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CityPULSE

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A newspaper for the rest of us

Virg on the verge

Why Bernero is eyeing City Hall again

An exclusive interview
See page 13



ABOOD

L A W F I R M 1 9 5 6

DID YOU KNOW?

Saturday, November 21, 2020

The New York Times



BUSINESS DAY

Giving Can Do Good, and Be Good for Your Taxes

By Ann Carrns

Thinking of making a donation to a charitable cause before the end of the year? This is a good time to do it, as the pandemic rages again. Plus, you can take a deduction for contributions in 2020, even if you don't itemize on your income tax return.



Day
Caused Immense Suffering
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DONATE TODAY!



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

for cash donations made this year to a 501(c)(3) when you file your taxes next spring! This expires after Dec. 31, so please act now.

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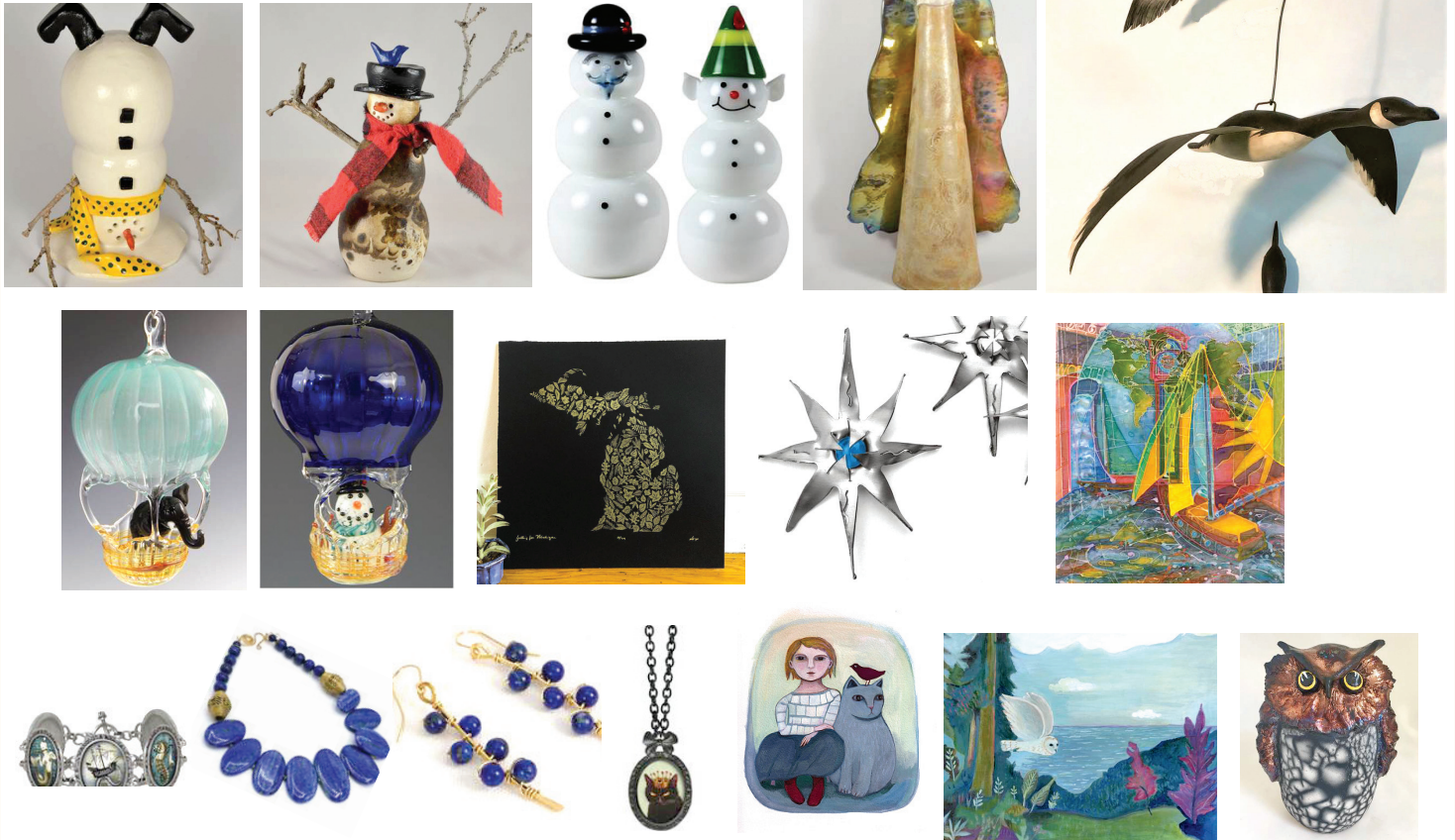
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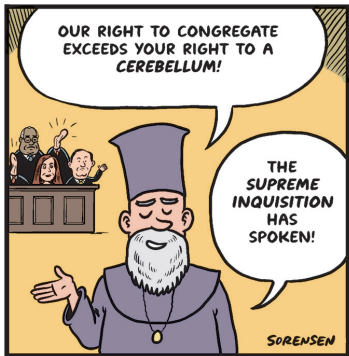
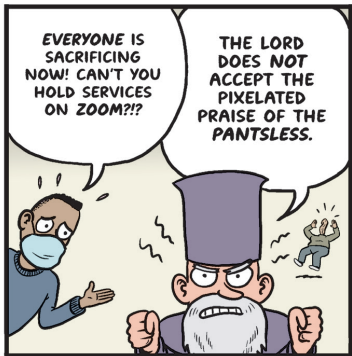
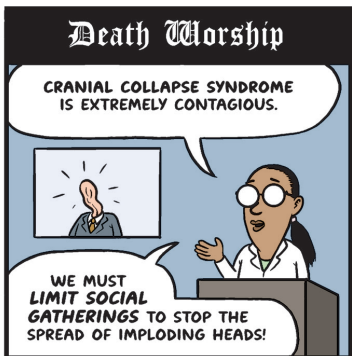
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CITY PULSE
on the
AIR

NOW AT 10:00 A.M.
SUNDAYS on

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION OFFICIALLY UNDERWAY, EXPERTS SAY WORRIES ABOUT A COUP WERE DEFINITELY MISGUIDED! PROBABLY.

THAT'S RIGHT, BIFF! CONTRARY TO THE FEARS OF HYSTERICAL ALARMISTS, THE SYSTEM WORKED! SO FAR.

KNOCK ON WOOD.



IT IS TRUE THAT THE PRESIDENT OPENLY DISCUSSED HIS STRATEGIES TO STEAL THE ELECTION FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR!

HE SABOTAGED THE POST OFFICE! HE TRIED TO DISCREDIT MAIL-IN VOTES AS INHERENTLY FRAUDULENT!

A MONTH AFTER THE ELECTION, HE STILL REFUSES TO CONCEDE!



HOWEVER, HIS COMICALLY INEPT LEGAL TEAM HAS LOST DOZENS OF COURT CASES AT THIS POINT!

HIS CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE NOW VANISHINGLY SMALL! CLEARLY THERE WAS NEVER ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! AS ANY HISTORIAN WILL TELL YOU--



--IF A THING DOES NOT SUCCEED-- THERE WAS NEVER A CHANCE THAT IT MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED!

WE HAVEN'T ACTUALLY CONSULTED ANY HISTORIANS ON THIS, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A THING THEY WOULD SAY!



ON A RELATED NOTE--HOW SHOULD WE IN THE MEDIA REPORT ON, AND INTERACT WITH, REPUBLICAN ENABLERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S ATTEMPT TO SUBVERT DEMOCRACY?

THE MANAGEMENT OF THIS NETWORK FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT WE HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY--



--TO POLITELY PRETEND THEY ARE NOT FASCIST LUNATICS--AND KEEP FEATURING THEM ON OUR SHOWS!

EVERYTHING IS FINE AND NORMAL! NO WORRIES HERE!

COMING UP NEXT-- FASCINATING PERSPECTIVE FROM OUR NEWEST HIGHLY-PAID CONTRIBUTOR, STEPHEN MILLER!

FIRST THESE MESSAGES!



Tom Tomorrow @tomtomorrow www.thismodernworld.com

PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

Save the pool

Summer is a long way off, but we can almost hear the joyous sounds of children frolicking in a newly refurbished Moores Park Pool. The distance between here and there is measured not in months, but in dollars, and lots of them.

Built in 1922 and opened for swimmers the following year, the pool was designed by Lansing City Engineer Wesley Bintz and funded by the J.H. Moore Estate. It was the first of many Bintz-designed pools built in cities across the country. Lansing's pool was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 and now stands as one of the last of its kind still in operation. Due to myriad mechanical problems, major leaks and an advanced state of disrepair, the pool is clearly on its last lap. Barring a major intervention, it will be decommissioned and relegated to the pages of history.

Historic structures aren't always worth saving. When the damage is too severe and the cost of rehabilitation too steep, sometimes it is better to just turn the page. But there are times and places when the story is so compelling and the benefit to current and future generations of city residents so great that it is worth making a substantial investment to transform a crumbling historic icon into a thriving community asset. This is one of those times and places.

A new citizen-led group to save the Moore Park Pool is getting traction with city leaders and making positive strides toward bringing the renovation project to fruition. As a first step, they are raising money to help fund a comprehensive engineering study that will help ascertain the price tag for plugging the leaks and overhauling the pool's ancient mechanical systems. We think it is also worth

considering updates to the pool that offer more modern amenities, similar to the zero entry splash pad features at the city's Hunter Park Pool that open the experience to youth with disabilities and those who have not yet learned to swim.

The renovation and expansion of the Hunter Park facility in 2006 provides a good template for using the city's limited financial resources to leverage significant additional funds. The Hunter Park project received a \$500,000 grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, which

was matched with funds from Lansing's dedicated parks millage. Because of the historic status of the Moores Park Pool, the renovation project may also be eligible for federal grant funding through the National Parks Historic Preservation Fund and similar programs. In the past five years the city has sold two major parcels of park property — the former Red Cedar and Waverly golf courses — netting more than \$3

million that can only be used to improve the city's parks and recreation facilities. Although we don't think it would be wise to spend all of that money on restoring the Moores Park Pool, we believe it could and should be a major source of local matching funds for the project.

It may seem counterintuitive to suggest spending a million dollars or more on a swimming pool when there are so many other unmet needs in the city, and at a time when city finances are in a shambles due to the COVID pandemic. Yet the

funds secured through park property sales cannot be used to fix roads or reduce the city's legacy costs, so we have no qualms about suggesting that city leaders make funding the pool renovation project a major priority. Truth be told: Children don't use playground equipment like they once did, but a swimming pool is a guaranteed draw throughout the summer months.

Public swimming pools are an important part of the fabric of a community, strengthening the surrounding neighborhoods by offering quality recreational experiences within walking distance of home. The Hunter Park Pool is a major asset to the East Side Neighborhood and a restored Moores Park Pool can play the same role on the city's west side. That's why we are willing to put our support behind the effort to save the pool.

In this season of giving, we encourage our readers to first and foremost help others in need by contributing to our local food banks and homeless shelters. But, if you have a little bit extra in your charitable budget, we hope you will consider making a donation to the Friends of Moores Park Pool to help pay for the engineering study that is the first step toward giving this historic treasure a new lease on life. Donations can be made through the Michigan Historic Preservation Network by visiting <https://www.mhpn.org/MPP>.



The CP Edit Opinion

Kyle Kaminski named managing editor of City Pulse

By BERL SCHWARTZ

One line in Kyle Kaminski's resume says a lot. It declares his reporting at the Traverse City Record-Eagle emphasized "hard-hitting stories that serve a watchdog-type service for our readers."

That's one of the assets Kaminski brings to City Pulse as its new managing editor/news, as readers of his reporting on government in City Pulse already know.

In his new role, Kaminski, 28, oversees all of the reporting in the news pages of City Pulse. He will continue to report on government and politics. He conducted the q-and-a with former Mayor Virg Bernero in

this week's paper.

Kaminski joined City Pulse more than two years ago. Previously, he worked for the Record-Eagle, a well-regarded daily paper, for nearly three years, and for the year before that he was the associate editor of The Grand Traverse Insider, a free week-



ly.

Kaminski is a graduate of Central Michigan University, where he wrote and edited for Central Michigan Life, the student daily.

His efforts earned him an honorable mention in the Michigan Press Association's 2018 Best Newspaper Contest for the Best FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) Story and third place for Best Spot News Story. As a student reporter, he swept the category for best editorial writing, win-

ning 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the 2014 Michigan Press Association College Newspaper Contest.

Though he's best known to City Pulse readers for his governmental coverage, Kaminski has another side: "Lansterdam in Review," his weekly look at area dispensary offerings.

We don't drug test at City Pulse. (Berl Schwartz is editor and publisher of City Pulse.)

Send letters to the editor to letters@lansingcitypulse.com.
Please limit them to 250 words

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Lawmakers receiving calls to pick electors for Trump

The Trump campaign is putting a final push on Michigan's Republican legislators to find a way to appoint Michigan's 16 Electoral College members to vote for President Donald Trump for president on the argument that there was too much fraud and shenanigans that took place in Wayne County to let the vote there stand.



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

their president and stop voter fraud and "to appoint electors for Trump."

MIRS called McCallom to ask additional questions. She said, "I'm sorry, I'm not in a position to answer any questions right now" before hanging up.

The Nov. 3 vote totals from Michigan showed Democrat Joe BIDEN defeating Trump by 154,188.

According to attorney Peter RUDELL of Honigman law firm, the U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section 2, dictates that each state shall appoint its electors in a manner directed by its legislature, the phrase "no doubt" the Trump campaign is hinging its argument on.

However, the Michigan Legislature has already dictated how those electors are to be named. A law was passed that says each political party must select a slate of electors at their fall convention and pass those names to the secretary of state within a day after that selection.

Whichever party's candidate for president wins Michigan's popular vote, that party's electors are appointed to cast votes for president on behalf of the state of Michigan.

"There's no provision in Michigan law for the Michigan legislature to act" as it relates to selecting electors, Ruddell said. It's possible, theoretically, for the Legislature to try to change the rules of the game, but they would need to pass a bill ... which undoubtedly Gov. Gretchen WHITMER would veto.

The Republicans in the legislature would not have the votes to override that veto. Electors are set to cast their votes Dec. 14.

Today's call came as the Senate Oversight Committee took roughly seven hours of testimony from individuals claiming fraud in Michigan's election system and urging lawmakers to pick electors who will cast votes for Trump.

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



Outside of the Senate Oversight Committee hearing on election activity at the TCF Center in Detroit, which is approaching seven hours of testimony, legislators are receiving phone calls like this one from people claiming to be with Trump campaign headquarters in Washington.

"I wanted to reach out to you personally on behalf of the president as you got an opportunity to be a crucial part of his reelection," said someone who identified herself as Angela McCallom to a state representative in Michigan. "I'm sure you know right now that the Senate Oversight committee is hearing from witnesses who are sharing their testimonies regarding voter fraud across the state.

"We wanted to make sure you knew how you could be helpful in ensuring that every American is represented and can be rest assured that their vote will be fairly and correctly counted in this election. The United States Constitution provides that the state legislators retain sole authority to designate presidential electors."

She said Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani will be in front of the House Oversight Committee at 6 p.m. today (Dec. 2) to present experts and witnesses who observed fraud in Michigan's election.

"The vote totals are fatally flawed and do not accurately represent the will of the voters as well as your constituents," McCallom said. "You have the power to reclaim your authority and send a slate of electors that will support President Trump and Vice President (Mike) Pence."

She said this is part of an effort in Georgia, Arizona and Pennsylvania to get state legislators to stand with

CITY OF LANSING NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Lansing will hold a public hearing at 7:00 p.m. during the City Council Meeting, via ZOOM Conferencing, Meeting ID 850 7039 5122, on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of considering:

An Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to amend the Code of Ordinances of the City of Lansing by adding a new Section 888.32 for the purposes of providing for an extension of a service charge in lieu of taxes for seventy-six (76) low income multi-family dwelling units in a project known as the Walter French Apartments, pursuant to the provisions of The State Housing Development Authority Act of 1966, As Amended.

Note: Michigan Director of Health and Human Services Robert Gordon's Order of October 9, 2020 regarding Gather Prohibition and Face Covering, as well as states of emergency declared by the Mayor and approved by City Council have led to a closure of City Hall to public at this time due to COVID-19. Public observation and participation may be facilitated electronically in accordance with the Open Meetings Act in an effort to protect the health and safety of the public.

Members of the public wishing to participate in the meeting may do so by logging into or calling into the meetings using the website <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85070395122> or phone number 312 626 6799 and Meeting ID 850 7039 5122. Michigan Public Act 228 of 2020 provides for authorization of remote participation in public meetings and hearings.

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

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk
www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk
www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope

CP#20-300

CITY OF LANSING SUMMARY OF ADOPTED ORDINANCE # 1270

Lansing City Council adopted an Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to amend the Lansing Codified Ordinances (code) by amending Chapter 602 Section 602.11, to prevent disease, prolong life and promote public health by providing for enforcement of local health orders or regulations issued pursuant to the Michigan public health code, being 1978 PA 368, as amended, MCL 333.1101, et seq.; to provide for penalties for willful violation of such orders or regulations with personal knowledge as a misdemeanor, or upon being informed of such order or regulation by a law enforcement officer, as a civil infraction.

The City of Lansing ordains and finds an emergency exists to control the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Effective date: December 30, 2020

Notice: The full text of this Ordinance is available for review at the City Clerk's Office, 9th Floor, City Hall, Lansing, Michigan. A copy of the full text of this Ordinance may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office, 9th Floor, City Hall, Lansing, Michigan at a fee determined by City Council.

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/CMCC
www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk
www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope

CP#20-301

REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI



Shuffleboard approved at City Market

The Lansing City Council voted 7-1 Monday to approve a 20-year lease agreement for the Lansing Shuffleboard & Social Club at the former City Market building, expected to open by 2022. Annual rent is \$24,000, less than half of the old Waterfront Bar & Grill's \$70,000 annual payments. Plans still hinge on a \$400,000 tax increment financing plan among other state and local loans. The project also calls for a \$3.2 million private investment, packing in six or more food vendors, a bar, live entertainment and eight shuffleboard courts at the currently vacant pole barn along the Grand River. The lease also includes a purchase option after three years that would require City Council approval.

Pena faces more campaign reporting woes

The Michigan Bureau of Elections will investigate a complaint filed this week by eastside resident Stephen Romero against Ingham County Commissioner-elect Bob Pena, who was already found to be several months late in reporting thousands of dollars in political contributions. The complaint contends that Pena misled voters by confirming a reporting waiver in August that certified he intended to raise and spend less than \$1,000. Records show that he passed that mark in July. And by the time Pena's late records were filed on Oct. 29, the primary election had passed and voters were largely left in the dark on Pena's spending before casting a vote. The issue is expected to amount to little more than a wrist slap in fines. Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum labeled Michigan's campaign finance laws this week as among the "most relaxed" in the U.S.



Pena

Blackwell suits cost MSU \$1 million

Michigan State University spent more than \$1 million fighting lawsuits brought forth by Curtis Blackwell II, a former camp and college advancement director for the Spartans, the Lansing State Journal reports. The most expensive of the lawsuits was one that named Mark Dantonio and argued that Blackwell was wrongfully arrested and accused of covering up a sexual assault complaint against three football players.



Developers eye \$200M Delta Twp. project

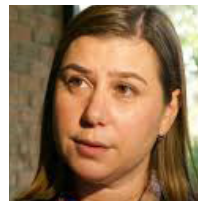
Retail Construction & Development, the developers of the Delta Crossings site along I96 and West Saginaw Highway, are envisioning a \$200 million project that will take five years to complete, reports the Lansing State Journal. Apartments, a hotel, gym and grocery store could reportedly become part of the long-term plans, but first Delta Township officials will have to create a Corridor Improvement Authority.

House panels takes up anti-bias bill

The Michigan House Committee on Local Government and Municipal Finance will take action on a bill from State Rep. Sarah Anthony, D-Lansing, to prohibit deed restrictions on the basis of race, gender, religion and other protected classes. Anthony said the language in those deeds is technically no longer enforceable, but they still exist as part of a legacy of discrimination and segregation across Michigan.

Slotkin's name floated for CIA post

The New York Times reported last week that U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin, a former intelligence officer who worked with presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, was among those being considered to take over the Central Intelligence Agency in the Biden administration. Slotkin, who represents all of Ingham County in Congress, did three tours in Iraq as a CIA officer and worked in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and for the National Security Council. Over the weekend, a spokeswoman for Slotkin said she "appreciated" being named among other contenders.



Slotkin

Drain assessment appeals will be considered

The Lansing City Council's Committee on Public Service meets at 3 p.m. Dec. 14 to review appeals from about 30 property owners who are challenging winter tax assessments levied this year as part of the Ingham County drain commissioner's \$34.8 million Montgomery Drain reconstruction project. About \$12 million in local tax assessments are slated to be rolled into winter tax bills this year. Appeals for those calculated assessments are no longer being accepted; those already filed will be decided at the virtual committee meeting and then sent on to the full City Council final approval at a meeting next year.

Thanksgiving weekend brings reports of four shootings

At least five people were shot in Lansing in four separate incidents over the long Thanksgiving weekend, according to reports in the Lansing State Journal. None of the five victims reportedly suffered life-threatening injuries and no arrests have been made in any of the shootings as police investigate.



Property Address:
934 Seymour Ave., Lansing
Year Built: 1897

This month's Eye Candy is the historic Ziegler house in Lansing's Walnut Neighborhood. The private home was built in 1897, most likely for Otto Ziegler, owner of a cigar store on nearby Washington Avenue. According to the Political Graveyard, Ziegler was later a Republican candidate for Lansing mayor in 1912. It may have been around this time that the expansive wraparound front porch and the garage, which is on the side of the house on Kilborn Street, were added. Both the porch and garage are constructed of brick in contrast to the rest of the wood-sided home.

The architecture of the house is a refined Victorian in the Stick-style, characterized by its asymmetrical appearance and the gingerbread trim on the front elevation. The porch and garage seem to exhibit more of the Arts & Crafts style with the porch giving the house a cozy bungalow-feeling. Also of particular note are the well-crafted drains on the front porch. The ability for water to quickly escape has helped porches of this era last longer.

The current owner has lived in the house for nearly 30 years. In that time, the roof has been replaced twice, the wood siding painted, and the original windows maintained. This keen eye for detail and the obvious care shown in the upkeep of this historic house makes it a stand out.

— CARRIE SAMPSON

"Eye Candy of the Week" is our look at some of the nicer properties in Lansing. It rotates with Eyesore of the Week and Eye for Design. If you have a suggestion, please e-mail eye@lansingcitypulse.com or call Berl Schwartz at 999-5061.

Emus are out as form-based zoning takes shape

Quarantine time on your hands? Comb through Lansing's 300-page draft on form-based zoning code, available for perusal on the city website, and spot the ban on keeping emus in your yard.

The search will take you through a city that isn't real — but might be someday. A decade in the making, the code is a citywide set of guidelines on building and land use designed to move Lansing in line with the "new urbanist" trend toward bustling, walkable, high density spaces.

In contrast with former zoning schemes, form-based codes go beyond the traditional usage breakdown of residential, office and retail, and govern the actual look and layout of buildings. In denser areas of town, new developments might sit right next to the sidewalk, "holding the line" of urban activity, with parking in back or on the side of a building.

There's a lot more detail in the draft, including the prohibition on emus, but the code's biggest aim is to reverse the haphazard patchwork of parking lots, strip malls and empty big box stores that gradually accreted along urban corridors like South Cedar Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard over decades of piecemeal, auto-centric development in the city of Lansing.

At Monday's virtual City Council meeting, the draft code got a public hearing and garnered a smattering of comments — both pro and con. Next, the draft will go to the council's Committee on Development and Planning for a closer look, and then back to the full Council for a vote.

Commenters Monday brought up several concerns about the draft, including fears that a citywide code would force disparate neighborhoods to conform to a single approach. Grand Rapids, Birmingham, Midland, Traverse City, Saginaw, Mt. Pleasant, Dearborn and Marquette are among the Michigan cities that have adopted form-based codes, some of them citywide.

Brian McGrain, the city's director of economic development and planning, admitted the code is "daunting" to read, but he urged people to at least look at the pictures.

"We've heard the criticism that it's one size fits all, but that's just not true," he said.

Diagrams lay out different standards for more than a dozen "transects," or types of neighborhoods, ranging from



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

The 600 Block mixed-use development on Michigan Avenue is an example of the New Urbanist style of form-based zoning code that the Lansing City Council is considering to promote.

suburban residential to high-density downtown, with hybrid standards for transitional zones between the zones.

Because of this fine-tuning, McGrain said, the code won't pop mixed-use projects on the scale of Michigan Avenue's Capital City Market or The Venue all over town. High-rise buildings won't pop up in single-family neighborhoods. McGrain said it instead focuses on what's "appropriate."

"Michigan Avenue isn't the same as Edgewood," McGrain added. "Our plans for Edgewood don't involve making it a dense, walkable urban neighborhood. Nor are we going to show up in, say, the Tecumseh River neighborhood and encourage hundreds of units of high rises."

City Planner Andy Fedewa said like in corridors along South Cedar Street, the new codes will bring buildings closer to the road, making them more accessible to bus travelers and pedestrians.

Some at Monday's Council meeting also expressed fears the dense development encouraged by the codes along the city's main arteries would push parking into neighborhood streets.

"The code does not remove all parking requirements, as I've read on Facebook," McGrain said.

The form-based code, instead, sets a range of parking minimums, depending on the districts, but allows for shared parking among neighboring businesses. McGrain said the corrective is needed to reverse the "auto-centric" decisions of recent decades.

"Buildings were plowed down to provide parking in excess of what was ever needed," he said.

The draft code has been a long time coming, starting with the Design Lansing master plan adopted by the city in 2012. The master plan called for "regulatory realignment to reflect new realities," including "placemaking, quality and community appearance."

The philosophy behind form-based codes is summed up by a quote from "smart growth" guru Fred Kent on the Design Lansing web page: "If you plan for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places."

When McGrain joined the city in 2018, he worked with former planning director Bill Rieske to push the codes over the finish line.

Many of the features of form-based codes are already familiar to Lansing development watchers. The most conspicuous new projects along Michigan Avenue, including the new 600 Block/Capital City Market project, already follow New Urbanist principles.

McGrain said that's because "overlay districts" imposing guidelines similar to form-based codes have already been in place in Lansing for several years.

"We're already requiring things that come closer to the street, better quality builds," McGrain said. "Form-based codes will move us further in that direction."

But he cautioned that it will take a long time, as new buildings go up or old

ones are redeveloped, for the vision in the draft code to take shape.

"We're not going to flip a switch and everything changes overnight," he said. "What's already there is there. Logan Square isn't going to disappear overnight. This allows us to move forward in a pattern that's livable, better placed. It's a turning point."

Commenters on Monday also brought up concerns that there hasn't been enough public notice of the code being under review. Councilwoman Carol Wood also briefly suggested tabling the issue for fear of genuine opposition not yet having an opportunity to voice complaints.

McGrain contended that the draft "has been presented to neighborhood associations, Realtors, and the business community," and the public had the opportunity to discuss it before the Planning Board before the board passed it in February.

He also cited multiple public meetings leading up to the adoption of the Design Lansing master plan, which includes form-based codes as a central principle.

"It's been out there for 10 years," he said. "We finally have it ready to go."

But even McGrain was surprised to learn of the backyard emu ban. He punted to Fedewa.

"Lansing is not a farming community," Fedewa said tersely. "Livestock is just not appropriate."

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Lansing ordinance enables tickets for COVID-19 rulebreakers

Greater Lansing charts nearly 2,000 coronavirus cases in one week

An ordinance approved this week by the Lansing City Council is designed to ramp up local enforcement of state health orders on face masks, social distancing and capacity restrictions.

The City Council voted Monday to formally codify misdemeanor charges for those in Lansing who are caught willfully violating public health orders handed down by state officials and the Ingham County Health Department, including those wrapped into the latest lockdown orders.

Under the new ordinance, willful violations of state and county pandemic orders are punishable by ticketed civil infractions — as well as by existing misdemeanor charges — that could rack up fines as high as \$500 for each subsequent violation after a warning is issued.

The change doesn't change much operationally, officials said. Instead, it simply allows local police officers to exercise more flexibility on virus-related enforcement of orders that require face masks in indoor spaces, limit household gatherings and are keeping dining rooms closed.

Council President Peter Spadafore explained that codifying those broad regulations into the City Code enables local officers to pursue civil infractions handled by the city attorney, rather than only seek related misdemeanor charges through the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office.

Without the ordinance in place, the Lansing Police Department hasn't been able to issue a single ticket related to the pandemic since it arrived in Michigan. A spokesman said 13 reports were sent to the county prosecutor, but none have resulted in criminal charges. Still, even after the recent change, cops will continue to respond to calls with a foremost focus on education.

CORONAVIRUS IN MICHIGAN					
BY THE NUMBERS...					
MICHIGAN					
	11/24/20	12/01/20	WEEKLY CHANGE		
CASES	320,506	360,449	^13%		
DEATHS	8,688	9,134	^5%		

GREATER LANSING			EATON CO.		
	11/24/20	12/01/20	WEEKLY CHANGE		
CASES	12,945	14,895	^15%		
DEATHS	155	186	^20%		

INGHAM CO.			CLINTON CO.		
	11/24/20	12/01/20	WEEKLY CHANGE		
CASES	8,006	9,149	^14%		
DEATHS	102	119	^17%		

City Attorney Jim Smiertka said local cops will also soon be trained on enforcement procedures under the new ordinance, as well as under what circumstances in which tickets can be issued.

Meanwhile, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services issued citations and the Liquor Control Commission suspended liquor licenses to several businesses that flouted public health orders issued last month, including those that limited gatherings and indoor food service.

Several businesses in Fremont, Newaygo and Fenton were named this week for allegedly allowing non-residential gatherings, providing in-person dining and failing to require face masks.

In related news ...

Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail sent a letter Monday to remind state Senate leaders to follow COVID-19 protocols when they hold hearings at the Capitol, reported the Detroit Free Press. In the letter, Vail reportedly warned that she has received multiple reports of safety violations — like a failure to wear face masks — during Senate hearings. Vail said she sent the letter more as a courtesy than a threat. The State Capitol is beyond her purview as a county health officer, though state regulations still guide best practices for employers statewide. Vail also told reporters Tuesday that she hadn't yet

received a response.

MIRS News reports that vaccines for COVID-19 are expected to become widely available in Michigan by April or May. Health-care workers and nursing home residents should get the first doses, an advisory panel to the Centers for Disease Control recommended Tuesday.

City leaders from across the country called for state legislative action during what is known as the "lame duck" period before Jan. 1 in which they could pass measures that would help prevent cuts to vital city services without requiring a state handout, reports the Detroit Free Press.

Whitmer asked lawmakers for a \$100 million state relief plan last week. Attorney General Dana Nessel has also since joined a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general representing 43 states this week urging federal lawmakers to extend the federal CARES Act until the end of 2021.

Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr., D-East Lansing, is looking for nominations of "frontline heroes" to be publicly recognized and thanked with a \$100 gift card to a local restaurant. Highlights will be featured twice weekly through Dec. 31 on Hertel's Facebook page and his online newsletter. To nominate a local frontline hero, send an email with details to senchertel@senate.michigan.gov.

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Fighting a pandemic during a second pandemic

Lansing Area AIDS network adapts to a changing healthcare landscape

Earlier this year, Sarah was experiencing symptoms that she thought might be related to HIV. With the COVID-19 crisis still raging across the country, she wasn't sure if she could get tested.

But a quick Google search revealed that the local Lansing Area AIDS Network was running contactless HIV testing through a drive-up service off Holmes Road. Sarah figured they would be closed, but online appointments were — and are still — being scheduled for secure testing.

The contactless drive-thru testing option was the brainchild of Nhoua Yang, prevention manager for LAAN. While on a conference call with other HIV prevention leaders from across the country, Yang said she heard another agency's experience with drive-thru testing. Then she called the state Department of Health and Human Services, which provides most of LAAN's budget.

"They were really excited," Yang said. "We were the one of the first to start offering the option."

In the pre-coronavirus era, testing required a small amount of blood, collected from a finger prick. That also required close quarters with clients, and included a discussion about risk behaviors and prevention options that are uniquely crafted for

each individual client.

Now, clients register for appointments online. The usual counseling session is then conducted via secure communications in advance of the testing. Only then do they come to the agency's offices on Holmes Road, though Sarah — who requested her full name not be disclosed — said the counseling sessions aren't as "intimate."

"It just didn't feel the same," she added. "I was originally worried that people would be less honest during a phone or video counseling session. But that hasn't been the case, at all. In fact, people are very open. I think they are happy just to be having conversations with someone."

Sarah's counseling session was a few days before her test. The earlier meeting helped alleviate many of her fears and made the process less stressful, she said.

On the day of her appointment, Yang exited the building "dressed very professionally" and wearing a mask. Sarah said she dragged a cart with testing supplies with her. Yang poked Sarah's finger, took a little bit of blood and put it into the test. Then, a 20-minute wait.

"Then she texted me that my results were ready. She came out and she gave me my results."



Courtesy

Nhoua Yang, prevention manager for the Lansing Area AIDS Network, which offers contactless HIV testing at a drive-thru location on Holmes Road.

Sarah's test was negative, she said. But the drive-thru testing is just one example of how staff and agency volunteers are keeping up the fight against HIV in the midst of another pandemic.

It requires what care program manager Ligia Romero called "out of the box" thinking.

"It really pushed us in new ways," she explained.

Staff still can't provide many human elements of their job — touch, smiles, being physically present. Those things may seem small, but those living with HIV often struggle with a sense of isolation and lack of human connections as a result of stigma related to the infection.

"We weren't having clients come in," Romero said. "We were making calls. That's just not LAAN. It threw us for a loop. Face to face allowed us to discern how our clients were actually doing. They could tell us they were fine over text or by phone, but when they were there in person, we could see they weren't fine."

With the economy mostly shut down, and many of those clients in low-wage service industry jobs, the need for the agency's small food bank also increased dramatically.

For years, the agency had hosted a biweekly pantry for its clients. That, in turn, became an opportunity for clients to stop, catch up with one another and have a cup of coffee in

the agency's conference room. That — obviously — would not work in the midst of COVID-19.

LAAN staff and volunteers made the decision to begin dropping off food to clients. They also developed limited curbside pick up, but because of COVID, the staff was still unable to make those face-to-face connections.

"We had to call people and tell them we were coming to deliver the food," she said. "But it also meant telling them that they couldn't come out to see us. That we couldn't see them."

And Yang didn't stop with creating testing protocols for those with access to a car. She also worked with the Lansing Syringe Access, a private group that distributes sterile needles to people who inject drugs, to identify people in need of testing — anyway to expand outreach.

"We know that people in that risk group are less likely to seek testing," she said. "So we started providing a limited number of at-home test kits to be distributed by the LSA. They would pass out condoms, COVID information, syringes, Narcan and the test kits."

Activists and health officials have been ambivalent about home testing kits, pointing to the psychological impact of a positive test result. Studies have reported that up to 65% of newly diagnosed persons will be diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder within six months of their positive diagnosis. The test result has been identified as the trigger for the trauma.

"We put out cards with those tests," Yang said. "We know that this group of people is less likely to connect with us, so if this gives them that opportunity, I'll take it. They are encouraged to call us during the testing process. And they have been."

She also noted that some people cannot participate in the drive-thru testing as a result of myriad barriers. Some are in abusive relationships, secretive about their sex lives or simply do not want others to know about their risk. Others simply don't have transportation to the office. After searching for other options, Yang will release at-home testing kits to those clients as well.

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Parking lot to replace iconic East Lansing building

Biggby's departure paves way for 'concrete slab'

The iconic site of the first Biggby Coffee shop in East Lansing is set to be turned into another parking lot, despite concerns from public officials over the necessity of more surface parking. And even the owners of the property are starting to recognize that it may be an "atrocious" idea.

"Parking lots are a waste of space in my mind anyway," explained Colin Cronin, vice president and co-owner of DTN Management, the owner of the former Biggby at 270 W. Grand River Ave. "A flat surface lot is about the worst use of space for value assessment and land use."

The surface lot will replace what Susan Bandes, an MSU professor and author of the history book "Mid-Michigan Modern," praised for its architecture. Built as an Arby's in the 1950s, it became the first Biggby — then called Beaners — in 1995.

"Style aside, this building is an important community gathering place," Bandes said in 2013, when it was first reported that DTN might tear it down for a development.

Architecture critic Amanda Harrell-Seyburn said in 2013 that the first cafe building is "iconic."

"The vaulted roof arcs over the structure sheltering the activity within, its weight supported by two stone pillars channeling the look of a Conestoga wagon," Harrell-Seyburn wrote for City Pulse. "During the day, materials, textures and structural interplay draws the eye. At night, the building glows like a lantern. It is bold architecture. The purpose-built structure was born from a forward-thinking, mid-century Arby's restaurant. It represents a complete departure from previous architecture styles and is an example of the origin of today's fast-food buildings."

Seven years later, the building is set to be demolished in favor of a 39-space, 15,336-square-foot slab lot, according to a construction permit filed by DTN on Nov. 12. A teardown date isn't set, but Cronin described his plans for rental parking as only temporary, at least until a better idea rolls around.

"The building is going down to the concrete slab," Cronin told City Pulse on Monday. "This is kind of a low-pri-

ority site we'll hang on to for a bit until we get a gee-whiz-bang good idea."

A demolition permit has not been pulled. An incomplete construction permit for the parking lot, however, remains under review within the city's planning department.

Tom Fehrenbach, East Lansing's director of planning, building and development, said city officials have yet to receive a complete application for the project.

The timeline of the demolition and parking lot replacement remained uncertain this week as officials waited to gauge the environmental impact of the would-be demolition. If accepted, the application could head to the Planning Commission and later the East Lansing City Council.

However, some public officials are already growing wary of the plan as it's still being developed.

Parking lot construction is bad for the environment, said Ingham County Drain Commissioner Pat Lindemann. And East Lansing already operates seven parking garages and six parking lots.

"One of the issues is the imperviousness of it and the consistency of its runoff factors," he said.

A busy parking lot creates pollution like rubber residue from tires, acidic emissions from car batteries and tossed cigarette butts, just to name a few examples, Lindemann explained. As a result, the environmental impact depends largely on how frequently the parking lot gets used.

The city of Lansing last year earned itself the title of the worst "parking crater" in the nation, according to a report from Streets Blog. The local landscape, consumed by massive swathes of street-level parking, is a model of inefficiency and wastes the city's development potential, according to the nonprofit news group. Some fear that East Lansing could add to the problem.

One person who wants fewer parking spaces in East Lansing is James Anderson, a Michigan State University history professor who said he has long studied the parking issue in the city.

"A slab parking lot is strictly a transitional use. In other words, there's something else coming down the line, whether or not it's divulged," he said. "What's the endgame for the structure?"



Courtesy



Berl Schwartz/City Pulse

(Above) MSU Professor Susan Bandes, an expert on mid-century modern architecture in mid-Michigan, singled out the home of the original Biggby as important for both its style and as a community gathering place. It was built in the '50s as an Arby's restaurant.

(Below) The original Biggby Coffee shop at 270 W. Grand River Ave. in Lansing as it appeared last month. To the left is Biggby's new home.

Ingham County Commissioner Mark Grebner represents portions of East Lansing and Michigan State University's campus. He said East Lansing has always had a demand for easy parking options, but too often those opportunities get "piled up" into massive and unsightly garages.

"East Lansing has too much — and too little — parking at the same time because what people want is surface parking and what they get is ramp parking," Grebner explained last week.

While a construction permit from 270 W. Grand River LLC. remains under review, company officials are assessing the existing building for asbestos and lead, city officials said last week. The electricity, gas and water

will also have to be shut off long before the building comes down.

The building, Biggby's first location in 1995, closed last December after 24 years in business. Shortly after closing, Biggby opened a location across the street at 300 W. Grand River Ave. Before the coffee was brewing, it was originally built in the 1950s to house an Arby's restaurant.

Fathy Shetiah, the former and new location's co-owner, said in December that it was getting difficult to maintain the space. He also said that he and his brother had been in conversation with DTN Management about moving out of the shop for the last five years.

— SEAN BRADLEY



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Virg and Teri Bernero at their home in Lansing.



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

Exclusive Interview

Is Lansing ready for four more years of Virg Bernero? He seems to think so.

Another election season is quickly approaching in Lansing, and two likely challengers are already gearing up for the campaign trail, sights set on blocking a second term for Lansing Mayor Andy Schor. Among them: Former state legislator and three-term mayor Virg Bernero.

Though both Bernero and City Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley have declared a definitive interest, neither has actually filed to run with months to go until the

April 27 deadline. But this week marks eight months until the primary election. The next several weeks could help voters determine how they'd like to set Lansing's political landscape for at least the next four years.

Bernero, a former Ingham County commissioner, state senator and state representative, succeeded Lansing Mayor Tony Benavides in 2006, going on to serve three terms as mayor. His brazenly unapologetic leadership style earned him the title of Lansing's "Angry Mayor"

and both praise and criticism before he stepped away from politics to "reinvest" in his family in 2017.

As a consultant for the cannabis industry and executive director of the Capital Area Manufacturing Council, Bernero, 56, has quietly kept himself invested in Lansing's momentum. But next year, Bernero could be fully back in action. In a lengthy interview with Managing Editor Kyle Kaminski, Bernero declared a "strong" interest this week in reclaiming the mantle from Schor.

Exclusive Interview with Virg Bernero

Q: Are you running for mayor next year?

A: I'm strongly leaning that way. I'm hearing from a lot of community members that want me to re-enter, and I'm sort of preparing for that eventuality. I'm concerned about where the city is headed, and our challenges are great, but I think they're surpassed by our possibilities and our potential as a city. I have a proven track record, and I'll stand by it, good and bad. I think it's mostly good. And I got to admit that I'm excited at the prospect of coming back and leading the city through what's promised to be some very challenging times.

Q: Walk me through what changed since you decided against a fourth term? What changed?

A: I had to prioritize my family, and I've done that. I don't regret it. I celebrated 33 years of marriage with my wife, Teri. I'm a new grandpa; I have a 6-month-old and a 6-week-old grandchild. Over the summer, I said goodbye to my father, Giulio, who passed at 95 years old. I don't regret the time that I've been able to spend to really reinvest in and rebalance my personal life. My family had really taken a backseat to political needs and the needs of the city. So, I reinvested, reprioritized and rebalanced. I feel very good now about where that is.

The city is facing the greatest challenges since the Great Recession. I'm deeply concerned about the city and the people that I love. I think there were troubling signs before COVID, but now the city budget is a pending disaster. I'm deeply concerned about Lansing families that are at the low end of the economic ladder. Food security is a growing problem, especially with schools closed and grocery prices rising. I see concerns in public safety and policing. Violent crime and shootings are on the rise. I think there's a need to build on the community policing ethic that is longstanding in Lansing and to improve training. There's also a need for absolute transparency in the Police Department, as has been evidenced by Anthony Hulon's death in the city lock-up. We need a vision for the post-COVID economic recovery that is going to have to be bold. Now, more than ever, in the COVID and post-COVID economy that's coming, we've got to end the go-it-alone mentality and focus on regionalism.

It is time for one Lansing. We sink or swim together. And when I say Lansing, I don't mean in the confines of the city. I'm talking about the region. If we're not successful in convincing everybody that we're all swimming in the same direction, then I don't know how well we're going to survive beyond the pandemic. The old economic system is falling away, and we have to figure out how Lansing fits in. Regionalism will be about our survival and thriving in our new economy.

Q: Many people have described a sense of "Virg Fatigue" that struck Lansing toward the end of your third term. Regardless of whether people loved or hated you at the end, it seemed the city was ready for a fresh mayoral administration when Schor took office. Did you get that sense?

A: I never got that sense. [Here, Bernero rambled a bit about various accomplishments during his three-term tenure, including the Lansing Board of Water & Light's removal of residential lead lines and the conversion of the Ottawa power station into the Accident Fund

headquarters — "one of the greatest economic transformations in Michigan history," as Bernero described it.]

"We're going to need an A effort, and I think I'm up to it. From day one, I've dreamed big for Lansing. I didn't believe the naysayers. When I came in, our slogan for the city was 'Believe in Lansing' because people were having a hard time even believing in the city."



I've got a proven track record. I never got the sense of any fatigue. I was not fatigued, and we need that kind of bold leadership now. I'm saying that people are hurting, that unemployment is on the rise. There's a lot of bright spots, and I'm a glass-half-full kind of guy. Lansing has a bright future, but we have severe challenges and we're going to need bold leadership, and it's not going to happen by just sitting around and waiting for something to happen.

Q: Many residents and regional leaders — even so-called Progressives — have sort of bristled at your "Angry Mayor" style of governance. Lansing might have been moving in the right direction, but to many you were seen as too mouthy, too in-your-face. Have you mellowed?

A: On national TV, I was angry about our auto workers being left behind and people suggesting that we should just allow the auto industry to fade away. And I turned that anger into results. I turned it into hard work, which is what I do. And as far as my style, I was able to get things done. Mellowed? I'll leave that for you to determine. Of course, grandkids have that effect.

There's a stylistic, image thing — a perception — and then there's reality. The reality is I worked very well with regional leaders. We accomplished a lot together. I'll put my record up against the current mayor anytime. They called me an angry mayor because I made a national splash to try to save the auto industry. And I make no apologies for it. I tried to work. I'm a guy that gets results, that gets in and rolls up my sleeves. And I really think at a time like this, when we're going to have some historic economic challenges, we're going to need that kind of leadership.

Q: There's a difference between a take-charge approach to governance and being a bully. You called then-Councilman Brian Jeffries a "pathetic piece of shit" two months into your first term. Is that sort of bullheaded approach something that you think we really need in our next mayor?

A: Not everything is perfect. There are pluses and minuses. You try to do what is right in the long run. I just read a thing about Harry Truman. His approval rating was 22% when he left office. And yet now, he's one of the most popular presidents. I took a lot of heat, but I think my decisions — like that beautiful new driveway at Groesbeck Golf Course — stand the test of time.

The city is not in a privileged position where we can just keep doing the same thing the same way and everything's going to work out fine. It's not going to be that way. We have a lot of challenges and again, I'm a glass-half-full kind of guy. I'm optimistic, I think we have tremendous assets to be leveraged, but we've got to begin working together and we have to be more bold.

Q: Whom are you counting on to drive support at the polls? Do you think you can leverage enough support from the business community or the chamber or union leadership? I think it's worth noting that most of the major unions are actively pouring cash into Schor's campaign.

A: I'm not getting into campaign strategy. My track record speaks for itself. Time will tell.

Q: Lansing has three cops on paid leave after a violent arrest involving an unarmed Black man on Baker Street. We also have a man who was choked to death in the basement lock-up beneath City Hall, and a mayoral administration that won't sit down for an interview on the topic. What needs to be changed at the Lansing Police Department? What would Mayor Bernero do?

A: This is a crucial issue. The homicide of George Floyd — it changed the national dialogue. It awakened a lot of people who didn't realize the extent of just how bad it was for people of color, who often live in fear of policing. There's a dichotomy out there in terms of how people view policing. In my 12 years, I built on Lansing's long tradition of community engagement and community policing. I came into a pretty professional department, where some changes had already been made, and we continued to build on that. We put body cameras on our police officers. We all agreed that would lead to more accountability and transparency.

Lansing was not perfect by any means, but ahead of the curve. Because of a death in the jail and subsequent protests, Mayor David Hollister led some reforms. Those may seem tame now, but it led to the independent police investigator position in the city. It led to us tracking racial demographics in our tickets. I built on those reforms and the key is community engagement.

I can't say that enough: community engagement. Diversity in recruitment. Constant training and accountability. We need transparency. That, and some reform at the state level with regards to officer immunity. Sometimes, it can be difficult to try to hold officers accountable because of the way the state law is written. And then of course, we need more investment in mental health from the state. At the mayoral level, transparency is key here. We need community and police on the same page. The police can only be effective if they're seen

Exclusive Interview with Virg Bernero

Virg

from page 14

as an extension of the community. If they're seen as an occupying force, then we're only doomed to more failure and disappointment.

I think Lansing is a cut above. That's not saying that we're perfect. You can never rest. You have to do constant training. You're constantly looking to diversify the department and hiring, but I've met many of our officers. I'm convinced that these are good people who went into policing to do good. We have to build that trust and that faith with the community that we've had in the past.

Q: That's a lot of high praise for a Police Department that you claim still needs reform. It could be argued that any of the problems we're facing this year weren't necessarily born under the Schor administration. You had three terms to put safeguards into place. Did you do enough?

A: It's never enough. It's a constant effort. I worked with the former chief to implement policing reforms. Things like the ban on chokeholds? We did that years ago. We're ahead of the curve. But when you're putting a badge and a gun on somebody and putting them in the community, there has to be constant training. It has to be a constant commitment to accountability and transparency. In this administration, there are some real lingering questions with transparency.

And by the way, I also left a plan to eliminate the city lock-up. I think that Lansing should get out of the jail business. The plan I left for this new city hall would not have included a lockup. We don't need a lockup. It's a liability. Those cells are small. That facility is just outdated. I think we should be buying into possibilities of working together with Ingham County to find a solution.

Q: Schor is also supportive of efforts to close the city's lock-up. It's easier said than done. But like any other issue, you've had more than a decade to get it done while Schor has had three.

A: I wish I could have gotten that done. My plan, which I left with the Schor administration, was that the new city hall would not include a lock-up. These reforms started years and years ago. I built on what Hollister did. It's Andy's job to build on what I did. Do you see how that works? I didn't spend 12 years pointing out what Hollister didn't do. Instead, I just built on what he did.

Q: Do you think Chief Daryl Green still deserves a job with the city after these recent issues?

A: I don't have enough information to say. It starts at the top, and that's the mayor. Under our charter, the mayor is essentially the chief law enforcement officer. I'd look to the Mayor's Office to ensure that the Police Department remains transparent. Without being there, I don't know.

Q: The City Council has considered resolutions on police divestment. Committees and subcommittees and task forces have formed. At the end of the day, however,



On why he did not run again in 2017:

"I had to prioritize my family, and I've done that. I don't regret it. I celebrated 33 years of marriage with my wife, Teri. I'm a new grandpa; I have a 6-month-old and a 6-week-old grandchild. Over the summer, I said goodbye to my father, Giulio, who passed at 95 years old. My family had really taken a backseat to political needs and the needs of the city. So, I reinvested, reprioritized and rebalanced. I feel very good now about where that is."

divestment boils down to the mayor's budget. Would you support efforts to reduce funding at the Lansing Police Department and, in turn, reinvest those dollars into other community supports and services?

A: Community policing is a tradition, and I would build on that budget. Would I cut the number of officers? I would not, at this time. I've had to make those difficult decisions before, and that can lead to changes in response times. When Lansing residents call 911, they need a response.

We can argue about what that response should be. I certainly want to see mental health resources working closely with police. I want to see better training with police. But again, having led through the Great Recession, I've seen what reductions in force can do to the city. You have to look at response time, and ultimately, public safety comes first. We can use better community engagement, diversity in recruitment, better training. We actually could need to spend more.

Q: Did you really just call for police investment amid the police divestment movement?

A: To do the things that a modern police department needs to do, we could certainly use an increase in the areas that I'm talking about. For the community engagement, moving upstream, providing mental health — this is why I think that to have a holistic view on policing. Police are the last line of defense. We can't expect to use the police budget to make up for failings in all these other areas, I don't think it is realistic. I think the demand for mental health, education and family support is real. There are repairs that need to be made to the social safety net, but I think that those dollars, especially in an urban core city, must come from state and federal resources.

Q: How would you have handled that May 31 civil rights protest in downtown Lansing differently? Would tear gas still have been used?

A: I would have been downtown. [Editor's note: Mayor Andy Schor said he went home on the advice of the police.] I would have been there on the street with my police chief and with a number of community members. I would have organized a peace team. It's easy to Monday-morning quarterback, however, having been mayor for 12 years and been through some protests and things, I have a pretty good sense that I would have been

down there.

I can't say whether I would have authorized tear gas. We have a small downtown and any fire there could be a disaster. I would have been down there to help prevent it. My guess is that tear gas could have been avoided, but I surely wouldn't have allowed the downtown to be torched.

Q: Schor's administration has been repeatedly accused of racial discrimination, most recently in the form of a lawsuit from several former firefighters and other city employees. What needs to happen right now to address this? And how would you work to resolve these issues as mayor?

A: It pains me greatly the changes that have happened with regard to diversity and inclusion. I came to a city that was well known for its diversity. My cabinet reflected that. I didn't have to have someone tell me what people of color were thinking. They were right there in my midst.

There's a lawsuit, and the mayor will have to answer for that. But I knew these people. I saw how they were treated. What happened to Joan Jackson Johnson [an African-American woman whom Bernero appointed in 2006 to head the city's human relations department until Schor suspended her this year in light of a federal investigation into her operations] was one of the great injustices. Others were pushed out of their positions too. It's terrible. It's unbelievable. And I just don't understand it at all, but I guess there's a lawsuit now and we'll all see what comes to light.

Q: Among other topics that led to calls for Schor's resignation: A proposed adjustment to retiree healthcare benefits for about 1,300 city retirees. There are some lingering uncertainties, but many are expecting to have some aspects of their coverage reduced. What must be done?

A: This is about working together. Those he unfunded liabilities were a problem when I came in, and they're still a problem today. I negotiated concessionary contracts. That means the unions were giving things up. Each one was a difficult negotiation, because you're asking workers to take less, but that's what we had to do. So, we lessen the burden, but that burden is still there.

Our unfunded liabilities are real, but you want to try to affect retirees the least of all.

See Virg, Page 16

Exclusive Interview with Virg Bernero

Virg

from page 15

The changes that we made mostly were about new employees and some current employees. You always want to try to preserve what has already been promised, because retirees are on a fixed income and they make decisions based on the money and benefits that they expect to have.

The answer is, you got to work together. You work with the union. I mentioned the cuts that had been made to uniform personnel while I was mayor — we worked with the unions. When the bottom fell out during the Great Recession, we just took the numbers and sat down with the unions. It took a lot of meetings, some pounding on the table and some gnashing of teeth. People were not happy, but at the end of the day, they're realists. We saw the numbers.

And by the way, we led by example. Those were times when I cut my pay. I also cut the pay of my top people, I got rid of the city car for the mayor. We made sacrifices. The unions saw that.

Q: How do you strike a balance between making those shared sacrifices on the backs of retirees or making Lansing a less desirable place to work for new and current employees? Our unfunded liabilities don't seem to be going anywhere in a hurry. What's your budget plan?

A: When I talk about regionalism, I'm not just whistling Dixie. We regionalized the Potter Park Zoo. We regionalized the Lansing River Trail. Virgil Bernero didn't do that, but Virgil Bernero led those calls to make it happen. And I helped bring people together to make it happen.

There are now dedicated millages. These were resources that the city had paid. Everybody was using it, but only the city was paying for it. That's not sustainable. Look at the Lansing Center. Right now they're not taking in any money. This is a crisis. The Lansing Center is not properly funded. When these unsustainable things are not fixed, they create problems in other areas.

I wasn't that bullheaded. I knew we had to make a change, but I was able to convince the county and voters to go along with us. And we made those changes. So you can't bury your head in the sand and just hope that it gets better. We have to continue to regionalize and change. And, we may have to look at other things that we can migrate to the county.

Q: You one said Lansing should consider selling BWL. Is that still something on your radar?

A: I think that we should know the value of the BWL. I think that the Financial Health Team, which I created before the state mandated it, should know the value of the asset. We should know the value of all of our assets in the city, and we should consider them at all times.

I think the Board of Water and Light is a tremendous asset. It provides a substantial return on investment. That's an asset that actually pays. It gives people confidence. It powers our progress and our community — including

the new burgeoning cannabis industry. It's like a home: We should know the value of that asset, maybe not to sell it but to know the true value.

“They called me an angry mayor because I made a national splash to try to save the auto industry. And I make no apologies for it. I tried to work. I'm a guy that gets results, that gets in and rolls up my sleeves. And I really think at a time like this, when we're going to have some historic economic challenges, we're going to need that kind of leadership.”



Q: Let's address the pandemic. What's the long-term economic impact in Lansing?

A: People still want to live downtown. I think that's a trend that's going to continue. I think that as we evolve beyond the pandemic, maybe there's going to be less demand for office. I think we're going to need to look to transform some of these older office spaces into residential — a trend that Lansing really helped lead the way on, something that we were ahead of the curve on.

Q: We've talked a lot about Schor. Do you view Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley as a viable candidate in this race?

A: It's not my place to say that anybody is viable. I've worked with Patricia. I think she cares about the city, and I look forward to working with her in the future to move the city forward. I'm not planning on any dogfight with Patricia. I've worked with her and I think her heart is in the right place. I think Patricia is a smart and capable woman, who already has a big job in working with the Racer Trust, an agency that I helped to actually create through my automotive coalition.

Q: When you were mayor, you offloaded the city's in-house economic development mission to the Lansing Economic Area Partnership. That's a move that has since been criticized. The City Council made it budget priority this year to consider alternatives to that contractual relationship. Do you stand behind that decision today? Do you think the city should bring that back in-house?

A: I think LEAP has clearly stood the test of time and proved their viability and their great value to the city and the region. I think LEAP has also done a phenomenal job at taking state and federal dollars and getting them out just

in time to help a number of businesses during the pandemic. I think LEAP has been on the front lines and it has done a tremendous job.

Q: You pressured the board at BWL to fire Peter Lark, who was former chief executive at the time. That resulted in a \$650,000 payout. There's also a \$160,000 payout to former city attorney Janine McIntyre. You've minimized both of those payments. What do you say now?

A: I never authorized the payment to Peter Lark and never knew about that arrangement. That contract with Peter Lark was negotiated without knowledge of the city. And in all fairness, I pushed for an amendment that would've prevented such a payout from happening again.

Yes, I encouraged the board to fire Peter Lark. I supported his departure, and I think that has also stood the test of time. Dick Peffley has done a wonderful job, and it was time for a change. And the payment to Janine was one year of salary and was in the best interests of the city.

Q: You sat down with City Pulse at the end of your last term for an exit interview in which you graded your overall performance with a B+. Why should Lansing ever rehire a B+ mayor?

A: I think B+ is actually darn good, given the hand that I was dealt. We went through the Great Recession. We survived the bankruptcy of General Motors and its rebirth. I went to bat for our leading industry, organized mayors from around the country and proudly won the battle for GM.

That was probably my proudest moment of when I could be of service to this city, and that's really the issue: The city I love and the people I love in Lansing. I'm not a perfect leader. I'm not a perfect man. I'm a better man, but I think I was a hell of a mayor and I led us well during some tough times. So yeah, I gave myself that honest appraisal of B+, and I think it was a B+ effort.

Now, I think we're going to need an A effort, and I think I'm up to it. From day one, I've dreamed big for Lansing. I didn't believe the naysayers. When I came in, our slogan for the city was "Believe in Lansing" because people were having a hard time even believing in the city.

The Ottawa power station is one of the great economic transformations in not just Lansing's history, but around the state. It won national awards. It was a symbol of stagnation, and it's now a sign of our growth and progress. LEAP is the gift that keeps on giving. I helped create that.

I helped lead the way to restoring the train station in REO Town, and we've got the rebirth of REO Town taking place now. I dealt with the harsh realities of the time and I called for innovative solutions, like regionalizing the zoo and regionalizing the river trail. I had to close two golf courses. I'm not shy about using economic development tools at our disposal, and I think we're going to need all of that. We're going to need all of that energy, and we're going to need to come together as a community as well. We can't afford to leave any sector of the community behind.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

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Potter Park Zoo spreads cheer with Wonderland of Lights

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Keeping up with the holiday spirit might be a tough gig this season, but a wintery walk through a labyrinth of brightly shining Christmas lights and decorations could help.

Wonderland of Lights

5 p.m. to 8 p.m. through Dec. 27
\$9 adults, \$5 kids 3-12, seniors (60+) and military
Free for kids under 3
Potter Park Zoo
1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing
(517) 483-4222,
PotterParkZoo.org/Event/Lights2020

the illumination from thousands of twinkling lights.

“Being in the zoo after dark is really unique. People are always fascinated by Christmas lights and this is a special venue for people to see a bunch of Christmas displays,” Potter Park Zoo special projects coordinator Carolyn Fabro said.

The process of transforming the zoo into an interactive light show takes Potter Park staff several months, and preparation for the yearly winter event begins as early as August.

“As soon as we finish our fall events, we immediately start putting up Christmas lights. It’s many weeks of work to get them all up,” Fabro said.

The actual lights are obtained from a hodge-podge of suppliers, such as Amazon and Menards. Potter Park employees are then tasked with arranging them all across the zoo. Fabro said one of the most impressive displays from this year’s Wonderland of Lights is what she calls the “wall of lights” — a massive amount of multi-color vertical string lights that stretches across five trees. She also personally designed her own light fixture on the path near the penguin enclosure.

Because visitors are required to maintain one-way traffic, Fabro said displays must be eye-catching and encourage forward movement in



Wonderland of Lights is Potter Park Zoo’s annual holiday event.

order to prevent people from backtracking through the zoo. “That’s part of the added challenge that makes putting up lights fun,” she said.

While the majority of animals are tucked away inside to avoid the cold, the eagles are always present and the river otters, which do well in chilly temperatures, are occasionally play-

ing outside.

COVID-19 precautions require guests to wear masks at all times and keep a social distance of 6 feet. Potter Park must also maintain a limited capacity, so Fabro recommends making online reservations in advance. Walkups are allowed, but you might have to deal with a long wait in line.

Holiday happenings to check out around Greater Lansing

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

Old Town Scrooge Scramble 5K

For the safety of all participants, the Scrooge Scramble is going virtual this year. This is a family friendly event open to walkers and runners of all ages. How does a virtual race work? Well, all you have to do is run a 5K and submit your official time by Saturday, Dec. 5. All participants will receive a finishing medal and a commemorative Scrooge Scramble beanie. First place medals will also be given to the top finisher in each age division for both men and women.

Saturday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m. to noon. Registration is \$35. All proceeds go towards Old Town and the Old Town Commercial Association. To find out more, visit ILoveOldTown.com.

Keto Through Christmas

The holiday season can present a challenge to anyone trying to stay on their diet. It’s typically a time for feasting with family or indulging in one-too-many baked goods. For folks looking to eat healthy during or after the holidays,

Gilead Healing Center is hosting Keto Through Christmas — an informative seminar hosted by clinical nutritionist Helena Miller that offers an introduction to the popular “keto diet.”

Thursday Dec. 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. You can RSVP by calling 517-336-8880 or 517-319-5818. This event takes place at the Gilead Healing Center at 306 S. Creyts Rd., Lansing. Registration is free.

Holiday Mason Jars

If you’re looking for the perfect handmade gift to give to a loved one this holiday season, look no further. Paint Your Poison is holding an online painting class perfect for those in need of a gift for grandma. Portions of the proceeds from each ticket sale will go towards The Village Lansing, a community organization that provides youth mentoring. For \$35, you get a mason jar, acrylic paint, paint brushes, a candle and access to a live Zoom session where you can paint your jar step-by-step along with a professional artist.

Thursday, Dec. 10, from 6:30 to 8:30

p.m. Jar kits are available for pickup or delivery within 20 miles of Lansing. More information about the event can be found at PaintYourPoison.com.

The Holiday Lights Un-Parade

This year, in order to keep people safe from COVID-19, Ingham Co. Fairgrounds is putting on a Holiday Lights Un-Parade. That means that all the parade floats and lights can be enjoyed from the comfort and safety of your car. Floats will remain stationary on the midway at the fairgrounds, giving parade-goers ample space to drive through and admire the sights and sounds of Christmas. The Un-Parade is a free, family event.

Friday Dec. 11, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. It will be held at the Ingham County Fairgrounds, 700 E. Ash St., Mason.

Photos with Santa

Celebrating the holidays is going to be a little strange this year. That doesn’t mean you have to miss out on classic Christmas traditions like having your child’s picture taken with Santa Claus.

Based on current state regulations, face coverings for you, your child and Santa himself are required in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Through Dec. 24, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, noon to 6 p.m. Sunday. You can book a reservation online at LansingMall.com. Santa will be sitting in front of the JC Penney in the Lansing Mall, 5330 W. Saginaw Highway, Lansing.

REO Town Holiday Bazaar

The REO Town Marketplace is hosting a wide variety of local artisans this holiday season. Art, coffee, records, soap, jewelry — you can find all of this and more at the REO Town Marketplace. During this season of giving, you can shop local to find the perfect gift for your friends and family.

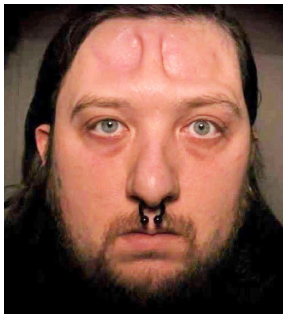
Until Christmas on Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The REO Town Marketplace is located at 1027 S. Washington St., Lansing.

Favorite Things Cameron Earley and his rubber ear rat toy

Cameron Earley is a line cook with Ruckus Ramen inside The Avenue Café and owns a consignment shop called Cult of Death, which is nestled in the basement of Thrift Witch in Old Town. Earley is an avid collector of rare vintage toys and his favorite thing is a custom piece he ordered from toy sculptor Zac Amendolia.

My favorite thing is a custom-made toy by an Instagram creator named Zac Amendolia. His company is called Greasy Creeps and he makes weird, vintage-inspired rubber toys and I'm super into the old Finger Monster toys; Madballs — all the weird '80s gross stuff. He recreates them with his own style, and this is the first one I've purchased from him. I love it.

I don't even know if I can say how exactly I discovered Amendolia. Somebody I follow must have shared a picture of one



of his toys. Who knows? I just picked up on him somewhere out there on the Internet.

There's a small subculture of people that have same obsession with these gross '80s toys. We're all super-collectors and we're always trying to trade with each



other on Instagram. Something about the style really appeals to me; maybe it's my love for Halloween.

The online world of toy trading is huge, especially for the classic '80s stuff like Madballs. There's a lot of people with Instagram stores and they'll do live auctions. There's even a huge niche for it in Lansing. Tesco Vee hosts a regular collectible toy show and it almost always draws in people that into Universal monsters, or any other kind of '80s monster stuff.

For years, I was super into collecting vintage toys. It got to the point where my shelves were overflowing. I moved the toys from shelves into tubs and then the tubs started overflowing. Then I decided to start a little shop and sell what I could. It's super small and it's located in the basement of Thrift Witch in Old Town. It's a very small room, but my wife and I pack it with handpicked stuff. Maybe we don't do the best in sales, but it's something I am going to keep doing. Hopefully I can make some money from it someday.

Interview edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley. If you have a suggestion for Favorite Things, please email Skyler@Lansingcitypulse.com

Reduced pricing at Homegrown actually competes with illicit sales

This pot shop is killing business for my dealer

KYLE KAMINSKI

Since its inception, Homegrown Cannabis Co. has made quite a name



for itself in Lansing. In February, it became the first pot shop in the city to open its doors for recreational sales. And it has continued to stock some of the most diverse, potent and affordable products on the market.

When friends come to Lansing, I often recommend the place specifically for its unmatched affordability — and not just because it won so many awards in our Top of the Town contest. Edibles and concentrates there can be a few bucks cheaper. Its in-house strains are always dank. Though cheap dispensary prices can still be hard to justify if you know a guy who knows a guy, Homegrown seem to be trying its best to put my regular plug out of a job — especially this week with the latest release of \$25 eighthers (and \$200 ounces) testing in at 27.3% THC.

Homegrown Cannabis Co. — Harambe (Josey Wales)
Price — \$25/3.5g
THC content — 27.3%

This indica-leaning hybrid, first developed by the Ethos Collective in Colorado, was named in honor of the gorilla who was shot and killed at the Cincinnati Zoo in 2016 after a young child entered his enclosure. Ethos donated 10% of seed sales to non-kill animal shelters in Colorado.

The seeds may be imported, but Homegrown employees grew and harvested this house blend (which is also named Josey Wales) themselves in Lansing. Small, dense buds coated in trichomes. A mildly sweet and earthy smell, with citrus undertones that become much more apparent when smoked. A touch of diesel. An airy and acidic smoke that wasn't overly harsh.

The real kickers: This batch is testing in at a whopping 27.3% and offers an incredible high and an insanely affordable price. A similar eighter could easily set you back \$40-50 elsewhere. Even

on the illicit market, it can be challenging to find bud this powerful for prices that are this low. I picked up a \$200 ounce and may very well be back for another sometime before Christmas.

The high was happy and calm; Enough to relieve some anxiety after just a few tokes but not enough to totally incapacitate me for the rest of the afternoon. This one is a good daily driver — enough of that sativa boost to provide a bit of jitter-free energy and just enough indica to relax.

So, what's the secret to keeping prices so low and quality so high? Staff there wouldn't share any insider details, but they recommended I pick up some Pineapple Express at the same price rate.

Owner Tom James told me last month to expect prices to stay low throughout the holiday season in recognition of the ongoing financial struggles that some residents have faced amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Affordability, quality and variety are the recipe to success, he said.

"We've really tried to stay aggressive with our pricing," James said earlier this month. "The pandemic has hurt a lot of people financially, so we want to keep things affordable. We also buy from everybody to keep out there as much variety in products in brands as we possibly can."

Claw Cannabis VFire Pod — Big Lemons (Sativa Hybrid)
Price — \$60/1g
THC content — 75.5%

Another reason my dealer is in trouble? He doesn't sell vape cartridges. This sativa-hybrid blend from Claw Cannabis was produced in Jackson and, as expected, is sort of like biting into a lemon. Piney and acidic diesel notes are tart like citrus. Even the vapor smells like lemons.

I found this blend to be a perfect pairing for Josey Wales. It only added to its stress-relieving effects. Mixing this vape cartridge into the lineup can also really help to conserve flower intake.

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

Lend your ears to Peppermint Creek's 'Hear Our Cry'

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Peppermint Creek Theatre's "Hear Our Cry" was originally shown in late October as a drive-in "movie" in the parking lot at the corner of Capitol Avenue and Ionia Street. Now, until Dec. 31, the same compelling Zoom medley is available on YouTube.

"Hear Our Cry" reflects Peppermint Creek's mission to encourage dialogue and address current issues in society. Its 12 performances highlight what it's like to be a minority in the United States. It was adapted to the screen by Kathleen Egan and Chad Swan-Bagero and edited and assembled by Ben Cassidy.

The first performance features



Courtesy

Peppermint Creek's "Hear Our Cry" is an anthology of 12 plays inspired by social justice. It can be viewed on YouTube.

Harvey Milk's 1978 speech, "Give Them Hope." Five months after delivering it, Milk and George Moscone were assassinated in a hate crime.

Chris Swope reads the abbreviated text as Milk. The importance of electing LGBTQ people — and not just allies — is a focal point of the speech.

Zurich Dawson reads "Kids Who Die," by Langston Hughes, with legitimacy. Hughes was a prolific black writer from the '20s until the mid-'60s. With a mix of subtlety and starkness, the Hughes poem shows how kids —

"Hear Our Cry"

Watch on Peppermint Creek Theatre's YouTube page. Search "Peppermint Creek Theatre Hear Our Cry" or enter the URL: [Youtube.com/channel/UC1pIVVGA0Ux1_GcE5xpDz-A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1pIVVGA0Ux1_GcE5xpDz-A)

and resisters of oppression — are dying and not being acknowledged. "Women's Rights Are Human Rights" is Hillary Rodham Clinton's speech at the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women. The Beijing event included 1,500 delegates. Deb Vaughn adds her own passion to the potent address. It is full of tragic and graphic examples of the marginalizing, abuse, and unequal treatment of women everywhere.

The Cherokee poet, author and playwright Diane Glancy wrote "Mississippi River." Glancy gives a Native American perspective that's full of imagery. Aidan Kakela has the perfect look and voice to recite "The Mississippi River." The dream-like poem's inspiration is the terrible story of the Trail of Tears.

Detroit's Shawntai Brown's "Out of Body" begins with two Black teachers at a school chatting on Zoom.

Four others join them virtually for an after-school committee meeting. Meghan Corbett, Greg Hunter, Maegan Murphy, Sarah Hendrickson and Jennifer Rupp play the participants realistically. Briana Lofton plays a member's partner.

Players demonstrate insensitivity and an ignorance of how offensive some of their comments are. Assumptions, conservatism and unawareness fuel uncomfortable remarks that reveal racial and gay stereotypes. At 10 minutes, the "Out of Body" play is the longest of the "Hear Our Cry" collection.

"Count Day," by Brittany Rogers and read ardently by Nafeesah Symonette, is a short oration about a Detroit school's single day to determine state funds. Any teacher will empathize with its messages about the burdens public teachers face. All Americans should hear how our compassionate teachers are expected to do the impossible.

"A Letter to My Brother," by Marianne Chan, is about DeWitt High School — and what it was like to attend as an Asian and Pacific Islander. Samantha Lee is totally convincing as she reveals how Chan and her brother suffered racism in a mostly white, rural school — and how they had to degrade themselves to survive.

"Peregrinacion, Penitencia, Revolucion" is Cesar Chavez's speech about the "March from Delano to Sacramento." Eloy F. Gomez Orfila commands the Chavez role. The speech is about cultures, pilgrimages and religious influences. It is also about Mexican Americans who are children of the revolution, and an increasingly vocal minority that deserves recognition.

A particularly strong "Hear Our Cry"

performance comes from Sharriese Hamilton, who delivers Sandra Seaton's "Call Me By My Name" monologue. It brings attention to Henrietta Lacks, whose cancer cells lived on to help create cures for polio and more. They were taken from her when dying of cervical cancer in 1951. Lacks never gave permission or was told of her donation.

"The Trail of Tears" is a poem by Ruth Margaret Muskrat, a Cherokee poet, educator and Indian rights activist. Kelsey Rainwater has an authoritative voice to deliver Muskrat's work.

Like "The Mississippi River," the poem bemoans the 1830-50 relocation of 60,000 Native Americans from their southeastern homes to places west of the Mississippi. "The Trail of Tears" poem is more specific. It mentions more details of suffering and the four thousand lost — all for "the sake of greed and gold."

The final "Hear Our Cry" performance features Susan Oetgen reciting what is attached to the base of the Statue of Liberty. "The New Colossus," by Emma Lazarus, is her poem that includes the lines, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses."

After Lazarus died in 1887, "The New Colossus" was attached to the Statue to honor the native New Yorker with Jewish heritage.

Each "Hear Our Cry" performance includes a photo of the piece's author. For the original outside showing, text captions were added. Mostly bland Zoom backgrounds and some varied volume levels are insignificant. The compelling words and their thought-provoking messages are what matters.



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Move over Super Mario, this is the real Mushroom Kingdom

By **BILL CASTANIER**

The houses may be little, but they're not made of "ticky-tack" and they definitely don't all look the same — with hats off to songwriter Melvina Reynolds.

While Park Avenue is a short drive from downtown Charlevoix, it's tucked away from the fudge shops and tourist traps. It is another world, a funky collection of mushroom-shaped houses constructed of stone with roofs that roll and walls that curve. You half expect Hobbits to emerge to tidy up the flowerbeds.

The homes, first built in the '30s, are the genius of local developer and designer Earl A. Young and form a quirky neighborhood that has become

a must-see trip for architectural aficionados.

David L. Miles, who grew up nearby by the mushroom neighborhood, is obsessed with these residential anomalies, and has teamed up with photographer Mike Barton to produce "Boulders: The Life and Creations of Earl A. Young in Charlevoix, Michigan," an exquisite biography of Young bristling with dramatic photography.

Growing up one block from the Park Avenue homes, Miles wasn't always impressed with the uniqueness of the homes.

"Young was a friend of my father and he was always part of my childhood. I didn't understand the importance of his work until I was in my mid-40s. When I went and stood and looked at them, it was like I was hit across the head by a 2x4," Miles said. "The legacy he left for the town is irreplaceable."

Miles said he led tours of the homes for a number of years before it dawned on him that Young and his mushroom houses deserved a book. He approached the Charlevoix Historical Society about publishing a book in 2018.

He said working on the book was an eye-opener, and was timed perfectly with the acquisition of several Young family members' personal collections, as well as a cache of photographs made

available from the city assessor's office.

"For the first time, we were able to construct the chronology of the houses," he said. "There was an alignment of the planets. Everything came together, and the question became: 'How could we not do it?'"

Young studied architecture at the University of Michigan, but dropped out to pursue an insurance business in Charlevoix. He would design and build 26 or 27 homes, depending on how you count, Miles said. One of the homes was eventually bulldozed. He also built four commercial structures — including his real estate office, which was torn down. Among the commercial structures is the impressive Weathervane Inn. Built in the mid-'50s, it boasts one of the most impressive Young fireplaces, complete with a nine-ton boulder as its centerpiece.

The book dedicates an entire chapter to the construction of the Weathervane and the effort to save the restaurant from the rising waters of the Charlevoix Channel.

There is also a chapter on the nearby Castle Farms, a massive summer stone home and barns for Chicago's Loeb family. Miles said it is likely Young was inspired by the stone construction of

Castle Farms. "Although Earl would never admit to it, you can see the influences," Miles said.

Young was not big on using construction or site plans, and the "Mushroom homes" seemed to grow from the earth.

Young, much like his designs, was quirky in how he decided where to construct his next house. According to Miles, he would walk the property to "to feel the spirit of the earth."

"It inspired him to do what he did," Miles said.

The best way to see the homes is a walking tour, which — until the coronavirus crisis — was the "icing on the cake" of Charlevoix tourism.

"People would see the homes and then go back home and tell other people what they saw," Miles said.

The homes constructed of stone boulders appear to grow from the earth and the rounded running cedar-shake roofs suggest a fairy tale village.

Earl was inspired by the land, Miles said. His first home was more traditional, but as he proceeded to build them, "his designs seemed to fly." If he didn't like how something looked during construction, he would have the workers tear the day's work down and start over.

In 1925, prior to building the Park Avenue mushroom houses from 1938 to 1954, Young built a small subdivision. Aptly named Boulder Park, it is only a short drive from Park Avenue. A total of 10 Young-style homes grace the subdivision and several other homes were commissioned on the nearby Round Lake.

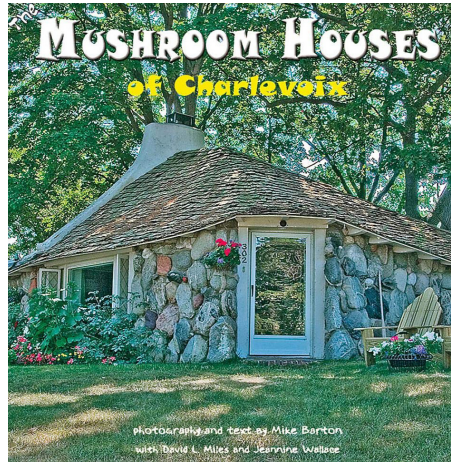
Like many of the tourists who visit Charlevoix each year looking for the fabled Petoskey stone, Earl also collected stones — some weighing several tons. Miles recounts stories of Young hiding impressive stones by burying them for later use.

Many of these massive stones made their way into fireplaces, which are a signature motif of Earl's construction.

Today, Miles said many of the homes are rentals and have been renovated.

"Earl didn't believe in kitchens," Miles said.

For those interested in walking tours of mushroom houses, it is worth stopping by the Charlevoix Historical Society to pick up a guide for \$5. Miles also works at the office several days a week and is a fountain of information. His father, Bob Miles, was a photographer in Charlevoix for 40 years and was an early inspiration for his son's love of history.



Photographs and text by Mike Barton with David L. Miles and Jeannine Weisse

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Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Hyphen It Up"---but a bit longer.
by Matt Jones

Across

- 1 "Cinderella Man" antagonist Max
- 5 Stacks of cash
- 9 First name in Fighting Irish history
- 12 Sansa's sister on "Game of Thrones"
- 13 '80s-'90s TV legal drama with a license plate in the title screen
- 14 "Star Trek" captain
- 16 Show excessive stubble, perhaps
- 18 High point?
- 19 As originally located
- 20 Old-timey hangout with a counter
- 22 Step unit
- 23 Repair tears
- 24 ___ the cows come home
- 25 Huge success
- 26 ___ Nublar ("Jurassic Park" setting)
- 30 Party invitation blank
- 32 Dark times?
- 35 Firing figure
- 36 Tourists' warm-weather wear
- 39 2011 NBA champs, for short
- 40 Exciting way to take the world
- 41 "Middlemarch" novelist
- 43 Tangerine cover
- 44 Leading
- 47 ___ Aviv, Israel
- 48 Peachy keen
- 51 "File not found," for

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	
47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62
63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78

- example
- 6 "Sad to say"
- 36 Islands off Spain
- 7 Swiss host city for the World Economic Forum
- 37 Movie that brought on "Army of Darkness"
- 8 Any ABBA member
- 38 "25 Words ___" (game show)
- 9 Aliases, for short
- 39 Way of doing things
- 10 Basic file format that allows for bold and underlining
- 42 Prof's helpers
- 11 Ornate cupboards
- 44 Faithful about
- 13 "Geaux Tigers" sch.
- 45 Plenty
- 15 Laws of planetary motion discoverer
- 46 "1984" working class
- 17 Chest chamber
- 49 1977 George Burns film
- 21 "That's sooo cute!"
- 50 Shell source in the Mario Kart series
- 27 Checkbook record
- 52 Clean-up clinic
- 28 Godiva's title
- 54 "___ Well That Ends Well"
- 29 Audibly in shock
- 55 Two-___ sloth
- 31 Damage
- 56 ___ de deuce (two-person dance)
- 32 "___ I'm told"
- 33 East, in Spain
- 59 Genetic info carrier
- 34 Louboutin item

Down

- 1 Send packing
- 2 "___ just the cutest?"
- 3 Made ___ (flirted, in a way)
- 4 Circle measurements
- 5 Cartoon baby's cry

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Answers Page 25

SUDOKU

Intermediate

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

TO PLAY

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

Answers on page 25

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsy

December 2-8, 2020

ARIES (March 21-April 19): An anonymous blogger on Tumblr writes the following: "What I'd really like is for someone to objectively watch me for a week and then sit down with me for a few hours and explain to me what I am like and how I look to others and what my personality is in detail and how I need to improve. Where do I sign up for that?" I can assure you that the person who composed this message is not an Aries. More than any other sign of the zodiac, you Rams want to "be" yourself, to inhabit your experience purely and completely—not see yourself from the perspective of outside observers. Now is a good time to emphasize this specialty.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "Humans like to be scared," declares author Cathy Bell. "We love the wicked witch's cackle, the wolf's hot breath, and the old lady who eats children, because sometimes, when the scary is over, all we remember is the magic." I suppose that what she says is a tiny bit true. But there are also many ways to access the magic that don't require encounters with dread. And that's exactly what I predict for you in the coming weeks, Taurus: marvelous experiences—including catharses, epiphanies, and breakthroughs—that are neither spurred by fear nor infused with it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In 1994, the animated movie "The Lion King" told the story of the difficult journey made by a young lion as he struggled to claim his destiny as rightful king. A remake of the film appeared in 2019. During the intervening 25 years, the number of real lions living in nature declined dramatically. There are now just 20,000. Why am I telling you such bad news? I hope to inspire you to make 2021 a year when you will resist trends like this. Your assignment is to nurture and foster wildness in every way that's meaningful for you—whether that means helping to preserve habitats of animals in danger of extinction or feeding and championing the wildness inside you and those you care about. Get started!

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Is there anyone whose forgiveness you would like to have? Is there anyone to whom you should make atonement? Now is a favorable phase to initiate such actions. In a related subject, would you benefit from forgiving a certain person whom you feel wronged you? Might there be healing for you in asking that person to make amends? The coming weeks will provide the best opportunity you have had in a long time to seek these changes.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Scientists know that the Earth's rotation is gradually slowing down—but at the very slow rate of two milliseconds every 100 years. What that means is that 200 million years from now, one day will last 25 hours. Think of how much more we humans will be able to get done with an extra hour every day! I suspect you may get a preview of this effect in the coming weeks, Leo. You'll be extra efficient. You'll be focused and intense in a relaxing way. Not only that: You will also be extra appreciative of the monumental privilege of being alive. As a result, you will seem to have more of the precious luxury of time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Adventurer Tim Peck says there are three kinds of fun. The first is pure pleasure, enjoyed in full as it's happening. The second kind of fun feels challenging when it's underway, but interesting and meaningful in retrospect. Examples are giving birth to a baby or taking an arduous hike uphill through deep snow. The third variety is no fun at all. It's irksome while you're doing it, and equally disagreeable as you think about it later. Now I'll propose a fourth type of fun, which I suspect you'll specialize in during the coming weeks. It's rather boring or tedious or nondescript while it's going on, but in retrospect you are very glad you did it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "I made the wrong mistakes," said Libran composer and jazz pianist Thelonious Monk. He had just completed an improvisatory performance he wasn't satisfied with. On countless other occasions, however, he

made the right mistakes. The unexpected notes and tempo shifts he tried often resulted in music that pleased him. I hope that in the coming weeks you make a clear demarcation between wrong mistakes and right mistakes, dear Libra. The latter could help bring about just the transformations you need.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Home is not where you were born," writes Naguib Mahfouz. "Home is where all your attempts to escape cease." I propose we make that one of your mottos for the next 12 months, Scorpio. According to my astrological analysis, you will receive all the inspiration and support you need as you strive to be at peace with exactly who you are. You'll feel an ever-diminishing urge to wish you were doing something else besides what you're actually doing. You'll be less and less tempted to believe your destiny lies elsewhere, with different companions and different adventures. To your growing satisfaction, you will refrain from trying to flee from the gifts that have been given you, and you will instead accept the gifts just as they are. And it all starts now.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "Pictures of perfection, as you know, make me sick and wicked," observed Sagittarian author Jane Austen. She wrote this confession in a letter to her niece, Fanny, whose boyfriend thought that the women characters in Jane's novels were too naughty. In the coming weeks, I encourage you Sagittarians to regard pictures of perfection with a similar disdain. To accomplish all the brisk innovations you have a mandate to generate, you must cultivate a deep respect for the messiness of creativity; you must understand that your dynamic imagination needs room to experiment with possibilities that may at first appear disorderly. For inspiration, keep in mind this quote from Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich: "Well-behaved women seldom make history."

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Capricorn novelist Anne Brontë (1820-1849) said, "Smiles and tears are so alike with me, they are neither of them confined to any particular feelings: I often cry when I am happy, and smile when I am sad." I suspect you could have experiences like hers in the coming weeks. I bet you'll feel a welter of unique and unfamiliar emotions. Some of them may seem paradoxical or mysterious, although I think they'll all be interesting and catalytic. I suggest you welcome them and allow them to teach you new secrets about your deep self and the mysterious nature of your life.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Aquarian philosopher Simone Weil formulated resolutions so as to avoid undermining herself. First, she vowed she would only deal with difficulties that actually confronted her, not far-off or hypothetical problems. Second, she would allow herself to feel only those feelings that were needed to inspire her and make her take effective action. All other feelings were to be shed, including imaginary feelings—that is, those not rooted in any real, objective situation. Third, she vowed, she would "never react to evil in such a way as to augment it." Dear Aquarius, I think all of these resolutions would be very useful for you to adopt in the coming weeks.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In June 2019, the young Piscean singer Justin Bieber addressed a tweet to 56-year-old actor Tom Cruise, challenging him to a mixed martial arts cage fight. "If you don't take this fight," said Bieber, "you will never live it down." A few days later, Bieber retracted his dare, confessing that Cruise "would probably whoop my ass in a fight." If Bieber had waited until December 2020 to make his proposal, he might have had more confidence to follow through—and he might also have been better able to whoop Cruise's ass. You Pisceans are currently at the peak of your power and prowess.

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

TURN IT DOWN!

“Loud dispatches from Lansing’s music scene”

BY RICH TUPIKA

LANSING’S OWN CALLIOPE FEATURED ON NEW
THIRD MAN RECORDS COMPILATION



Lansing-based band Calliope is featured on Third Man Records’ new shoegaze, dream pop and space rock collection, “Southeast of Saturn.” (courtesy photos)

Q&A: Calliope guitarist Jason Lantrip

“Southeast of Saturn,” a new compilation LP, pressed up by Jack White’s Third Man Records, embarks on a reverb-soaked journey through Michigan’s spacey past. One of the 19 bands featured on this already acclaimed collection of ’90s-era shoegaze and dream pop tracks is Lansing’s own Calliope.

With Andy Dryer on vocals, the band’s cosmic sound was filled out by bassist Eric Merkle on bass, drummer Matt Ellison and guitarist Jason Lantrip. While Calliope has long had a cult following in Michigan and beyond, this new LP will justly shine an even brighter light on the group. Here’s what Lantrip had to say about the new record, which is available both on wax and all streaming services.

How would you describe “Southeast of Saturn”?

Jason Lantrip: It’s a ’90s Michigan shoegaze compilation curated by Rich Hansen for Third Man Records. You might call it dream pop or space rock, but basically there were a bunch of bands enamored with the ambient druggy import records wrote about in NME and Melody Maker in the early-to-mid ’90s. Not unlike punk in ’79, we all discovered that with a bit of delay, tremolo and reverb we could turn inadequacies into strengths and started bands with our friends.

Rich Hansen contacted me last year when he was putting it together.

Calliope and Rich were friendly back when he lived in East Lansing, this was in the mid ’90s. Our bands played co-op parties together and we’d see him about town.

As for the other bands on Southeast of Saturn, back in the day, did you play with many of those bands?

Our previous band, Sixth With Violet, played with Majesty Crush and Thirsty Forrest Animals at the MSU Union Ballroom. We also played with Spectacle at the Small Planet, but almost none of the other bands unfortunately. Maybe Miss Bliss? Certainly, Auburn Lull far later in life. All of these bands had their little Michigan space rock orbits and we get to represent East Lansing.

Having a release on Third Man is pretty cool, I’d imagine. Where can people hear it?

It’s a very cool thing. It feels like an affirmation that what we did mattered and that it’s a part of history now. It’s live on the streaming platforms and vinyl is out to the shops now. I’m hearing that it is going into a second printing due to demand so don’t despair if you can’t get it right away. It looks like they are entertaining a volume two, at the very least, which is good news. This record is the sort of mixtape that got me into Spaceman 3, Ride, Slowdive, Lush, 4AD, Creation and My Bloody

Valentine. I’ve only ever hoped to be the sort of band that you might find on a “Nuggets” compilation somewhere. I feel like I’ve succeeded in that goal here.

The Calliope song included on the comp is “Laughing at Roadsigns,” when was that recorded?

It was recorded at Chicago Trax in a weekend in December of ’94. It was one of the first few songs written by Andy and Eric when Calliope was just getting off the ground. The plan was to record it, and a few others, for a demo for Thick Records. We ended up succeeding in recording and mixing an entire record that weekend. We were regaled with tales of infamous Ministry sessions and got to meet Wesley Willis, who was recording in Studio B.

Out of your entire catalog, why do you think that song was chosen for this comp?

There was a specific time frame it had to fall into. It’s not our most spacey track from back then. We might’ve had songs from that era that fit a little better sonically, but I think the lyric fit the vibe of the story they are telling here. Largely, the story of record nerds that got a crush on a wave of dreamy independent music found in the import bins of Play it Again and Neptune Records ... or of course Warehouse Records and FBC in East Lansing, for us.

Early on, what was Calliope’s mission? What were you shooting for?

Andy and Eric and I were all in a previous band together, Sixth With Violet. We met as students at Michigan State University. The idea initially was to do something darker, more mellow. Quieter. Sonic.

What’s the most recent thing Calliope has done or released? Any chance for new music?

Funny enough, I think the last thing we released was a jingle for Jeni’s Ice Cream back in 2017. They did not ask us to write it, but who are we to deny our muse. It came out on a GTG comp, as did most everything we’ve done since our last full-length CD in 2004. The newest calliope related project is the Sexy Murders split single with Drinking Mercury on GTG. That is basically the founding members, Eric and Andy, collaborating under a new name. It’s a sweet lathe cut release. We are considering some potential vinyl re-issues and perhaps some celebratory performances for the first couple releases. New stuff could happen, but it hasn’t yet.

Follow Calliope at [facebook.com/calliopeSounds](https://www.facebook.com/calliopeSounds) or visit [thirdmanrecords.com](https://www.thirdmanrecords.com) to buy “Southeast of Saturn” vinyl.



OUT ON THE TOWN

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

Wednesday, December 2

12 Days of a Not So Silent Night Annual Fundraising Event - Virtual - through December 12. Reach Studio Art Center, 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Music for Social Justice: Xavier Davis, piano - Video interview and performance. 11 a.m. MSU. music.msu.edu.

Shop, Sip & Stroll Downtown Lansing - enjoy themed shopping nights and support local businesses! 5:30-7 p.m. More info at facebook.com/downtownlansing

Special Collections Look Club: Our theme this week is LGBTQ+ Community. 2-2:45 p.m. MSU Libraries. bookings.lib.msu.edu.

Threads of Wisdom: Lucid Dreaming - 6:30-7:30 p.m. weaversoftheweb.org.

Thursday, December 3

Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Colloquium Series - 11 a.m. Please email Ashley Parks (clarkas@msu.edu) for the Zoom link and password.

Capital Area Audubon Society monthly meeting - 7-9 p.m. Visit CapitalAreaAudubon.org for Zoom info or call 517-303-5742.

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

Studio (in)Process at Home - Broad Museum. 9 p.m. on Facebook Live. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Friday, December 4

Dave Stryker, jazz guitar, with MSU Jazz Orchestras - Video presentation of jazz guitarist Dave Stryker with MSU Jazz Orchestra. 8 p.m. music.msu.edu.

Flash Sale Fridays - 1st 3 Fridays in December - online store. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Michigan Audubon. michiganaudubon.org.

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

Science at the Edge Seminar - Speaker: Rebecca Wade of Heidelberg University. Zooming in on the dynamic interactions of proteins and drugs. 11:30 a.m. pa.msu.edu

Shop Local Day - Get into the holiday spirit at the MSU Broad! 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Shop, Sip & Stroll Downtown Lansing - enjoy themed shopping nights and support local businesses! 5:30-7 p.m. More info at facebook.com/downtownlansing

Saturday, December 5

Old Town Scrooge Scramble 5K - 1232 Turner St. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Lansing. iloveoldtown.org.

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

Space Adventure - 1 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. Register at impression5.org.

Winterfest - parade & activities. 3-9 p.m. lansingbusiness.org for more information.

Sunday, December 6

3-D Workshop: Winter Clay Luminaries - design a hand-built luminary. 1-4 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Blonding with Becca Clark - 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. The Standard, 519 East César E. Chávez Avenue, Lansing.

Handel's Messiah - Video presentation featuring MSU Choirs and Symphony Orchestra. 3 p.m. music.msu.edu.

Wild and Scenic Film Festival - 6-9 p.m. Virtual. 517-927-1152. mgrow.org for link.

Monday, December 7

Celebrating Ludwig van Beethoven - Video premiere of performances from MSU musicians. 7:30 p.m. music.msu.edu.

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

Tuesday, December 8

Alcorners Wonderland of Lights - for all with special needs in a safe, welcoming and sensory friendly environment. 6-6:15 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing.



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ABANDONED VEHICLE SALE CITY OF LANSING, MICHIGAN

Sealed bids marked **S/21/037, ABANDONED VEHICLES** will be accepted at the City of Lansing Purchasing Office, 124 W Michigan Ave 8th floor, Lansing MI. 48933 until but no later than, **1:00 PM, local time in effect WED. DEC 9, 2020.**

Questions regarding this sale may be directed to Stephanie Robinson Buyer, at (517) 483-4128 or email: Stephanie.robinson@lansingmi.gov

Vehicles may be inspected **WED. DEC 9, 2020**, as follows:

SHROYER'S, 2740 EATON RAPIDS RD, LANSING MI. 48911	8:30 AM
SWIFT TOWING, 2347 N CEDAR HOLT MI	9:30 AM
PJ'S, 1425 RENSEN, LANSING MI	10:00 AM
NORTHSIDE TOWING, 226 RUSSELL, LANSING, MI 48906	10:45 AM
H&H MOBILE TOWING, 1500 HASLETT RD. EAST LANSING, MI 48823	11:30 AM

ABANDONED VEHICLE SALE DEC 9, 2020

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2010 CHEV
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2012 FORD
2016 MAZDA
2016 FORD
2017 NISSAN
2004 CADIL
2011 CHEV
2015 DODGE

PJ TOWING

2018 MOPED
2004 MERCED
2002 TOYO
2017 MOPED
2011 KIA
2013 SUZU
2016 CHEV
2008 JEEP
2004 MERC

H&H TOWING

2004 CADIL
2019 MOPED
2005 CHEV

SHROYERS TOWING

2011 CHEV
2004 DODGE
2006 DODGE
2005 CHEV
2004 JEEP
2009 BUICK
1997 FORD
2014 TOYO
2014 GMC
2013 FORD

SWIFT TOWING

2011 CHEV

CP#20-302

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 23

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 23

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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Kombucha brewmaster opens brick and mortar shop

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Caley Gunthorpe is a physical education teacher, body-builder and personal fitness trainer that fell in love with the fizzy fermented health drink, kombucha. At first, brewing homemade batches was merely a hobby. It's since become another career and her company, Apple Blossom Kombucha, is preparing to open its first brick and mortar location in Lansing.

Gunthorpe first brewed kombucha in order to save money as a college student.

"I started drinking kombucha; making my own and selling it to my training clients. After doing it under the table, I decided to make it legit," she said.

In order for Apple Blossom Kombucha to become an LLC, Gunthorpe had to produce her beverages in a commercial kitchen. She rented kitchen space at the Allen Neighborhood Center, got the necessary licensing and began brewing and bottling a steady output of kombucha. It wasn't long before Gunthorpe became a regular in the Greater Lansing farmers market circuit.

"Kombucha has been around forever, but recently it's become the trend that everybody has heard of," Gunthorpe

Apple Blossom Kombucha

3415 E. Saginaw St.,
Lansing
Grand opening by
mid-December
AppleBlossom
Kombucha.com



said. "I started drinking it to help with my gut health while I was doing body-building shows."

Kombucha is well known for being tart and effervescent. It's brewed using a combination of tea, sugar, water and a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast. Gunthorpe makes it a point to use as many Michigan-made products as possible. Anything not grown in Michigan, such as tea or pineapples, is at the very least sourced from a Michigan-based company. Her most popular flavors are ginger, berry, botanical and seasonal offerings like pumpkin spice.

Gunthorpe said the most important element to nail down while brewing a batch of kombucha is tanginess. "It's just like beer. Every kombucha brewer



Courtesy Photo

Caley Gunthorpe of Apple Blossom Kombucha vending at a farmers market.

does it different. We all use different types of tea, sugar and flavoring. My kombucha isn't super tangy. I stand by using real fruits; it gives mine a much different taste than brews that use juice or syrup," Gunthorpe said.

Apple Blossom Kombucha's retail space is due to open in mid-December and it's located on Saginaw Street across from the Frandor Shopping Center.

Gunthorpe recommends kombucha for people seeking out a natural probiotic and for those who just want to try out something new that is locally produced.

"I work so hard to source everything from Michigan, that dollars spent here stay here. My kombucha supports our farmers; it's a full circle of support for everybody," she said.

Herbal soups

By ARI LeVAUX

Waiter, there's a salad in my soup
Last summer, I bought a pile of bitter eggplant at the farmers market. I'd never heard of it, but the green, red, yellow and orange wrinkled spheres drew me in. The farmer, an immigrant from the Laotian mountains, and the advice she gave me, sealed the deal.

She recommended two bitter eggplants for a large kettle of water, sliced in half and simmered with pork. And dill leaf, she added.

"When should I add the dill," I asked? "Cook it or add it fresh at the end?"

"Both," she said.

Cooking it with dill helps cover the extreme bitterness of the bitter eggplant. Adding dill at the end, where it can't cook for very long, adds addi-



tional kick.

My mom's chicken soup is anything but bitter, and includes a lot of cooked dill. And I like to add some fresh at the end, too.

You've probably tried pho, the Vietnamese soup famously served alongside a plate of herbs, sprouts and other raw fixings. The better pho restaurants will serve a differently formulated garnish plate with each flavor of pho. Andrea Nguyen, author of the James Beard award-winning "The Pho Cookbook," which I helped

recipe test, is a connoisseur of this auxiliary salad plate.

"Fresh herbs add vibrant color, flavor and aroma to pho," she told me. "Whether it's chopped cilantro in the bowl before the hot broth hits everything, or torn mint, Thai basil or culantro (AKA sawtooth, a type of Vietnamese herb) leaves added at the table, herbs are an essential part of the pho experience."

Posole, the brothy Mexican corn chile soup, is a lovely winter soup, similarly finished with a plate of fresh herbs and strong-flavored veggies such as cilantro leaves, chopped onions, and sliced radish. Chicken Kaeng Om, a dish from the northern mountains of Thailand, calls for a strong and complex broth flavored with lemongrass, galangal, turmeric root and chicken. That rich flavor is elevated to new heights with the final infusion of raw basil, dill, kaffir lime leaf, thin-sliced cabbage and spring

onion tops. Japanese nabemono, aka sour beef hot pot with fresh herbs, meanwhile, gets finished with basil, cilantro, mint and serrano pepper.

In winter, growing herbs indoors can be an easy way to keep fresh local greenery in your life. My supermarket sells potted basil and other herbs in the produce section, ready to grow on your windowsill, to be plucked as needed into your broth. And many of the vendors at my local farmers market sell herbs from heated greenhouses.

Herbs are full of oils and various oil-soluble aromatic compounds that disperse in the broth, permeating every sip and bite. Other raw vegetables like onions and peppers can similarly improve a broth. But not every herb or strong-flavored vegetable will be a winner in every bowl. The herbs and veggies you add to a soup should work together and with the broth. Dill may

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work in Mom's chicken soup and bitter eggplant broth, but that doesn't mean we want dill in the pho, where it would clash with the other flavors.

The easiest way to make herb soup is to get some broth, get some herbs, and start playing. Vegetables, meats, mushrooms, bones, and other soupy ingredients are allowed as well, just as long as the soup remains more brothy than chunky.

The best broth will always be homemade. Perhaps from the bones of a holiday carcass, or the bones from a rack of lamb. But there's no shame in using bouillon, pre-made stock, or simply your instant ramen of choice. From there, may the best herbs, and aromatic veggies, win.

Herbed Ramen

Camping in southern Nevada last week, I made a trip Las Vegas, where I found a bowl of oxtail pho at a restaurant called Viet Noodle Bar. I got it to go and brought it back to camp, where I reheated the oxtail in the broth. Then I added the noodles and served it with the many garnishes: basil, cilantro, sliced onions and jalapenos, a lime quarter and a pile of crunchy mung bean sprouts, along with hoisin and sriracha sauces in little packets. It was the best of all worlds: soup and salad, raw and cooked, wilderness and civilization.

During my Vegas run I also made a quick pilgrimage to Greenland Market in the Koreatown district, where I purchased some cutting-edge ramen, including Nongshim brand's non-fried noodle soup with dried anchovy paste and Samyang brand Chewy Chewy Su Tah ramen, among others. I had also loaded up on fresh herbs for the cooler.

Thus, I was ready to cook herbal soup from scratch in my camp, with ingredients I cobbled together from my cooler. It turned out great.

(Serves 2)

- 1 package high-end ramen
- 6 button mushrooms, sliced into quarters

- 1 carrot, chopped crudely
- 1 12-oz package of silken, non-refrigerated tofu, sliced into inch-sided cubes (one of these halves is probably enough)

- 1 egg
- Soy sauce, to taste
- 1 jalapeno pepper, sliced



Ari LeVaux

Ari LeVaux's herbal ramen.

1 bunch of cilantro, leaves stripped

Add an extra cup of water to the pot beyond what the ramen directions dictate. Add the flavor packets to the water and heat it on high. Add the carrots, mushrooms, tofu and noodles, and bring to a boil. Add the egg, cook for a minute and turn off the heat. Season with soy sauce, if necessary, and serve with cilantro leaves and jalapeno slices.

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



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