win an Eye for Design mug!

— JAMES KNARIAN



"Eye for Design" is a monthly contest that features distinctive fine points of architecture in Greater Lansing. It rotates with Eyesore and Eye Candy.

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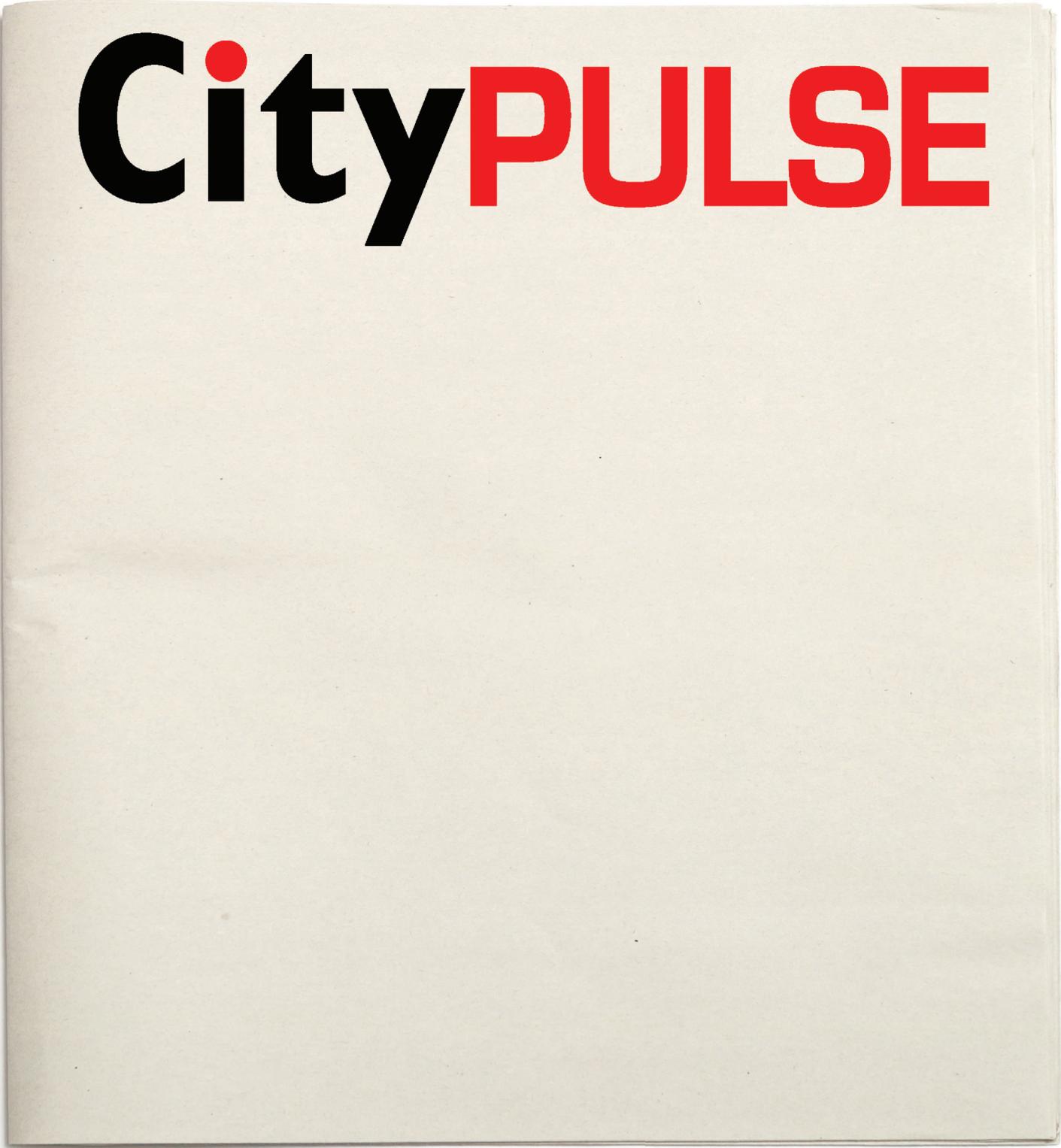
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## Breathing easier

The Lansing Board of Water & Light has made significant progress toward carbon neutrality by retiring its last coal-fired power plant. That's good news for the area and the planet. Replacing coal with natural gas significantly reduces carbon emissions while ensuring power reliability throughout BWL's service area.

While environmental advocates are encouraged by the progress toward carbon neutrality, they prefer a more aggressive effort toward green power generation rather than a focus on carbon neutrality. Certainly, the relentless efforts on their part encouraged a formerly reluctant BWL to rely more on gas than coal. More important to them is beefing up efforts to encourage renewable energy. The advocates are concerned that a "carbon neutral" goal may diminish efforts toward a green energy goal. They see gas plants as an interim, not a final solution.

Beyond eliminating reliance on coal (with the exception of purchasing power from DTE's Belle River coal-fired plant), BWL issued an All-Sources Request for Proposal to encourage energy solutions that include solar, wind and hydro, battery storage, thermal generations and efficiency programs. This demonstrates new openness to a variety of solutions to critical energy issues.

Our community is all the better for singularly focused environmental advocates working with BWL leadership that listens and moves toward an approach that will reduce but not eliminate the use of fossil fuels. Dick Peffley, BWL's general manager, is leading a company that must consider energy dependability alongside environmental needs, balancing present needs against a precarious future. It's not an easy needle to thread. We can all breathe a little better because BWL is no longer using coal and looking for green solutions. It's a step in the right direction.

## A legacy of service

The unexpected passing of David Maxwell, the longtime, recently retired director of Lansing's Office of Community and Faith-based Initiatives and pastor of Eliezer Temple Church, leaves a painful chasm in the hearts of those whose lives he touched through his life and his example. In the days following his death last week, Maxwell's friends and colleagues remembered a man whose calling to public service manifested the same passion and commitment he gave to his pastoral service. Although he was known as "Bishop" to most, earlier this year he was elevated



to an Apostle in his church. We can understand why. This we know: Maxwell was indeed an apostle, a leader who sought common ground and built bridges to mutual understanding. He was a missionary for a better world who acted with moral purpose and deep compassion for his fellow humans. Blessed with a keen intellect and a silver tongue, Maxwell used his gifts to advocate for a more just and equitable society in the tradition of Black minister-leaders like King, X and Farrakhan. A trusted adviser to Mayor Andy Schor and former Mayor Virg Bernero, Maxwell was also a friend and confidant of national civil rights leaders John Lewis, Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. He earned an invitation to The White House for his work to lift up the life prospects of young Black men. He moved in the nation's halls of power as easily as he ministered to the poor and homeless. State Senator-elect Sarah Anthony lamented Maxwell's loss and noted that a new generation of faith leaders will rise up to carry the mantle of community leadership in Lansing. We think they will do well to emulate the example set by David Maxwell.

## Lower education

From its founding as a pioneering land-grant institution, Michigan State University was designated as higher education for the public good. Teaching, research and service have brought MSU national and international acclaim with agricultural patents, technological innovations, scholarly faculty, MSU Extension and distinguished alumni contributing to a strong and productive reputation.

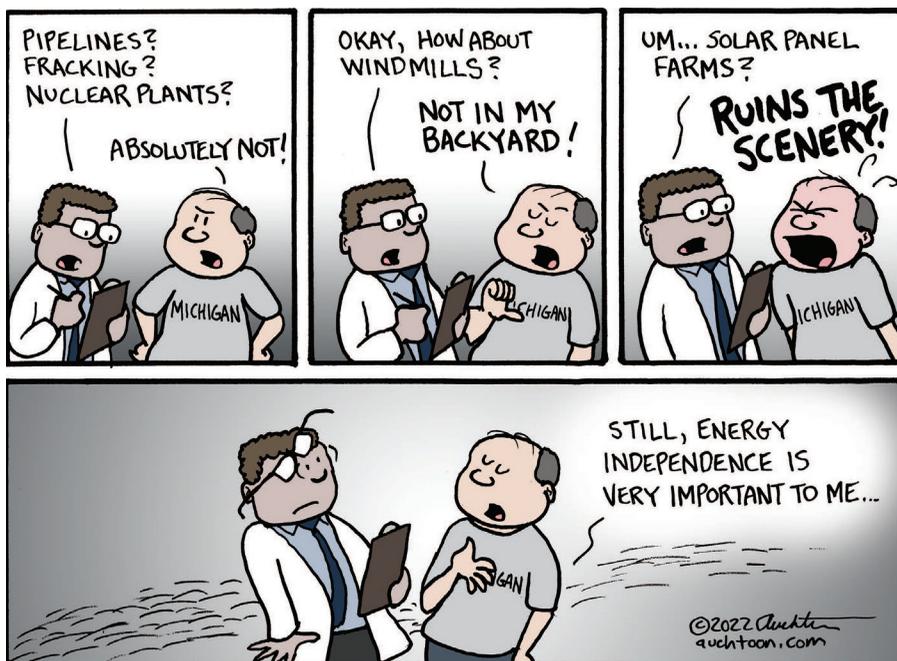
Yet, it's becoming harder to see the good that the university produces after an almost decade-long era of controversy. Far too often, the Spartan logo has been splashed on global newscasts alongside headlines of sexual misconduct, coverup or violent acts. The school on the banks of the Red Cedar is becoming known to all for many of the wrong reasons. Still more, the revolving door of leadership has students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community at-large bewildered. The president's seat has been occupied by four leaders since Lou Anna K. Simon's unceremonious exit in 2018; couple this disarray with recent turnover on the board, including

## The CP Edit

### Opinion

former Trustee Pat O'Keefe's resignation in late November, and only discord and distrust remain. MSU adopted a strategic plan in September 2021, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a member of the campus community who could recall its goals, which are continually overshadowed by these changes and calamities. MSU is critical to the viability of the capital region and the state; we cannot continue languishing in flux and upheaval.

If there is a hopeful sign, it is the appointment of Provost Teresa Woodruff as interim president. Woodruff promotes culture, communication and community as her mantra for creating stability on campus. We need today's university leadership to put petty disagreements and personal agendas aside, steady the ship with a steadfast administration and achieve its mission by centering on what's good for the people of Michigan.



## Have something to say about a local issue or an item that appeared in our pages?

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- Fax: (517) 371-5800
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### Write a guest column.

2

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.)

# It's Michigan's turn to spotlight the Dems' best presidential hopefuls

The Democratic National Committee finally stood up to the Iowa caucus foolishness last week and stripped the state of its early presidential selection spot.

It's about time. It's too bad it took Iowa Democrats making a dog's lunch out of their 2020 presidential process (are the results final yet?) before it happened.

This horse-and-carriage relic of multi-hour browbeating and cajoling neighbors in hundreds of high school gyms should have ceased to be glamorized as Americana years ago.

But it's finally here. Thank God.

South Carolina, the state that propelled President Joe Biden to the '20 nomination, will become the Democrats' first primary selection state on Feb. 3, 2024. New Hampshire and Nevada (which ended their caucuses last year) will hold their primaries on Feb. 6. Georgia will go on Feb. 13.

Then, here comes Michigan. The remaining presidential candidates will have two uninterrupted weeks to make their case to Michiganders before our Feb. 27 primary.

For those still in the race, Michigan will be the last stand before Super Tuesday.

The setup doesn't mean much for Democrats in 2024 if Biden is serious about running for reelection. It's hard to imagine serving in the world's most important position at age 86.

But let's not get off track. Biden would, at best, face token opposition, making the whole primary carousel a perfunctory exercise.

If he's not running again, Michigan becomes a proving ground where one or more candidates likely will end their dreams of becoming president. Folks like Michiganders' Gov. Gretchen Whitmer or "Mayor" Pete Buttigieg could see a big push if the dominos fall the right way and one or both are in field.

If the new schedule works out and the DNC sticks with it long term, this is a big change.

Every four years, Michigan will be under the bright, hot national spotlight. There'll likely be a nationally televised debate here. Millions of dollars spent on TV, radio and digital media ads. There will be more mailers, door knockers, visits to the Fleetwood Diner and other

eateries.

Michigan issues could be perennially talked about front and center as long as we don't mess up like Iowa.

Plus, our odds of shaking a future president's hand goes WAY up. That would be cool.

For Republicans, proactively pushing a switch doesn't benefit them. Last week, the Republican-led Senate passed a Feb. 6, 2024, presidential primary date as part of a deal with Whitmer.

The deal has fallen apart for unrelated reasons.

The Republican-led House has no incentive to move it to Whitmer's desk. Changing the primary puts Republicans crossways with the Republican National Committee, which approved a Super Tuesday primary for Michigan months ago.

Anything earlier puts dozens of Michigan delegate spots at risk. Even if the 2024 Republican presidential selection process isn't competitive, Michigan could be deprived of delegate designations that many grassroots leaders cherish.

It'll be up to the Democratic-led House and Senate to change the date to Feb. 6, 2024, and they will. Republicans would prefer it that way. They don't have to vote for it. It's out of their hands. Yet, they could still benefit from it.

Michigan Republicans could tell RNC Chair Ronna McDaniel and the rest of the RNC that the primary date got changed because of Democrats. There was nothing they could do to stop it.

But ... since the Democrats made the change, the Republicans probably should do it, too.

After all, giving the eventual Democratic candidates two weeks of uncontested public attention hurts the Republicans' chances of winning the Great Lakes State on Nov. 5, 2024. A good Republican doesn't want that.

Really, any Michigander who likes politics — regardless of party — has to like Michigan being moved to the front of the line for presidential primaries.

Michigan should celebrate and take seriously this opportunity. We need to properly vet and highlight the best candidates when they come.

We need to advance their chances to lead this country.

It's a responsibility this state is ready for. (Email Kyle Melinn of the Capitol news service MIRS at [melinnky@gmail.com](mailto:melinnky@gmail.com).)



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

Opinion



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ORDINANCE 1518**

**AN AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE SECTION 20-31 OF THE CITY  
CODE TO REPEAL A PORTION OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
COMMISSION ORDINANCE**

**THE CITY OF EAST LANSING ORDAINS:**

**Sec. 20-31. - Historic district commission established; membership; meetings and rules of procedure.**

(a) There is hereby established a commission to be known as the City of East Lansing Historic District Commission. The commission shall consist of seven members. Each shall reside within the city. Members shall be appointed by the mayor with the consent of the city council for three-year terms. A majority of the members appointed and serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A member who has been granted a leave of absence; or whose resignation has been accepted by city council; has been removed by the appointing authority; or, has been automatically removed for nonattendance shall not be considered for the purpose of determining a quorum.

(b) At least two members shall be appointed from a list of residents submitted by one or more duly organized local historic preservation organizations. One member shall be an architect registered by the State of Michigan or a graduate of an accredited school who has two years of architectural experience if such a person resides within the city and is available for appointment. A majority of the members shall have a clearly demonstrated interest in or knowledge of historic preservation.

(c) The commission shall elect a chairperson and adopt bylaws providing for its organization and conduct of business. The commission shall schedule regular meetings at least once each month or as required by state law. The city manager or his/her designee shall serve as secretary of the commission. The concurring vote of four members of the commission shall be necessary to issue a notice to proceed or for the adoption or modification of preservation guidelines. Other actions of the commission, including approval of a certificate of appropriateness, shall require a simple majority of members present constituting a quorum.

(d) The commission shall receive staff support from the city as assigned by the city manager, including administrative, clerical, research and other appropriate support.

(e) All meetings of the commission shall be conducted in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act, being Public Act No. 267 of 1976 (MCL 15.261 et seq.), and all writings of the commission shall be maintained and published in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, being Public Act No. 442 of 1976.

It Is Hereby Resolved by the City Council of the City of East Lansing.

Jennifer Shuster  
City Clerk

CP#22-275



**SATURDAY,  
DEC. 10**

**11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

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Community Center**

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# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## Mosaic exhibit remembers 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting

By TAYLOR BLAIR

On Oct. 27, 2018, a shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh rattled the nation. The attack, among the deadliest against the Jewish community in the history of the United States, left 11 dead and six wounded.

In remembrance, artists across the United States and abroad banded together to create the traveling art exhibit, "From Darkness to Light: Mosaics Inspired by Tragedy." It is on display at the MSU Main Library through Dec. 22, featuring 34 reproductions of the original 36 mosaics.

Yael Aronoff, director of MSU's Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel, said the exhibit is "a moving tribute by artists from across the world to the 11 congregants of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh four years ago that were murdered as they were praying by an antisemitic white nationalist."

"I was particularly moved by the reflection in the exhibit by a surviving congregant of the Tree of Life synagogue who was a Holocaust survivor," Aronoff said. "While we look to the future with hope, it is also daunting that threats and attacks against Jews in the U.S. have risen over the past four years. Two suspects were arrested in New York for threatening a New York City synagogue, one of whom operated a white supremacist Twitter group. This followed an FBI warning of credible threats this month against synagogues in New Jersey. It is our job as educators to educate about these hatreds that lead to murder and other expressions of prejudice."

Librarian Deborah Margolis worked with Tree of Life board member Dave Kella to bring the exhibit to MSU as a way of highlighting the work of MSU's Serling Institute for Jewish Studies. Kella serves as the liaison between the mosaic artists and institutions housing the display.

"The institute has been trying to educate the MSU community about antisemitism," Margolis said. "I thought it would be a good opportunity to support those efforts."

An art lover herself, Margolis complimented the beauty of the artwork and the recurring themes of positivity, love and peace. She likened mosaics from the exhibit to the concept of taking little pieces from broken things to make something hopeful and beautiful out of our world.

The conception of this collaboration between artists began with mosaic artist Susan Ribnick, owner of Vintage Mosaic in Austin, Texas, and co-president of the Austin Mosaic Guild.

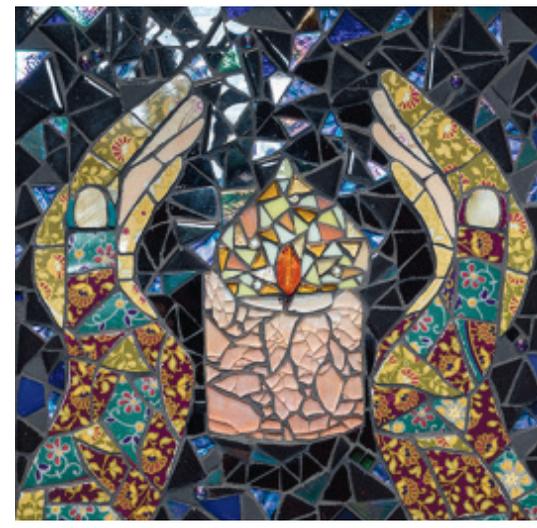
Ribnick called a guild board meeting to create a memorial immediately after the shooting.

"When this happened in Pittsburgh, it just hit very close to home," she said.

Ribnick has participated in community projects in the past. She believes people



Courtesy photo  
"Into the Light" (2019), by Robyn Abrams of Philadelphia.



Courtesy photo  
"Light One Candle" (2019), by Karen Kobylus of San Marcos, Texas.

can do good work when they are inspired and have something to say.

When speaking about her role in development, Ribnick says she was just the "ringleader" of the project.

The mosaics started as a 12-person intercommunity effort in Austin that quickly grew as more people wanted to get involved. After heavy interest, Ribnick created guidelines and a dedication panel for new collaborators. The number of artists grew to 36 once COVID-19 hit, leaving creatives idle in their studios.

The genesis of the exhibit going on the road was mostly an organic process, according to Ribnick.

"We just started to get invitations. And then, of course, the scope of everything changed," she said. "We had to get ourselves organized in a different way. I thought it was great. It exceeded my expectations. Because what we're trying to do is rattle some cages. We're trying to be heard." Ribnick held an event in Austin, and after news articles were released, the Skirball Museum in Cincinnati contacted Ribnick about hosting the exhibit. Other venues followed suit.

Displaying the exhibit at MSU's library is an intentional choice.

"It's a blend of Jewish and universal symbols and everyone coming together hoping for peace and tolerance," said Margolis.

A press release described the library as a space that "promotes equal access to information and spaces for all and leads meaningful initiatives in accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion."

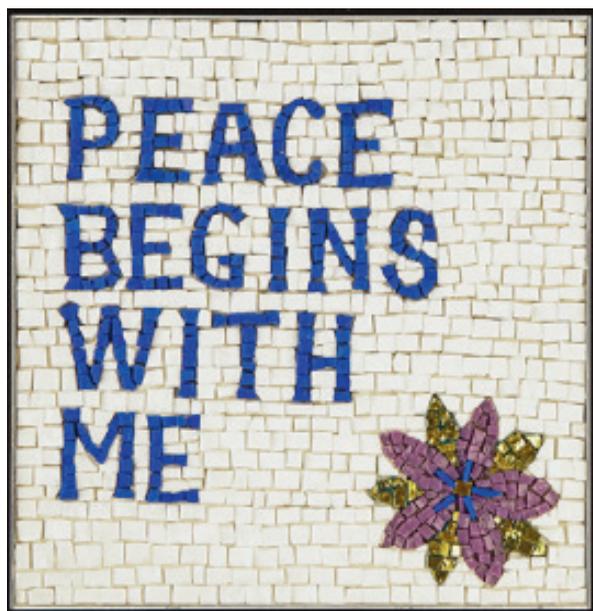
With daily foot traffic from the MSU community, Margolis shared how refreshing it was seeing the student body experiencing the exhibit.

"I think their initial reaction is just how nice it is," she said. "Each piece has very different artists; they can read and see what each piece is about and what the exhibit is about as a whole."

What happens to the message once the exhibit leaves?

"Let the artwork do the heavy lifting," said Ribnick. "Maybe that will promote a conversation. Rather than walking around feeling indignant and angry, let's do something."

"I would like people to continue to learn about different cultures," Margolis said. "Today, I think many of us do not know people from other cultures, especially other political views. It's very sad, and that bothers me a lot these days. I hope that people will continue to seek out learning about different people's views. Maybe there's something underneath that's in common."



Courtesy photo  
"Mantra" (2021), by Carol Nemir of Austin, Texas.

# Chill out: CBD gummy review

By LUCAS HENKEL

Let's get scientific, fellow stoners of Lansterdam: There are more than 100 cannabinoids in the average cannabis plant. Two of the most talked-about cannabinoids are THC and CBD. THC is the main psychoactive compound in cannabis that gives consumers the sensation of being "high," while CBD is non-psychoactive and can provide relief for consumers suffering from chronic pain or mental illness. When isolated, THC and CBD can provide vastly different effects: an 85% THC distillate cartridge can make users feel "stoned," whereas high doses of CBD can make you feel very relaxed but still lucid. However, when various cannabis compounds work together, there can be unique and beneficial side effects. This "entourage effect" helps create a more powerful high that can help consumers reach new levels of relief.

I taste-tested a variety of CBD and THC gummies while being sick last week (get your flu shot, folks). Read on for my full review:



Courtesy photo

PlusCBD Reserve Collection gummies contain a mix of CBD and THC, perfect for consumers looking for a little more "oomph" than the typical CBD edible.

### PlusCBD Reserve Collection gummies | CV Sciences | 30 for \$55

Each gummy from the PlusCBD Reserve Collection contains 25 milligrams of CBD and 2.5 milligrams of THC, making it a perfect starting point for

daily, well-balanced relief. The gummies contain natural ingredients and full-spectrum cannabis extract. The "full-spectrum" component means that all the good parts of the cannabis plant, like the terpenes, cannabinoids



and amino acids, are included to create a more potent edible. Most full-spectrum CBD gummies contain trace amounts of THC, but it is a very small amount (about 0.03% per container for the PlusCBD gummies, specifically). The combination of THC and CBD in Reserve Collection gummies can greatly benefit consumers looking to elevate their mood, sleep and overall relaxation. PlusCBD Gummies are vegan, soy-free and do not contain any artificial flavors or sweeteners. I am personally a fan of their peach-flavored gummies and have been taking one to two before I go to bed for the past few weeks. Even when my three cats are causing chaos in the middle of the night, I sleep soundly and wake up refreshed.

### PlusCBD Calm gummies | CV Sciences | 30 for \$35

If you are looking for something to help keep your spirits bright during a potentially stressful holiday season,

See Chill out, Page 16

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Element Premium 1g Carts (Live & Cured)

**8/\$100**  
Element Premium 1g Concentrates (Live & Cured)

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Courtesy photo

The earliest First United Methodist Church at the present-day Temple Lofts site was built of wood in 1870 at a cost of \$10,000.



Courtesy photo

A second church, made of stone and brick, with stained glass windows and a pipe organ, was built on the same site in 1905, for a cost of \$9,255.



Courtesy photo

A new brick church was dedicated in 1918 and kept the stained glass windows from the earlier stone church. First United Methodist moved out of the building in 1962 and Bethlehem Temple took it over in 1965.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

The Temple Lofts open officially Monday with 31 living units, ranging from studio apartments to two-bedroom suites. In 2023, the first floor will house the offices of project developer Michigan Community Capital and an expanded-menu Strange Matter cafe.

# From prophets to nonprofits

A reading from the book of the Temple's Resurrection

By **LAWRENCE COSENTINO**

There's no secret to demolishing a temple. In the Old Testament, Samson did it by grabbing the middle two pillars and giving them a shove.

Saving a temple is a more complicated task.

Monday marks the official opening of the Temple Lofts, a 31-unit apartment complex deftly stuffed into the historic walls of the former Bethlehem Temple, known to many locals as the Temple Club concert venue from 2001 to 2006. In the spring, the ground floor will be home to the newest Strange Matter Coffee emporium. The project's nonprofit developer, Michigan Community Capital, will also set up shop on the first

floor.

To take in this feat of adaptive reuse, start with its most conspicuous feature: the four 18-foot-tall Ionic columns on the façade. They look mighty, but they don't support anything. Sorry, Samson.

This brazen visual trick, a hallmark of turn-of-the-20th-century neoclassical architecture, went largely unnoticed until this fall. To the shock of passersby, all four wooden columns, riddled with rot, were taken off the building, but nothing came crashing down. New fiberglass columns were installed several weeks later.

And that's just the surface. Beneath the Temple building's grand exterior nests a \$10.7 million Matry-

oshka doll of tricky financial and architectural maneuvers.

Dancing on the edge between preservation and practicality, developers scooped the brick shell of a historic landmark like a pumpkin, stuffed it with living space and dragged the Temple into the 21st century, succeeding where many others failed.

## From worship to Wu-Tang

"There is a time to every purpose under the heavens," teaches the book of Ecclesiastes. The history of

# Temple

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the Temple building is best described as two long stretches of worship, one six-year freakout and, finally, a no-nonsense, “This Old House”-style intervention.

Behind this resurrection lies a simple question. Why bother?

Karl Dorshimer, president of the Lansing Economic Development Corp., put the Temple building in the “top 10 of historical buildings in Lansing to be redeveloped.”

“It has a great aesthetic presence on a prominent gateway to Lansing,” Dorshimer said.

Preservation architecture specialist Amanda Harrell-Seyburn, an associate of East Arbor Architecture in Ann Arbor, went further. “Most of Old Town consists of background buildings, and this is a foreground building — a big, prominent civic building, and that’s very valuable,” she said.

The Temple building and its predecessor churches on the southeast corner of Cedar Street and Cesar E. Chavez Avenue have roots reaching back to the very beginnings of Lansing. As work began on the Temple Lofts project and its adjoining 52-space parking garage in 2019, workers found remnants of the earliest First United Methodist Church, an elegant wooden structure built in 1870.

The church was a big step up from the denomination’s previous house of worship, a settlers’ cabin just east of the North Lansing Dam dating back to the 1840s, known informally as “God’s barn.”

The city and its Methodist flock were growing by leaps and bounds. A second church, made of stone and brick, was built in 1905 at the Temple site, for a cost of \$9,255. (The organ alone cost over \$2,000.) An even bigger building, the present-day Temple Lofts, was dedicated in 1918, retaining the stained glass windows from the earlier stone church.

First United Methodist moved out of the building in 1962. In 1965, a growing African-American church, Bethlehem Temple, moved in, giving the building a tag — the Temple — that still sticks.

In 2000, Bethlehem Temple moved to its present home, a barrel-vaulted complex at 1518 S. Washington Ave. in REO Town, leaving the Temple building vacant.

That same year, Old Town developer



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

In the first floor office complex, old stained glass windows sport modern “halo” light fixtures.

Diane Burns spent \$925,000 renovating the space into a music venue.

After decades of temperance and prayer, the building embarked on a bar-fueled binge in October 2001 — a six-year run as the Temple Club.

Among the acts that played the club were Clutch, KRS-1, the Reverend Horton Heat, Hard Lessons from Detroit, Slum Village, Patton Oswalt and members of the Wu-Tang Clan. Despite supplementing concert revenue with weddings and other events, the owners couldn’t sustain a venue with a capacity of 800 and the club closed in October 2006.

An artist’s collaborative used the Temple building from 2013 to 2015, but finding a permanent use for it was starting to look like a permanent headache.

## Financial alphabet soup

The intractable Temple building became “the subject of countless final projects” in urban planning and architecture classes at MSU, according to Daniel Bollman, founder and principal at East Arbor Architecture in East Lansing.

“It’s intrigued everybody,” Bollman said. “It’s this gorgeous landmark building, but despite the attempts to revive it, it remained a white elephant. It just wasn’t moving.”

The partnership of Alan Hooper, Sam Short and Aaron Mathews, the team that redeveloped Zoobie’s Old Town Tavern, a block east of the Temple, tried to revive the Temple as a restaurant and bar in 2013. They got as far as securing brownfield tax credits, but couldn’t put together the whole financial package.

“It was built around 100 years ago for a special purpose as a house of worship,” Dorshimer explained. “The building functioned well for its original intended purpose, but its interior layout did not fit modern uses. Recent attempts to renovate it could not make the numbers work for a profitable redevelopment.”

The restrictions that come with federal historic tax credits made the Temple daunting as a strict preservation project.

“They were trying to keep the big, open space,” Marilyn Chrumka of Michigan Community Capital said. “One thing that makes this project work is 31 apartments, paying rent.”

In 2019, Michigan Community Capital, a nonprofit specializing in tackling difficult projects, bought the building for \$500,000.

The nonprofit’s CEO, Eric Hanna, determined that adaptive re-use, with due respect for the historic shell and selected interior touches, was the way to go. However, shoehorning 31 apart-



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

The Temple building’s four wooden ionic columns, replaced with fiber-glass copies this summer, don’t hold anything up, but they make a grand neoclassical statement.



Courtesy photo

A section of the fourth floor of Temple Lofts had yet to be poured in this construction photo from 2021.

ments into a former church doesn’t fully explain how the nonprofit pulled it off. For that, it will be necessary to do a brisk backstroke in financial alphabet soup.

Last week, Chrumka explained the nonprofit’s mission as she walked through the Temple Lofts, looking for problems to trouble-shoot in the run-up to Monday’s open house and grand opening.

Tiny strips of blue tape on appliances, moldings and in closets marked areas that needed attention.

“We are drawn to the projects that are going to make a big community impact, that have a fraught history where other developers have tried and failed,” Chrumka said.

Michigan Community Capital started out in 2004 as the Michigan Magnet Fund, a nonprofit formed by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the MEDC, Cinnare and other private and public entities for the purpose of bringing competitive federal tax credits into the state.

The fund has been wildly successful, winning over \$320 million in federal New Market Tax Credits credits in the past four years and investing the credits in projects all over the state.

When Hanna joined the fund in 2018, he added a development arm, an insurance provider and other services to the fund and expanded it into Michigan Community Capital.

Hanna’s vision is to use all of those tools to help neighborhoods “with good organic fundamentals,” like the east end of Old Town, to “get to the next level.”

“Often that starts with a conspicuous and consequential building that is an eyesore but has potential,” Hanna said.

The development arm of Michigan Community Capital is still young, with the first projects completed in 2020, but it’s swiftly making its mark across the state, as Chrumka’s busy November calendar attests. Two weeks ago, on Oct. 24, Chrumka cut the ribbon on a project even bigger than the Temple Lofts, the renovation of a hulking, 100-year-old factory in Ludington, Michigan, into a 67-unit apartment complex, Lofts on Rowe.

“The buildings are expensive and complex, and the reason they haven’t been gobbled up by private developers is that they don’t make financial sense,” Hanna said. “They need a developer who is doing it for reasons that are other than financial, and that’s us.”



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

The view from a fifth-floor apartment, looking north along Cedar street.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

To convert the building into five floors of office and residential space, concrete floors were poured into a new metal skeleton, one by one, all the way up to the attic.

Most for-profit developers need to show double-digit returns. Otherwise, investors might as well put their money into the stock market, which is less risky than real estate, according to Chrumka.

As a nonprofit with no investors to placate, Michigan Community Capital can do an end run around that barrier and sustain a minimal rate of return.

“We’re making less than 2 percent cash return across our whole portfolio,” Chrumka said. “A for-profit developer would not have done the Temple Lofts project.”

For the record, financing for the \$10.7 million Temple Lofts project broke down as follows: \$2.2 million from the developer, Michigan Community Capital; a \$3.8 million loan from the Illinois Facility Fund; and a \$4.8 million equity investment from the Michigan Strategic Fund, via the Community Revitalization Program administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corp. The Michigan Strategic Fund will get 50 percent of the cash flow from the project until the investment is paid off.

The developer also secured a \$250,000 low-interest loan from the Lansing Area Economic Partnership to help fund upfront costs of the brownfield development.

The Lansing City Council approved a brownfield plan that will reimburse the project for \$2,055,000 over 30 years, not with upfront payments, but from taxes paid by the owner each year as the development begins to take in money.

## In on the ground floor

Beginning in April 2021, a crew of about 20 workers gutted the Temple until nothing was left but the masonry shell, which they shored up with more than 300 steel beams.

The tear-out was a mess. The project budget had a built-in contingency fund, but demo workers found more lead and

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# Temple

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asbestos than expected, and removal costs exceeded the fund by \$500,000.

Floor by floor, starting from ground level, concrete was poured and integrated into a new metal framework that bears all the weight of the building. The old brick walls are attached to the metal framework, but they have been relieved of their century-long burden and no longer bear any weight.

Taking advantage of an 11-foot-tall attic, workers were able to create a five-floor building, with four floors of apartments and a ground floor for office space.

Every window had to be replaced, along with innumerable exterior details. The grand new columns were built by Georgia-based Melton Classics (billed on its website as “single source solution for all your architectural column needs”).

Inside the building, many apartments are flooded with light from huge half-circle windows inherited from church times. Restored stained glass windows from have pride of place on every floor.

“We tried to preserve the character of the church without it being too churchy,” Chrumka said. “We loved the windows.”

Most of the stained glass is displayed in conspicuous public areas, but there’s one hidden treasure tucked into a stairwell. The image of a burning torch (featured on this issue’s cover) is so exquisite that the developers kept it intact, even though it’s in a stairwell landing and had to be protected with a layer of expensive industrial tempered glass.

Chrumka said the Temple Lofts are aimed at the middle of the market. Developers hope that by offering a range of apartment sizes, from studio apartments at \$790 a month to two-bedroom units at \$1,330 or less per month, the project will attract an economically diverse range of tenants.

To add a crucial missing element to the project, Hanna approached Cara Nader, owner of Strange Matter Coffee.

“We were impressed by Eric’s enthusiasm for historic preservation, and for this project,” Nader said. “He might have talked us into a couple of things.”



Courtesy photo

The old Temple Club bar awaits demolition in 2019.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

The parking garage is graced with a mural by Lansing artist Justin Hunt that celebrates North Lansing history, with visual shout-outs to surrounding businesses like Zoobie’s, Preuss Pets and Elderly Instruments.

## Temple Building and Temple Lofts

**Grand Opening**  
4-6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12  
502 E. Cesar E. Chavez Ave., Lansing  
RSVP at templeloftsevent.com  
517-708-2108

The first-floor café, with a planned opening in spring, will give the building’s tenants a place to catch coffee, grab a drink and a snack on the way home from work.

“Strange Matter is the ideal tenant for us — locally owned, female owned,” Chrumka said.

The 900-square-foot café will have the usual array of baked goods and specialty donuts and coffee drinks, along with small-plate food and, in due course, beer and wine (but not liquor).

Harrell-Seyburn said the café is a crucial part of the project and will help knit the Temple building with the surrounding community.

“You take this great community building, and you make it residential, which is private,” she said. “Suddenly, it becomes off-limits to the public. Put in a coffee shop, a store, a restaurant, and the public gets to embrace it, participate in it.”

## Gateway to the east

Despite the recent influx of new businesses like Grace Boutique and Metro Melik 517, it’s been hard to extend foot traffic from the heart of Old Town eastward to the intersection of Cesar Chavez and Cedar and beyond.

“There’s a disconnect between the dense, commercial part of Old Town and that stretch to the east,” Dan Bollman said.

The automobile century left the Temple stranded in a sea of asphalt.

“Three of those four corners are dedi-



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Marilyn Chrumka of Michigan Community Capital, developer of Temple Lofts, will share her non-profit’s first floor office space at the Temple Lofts with new murals and old stained glass.

cated to vehicles,” Harrell-Seyburn said, referring to parking lots for L.A. Insurance and Preuss Pets and a mega-sized Speedway gas station.

To beckon pedestrians and motorists alike, the project designer of Temple Lofts, Integrated Architecture of Grand Rapids, accented the café space with oversized windows and an inviting walkway with a crisp modernist awning.

“That commercial corner was done in a sensitive way, a beautiful way, respectful to the design of the building,” Harrell-Seyburn said. “It’s something visually appealing for people who are walking on foot — something that can pull them through the intersection into that next strip of Old Town.”

With its new residents and an inviting café, Dorshimer believes the Temple Lofts will spark a new wave of activity on the east edge of Old Town.

“I expect this redevelopment will continue east on Cesar Chavez Avenue and



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

The Temple Lofts’ one- and two-bedroom units and studio apartments are modern in design, but many of them inherited arched church windows.

provide additional positive benefits to the North Lansing area,” Dorshimer said.

If it does, Michigan Community Capital will be in the mix. The nonprofit has purchased the entire Temple Club block, parcel by parcel, with long-term plans to build another mixed-use building “that takes up the rest of the block,” Chrumka said.

However, an uncertain real estate market, sharp inflation and rising interest rates are forcing the nonprofit to put its grand design on hold, at least for now.

“Our alphabet soup of financing tools can’t keep up with 30 to 40 percent construction cost increases, which is what we’ve seen the past two years,” Chrumka said.

In the meantime, the former Old Town Diner east of the Temple Building has been leased to Maria’s Cuisine, a Mexican restaurant. The former Replay Video building on the corner of Larch Street and Cesar Chavez has been a handy storage area during Temple Lofts construction work.

“We put some money into cleaning it up, and it’s available for rent, but we haven’t found a tenant yet,” Chrumka said.

Last week, Harrell-Seyburn and Bollman walked around the project and eyed it carefully from the preservation standpoint.

“Over the years, I’ve seen different renderings, and I was involved with it with my students at Michigan State,” Harrell-Seyburn said. “I think this is the best version I’ve ever seen, and I’m so happy it was the one that was actually executed.”

Harrell-Seyburn carefully pointed out a difference between a preservationist and a preservation architect.

“A preservationist often wants to keep the building as it always was, trapped in time forever, and there’s a place for that,” she said. “This building needed to be ushered into the next hundred years.”

“This building is a lesson,” Bollman said. “The buildings that change, and can be modified and adapt over time, are the ones that survive.”

### CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING NOTICE OF POSTED MEETING MINUTES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all meeting minutes for the Charter Township of Lansing are posted to and available on the Township’s website at [www.lansingtowship.org](http://www.lansingtowship.org). Meeting minutes may also be obtained by emailing [dptyclerk@lansingtowship.org](mailto:dptyclerk@lansingtowship.org).

Meeting minutes are also posted in, and available for inspection at, the office of the Township Clerk (located at 3209 W. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, Michigan) during normal business hours.

Maggie Sanders, Supervisor  
Cortney Lighthouse, Clerk

CP#22-276

**B/23/066 RECYCLE RAMA E WASTE RECYCLING** as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing. The City of Lansing will accept bids at The City of Lansing, Purchasing Office, 124 W. Michigan Ave. 3rd Floor, Lansing, Michigan 48933 or electronically submitted thru MITN Site ([www.Mitn.Info](http://www.Mitn.Info)) until 2PM local time in effect on DEC 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2022. Complete specifications and forms required to submit bids are available by contacting Marilyn Chick at (517) 483-4282, or [Marilyn.chick@lansingmi.gov](mailto:Marilyn.chick@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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## Chill out

from page 12

CBD is a great option. PlusCBD Calm gummies are an even better one. Each PlusCBD Calm strawberry lemonade-flavored gummy contains 10 milligrams of CBD and a blend of herbal ingredients. This includes L-theanine, a compound found naturally in tea that has been shown to help counteract blood pressure increases in stressful situations, and 5-hydroxytryptophan (or 5-HTP, which sounds like a name of a boy band), a mood-boosting compound that is produced from the seeds of an African plant called Griffonia. These gummies offer relaxation without intoxication, making them a perfect pick-me-up that can be taken daily.

### PlusCBD Sleep gummies | CV Sciences | 30 for \$35

Each PlusCBD Sleep gummy contains 10 milligrams of CBD, 3 milligrams of melatonin and its own blend of herbal ingredients: magnolia bark, an herb used to help combat anxiety and depression, and lemon balm, a lemon-scented herb from the mint family that has been found to help with restlessness and insomnia. This combination helps consumers fall asleep and stay asleep without the worry of feeling groggy and out of it the next day. You can try both PlusCBD Sleep and Calm gummies in the PlusCBD Holiday Survival Kit, a special



bundle that contains a jar of both gummies for a discounted price, through the company's website ([pluscbd.com](http://pluscbd.com)). PlusCBD gummies can also be found at Better Health Markets for folks that would rather shop in-store.

### 1:1 pomegranate gummies | WYLD | 10 for \$15

WYLD gummies hit Michigan this year and have taken the edible market by storm. The Oregon-based company was founded in 2016 and started making full-spectrum CBD and THC-infused gummies in 2019. Each gummy is made with real fruit and natural ingredients, and they are offered in 100-milligram packs and 200-milligram packs for the more veteran stoners. WYLD offers products with a variety of THC-to-CBD ratios, like its 1:1 pomegranate gummies, so there is truly a product for everyone, regardless of their tolerance level. For the pomegranate gummies specifically, each individual gummy contains 10 milligrams of THC and 10 milligrams of CBD.

# PRESTON ART & MUSIC

Art @ MICA Gallery Dec. Gift Show (Saturdays)

Art Prints @ Old Town General Store

CDs @ Metro Melik 517

Art Prints & Stickers @ Capital Hippie

CDs & Art Prints @ The Record Lounge

Hand Colored Art Prints @ UNHinged Artz

Illustrated Instruments & Art Prints @

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# Brothers Kelly featured as beloved children's characters Frog and Toad

By **TODD HEYWOOD**

Not only are Connor and Quinn Kelly brothers, they are performing alongside each other as the beloved childhood book characters and best friends Frog and Toad in the Riverwalk Theatre's production of "A Year with Frog and Toad."

Quinn, 26, plays Toad, the uptight, reserved and too-often-worried friend in the pair. In comparison, Frog, played by Connor, 28, is the high-energy, bounce-off-the-walls friend, always ready for an adventure.

The beloved duo was created from the mind of Arnold Lobel, who wrote and illustrated the book series. In a 2017 biography published by the Parents' Choice Foundation, he said the two amphibians represented two sides of his own personality — a personality that fractured when he became gravely ill in the second grade. The experience isolated him and drove him to creative outlets for socializing, including drawing animals. In a way, his creativity saved his life.

The brothers both acknowledged that theater has had a similar impact on their lives. After each graduated from Waverly High School, they were aimless, unsure of what was next in life. Connor was starting down the road toward addiction.

"I was just trying to find a way to catch a buzz just to feel good most of the time," he said.

Connor took a theater class at the recommendation of his mother. He credits retired Lansing Community College theater Professor Mary Matzke with helping him fall in love with theater.

"I think those things that make us feel good can be a replacement for direction," he said. But after that first show with Matzke, Connor's life was set in a new direction.

Quinn had the opportunity to see his older brother in his first performance at LCC, a small role (one line, spoken in Italian), and the spark lit a fire for him.

"As a younger brother seeing my older brother, it made me think I could do this," Quinn said.

Quinn was addressing issues of his own at the time. He was completing probation for criminal charges from Eaton County and looking for a new direction as well.

The two have now shared the stage a number of times, including in LCC's production of "The Government Inspect-



Courtesy of Ariniko Artistry

High-energy Frog (Connor Kelly) wakes up grumpy Toad (Quinn Kelly) for a day full of hijinks.

tor," directed by Matzke. (Full disclosure, I played Osip in this production.)

The two were quickly becoming a force to be reckoned with on local stages. Then COVID-19 hit. Connor contracted the virus in 2021 and lost his voice for four months. He tried performing online,

"but it just wasn't the same."

COVID couldn't keep the duo down for long, however. The Brothers Kelly roared back onto local stages in separate musicals. Connor performed in "Cabaret" at LCC and Quinn in

"Big Fish" at Riverwalk Theatre.

In preparation for his audition for "Big Fish," Quinn said local voice instructor Judy Evans introduced him to the duet "Plant a Radish" from the musical "The Fantasticks." While he didn't use that song in his audition for "Big Fish," he later approached Connor with the idea of performing the song together as an audition for "Frog and Toad."

Connor wasn't sold. He'd just completed "Cabaret" and had begun a new job as a bartender.

"I said, 'Yeah, I know, but ...,'" Quinn said, pausing for dramatic effect, "Frog and Toad. You could be Frog. I could be Toad."

A reluctant Connor gave in to his brother and auditioned for the show. They were cast in the roles.

The brothers said they are having fun putting on the show and working with Tom Ferris, a longtime community theater director.

"He has this ability to bring people together that you wouldn't expect," said Quinn. "I really appreciate that."

Connor and Quinn both said the



Courtesy of Ariniko Artistry

Brothers Connor (left) and Quinn Kelly play the iconic children's book duo Frog and Toad in the Riverwalk Theatre's production of "A Year with Frog and Toad."

show is fast-paced and light fare, with a 15-minute intermission.

"We apologize in advance that your

kids will come away with these songs stuck in their heads," Connor said. "They're just fun, easy songs."

## December theater productions

### Riverwalk Theatre

228 Museum Drive, Lansing

#### "A Year with Frog and Toad"

Based on the beloved children's books by Arnold Lobel, this whimsical musical tells the story of an entire year in the lives of Frog, the happy friend, and Toad, the curmudgeon.

Dec. 8-18

Thursdays: 7 p.m.

Fridays and Saturdays: 8 p.m.

Sundays: 2 p.m.

Special performance Wednesday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m.

riverwalktheatre.com

### Williamston Theater

122 S. Putnam St., Williamston

#### "A Very Williamston Christmas"

The stereotypical Hallmark movie meets small-town Williamston in a romance for the holidays.

Through Dec. 23

Thursdays and Fridays: 8 p.m.

Saturdays: 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sundays: 2 p.m.

Special performances Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Friday, Dec. 23 at 3 p.m.

williamstontheatre.org

### Lebowsky Center

122 E. Main St., Owosso

#### "Holiday at Lebowsky"

Prepare for a holiday spectacular with singing, dancing and many stories of thanks and appreciation to the community that guided us through the ongoing pandemic.

Dec. 2, 3, 9, 10 at 8 p.m.

Dec. 3, 4, 10, 11 at 3 p.m.

lebowskycenter.com

### Peppermint Creek Theater Co.

#### "All is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914"

The Western Front, Christmas, 1914. A German soldier steps into No Man's Land singing "Stille Nacht." Thus begins an extraordinary night of camaraderie, music and peace. A remarkable true story told in the words and songs of the men who lived it.

Wednesday, Dec. 7 (sold out): Michigan History Center, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing

Thursday, Dec. 8: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, 303 Pearl St. NW, Grand Rapids

Friday, Dec. 9 (sold out): Detroit Historical Museum, 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit

peppermintcreek.org

### Wharton Center

750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing

#### "Pretty Woman: The Musical"

Based on one of Hollywood's most beloved romantic stories of all time, this adaptation springs to life with a powerhouse creative team led by two-time Tony Award-winning director and choreographer Jerry Mitchell.

Dec. 13-18

Tuesday-Thursday: 7:30 p.m.

Friday: 8 p.m.

Saturday: 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sunday: 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

whartoncenter.com

## BEHIND THE CURTAIN



# Green thumb therapy

By **LIZY FERGUSON**

As I write this, I am surrounded by the most low-maintenance houseplants fighting for their lives in the early-winter gloom of my most sun-filled room. I have the opposite of a green thumb, yet I still continue to try for the love of leafy things, despite my perfectionist tendencies often telling me to just give up already. Thankfully, others, like Emily Huff of Eaton Rapids, have more patience.

A transplant from Metro Detroit, Huff opened City Pulse's 2022 Top of the Town Best New Business, Odd Mama's Plants, back in June.

"Odd Mama's originally started out as a 50/50 partnership. After just a few months, my partner decided to step away and pursue another job opportunity," Huff said. "I'm still thankful to her, though, because she's the one who put the wheels in motion."

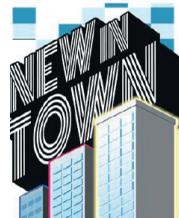
The idea for the store grew from a lifelong, casual interest in plants, which became a coping strategy and obsession during the COVID-19 pandemic. Having struggled with anxiety and depression throughout her life, Huff, a mother of four, brought her youngest home from the hospital the day lockdown began.



Lizy Ferguson

Emily Huff, owner of Odd Mama's Plants in Eaton Rapids, shares her love of all things green with her four children, including daughter Nona, pictured here.

"Coming home with a newborn at that time was pretty nerve-wracking, and like so many others, I think my anxiety reached an all-time high," she explained.



## Odd Mama's Plants

106 E. Knight St.,  
Eaton Rapids

Wednesday: 4:30-  
8:30 p.m.

Thursday, Friday:  
3-8 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m.-6  
p.m.

Closed Sunday-  
Tuesday

734-757-7919

of unique items from local makers and artists and offers repotting services and in-house workshops.

Huff's personal style (tattoos, gauges, an Against Me! tee-shirt) come through in the ghost and skeleton-themed items that make themselves at home alongside candy cane garlands and dangling, iridescent snowflakes. I picked up a pair of neon green gummy bear earrings to gift a friend, which turned out to be the work of Huff's eldest daughter.

"My amazing husband does a lot of things to help me with the shop behind the scenes, and my children are also always on board and excited to help

"Houseplants can be extremely beneficial for one's mental health and well-being. Plants are therapeutic and have allowed me to find calm in chaos, and they have allowed me to foster some really amazing friendships within the plant community."

Odd Mama's boasts a rotating selection of rare and common houseplants, unique pots and planters, macramé, plant accessories and plant-related gifts. The shop also carries a variety



Lizy Ferguson

Odd Mama's carries an array of houseplants, pots and planters, macramé, plant accessories, plant-related gifts and locally made trinkets.

where they can. It's definitely become much more of a family effort," said Huff.

With the business still so new, Huff is just getting started. While her current focus is on keeping new items in stock for repeat visitors to discover and cultivating the store's decidedly lovely and welcoming atmosphere, she has ideas that reach beyond the store.

"I'd love to start a plant project working with nursing home patients," she said. "I think plants could be very beneficial and bring some unexpected joy to a lot of people, and I'd love to share that with them."

## University United Methodist Church

1120 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing (corner of Trowbridge)

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**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 7PM**

A candlelight service of carols, lessons, and communion.

**CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 11AM**

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Christmas stories and carols. Bring a bell to ring!

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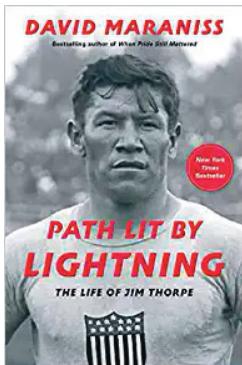
# The best holiday gifts for the highly literate

By **BILL CASTANIER**  
(First of two parts)

Books make some of the best holiday gifts, especially in Michigan, where the cold climate keeps us nestled inside for several months of the year. As City Pulse's resident expert on the subject, I have created a list that will make readers happy for the long winter and get them turning the pages of some fabulous books. Here is the first section, with the rest coming in next week's edition.

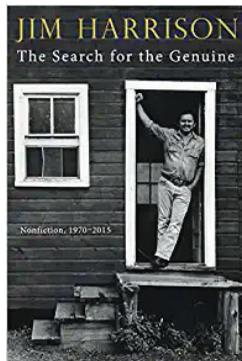
**"Path Lit by Lightning: The Life of Jim Thorpe"**  
**\$18.49, hardcover**

"Path Lit by Lightning," by award-winning author David Maraniss, is an engaging, new look at the life of Indigenous athlete Jim Thorpe. There have been many biographies about this great athlete who, until recently, had been stripped of his Olympic Medals, but none like this. Maraniss is noted for his detailed research and uncovers previously untold stories in this genius novel.



**"The Search for the Genuine"**

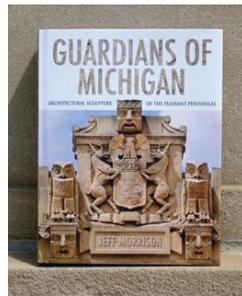
**\$23.99, hardcover**  
"The Search for the Genuine" is a collection of non-fiction stories that novelist and poet Jim



Harrison wrote from 1970 to 2015 for numerous publications. Harrison, who died in 2016, left behind an incredible body of work covering some of his favorite subjects, including hunting, fishing and just goofing off. This collection, although a small portion of his writing, shows the master at work.

**"Guardians of Michigan: Architectural Sculpture of the Pleasant Peninsulas"**

**\$47.70, hardcover**  
"Guardians of Michigan," by Detroit author, photographer and architectural historian Jeff Morrison, takes readers on a trip across the Lower and Upper Peninsulas of Michigan in search of the most illustrative embellishments on some of Michigan's most important historical structures. The work is an accompaniment to his 2019 book, "Guardians of Detroit." It's hefty, but it's worth it.



**"A Book of Days"**  
**\$22.99, hardcover**

National Book Award-winning author Patti Smith has done it again with her new publication, "A Book of Days," which comprises 366 of her own photo illustrations. Some images are strange, and some are lovely and will make you smile. It's a kooky way to keep track of the upcoming year.



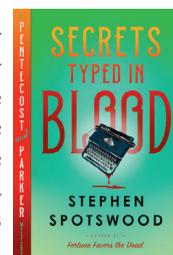
**"Uphill: A Memoir"**  
**\$21.99, hardcover**

"Uphill," by MSU graduate Jemele Hill, is a memoir of her fascinating climb to sports commentator on ESPN's SportsCenter and her fall when she criticized then-President Donald Trump. Hill, who is now a contributing editor for The Atlantic, tells how she overcame a hardscrabble life through writing.



**"Paperback Jack"**  
**\$26.99, hardcover**  
**"Secrets Typed in Blood: A Pentecost and Parker Mystery"**  
**\$27, hardcover**

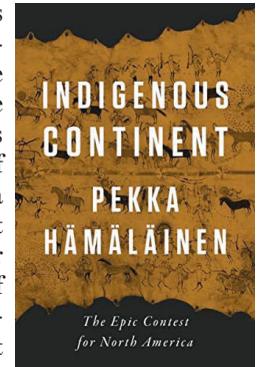
Both "Paperback Jack," by Loren Estleman, and "Secrets Typed in Blood," by Stephen Spotswood, will please any mystery reader as they explore the golden age of paperback fiction. The books not only provide a great history of this important time in the emerging genre of mysteries, they are fun reads recalling a time when paperbacks promised both sex and murders on the cover. Tawdry but tantalizing.



**"Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America"**  
**\$31.99, hardcover**

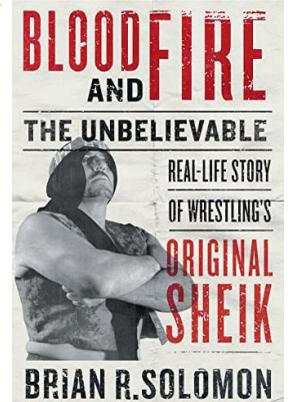
"Indigenous Continent," by Pekka

Hamalainen, is an honest portrayal of the history of the Indigenous population of North America as they fought to preserve their land and way of life. It's an entirely different look at how we perceive the relationships between the Indigenous Nation and the efforts to colonize North America.



**"Blood and Fire: The Unbelievable Real-Life Story of Wrestling's Original Sheik"**

**\$22.95, paperback**  
"Blood and Fire," by Brian R. Solomon, a Brooklyn writer who specializes in wrestling, is a sleeper this year. The Sheik, who in his other life was known as Ed Farhat, hailed from Lansing and rose to be one of the major promoters in professional wrestling during the 1950s and '60s. Although he was a promoter, he continued wrestling well into his later years and became best known as one of the real bad guys in professional wrestling.



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# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Capital Letters"--some big names here.

by Matt Jones

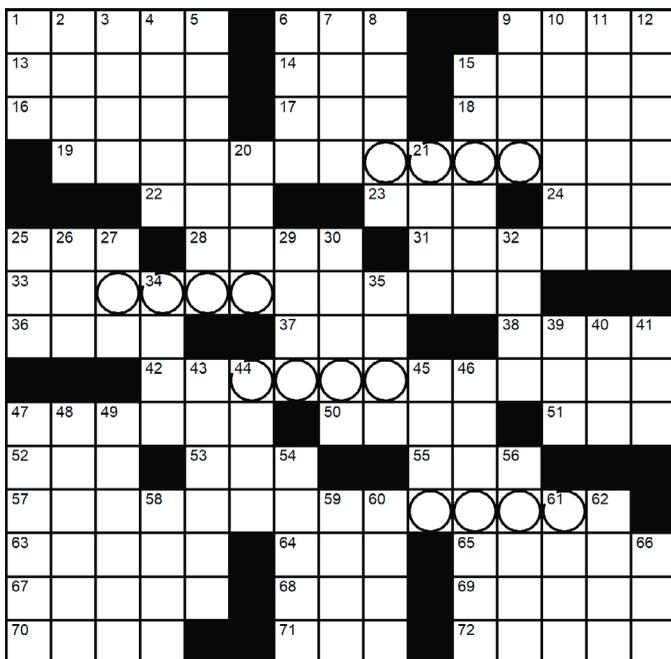
© 2022 Matt Jones

## ACROSS

- 1. Optimal
- 6. Common undergrad degrees
- 9. Mandlikova of '80s tennis
- 13. Actress Thomas involved with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- 14. "Glass Onion: A Knives \_\_\_ Mystery"
- 15. Palindromic Quebec university
- 16. Currently playing
- 17. Minecraft substance
- 18. Striped giraffe relative
- 19. "No, start with the second Japanese 'thank you'"p

- 22. Barcelona aunt
- 23. Xmas quaff
- 24. Comedian Wong
- 25. Inordinately long time
- 28. "Little \_\_\_ of Horrors"
- 31. Game that gets its name from "four"
- 33. Sharing battle between "Quantum Leap" star Scott and family?
- 36. Fiery gemstone
- 37. Rodrigo y Gabriela, e.g.
- 38. Grief-stricken cry

- 42. Eighteen-wheeler obstructing freeway traffic, say?
- 47. Leisurely walk
- 50. "Bearing gifts we traverse \_\_\_"
- 51. Late NHL star LaFleur
- 52. Abu Dhabi's gp.
- 53. Wagner opera "\_\_\_ Rheingold"
- 55. Part of UNLV
- 57. Run-down version of a basic two-dish pasta

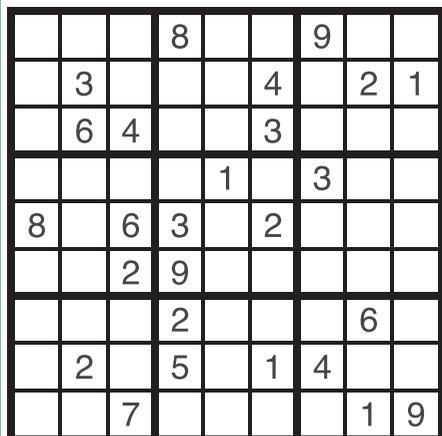


- meal? 63. Album's first half
  - 64. Kendrick Lamar's Grammy category
  - 65. Prom conveyances
  - 67. Record in a log
  - 68. Notable time
  - 69. Shorten by a letter or two
  - 70. Pop star Celine
  - 71. Get married to
  - 72. Kidney-related
- DOWN
- 1. "As I see it," for short
  - 2. "Consarn it!"
  - 3. Cube designer Rubik
  - 4. Floating
  - 5. With little at stake
  - 6. Dynamite sound
  - 7. Paranormal field
  - 8. Rear admiral's rear
  - 9. Ceremonial Maori dance
  - 10. Film with an upcoming
- "The Way of Water" sequel
  - 11. City in southern Italia
  - 12. Cover stories
  - 15. Subject of the History Channel's "Ax Men," e.g.
  - 20. "Hawaii Five-O" setting
  - 21. Letter after theta
  - 25. "Foucault's Pendulum" author Umberto
  - 26. Alley \_\_\_ (comic strip which, thanks to the recent Charles Schulz tributes, I learned still exists)
  - 27. Its finals are usually in June
  - 29. Former automaker, briefly
  - 30. "Where Have All the Cowboys Gone?" singer Cole
  - 32. Ruler before 1917
  - 34. Saxophone range
  - 35. Canine comment
  - 39. Haul
  - 40. Prefix for puncture
  - 41. Astronomer points at \_\_\_ (overused subject of science stock photos)
  - 43. Seasoning associated with Maryland
  - 44. Regenerist skin care brand
  - 45. "American Ninja Warrior" obstacle
  - 46. Movie preview
  - 47. Figured (out)
  - 48. Sesame seed paste
  - 49. Entertain, as kids at bedtime
  - 54. Hardware fastener
  - 56. 2022 psychological horror movie
  - 58. "Feel the \_\_\_" (2016 campaign slogan)
  - 59. Tortoise's opponent
  - 60. 2010 Apple debut
  - 61. Despot Idi
  - 62. Winner of the 2022 Best Picture Oscar
  - 66. Salt, in France

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Answers on page 24

# SUDOKU



## Fun By The Numbers

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

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

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

December 7-13, 2022

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Aries painter Vincent van Gogh was renowned for translating his sublime and unruly passions into colors and shapes on canvas. It was a demanding task. He careened between torment and ecstasy. "I put my heart and soul into my work," he said, "and I have lost my mind in the process." That's sad! But I have good news for you, Aries. In the coming months, you will have the potential to reach unprecedented new depths of zest as you put your heart and soul into your work and play. And hallelujah, you won't lose your mind in the process! In fact, I suspect you will become more mentally healthy than you've been in a long time.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** "The soul is silent," writes Taurus poet Louise Glück. "If it speaks at all, it speaks in dreams." I don't agree with her in general, and I especially don't agree with her in regard to your life in the coming weeks. I believe your soul will be singing, telling jokes, whispering in the dark and flinging out unexpected observations. Your soul will be extra alive and alert and awake, tempting you to dance in the grocery store and fling out random praise and fantasize about having your own podcast. Don't underestimate how vivacious your soul might be, Taurus. Give it permission to be as fun and funny as it yearns to be.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** The coming weeks will be an excellent time to expand your understanding about the nature of stress. Here are three study aids: 1. High stress levels are not healthy for your mind and body, but low to moderate stress can be good for you. 2. Low to moderate stress is even better for you if it involves dilemmas that you can ultimately solve. 3. There is a thing called "eustress," which means beneficial stress. It arises from a challenge that evokes your vigor, resilience and willpower. As you deal with it, you feel hopeful and hardy. It's meaningful and interesting. I bring these ideas to your attention, dear Gemini, because you are primed to enjoy a rousing upgrade in your relationship with stress.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Long before he launched his illustrious career, Cancerian inventor Buckminster was accepted to enroll at Harvard University. Studying at such a prestigious educational institution was a high honor and set him up for a bright future. Alas, he was expelled for partying too hard. Soon he was working odd jobs. His fortunes dwindled, and he grew depressed. But at age 32, he had a pivotal, mystical experience. He seemed to be immersed in a globe of white light hovering above the ground. A disembodied voice spoke, telling him he "belonged to the universe" and that he would fulfill his life purpose if he applied himself to serving "the highest advantage of others." How would you like a Buckminster Fuller-style intervention, Cancerian? It's available if you want it and ask for it.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Leo-born Judith Love Cohen was an electrical engineer who worked on NASA's Apollo Space Program. She was also the mother of the famous actor Jack Black. When she was nine months pregnant with Jack, on the day she went into labor, she performed a heroic service. On their way to the moon, the three astronauts aboard the Apollo 13 spacecraft had encountered a major systems failure. In the midst of her birth process, Judith Love Cohen carried out advanced troubleshooting that helped save their lives and bring their vehicle safely back to Earth. I don't expect you to achieve such a monumental feat in the coming days, Leo. But I suspect you will be extra intrepid and even epic in your efforts. And your ability to magically multitask will be at a peak.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** When you're at the height of your powers, you provide the people in your life with high-quality help and support. And I believe you could perform this role even stronger in 2023. Here are some of the best benefits you can offer: 1. Assist your allies in extracting bright

ideas from confusing mishmashes. 2. Help them cull fertile seeds from decaying dross. 3. As they wander through messy abysses, aid them in finding where the redemption is. 4. Cheer on their successes with wit and charm.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** A blogger named Daydreamydyke explains the art of bestowing soulful gifts. Don't give people you care for generic consumer goods, she tells us. Instead, say to them, "I picked up this cool rock I found on the ground that reminded me of you," or "I bought you this necklace for 50 cents at a yard sale because I thought you'd like it," or "I've had this odd little treasure since childhood, but I feel like it could be of use to you or give you comfort, so I want you to have it." That's the spirit I hope you will adopt during the holiday season, Libra — as well as for all of 2023, which will be the year you could become a virtuoso gift-giver.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** In 1957, engineers Alfred Fielding and Marc Chavannes invented three-dimensional plastic wallpaper. No one bought the stuff, though. A few years later, they rebranded it as Bubble Wrap and marketed it as material to protect packages during shipment. Success! Its new use has been popular ever since. I suspect you are in a phase comparable to the time between when their plastic wallpaper flopped and before they dreamed up Bubble Wrap. Have faith in the possibility of there being a Second Act, Scorpio. Be alert for new applications of possibilities that didn't quite make a splash the first time around.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** I applaud your expansive curiosity. I admire your yearning to learn more and more about our mysterious world as you add to your understanding of how the game of life works. Your greed for interesting experiences is good greed! It is one of your most beautiful qualities. But now and then, there come times when you need to scale down your quest for fresh, raw truths and work on integrating what you have already absorbed. The coming weeks will be one of those times.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Better than most, you have a rich potential to attune yourself to the cyclical patterns of life. It's your birthright to become skilled at discerning natural rhythms at work in the human comedy. Even more fortunately, Capricorn, you can be deeply comforted by this awareness. Educated by it. Motivated by it. I hope that in 2023, you will develop your capacity to the next level. The cosmic flow will be on your side as you strive to feel the cosmic flow — and place yourself in closer and closer alignment with it.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Anne, a character in a book by L. M. Montgomery, says she prefers the word "dusk" over "twilight" because it sounds so "velvety and shadowy." She continues, "In daylight, I belong to the world . . . in the night to sleep and eternity. But in the dusk, I'm free from both and belong only to myself." According to my astrological assessment, you Aquarians will go through a dusk-like phase in the coming weeks: a time when you will belong solely to yourself and any other creature you choose to join you in your velvety, shadowy emancipation.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** My Piscean friend Venus told me, "We Pisceans feel everything very intensely, but alas, we do not possess the survival skills of a Scorpio or the enough-is-enough, self-protective mechanism of the Cancerians. We are the water sign most susceptible to being engulfed and flooded and overwhelmed." I think Venus is somewhat correct in her assessment. But I also believe you Fishes have a potent asset that you may not fully appreciate or call on enough. Your ability to tune into the very deepest levels of emotion potentially provides you with access to a divine power source beyond your personality. If you allow it to give you all of its gifts, it will keep you shielded and safe and supported.

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

# OUT on the TOWN

## Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

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

### Wednesday, Dec. 7

**50 over Fitness** - The Meridian 50 Plus Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at Meridian Township Central Park Pavilion (Old Farmers Market) 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. 517-853-4600. [meridian50plus.com](http://meridian50plus.com).

**"A Course of Love" with Lucille Olson** - 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. [unitylansing.org](http://unitylansing.org).

**It's Elementary!** - Discover science in the world around you with experiments, crafts, activities, and more. Registration req. 2:45 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. [charlottelibrary.org](http://charlottelibrary.org).

**Jinju Kim, piano DMA** - 6 p.m. MSU College of Music, 333 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. [music.msu.edu](http://music.msu.edu).

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

**LCC Jazz Band** - 7 p.m. Everett High School, 3900 Stabler St., Lansing. [lcc.edu](http://lcc.edu).

**Lei Min, clarinet DMA** - 6 p.m. MSU College of Music, 333 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. [music.msu.edu](http://music.msu.edu).

**Meditation in the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition** - All are welcome to join our weekly practice! 7-9 p.m. Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S. MLK Jr. Blvd., Lansing. [lamc.info](http://lamc.info).

**Michigan Young Birders Network Virtual Meeting** - 7 p.m. Meeting ID: 946 4329 0865. Passcode: Chickadee.

**New Art Exhibit Showcases Powerful Array of Artistic Techniques and Images** - "Dreaming Between the Lines." 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The Peoples Church of East Lansing, 200 W. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. 517-332-5073. [thepeopleschurch.com](http://thepeopleschurch.com).

**Night of a Thousand Donuts** - Enjoy free coffee and donuts while supplies last! 8 p.m. MSU Main Library, 366 W. Circle Dr, East Lansing, and Gast Business Library, 648 N. Shaw Lane #50, East Lansing. [lib.msu.edu](http://lib.msu.edu).

**Read Across Time Book Group** - "Doctor Shiva-go" by Boris Pasternak (1950s). 11 a.m. Mark's Place, 238 E. Main St., Eaton Rapids.

**Wittle Country Christmas Party with Tenille Arts, Matt Stell & Dillon Charmichael** - 7 p.m. Lansing Brewing Co., 518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing. [wiltl.com](http://wiltl.com)

**Zaha Hadid Design: Untold** - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

### Thursday, Dec. 8

**"A Course in Miracles," a Group Discussion on ZOOM** - 7 p.m. Meeting ID: 177 417 886 Passcode: 601744. [unitylansing.org](http://unitylansing.org).

**A Very Williamston Christmas** - Hot cocoa, light parades and romance factor large in this parody of everyone's guilty pleasure: the holiday movie. 8 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. [williamstontheatre.org](http://williamstontheatre.org).

**Design a Laser Cut Trinket** - 3-5 p.m. MSU MakeCentral Makerspace, Main Library, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. [lib.msu.edu](http://lib.msu.edu).

**Frog and Toad** - 7 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. [riverwalktheatre.com](http://riverwalktheatre.com).

**Ladies Silver Blades Skating Club** - Join other adult women for fun, exercise, friendship and skating practice. 9:30-11:20 a.m. Suburban Ice, 2810 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. [ladiessilverblades.org](http://ladiessilverblades.org).

**New Art Exhibit Showcases Powerful Array of Artistic Techniques and Images** - "Dreaming Between the Lines." 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The Peoples Church of East Lansing, 200 W. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. 517-332-5073. [thepeopleschurch.com](http://thepeopleschurch.com).

**Stitch 'n Bitch** - Come hang out with some fellow stitching witches! 5-8 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540. [manifestlansing.com](http://manifestlansing.com).

**Therapy Dogs** - 3 p.m. MSU Main Library South Lobby, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. [lib.msu.edu](http://lib.msu.edu).

**U-Night Presents House N'Bass** - Ages 18+. Doors 8 p.m., show 9 p.m.-2 a.m. The Junction, 410 S. Clippert St., East Lansing. [thejunctionmichigan.com](http://thejunctionmichigan.com).

**Wonderland of Lights** - Thousands of lights create an extraordinary holiday display! 5-8 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4222. [potterparkzoo.org](http://potterparkzoo.org).

**Zaha Hadid Design: Untold** - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

### Friday, Dec. 9

**50 over Fitness** - The Meridian 50 Plus Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at Meridian Township Central Park Pavilion (Old Farmers Market) 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. 517-853-4600. [meridian50plus.com](http://meridian50plus.com).

**A Very Williamston Christmas** - Hot cocoa, light parades and romance factor large in this parody of everyone's guilty pleasure: the holiday movie. 8 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. [williamstontheatre.org](http://williamstontheatre.org).

**Christmas PJ Story Time** - 6:30 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. [charlottelibrary.org](http://charlottelibrary.org).

**Frog and Toad** - 8 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. [riverwalktheatre.com](http://riverwalktheatre.com).

**Holiday Nights of Lights** - This family-fun cruise through Frances Park will be loaded with holiday displays, lighted trees and tunnel. 6-9 p.m. 2701 Moores River Drive, Lansing.

**Holiday Road Rally** - Team based, one night photo scavenger hunt event. Registration req. 6 p.m. Foster Community Center, 200 N. Foster Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4291.

**Holiday Sing with song leader Sally Potter, Doug Berch, Doug Austin and spoken word artist Ruelaine Stokes** - 7:30-10 p.m. University United Methodist Church 1120 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. [tenpoundfiddle.org](http://tenpoundfiddle.org).

**Howl at the Moon** - Enjoy the full moon while taking a guided walk through the nighttime woods. 7 p.m. Harris Nature Center parking lot, 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos. 517-349-3866.

**Jazz Orchestras with Adrian Mears, jazz trombone (JAR)** - 8 p.m. Fairchild Theatre, 542

### "Telling the Story: Christmas Oratorios by Bach & Saint-Saëns"

8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10  
Cobb Great Hall, Wharton Center  
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing

On Saturday evening, the MSU College of Music will host its annual holiday concert. More than 200 members of the MSU Choral Union, University Chorale, State Singers and the MSU Symphony Orchestra, conducted by music Professor and MSU Choral Director David Rayl, will perform selections from the Christmas Oratorios of Johann Sebastian Bach and Camille Saint-Saëns.



"The lyricism of Saint-Saëns' music contrasts beautifully with the vocal and instrumental virtuosity delivered in Bach's cantatas," said Reyl. "We are grateful for this opportunity to share the beauty of choral-orchestral music and to help uplift everyone's spirits during the holiday season."

This is the second year that such a large section of the MSU choirs has been able to rehearse and perform in person since the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the concert to be canceled in 2019 and 2020. The musicians are excited to be back on stage for what will surely be an epic performance.

Reserved-seat tickets are \$22 for adults, \$20 for seniors (age 60 and older) and \$12 for students, plus a \$3.50 Wharton facility fee. Call 517-432-2000 or visit [whartoncenter.com](http://whartoncenter.com). Tickets can also be purchased at the door if available.

Auditorium Road, East Lansing. 517-355-1855.

**Jingle Hells** - A night of wicked elves, creepy decorations, tragic endings and dark holiday secrets! 7-11 p.m. Awaken Haunted Attraction, 4760 Churchill Road, Leslie.

**Movie Night: "The Great Rupert"** - 7 p.m. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. 517-371-3010.

**Sewers Salute Quilts of Valor Meeting** - Bring your project, sewing machine, and supplies. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Towar Hart Baptist Church, 6157 Towar Ave., East Lansing. 517-337-0727.

**The Swift Brothers** - 8 p.m. The Peanut Barrel, 521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. 517-351-0608. [peanutbarrel.com](http://peanutbarrel.com).

**TGIF Dinner & Dance** - 7 p.m.- midnight. Hawk Hollow Banquet Center, 15101 Chandler Road, Bath. 734-604-5095. [tgifdance.com/calendar](http://tgifdance.com/calendar).

**Wonderland of Lights** - Thousands of lights create an extraordinary holiday display! 5-8 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4222. [potterparkzoo.org](http://potterparkzoo.org).

**Zaha Hadid Design: Untold** - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

### Saturday, Dec. 10

**Telling the Story: Christmas Oratorios by Bach & Saint-Saëns** - 8 p.m. Cobb Great Hall, Whar-

ton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. [whartoncenter.com](http://whartoncenter.com).

**A Very Williamston Christmas** - Hot cocoa, light parades and romance factor large in this parody of everyone's guilty pleasure: the holiday movie. 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. [williamstontheatre.org](http://williamstontheatre.org).

**Alternative Christmas Market** - Come and find a unique gift this season while supporting those in need both locally and internationally. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The Presbyterian Church of Okemos, 2258 Bennett Road, Okemos. [okemospres.org](http://okemospres.org).

**Cocoa and Collection** - Hot cocoa and art-making activities inspired by wintery works of art in our collection! 1 p.m. Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

**East Lansing Winter Fest** - 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Aboot Road, East Lansing. [cityofeastlansing.com](http://cityofeastlansing.com).

**Frog and Toad** - 8 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. [riverwalktheatre.com](http://riverwalktheatre.com).

**Generations Community Theater Presents "A Christmas Carol"** - 7 p.m. Virginia Schlichter Auditorium at the Mason Area Historical Museum, 200 E. Oak St., Mason.

# Live & Local CityPULSE

## The Avenue

2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

**The Dark Art of Michigan Presents:  
Heavy Metal Holiday Meltdown**

Sat., Dec. 10, 8 p.m.

**LCC Rock Band**

Sun., Dec. 11, 6 p.m.

## Eaton Rapids Craft Co.

204 N. Main St., Eaton Rapids

**Brian Shelley**

Fri., Dec. 9, 7 p.m.

**Russ Holcomb**

Sat., Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

## The Exchange

314 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

**Smokey Bear Band**

Fri., Dec. 9, 9:30 p.m.

**The New Rule**

Sat., Dec. 10, 9:30 p.m.

## The Green Door

2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

**Off The Ledge**

Fri., Dec. 9, 8:30 p.m.

**Atomic Annie**

Sat., Dec. 10, 8:30 p.m.

## The Junction

410 S. Clippert St., Lansing

**Matt Williams and Sadie Bass**

Fri., Dec. 9, 8 p.m.

## Orchard Street Pump House

368 Orchard St., East Lansing

**The DonJuans**

Sat., Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

## The Peanut Barrel

521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing

**The Swift Brothers**

Fri., Dec. 9, 8 p.m.

## UrbanBeat

1213 Turner Road, Lansing

**Charlie Richardson and Jackalope**

Thurs., Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m.

**Time2Play**

Fri., Dec. 9, 8 p.m.

**Taylor Taylor**

Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.

**Rodney Page and Artaska**

Sun., Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m.



# TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

NO PLACE LIKE HOME



Courtesy photos

Lansing native Taylor Taylor, now living in Los Angeles, returns home for a holiday-themed show Saturday at UrbanBeat in Old Town. Backed by a full band, she will play a mix of holiday songs and her own originals.

## Taylor Taylor returns for UrbanBeat show

While her roots are in Lansing, singer-songwriter Taylor Taylor has called Los Angeles home for the last four years. Since the big move, she's further developed her warm, eclectic style of pop music. Her latest single, a surprisingly soulful cover of Uncle Kracker's "Follow Me," was self-produced. She also played all the instruments on it — a prime example of her dynamic talent.

Taylor returns to Lansing this weekend for her "Home for the Holidays" show Saturday at UrbanBeat. She will be joined by her band as well. In the meantime, the troubadour chatted with City Pulse about life out West and what's next.

**What motivated your move to California, and how's it been so far?**

**Taylor:** I moved to LA in 2018 to meet more music connections and collaborators. I can't believe it's been almost five years. It's encouraging to be surrounded by people in all aspects of the entertainment industry. I have found people to be very supportive and uplifting. The constant sunshine is a nice bonus, but I yearn for a hearty thunderstorm.

**How would you compare being a musician in Michigan compared to LA?**

There are obviously lots more musicians and singers in LA. It makes me appreciate all the support I have in the Lansing area when I come back home.

**What's been inspiring your lyrics and songwriting recently?**

Over the past year, I've acquired a few guitar pedals, a steel-string guitar — which I keep in an alternate tuning — and a keyboard with weighted keys to mimic a real piano. I've been playing guitar for so long that sometimes I

feel like I'm playing the same chords over and over while writing. But having these other instruments, pedals and plug-ins helps keep the process fresh.

**Over the years, what songwriter has stirred you the most?**

I've always been a fan of John Mayer's songwriting. He has some really beautiful lyrics, and I remember feeling the passion in his music when I was a kid. I still listen to his music, old and new. More recently, I've been admiring singer-songwriters like Jensen McRae, Lizzy McAlpine and Lianne La Havas. I love the vulnerability, storytelling and imagery that Lizzy and Jensen bring. I love Lianne's chords, classiness and beautiful, buttery vibrato.

**Your discography has grown a lot over the years. Which would you consider a pivotal release?**

I just celebrated the 10th anniversary of my very first EP from 2012. I currently have four EPs, about a dozen singles and lots of unrecorded music. I made a song in 2018 called "All Day" that's special to me because it's the first song I released that's self-produced. Initially, I didn't have any intention of putting it out. I was having fun with sounds and adding what I thought would sound cool.

The song made me more confident as a producer. It made me feel like more of an "artist," as opposed to just a singer-songwriter, because it is different from all my previous works. "All Day" has few words and focuses on the song's vibe. There are synths and sound effects and vocal effects. It demonstrates a bit of my versatility as a music creator, and it felt very freeing to make music without any agenda.

**Visit [taylortaylormusic.com](http://taylortaylormusic.com) for more information.**

## Home for the Holidays with Taylor Taylor

UrbanBeat  
1213 Turner St., Lansing  
Saturday, Dec. 10  
Doors: 6 p.m.  
Meet & greet: 6:30 p.m.  
Show: 7:30 p.m.  
[urbanbeatevents.com](http://urbanbeatevents.com)

# Williamston Theatre production pokes loving fun at holiday movies, Lansing area

By **MARY CUSACK**

It's time to publicly recognize that the Williamston Theatre owns Christmas. Consider some past triumphs, including Aral Gribble's one-man "A Christmas Carol: The Radio Show," John Lepard's one-man show "This Wonderful Life" as well as the many seasons that featured "Every Christmas Story Ever Told." This year, the theater's production of "A Very Williamston Christmas" puts a star on the top of the Williamston tree of entertainment.

"A Very Williamston Christmas" is a mischievous parody of Hallmark Channel holiday movies. One does not need to be an aficionado of those movies to enjoy the production. Having the shallowest understanding that Hallmark movies are romances with beautiful people and predictable, feel-good plots will suffice. Of course, those with more familiarity will experience more hilarity as the hallmarks of a Hallmark movie play out.

Felice (Dani Cochrane) is a career-oriented woman who eschews celebrating the holidays with family to focus on her career. As fate would have it, her



Review

## "A Very Williamston Christmas"

Performances through Dec. 23

8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays  
3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturdays  
2 p.m. Sundays

Additional shows the week of Dec. 19: Wednesday at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., Friday at 3 p.m.  
Tickets start at \$28 (senior, military and student discounts available)

Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston  
517-655-7469  
williamstontheatre.org

boss, Mr. Eared (Joe Bailey), offers her a promotion if she can acquire a certain property in her hometown of Williamston during the Christmas weekend. She returns home to do so and runs into an old high school crush, the handsome widower George (Ryan Patrick Welsh). Felice becomes torn between advancing her career and following her heart.

While the program does not explicitly denote that this new play is a world premiere, it stands to reason that "A Very Williamston Christmas" must be so, and quite frankly wouldn't make sense to be produced anywhere else. The script is chock-full of inside jokes that poke loving fun at Williamston, Lansing and the greater Lansing area. Clearly, playwright Robert Hawlmark has great affection for the area.

Hawlmark? Pronounced like the aforementioned channel that has created hundreds of cookie-cutter holiday movies? It seems like more than a coincidence. In fact, Robert Hawlmark is the poorly-kept secret nom de plume of Williamston Theatre co-founder John Lepard. Rather than starring in a Christmas production this year, he sat behind the keyboard and wrote a smart and funny vehicle to test the stamina of other actors.

In particular, Bailey and Emily Sut-

5 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St. #7A, Lansing. manifestlansing.com.

**Jingle Hells** - A night of wicked elves, creepy decorations, tragic endings and dark holiday secrets! 7-11 p.m. Awaken Haunted Attraction, 4760 Churchill Road, Leslie.

**Lansing TUBAGHCHRISTMAS 2022** - 1 p.m. Capitol building, 100 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. 989-513-0582. capitalareatubas.org.

**LCC Concert Choir** - 7 p.m. Okemos Community Church, 4734 Okemos Road, Okemos. 517-483-1122. lcc.edu.

**Leslie Area Chamber of Commerce Holiday Lighted Parade** - 6-8 p.m. Bellvue and Main streets, Leslie.

**Tease A Gogo Presents: Season's Teasings** - Join us for delicious food and sensational beverages, live music and incredible burlesque variety. 6 p.m. Country Creek Reception Hall, 5859 N. Michigan Road, Diamondale. teaseagoholiday.eventbrite.com.

**Wine in the Woods** - Bring your favorite beverage and enjoy a guided walk through the woods with a naturalist at the Harris Nature Center. 21+, registration req. 7 p.m. 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos. 517-349-3866. meridian.mi.us.

**Wonderland of Lights** - Thousands of lights create an extraordinary holiday display! 5-8 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4222. potterparkzoo.org.



Courtesy of Chris Purchis

Danny (Joe Bailey), George (Ryan Patrick Welsh) and Felice (Dani Cochrane) in the world premiere of the Williamston Theatre's production of "A Very Williamston Christmas" by Robert Hawlmark.

ton-Smith are revved up as they embody multiple roles. Sutton-Smith plays Felice's mom; her best friend, Barb, and an old woman who wanders the park. Bailey exhibits even more range as the evil Mr. Eared; George's father; George's 8-year-old son, Danny, and Felice's fiancé, Jack. Both actors embrace the lunacy of the role changes, and the script acknowledges this lunacy with a wink and a smirk.

The cast often breaks the fourth wall and engages the audience in the ridiculousness of the parody. Welsh smolders as Williamston's own "McDreamy" and makes sure everyone feels the heat as he casts mesmerizing gazes at Felice every time he leaves the stage. On opening night, the cast frequently broke, chok-

**Zaha Hadid Design: Untold** - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

## Sunday, Dec. 11

**A Beautiful December Night** - 6:30 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. urbanbeatevents.com.

**A Very Williamston Christmas** - Hot cocoa, light parades and romance factor large in this parody of everyone's guilty pleasure: the holiday movie. 2 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. williamstontheatre.org.

**Broad Art Museum Architecture Tour** - Learn more about our unique building and the Pritzker Prize-winning architect behind it through this 30-minute tour. Registration req. 1 p.m. 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

**Conversation Cafe, Share Your Christmas Traditions** - 9:30 a.m. University Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road., Lansing. unitylansing.org.

**Drum Circle with Greater Lansing Area Drummers (GLAD)** - 1 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540. manifestlansing.com.

**Frog and Toad** - 2 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. riverwalktheatre.com.

**Generations Community Theater Presents "A Christmas Carol"** - 2 p.m. Virginia Schlichter



Courtesy of Chris Purchis

Felice (Dani Cochrane) and her boss, Mr. Eared (Joe Bailey). Bailey plays multiple roles in "A Very Williamston Christmas," including Mr. Eared; George's father; George's 8-year-old son, Danny, and Felice's fiancé, Jack.

ing back chuckles as they emoted all over each other. Rather than being a distraction, this brought the audience even deeper into the joke.

"A Very Williamston Christmas" is as sweet as Felice's Christmas cookies, as scrumptious as George's tousled hair and as comforting as the warm buzz from Mom's beloved peppermint schnapps. It is the perfect holiday treat.

Auditorium at the Mason Area Historical Museum, 200 E. Oak St., Mason.

**Holiday Nights of Lights** - This family-fun cruise through Frances Park will be loaded with holiday displays, lighted trees and tunnel. 6-9 p.m. 2701 Moores River Drive, Lansing.

**Jolly Holiday Artisan Market** - Noon-5 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

**LCC Rockband** - 6 p.m. The Avenue, 2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. lcc.edu.

**Screen Print Sundays** - Visit the museum between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. to pull a birthday screen print. Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

**Lansing Symphony Orchestra: Season's Greetings** - 3 p.m. Cobb Great Hall, Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. whartoncenter.com.

**Therapy Dogs** - 1:30 p.m. MSU Main Library, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. lib.msu.edu.

**The Wild Hunt with Erin Wilson-Boget** - Learn about the Fairy host, Celtic Samhain traditions, what happens if you're shot by a fairy arrow and much more! 3 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540. manifestlansing.com.

## Events

from page 21

**Grammy Winners The DonJuans at Pump House Concerts** - Doors at 6:30 p.m., Show at 7 p.m. 368 Orchard St., East Lansing. thedonjuans.com.

**Greeting Cards with Jane Reiter** - This workshop is for ages 17+. Individuals ages 11 to 16 must be accompanied by an adult. 10 a.m. Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center, 300 S. Washington Square #100, Lansing. lansingart-gallery.org.

**Hive Holiday Show 2022** - 11 a.m. Waverly High School, 160 Snow Road, Lansing. thehivedandcestudio.com.

**Holiday Nights of Lights** - This family-fun cruise through Frances Park will be loaded with holiday displays, lighted trees and tunnel. 6-9 p.m. 2701 Moores River Drive, Lansing.

**Jolly Holiday Artisan Market** - 11 a.m.-6 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

**Home for the Holiday's with Taylor Taylor** - 7:30 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. urbanbeatevents.com.

**Inebriated Insights** - A night of intoxicated witchcraft as our readers and psychics soak up the juice while throwing down the vibes.

# Events

from page 23

**Wonderland of Lights** - Thousands of lights create an extraordinary holiday display! 5-8 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4222. potterparkzoo.org.

**Zaha Hadid Design: Untold** - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

## Monday, Dec. 12

**50 over Fitness** - The Meridian 50 Plus Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at Meridian Township Central Park Pavilion (Old Farmers Market) 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. 517-853-4600. meridian50plus.com.

**Fiber Circle at Charlotte Community Library** - Social gathering for knitters, crocheters and stitchers of all ages and skill levels. 6 p.m. 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

**Meaningful Mondays** - Gather to nourish

our spiritual selves as we send out love and prayers to the world. 8-9 p.m. Zoom meeting: 838 6857 0593. Password: 182016. 517-641-6201.

**"Mirari, the Way of the Marys" with Lucille Olson** - 1:30 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Password: 601744. unitylansing.org.

**Perler Bead Party** - 3 p.m. MSU Main Library, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. lib.msu.edu.

**Therapy Dogs at the Gast Business Library** - 1 p.m. 648 N. Shaw Lane #50, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. lib.msu.edu

## Tuesday, Dec. 13

**Board Game Meet Up** - Ages 18 and up. 6:30-10:30 p.m. Spare Time Bowling Alley, 3101 E. Grand River Ave., Lansing.

**Breakfast Amongst the Books** - Enjoy free coffee and bagels while supplies last! 9 a.m. MSU Main Library, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. lib.msu.edu.

**LET IT SNOW** - Join us at Charlie's for great food, drinks and painting! 6:30-9 p.m. Charlie's Bar & Grill, 136 N. Main St., Perry. 517-625-3323. charliesbarandgrille.com.

**Minecraft Mania!** - Come out and join us for an evening of fun and friendly competition. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

**On the Same Page Book Club** - Grades 7 through 12. Registration req. 6 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

**Preschool Family Storytime** - Stories and literacy-enhancing activities for ages 1-6. 11 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

**Pretty Woman - The Musical** - 7:30 p.m. Cobb Great Hall, Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. whartoncenter.com.

**Story Hour at Charlotte Community Library** - Adults drop off preschool-aged kids and stay in the library while the kids enjoy stories,

songs and crafts. Registration req. 10 a.m. 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

**Therapy Dogs** - 7 p.m. MSU Main Library, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. lib.msu.edu.

**Therapy Dogs at the Gast Business Library** - 1 p.m. 648 N. Shaw Lane #50, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. lib.msu.edu

**Troubleshooting for Computers, Networks, & other Electronics** - 4 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. eradl.org.

**Watercolor Wonders** - Take a study break and paint with us! Free and all are welcome. 6 p.m. MSU Main Library, 366 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. 517-884-0901. lib.msu.edu.

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## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 20

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## SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 20

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

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# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

# An eruption of flavor

By **ARI LEVAUX**

A sauce called “Magma” made its debut at Thanksgiving dinner this year. As guests passed the sauce around the table, the revelers quickly noticed its power and utility. The crimson emulsion was like a second gravy for the turkey. Its sweet pungency enhanced the stuffing, which sounds impossible, but it’s true. The potatoes, dressed in red, became all the more delectable, and the Midwestern casserole became downright edible. Someone at the table dubbed it “red mayonnaise,” because it improved everything it touched. After the meal, there were so many leftovers that the hosts handed out full takeout containers to the departing guests. But they kept the scant remains of the Magma in a takeout container for themselves.

Like its namesake, Magma sauce comes from the earth, but the surface, rather than the depths where true molten lava originates. Forged from roasted red peppers and baked squash, Magma imparts the sweetness of both, with a near-piquant undertone that makes you cringe like you’re about to get slapped but doesn’t deliver. Instead, you get kissed, with a lipstick-red mark possibly left on your face. There are a few extra seasonings, but the peppers and squash dominate, and there is no need to complicate matters.

We owe the existence of Magma sauce to an arrangement my kids have with a local farmer. They sell his excess



Ari LeVaux

Magma sauce, pictured here over pasta, is the polymath of condiments. It adds delicious flavor to any dish and is also delectable on its own as a soup.

produce in a roadside stand and split the money. This year, after bringing home a literal truckload of squash and peppers, winter came unseasonably early. The icy conditions made it impossible to put the stand out. After six weeks of waiting for autumn to regress from the clutches of winter, we threw in the towel and donated the produce to the local homeless shelter in time for Thanksgiving. I hung onto a couple of boxes of each for personal use.

On Thanksgiving morning, while my

son made an angel food cake, I roasted red and yellow peppers and baked an orange kabocha squash that goes by the name Sunshine. I peeled the blistered peppers and scooped the squash flesh, combining these two ingredients in the blender with olive oil, garlic, salt and some thyme.

The resulting puree was thick, and after some time in the fridge, it grew downright stiff. It turns out that both squash and peppers contain pectin, a carbohydrate that jam makers use to thicken their product. Jeopardizing my precious Thanksgiving belly-space, I began eating my creation, heavily garnished with cilantro and green onions. I spooned it down like soup, not at all regretting the turkey I was forsaking. It was like eating a salad in a bowl of thick dressing, so tangy from the bell peppers that it didn’t need acid.

The day after Thanksgiving, I made another batch, this time with some hot peppers. I spooned this red mayo upon scrambled eggs, where it looked and tasted like salsa despite having no tomatoes. I tried some on pasta, where it was like a creamy marinara.

Since we had some leftover yolks from my son’s angel food cake, I made



mayonnaise and folded in some Magma. Although it was now a true red mayo, it had less charm than the original. The oil and yolks dulled the raw, vegetal flavors, and the original version was thick enough, thanks to the pectin. After an hour in the fridge, the Magma is even thicker, so solid you can’t pour it. You have to scoop it like pudding. And unlike its namesake, Magma sauce stays red, even when cool.

### Magma Sauce

The quantities listed here will make about a quart of Magma. As a soup, it serves four. As a sauce, a few more.

One 3-pound kabocha squash (or similar starchy, winter squash)  
8 bell peppers, red or yellow (the flavor is good with both, but the color is better with red)

Optional: some hot peppers if you want more fire in the Magma

4 large garlic cloves

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon thyme or oregano

1 teaspoon salt; more to taste

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Cut the squash in half, scoop out the seeds and lay the halves down on a baking pan. Cook until soft enough to squeeze from the outside, about 45 minutes. On a separate pan, roast the peppers, turning once or twice so they blister on both sides. Remove them after about 30 minutes, or when they are completely blistered and collapsed. At the same time, roast the garlic in the olive oil in a small oven-safe dish until soft — about 30 minutes.

Allow the roasted ingredients to cool. Peel the peppers as best you can — it’s okay if some bits of skin remain — and scrape out the seeds. Scoop out the flesh from the squash. Add the squash, peppers, garlic and olive oil, salt and thyme to a blender. Puree. Season with more salt if necessary. Puree again.

Your Magma sauce is now ready. Let the eruption of flavors begin.

## Appetizers

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# Through East Lansing's changes, Charlie Kang's stands strong

By LIZY FERGUSON

Downtown East Lansing is my personal nightmare. Having grown up wandering its relative quaintness, I find its new scale and congestion more than a little off-putting. Add to that my innate agoraphobic tendencies that found full flourish during the height of the pandemic, and you have my justification for having my order from Charlie Kang's Korean Cuisine DoorDashed.

One of the few remaining familiar sights, Charlie Kang's is actually familiar in name only, for they have fully renovated and changed their signage. If I'm being honest, I don't even know where I would park to gain entry. Is the weird, Tiffany-blue statue even out back anymore? I digress. We're here to talk about noodles!

Though Charlie Kang's has changed its appearance, its menu remains consistent: a huge variety of options ranging from Chinese restaurant greatest hits to more traditional

dishes as well as a large selection of Korean food. There is a whole section of the menu devoted to noodles, and it is here that I reacquainted myself with an old favorite: ho fun noodles with chicken.

I have distinct memories of a bleak winter, many years ago, when I was unemployed and trying to spend as little money as possible. Every once in a while, I would allow myself this dish when I felt my spirit really needed bolstering. I think of it as a Chinese spin on chicken noodle soup with its in-kind ability to comfort, cure and restore.

In place of broth, there is gravy. That's the word used on the menu, and I think it's apt as it reminds me, in a delicious way, of what would be ladled on mashed potatoes at a good diner. It's savory and salty and intensely craveable. Tasting of shiitake mushrooms, garlic, sesame oil and white pepper, it's a musky sauce befitting of that which it generously coats.

The noodles are very special. They are cut about an inch wide, with considerable depth, and to this day I find

it hard to believe they are rice noodles due to their luscious, chewy texture, the structure of which I would have thought only gluten molecules could support. The few points of comparison I can summon would be the egg noodles served with beef stroganoff or the sheets of pasta in lasagna.

Adding to this already tasty tableau are pieces of juicy, white meat chicken (other protein options available) as well as crisp carrots, pea pods, broccoli and baby bok choy, which collects the sauce between its small, steamed leaves and will have you searching through the noodles for more. There used to be pieces of shiitake throughout, which I missed, but as their flavor still sings through the sauce, I wasn't too disappointed.

I am happy to see Charlie Kang's continue to thrive and offer the reliably tasty food I remember, and I will continue to support them from afar, adding their truly top-shelf to-go containers to my impressive collection.



Lizy Ferguson

Ho fun noodles with chicken and vegetables slathered in an umami gravy sauce.



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