

# CityPULSE

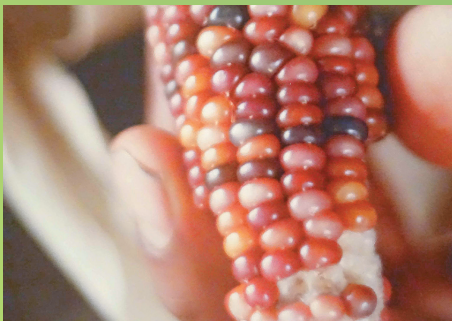
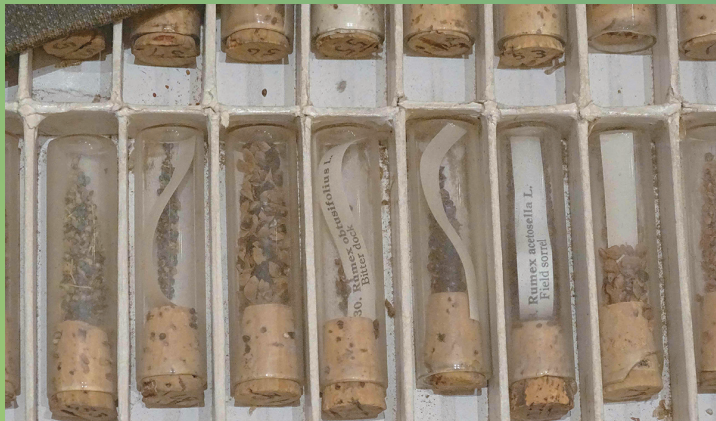
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A newspaper for the rest of us




## Seeds of spring at MSU

See page 14

# sidebar

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East Lansing



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**BEATS FOR YOU!**

## ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

MONTGOMERY DRAIN MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
DIVISION VI – WATER QUALITY FEATURES

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that I, Patrick Lindemann, Ingham County Drain Commissioner, being Chair of the Montgomery Drain Chapter 20 Drainage Board, will receive bids until **Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at 12:00 p.m.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Social Distancing protocols are being implemented for this Project by conducting a Virtual Bid Letting only and will only accept bids submitted through the QuestCDN website, unless further advised via Addendum. Bids relative to Division VI will then be opened and announced on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. and, after a meeting of the Montgomery Drain Drainage Board, will be publicly awarded for work to be undertaken in connection with a drain known and designated as the "Montgomery Drain."

To attend the Bid Opening, call +1 517-507-3834 Conference ID: 335 217 403# OR copy the following URL into your browser to join the meeting with video capability:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/j/97047137864?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2273cd70a6-595b-42b5-b9be-ed36192d7d69%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b988aee-f2d8-4511-ac27-0d4c88b78953%22%7d>

The major items of work in connection with construction of the Montgomery Drain and coordination of work for other permitted activities within Division VI include the following:

1. Excavation – Approx. 360 Cu. Yd.
2. Boulder Installation – Approx. 220 Tons
3. Pond Liner – Approx. 3000 Sq. Ft.
4. Retaining Walls – Approx. 210 Lin. Ft.
5. Various Concrete Work – Approx. 3700 Sq. Ft.
6. Flagstone Channel – Approx. 420 Sq. Ft.
7. Restoration and Landscaping

All quantities listed are approximate and final payment will be made on measured quantities.

Bidders wishing to download the Plans and Specifications at a cost of \$30.00 (which includes the cost of bid submission) may do so by going to the Bidding section of the Spicer Group, Inc. website at [www.spicergroup.com](http://www.spicergroup.com). You may view and download the digital project bidding documents by entering Quest Project Number **7683202** on the website's project search page. Please contact Quest CDN Customer Support at (952) 233-1632 or [info@questcdn.com](mailto:info@questcdn.com) for assistance in free membership registration, downloading, and working with the digital project information.

**A MANDATORY pre-bid conference will be held on Tuesday, March 30, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 Social Distancing protocols, this pre-bid conference will be conducted via video and telephone conference only. Call: +1 517-507-3834 Conference ID: 607 381 808# OR copy the following URL into your browser to join the meeting with video and plan sheet viewing capability:**

<https://teams.microsoft.com/j/97047137864?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2273cd70a6-595b-42b5-b9be-ed36192d7d69%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b988aee-f2d8-4511-ac27-0d4c88b78953%22%7d>

Representatives of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner and Engineer will be available at the pre-bid conference to discuss the Drain Contract. Prospective Bidders are required to attend and participate in the pre-bid conference. Attendance will be taken. All prospective bidders will also be required to submit a certification of compliance with Public Act 517 of 2012 prior to bid award. Only bids from Bidders in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be opened. All other bids will be considered non-responsive and will be disqualified from bidding on the Drain Contract. The Engineer will transmit to all prospective Bidders of record such Addenda as the Engineer considers necessary in response to questions. Oral statements may not be relied upon and will not be binding or legally effective. Use the Bid Worksheet on QuestCDN for submittal of bids. **You must download the Contract Documents from QuestCDN to bid on the project, to be included on the plan holders list, and to receive Addenda.** The Contractor is responsible for ensuring all addenda have been received and acknowledged prior to submittal of the bid.

Bid security in the amount of 5%, for and subject to the conditions provided in the Instruction to Bidders, must be submitted through the QuestCDN site with each Bid. Bids may not be withdrawn for a period of 90 days after the actual date of opening thereof. This time period may be extended by mutual agreement of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner and any Bidders.

Contracts will be entered into with the successful bidder giving adequate security for the performance of the work and meeting all conditions represented in the Instructions to Bidders. The Montgomery Drain Chapter 20 Drainage Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids, award the Contract to any bidder for any reason, and to adjourn the letting to such time and place as it shall publicly announce.

Bidders shall comply with the Ingham County policies regarding the payment of Prevailing Wages, and Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination, as set forth in Ingham County Board of Commissioners Resolutions #02-263 and #02-283, respectively. The work must be substantially complete by September 1, 2022.

CP#21-057

## ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

MONTGOMERY DRAIN MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
DIVISION XII – RANNEY PARK, 2021

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that I, Patrick Lindemann, Ingham County Drain Commissioner, being Chair of the Montgomery Drain Chapter 20 Drainage Board, will receive bids until **Wednesday, April 21, 2021, at 11:00 a.m.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Social Distancing protocols are being implemented for this Project by conducting a Virtual Bid Letting only and will only accept bids submitted through the QuestCDN website, unless further advised via Addendum. Bids relative to Division XII will then be publicly opened and announced on Wednesday, April 21, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. and, after a meeting of the Montgomery Drain Drainage Board, may be publicly awarded for work to be undertaken in connection with a drain known and designated as the "Montgomery Drain." The format of the Bid Opening will be via video and telephone conference, and available through the following link and telephone conference number:

Link for Bid Opening:  
<https://zoom.us/j/97047137864>  
Or Dial  
+1 646 558 8656  
Meeting ID: 970 4713 7864

The major items of work in connection with construction of the Montgomery Drain and coordination of work for other permitted activities within Division XII include the following:

- 235 linear feet of 30-inch RCP storm sewer
- 76 linear feet of 54-inch RCP storm sewer
- 520 linear feet of 48-inch PVC storm sewer
- 210 linear feet of 16-inch ductile iron pipe forcemain
- 3 water supply manholes with varying valve types and sizes
- 910 square yards of 6-inch concrete sidewalk
- 3,800 square yards of 8-foot wide asphalt pathway
- 1 lump sum concrete water quality wall
- 1 lump sum concrete walkway and water quality aeration pool
- 1 lump sum public education pavilion
- 4 lump sum water quality aeration pools with associated electrical & plumbing
- 3 lump sum drain crossing boardwalk structures
- 4,000 square yards of HMA parking lot restoration
- 350 linear feet of various concrete and stone retaining walls
- Also includes all site features, plumbing, electric, SESC, restoration, removals, and various stormwater facilities

All quantities listed are approximate and final payment will be made on measured quantities.

One contract is being let for this work, which will include all material necessary to perform same. This contract will be let in accordance with the Contract Documents and bids will be made and received in accordance with these documents.

Bidders wishing to download the Plans and Specifications at a cost of \$30.00 (which includes the cost of bid submission) may do so by downloading digital project bidding documents by entering **Quest Project Number 7633504** on the website's project search page, or by using this link: [https://qap.questcdn.com/qap/projects/prj\\_browse/ipp\\_browse\\_grid.html?projType=all&provider=6901061&group=6901061](https://qap.questcdn.com/qap/projects/prj_browse/ipp_browse_grid.html?projType=all&provider=6901061&group=6901061).

Please contact QuestCDN Customer Support at (952) 233-1632 or [info@questcdn.com](mailto:info@questcdn.com) for assistance in free membership registration, downloading, and working with the digital project information. Bidding documents are also available at [www.geiconsultants.com](http://www.geiconsultants.com) (click on the "GEI Bidding" link).

**A MANDATORY pre-bid conference will be held on April 7, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. Due to the COVID-19 Social Distancing protocols, this pre-bid conference will be conducted via video and telephone conference only. Please find the Zoom link and call-in information below.**

Link for MANDATORY Pre-Bid Conference:  
<https://zoom.us/j/95865316170>  
Or Dial  
+1 312 626 6799  
Meeting ID: 958 6531 6170

Representatives of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner and Engineer will be available at the pre-bid conference to discuss the Drain Contract. Prospective Bidders are required to attend and participate in the pre-bid conference. All prospective Bidders must "sign in" by providing the name of the attendee, business represented, and email address. All prospective bidders will also be required to submit a certification of compliance with Public Act 517 of 2012 prior to bid award. Only bids from Bidders in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be opened. All other bids will be considered non-responsive and will be disqualified from bidding on the Drain Contract. The Engineer will transmit to all prospective Bidders of record such Addenda as the Engineer considers necessary in response to questions. Oral statements may not be relied upon and will not be binding or legally effective. Use the Bid Form on QuestCDN for submittal of bids. **You must download the Contract Documents from QuestCDN to bid on the project, to be included on the plan holders list, and to receive Addenda.** The Contractor is responsible for ensuring all addenda have been received and acknowledged prior to submittal of the bid. The Contractor is responsible for paying the fee to place a bid via QuestCDN.

Bid security in the amount of 5%, for and subject to the conditions provided in the Instructions to Bidders, must be submitted through the QuestCDN site with each Bid. Bids may not be withdrawn for a period of 90 days after the actual date of opening thereof. This time period may be extended by mutual agreement of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner and any Bidders.

Contracts will be entered into with the successful bidder giving adequate security for the performance of the work and meeting all conditions represented in the Instructions to Bidders. The Montgomery Drain Chapter 20 Drainage Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids, award the Contract to any bidder for any reason, and to adjourn the letting to such time and place as it shall publicly announce.

Bidders shall comply with the Ingham County policies regarding the payment of Prevailing Wages, and Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination, as set forth in Ingham County Board of Commissioners Resolutions #02-263 and #02-283, respectively. The work must be substantially complete by October 30, 2021.

CP#21-058

# LOOK WHO'S BANKROLLING...

# AMERICA'S HORNIEST MAYOR!



KRIS NICHOLOFF, CEO AND LOBBYIST: \$1,000  
 ELIZABETH JONES, DTN STUDENT RENTALS: \$2,000  
 PAUL FRICK, D.C. CONSULTANT: \$1,000  
 JOSEPH MANZELLA II, DIRECTOR, QUICKEN LOANS: \$1,000  
 SAGAR SETH, CEO, MOEBIUS: \$1,000  
 KEVIN SCOTT, FAST FOOD ENTREPRENEUR: \$1,000  
 JANE HOURANI, HOMEMAKER: \$1,000  
 WILLIAM DEMMER, CEO, DEMMER CORP.: \$1,000  
 MICHAEL MARKS, CEO, E.T. MACKENZIE: \$1,000

EARDMENT MACKENZIE, CHAIRMAN, E.T. MACKENZIE: \$2,100  
 EDGER HARDEN, CEO, CAPITOL NATIONAL BANK: \$500  
 STEVE CALVERLEY, CEO, MAPLEGROVE PROPERTY MGMT: \$500  
 VAN MARTIN, CEO, MARTIN COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES: \$1,000  
 KRISTIN CARLTON, OWNER, CLEAN CLEANING LLC: \$1,500  
 AMANDA SHAMOON, UNEMPLOYED: \$1,500  
 PAUL BROWN, REALTOR, KELLER WILLIAMS: \$2,100

(WATCH THIS SPACE IN JULY FOR A COMPLETE LIST!)

Source: Virg Bernero for Lansing 2020 campaign finance report, ingham.org

**EXCLUSIVE: BERNERO FACES SEXUAL HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS**  
City Pulse, 3/2/21

**Survivor: former three-term mayor 'still a danger to women' in 2021**

City Pulse, 3/10/21

**Report: Former Lansing mayor faces sexual harassment allegations**  
WOOD-TV, 3/3/21

**Criticism mounts against Bernero over sexual harassment claims**  
City Pulse, 3/4/21

Paid for by Michigan Deserves Better,  
PO Box 14222, Lansing, MI 48901

### Border Blather

SUDDENLY PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT A "BORDER CRISIS" DESPITE THE NUMBER OF MIGRANTS BEING NOT VERY UNUSUAL.

### SO... A CRISIS FOR WHO, EXACTLY?

JUST FLEEING CERTAIN DEATH, SORRY!

ACTUAL CRISIS

### AND WASN'T THERE A CRISIS BEFORE?

YES, THERE WERE SQUALID REFUGEE CAMPS AND APPALLING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

BUT THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED "INVASION" NARRATIVE!

NATTERING NOGGINS

### MEANWHILE, A MASSIVE WAVE OF VOTER SUPPRESSION IS SWEEPING THE COUNTRY.

HELLO! REAL CRISIS OVER HERE!

NO JIM CROW

CAN ANYBODY HEAR ME?

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# CityPULSE

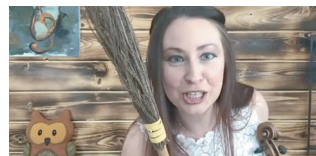
## VOL. 20 ISSUE 33

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Lansing families host unaccompanied minors

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Lansing Symphony brings back children's series

PAGE 24



Flash in the Pan: Tea-dyed eggs

PAGE 25



Photo by Lawrence Cosentino

Cover Art

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# CITY PULSE

on the AIR

NOW AT 10:00 A.M.  
SUNDAYS on

WDBM  
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88.9FM

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

WELCOME BACK TO THE EXTREMELY PATRIOTIC ALL-AMERICAN NEWS NETWORK! OUR TOP STORY THIS HOUR: THE WHITE MAN WHO KILLED SIX ASIAN WOMEN AND TWO OTHER PEOPLE AT ASIAN-RUN BUSINESSES SAYS HE IS NOT RACIST!

THAT'S A RELIEF, BECAUSE OF COURSE THERE IS NO RACISM IN THIS SOCIETY!

AND THEREFORE, NO NEED TO ADDRESS RACISM!

EPAANN

BREAKING: WE DON'T EVEN SEE

THE KILLER, WHO IS SAID TO BE A SOFT-SPOKEN CHURCHGOER, SAYS HE WAS WRESTLING WITH A SEX ADDICTION! THEREFORE THIS CANNOT BE A HATE CRIME, BECAUSE REASONS!

ANYWAY, IF YOU CAN'T TRUST A MASS MURDERER TO RATIONALLY EXPLAIN HIS OWN MOTIVATIONS, WHO CAN YOU TRUST?

RACE • WE ARE JUST CONCERNED

HE ALSO SAID HE WAS HAVING A REALLY BAD DAY, ACCORDING TO A SHERIFF'S SPOKESPERSON WHO INCIDENTALLY ENJOYS POSTING AMUSING "CHINA VIRUS" MEMES TO FACEBOOK!

AS ONE DOES! WHERE'S THE HARM IN THAT?

ABOUT CONFEDERATE STATUES •

THERE ARE DEFINITELY NO CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE SPIKE IN ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE WHICH HAS ALLEGEDLY OCCURRED SINCE FORMER PRESIDENT TRUMP STARTED BLAMING THE VIRUS ON CHINA!

LIKE THEY ALWAYS SAY IN THE COMMENTS, CORRELATION DOES NOT EQUAL CAUSATION! PARTICULARLY IN THIS CASE!

AND VOTER FRAUD • AND SCARY

AND WHILE LIBERALS ARE FIXATED ON RACE AT THE MOMENT, WE SHOULD PRE-EMPTIVELY NOTE THAT GUN CONTROL WOULD NOT WORK, AND THERE'S NO POINT IN EVEN TRYING!

WHY DO WE HAVE LAWS, EVEN? PEOPLE WILL JUST BREAK THEM!

BUT WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT ANY OF THIS--

MIGRANT HORDES • AND OTHER

--WHEN THE PERVERSIVE MENACE OF CANCEL CULTURE THREATENS THE VERY FABRIC OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION?

IT SHOULD BE EVERY PATRIOT'S TOP CONCERN!

AT LEAST, UNTIL WE THINK OF SOMETHING BETTER!

TOTALLY NON-RACIST STUFF • LOL

I MISS BEN-GHAZI!

THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

Tom Tomorrow © 2021... www.thismodernworld.com... twitter.com/tomtomorrow

PULSE

NEWS &amp; OPINION

# Governing Lansing

Where you stand on an issue often depends on where you sit. And so it is with the occasional urge to change Lansing's mayor-council form of city government to a council-manager form of government. It's a question that pops up every few years but has never gained much traction as an alternative to the capital city's longstanding approach to municipal governance. (See page 11 in today's edition for our related story.)

For the unfamiliar, Lansing's mayor-council system of governance — also known as a “strong mayor” system — is led by a popularly elected mayor who serves as the city's chief executive officer. The mayor is solely responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city and hires, with council approval, a staff of professionals to manage the various city departments. The Council controls the annual budget and establishes city policies by passing resolutions and ordinances.

The council-manager governance model is altogether different. Chosen by the elected council from among its members, the mayor is the most visible public official of the city but with no more operational authority than any other member of council. The position is largely ceremonial. To run the city's day-to-day operations, the council hires a professional city manager, who in turn hires qualified people to run the departments. The council-manager model is used in East Lansing, with mixed results. While the city appears to be efficiently run in most respects, East Lansing struggles to define its identity, fumbles through its economic development initiatives, and frequently has an unnecessarily contentious relationship with Michigan State University.

While city manager systems can be more efficient, one downside is that the manager has as many bosses as there are council members. It is said that city managers are more insulated from the changing winds of politics, but we're not sure that's always the case. The fact that the manager can be fired by the council at any time means they must bend to the will of council members in an effort to keep a majority satisfied with their performance. We're also reminded of the expression that when everyone is in charge, no one is in charge.

There are considerable merits to keeping the system we have now. Lansing's best days in the past 30 years have been under the direction of a strong mayor who knew how to get the job done — David Hollister and Virg Bernero both come to mind. Lansing's arguably worst days have been at the hands of weaker mayors who tried to fill a position that requires strength — Tony Benavides and, thus far, Andy Schor fit that mold.



## The CP Edit

### Opinion

Chatter about changing Lansing's system of governance pops up most often when people are dissatisfied with the decisions made by their elected leaders or have some animus toward a particular public official. Most recently, the candidacy of Bernero, who is seeking a fourth term as mayor, has renewed the conversation. Whatever feelings one might have toward Bernero, we're not convinced that a decision to change forms of government in Lansing should be driven by the politics or personalities of the moment.

When all is said and done, we continue to believe that the optimal governing model for Lansing is a strong mayor who provides visionary leadership, an engaged council that pays attention to the details and holds the executive accountable, and capable managers who run the city departments. On balance, we favor the mayor-council form of government because it provides executive leadership that is directly accountable to the people every four years, just like the governor, rather than a part-time council with no particular expertise in municipal government directing the work of a city manager.

The reality is that either form of government can work and work well, but both of them depend on the quality of leadership elected by the people. As we learned over the course of four torturous years, national leadership by a

singularly unqualified individual without the slightest idea how to run the federal government was an unmitigated disaster. In contrast, four years of a strong governor with a strong team have served Michigan quite well through some of the most challenging times the state and its people have ever faced.

And thus, once again, the quality of leadership at any level of government depends mightily on voter's making smart choices. Cynics might opine that the people can't be trusted to make those decisions, but we continue to have faith in the collective wisdom of the people as expressed through their votes. When they err, our democratic system provides a corrective mechanism — the next election.

It's said that in a democracy, you get the government you vote for. Some would say you get the government you deserve. When less than one quarter of city voters participate in municipal elections, we're not convinced that the people of Lansing are especially concerned about the city's form of government. They are vastly more interested in getting the roads fixed, trash being picked up on time, and a quick response if they need help from the police or fire department. We believe both forms of government are capable of delivering on those needs.

With respect to strong mayor vs. city manager systems, Governing magazine once noted that “political problems being largely problems of human nature, no arrangement of duties is going to solve them all.”

We concur.

Send letters to the editor to [letters@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:letters@lansingcitypulse.com).  
Please limit them to 250 words

## LETTERS to the editor

### 'I'm with Whoopi'

I see that a list of current Bernero for Lansing contributors has been published within an ad in your March 17 issue, with an accompanying story.

In the Fall of 2019, in response to a demand from Hollywood stars that a list be published of all contributors to a Trump fund-

raiser held in Los Angeles at that time, Whoopi Goldberg said on her program "The View":

"Do not encourage people to print out lists, because the next list that comes out, your name will be on, and then people will be coming after YOU."

I'm with Whoopi.

**T.E. Klunzinger  
Haslett**

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

Now you have two ways to sound off:

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

- E-mail: [letters@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:letters@lansingcitypulse.com)
- Snail mail: City Pulse, 1905 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48912
- Fax: (517) 371-5800
- At [lansingcitypulse.com](http://lansingcitypulse.com)

### 2.) Write a guest column:

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

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

# An alumni perspective on Okemos' 'Chieftain' mascot

By **AUDREY MATUSZ**  
**OPINION**



(Audrey Matusz is a 2014 graduate of Okemos High School and serves as a member of the Superintendent's Mascot Recommendation Committee. She is a former City Pulse arts editor.)

Last summer, nearly 1,000 Okemos High School students and alumni signed a petition calling for the school to finish what it started. In addition to demanding a new mascot, the petition also called for a third-party evaluation of the Okemos Public Schools' 2016-2019 equity plan.

The district's passive strategies to combat systemic racism looked like halfhearted apologies and lazy diversity initiatives. As an OPS alumni, I am tired of hearing from young men and women of color about the racial harassment they experienced in this district. Changing the Okemos mascot is an opportunity to reeducate white constituents to prepare them for the multiracial, multi-national world outside of the 517 area code.

In 2011, Michigan State University professors and local tribal members were invited to the high school for a recorded panel discussion addressing the school's logo. Last year, I was asked to join the superintendent's mascot recommendation committee. The apprehension toward changing the mascot ranges from costliness for the athletic program to concern for the emotional well-being of white students. While I am not indigenous and I do not identify as an "Okemos Chief," my concern with the lack of action on this issue is this: If a district can blatantly ignore the documented requests of people of color, what really happens behind closed doors?

One morning, I witnessed my Black mother be assaulted by a white man whom she had never met. When she retaliated, a pattern was identified that stuck with me. And it has only replayed.

When a Black woman says she has had enough to a white male

aggressor, she is overpowered by his self-righteousness. When she retaliates, she runs the risk of losing her livelihood. Back in 2003, my mother's throwing a single left-handed jab fueled out of self-defense fueled unrest in the Okemos school district and required years of litigation, fines and social blacklisting.

According to the Okemos Education Foundation's website, in 1996 Catherine Ash was named director of human resources in Okemos. After leading the HR department for seven years, she assumed additional responsibilities in finance and became the deputy superintendent. Ash left the position in 2017 but continued to "actively" be involved and provided leadership for many district committees tackling "strategic planning," "long-range planning" and "minority recruiting" — to name a few. Based on my family's private narrative, the negative experiences lived and shared by OPS alum and our collective memory of Okemos' legacy of curricular failings, it has become clear to us that any equity plan launched under the Ash administration was implemented without sincerity.

Last summer, current and former students were shocked to find the district's 2016-2019 equity plan exists without requiring legal representation for students facing expulsion, without detailed restorative justice practices to avoid expulsion trials, and without naming specific forms of discrimination — such as xenophobia or Islamophobia. It is clear this antiquated mascot is symbolic of a much larger issue at OPS, where administrators lack the education and cultural competence to lead diversity initiatives and empower their constituents of color.

If a school district can't agree on a symbol that accurately represents and respects the greater community, let alone Michigan natives, how can it possibly serve as a leader in education at a state level? Selecting a new mascot could become the humbling, community-building exercise that helps this school district heal and reevaluate its identity from being "The Best" to just being.

### CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

#### PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED STATE AND FEDERAL APPLICATIONS FOR OPERATING, CAPITAL ASSISTANCE AND PUBLIC HEARING

All citizens are advised that CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY ("CATA") has prepared an application for State of Michigan ("State") financial assistance for fiscal year 2022 as required under Act 51 of the Public Acts of 1951, as amended, and for federal assistance as required under the federal transit laws, as amended, as follows:

State Operating Assistance	\$	16,824,253
FTA/State Urban Capital Program (Section 5307)	\$	8,658,341
State Specialized Services	\$	46,828
FTA Rural Operating Assistance (Section 5311)	\$	476,843
FTA/State Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339)	\$	1,079,515
FTA/State Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality	\$	342,162
FTA/State Enhanced Mobility (Section 5310)	\$	484,370
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>27,912,312</b>

Operating and capital funds listed above include both urban and rural funds. Capital projects to be funded include the purchase of large and small buses, paratransit vehicles for transporting customers and support vehicles; preventive maintenance, technology systems, planning, maintenance equipment, bus replacement parts, safety and security system, customer enhancements and facility improvements. This notice meets the Federal Transit Administration 5307 public notification requirement. The above program will be the final program, unless amended.

CATA ensures that the level and quality of transportation service is provided without regard to race, color or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For more information regarding our Title VI obligations or to file a complaint, please contact our Deputy CEO at the address below.

The proposed application is on file at CATA, 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing, and may be reviewed during a 30-day period (March 21, 2021 – April 20, 2021), Monday – Friday, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Written comments regarding the application and/or written requests for a public hearing to review the application must be received by 5 p.m. April 20, 2021. If a hearing is requested, notice of the scheduled date, time and location will be provided at least 10 days in advance.

Submittals should be sent to CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY, FY 2022 Grant Application, Attn: Grants Department, 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing, MI 48910 or via email to [marketing@cata.org](mailto:marketing@cata.org)

CP#21-049

# Practicality trumps politics as Hertel appointment goes thru

In a purely political environment, there's no way the Republican-led

**OPINION**

Senate would have



**KYLE MELINN**

**POLITICS**

allowed the governor's appointment of a new head of the Department of Health and Human Services to stand.

Elizabeth Hertel, despite her resume and deep political connections in state government, would have been dumped as a casualty of this hyper-political environment. The Legislature has few indisputable and unchallenged powers. Canning gubernatorial appointments is one of them.

Lawmakers have used that power as recently as two months ago. The Republican Senate unapologetically rejected a sex abuse and human tracking assistant prosecutor as the state's next Children's Ombudsman, for Pete's sake. The Senate majority leader admitted at the time it was to make a political point.

Nothing has changed since then. Rejecting the state's chief public health official over being shut out of the governor's COVID-19 response seems as automatic as getting a kick from a reflex hammer to the knee.

Hertel, wife of state Sen Curtis Hertel Jr., D-East Lansing, is on the same page with the governor on just about everything. She's not declaring any of the DHHS' prior COVID-19 reactions as mistakes.

Not the decision to allow COVID-positive patients back into nursing home. Not the contact tracing contract with a company with Democratic political connections. Not the arguably uneven restrictions on what the public can and cannot do to prevent the coronavirus' spread.

And, yet, when a vote was put on the board to approve Hertel's appointment, Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey — the person who admitted to Hillsdale activists that he fantasized about challenging the Governor to a fist on the Capitol lawn — was a "yes."

It's not because Shirkey's relationship with the governor is on the

mend. It's not. It's not even because Shirkey is trying to mend the relationship. He's not.

The reason is simple. DHHS is the most important state department in these pandemic times — and Whitmer isn't going to pick anyone better.

Anybody she picks will be lockstep with her. Not only that, she could avoid the whole Senate advice and consent process by simply hiring an interim to serve for an indefinite amount of time.

The governor could rotate her deputies at DHHS in and out as interim directors, giving her even more power over the department than she does now.

No, as much as Senate R's wanted to stick it to the governor again, the leaders allowed practicality to trump politics. It's a rare exception to the rule. I can't say it's going to happen again. But on March 22, it did.

"My vote in favor of Elizabeth Hertel's appointment does not reflect agreement with her decisions as deputy director and now as director of MDHHS, but rather my belief that her background and expertise make her qualified for the job," Shirkey said.

Hertel returns his phone calls. She returns all of his members' calls. She's responsive, even if it's not always the answer he wants to hear.

Also, the Senate has a new chairman of the DHHS budget committee in Sen. Rick Outman. Outman's staff has worked with Hertel for years and reportedly has a positive rapport that will ease that senator's transition to one of the most complex jobs in the Legislature.

Hertel isn't a rabid partisan. One of her first jobs in Lansing was working for the House Republican policy staff with Shirkey's predecessor in the Senate.

Anybody Whitmer would pick as a replacement to Hertel would be a downgrade, causing more of a long-term pain that would have worse than the short-term praise and admiration Shirkey & Co. would have received the grassroots conservatives.

Also, Hertel's husband is a state senator. I know it's all big boys and girls in the Senate, but we're human, too. Sen. Hertel would have kept a

stiff upper lip if his colleagues voted his wife out of a job. But how weird would that have been?

Hertel actually works with Republicans to get stuff done. Does the majority really want to damage one of their last direct conduits to the governor?

No. They don't. It's a sign practicality can still win in those rare cases and bipartisanship in Lansing isn't completely dead.

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

**CITY OF LANSING  
NOTICE OF REGISTRATION  
FOR THE TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021 SPECIAL ELECTION**

To the qualified electors of the City of Lansing:

Please take notice that the City of Lansing will hold an Election on Tuesday, May 4, 2021.

**For the purpose of voting on the following proposals:**

- Holt School District Bonding Proposal
- Waverly School District Bonding Proposal

Full text of the proposals can be found at [www.lansingvotes.com](http://www.lansingvotes.com)

Any qualified elector who is not already registered, may register to vote at the office of the Lansing City Clerk, the office of their County Clerk, a Secretary of State Branch office, or other designated state agency. Registration forms may be obtained at [www.Michigan.gov/vote](http://www.Michigan.gov/vote) and mailed to or dropped off at the office of the Lansing City Clerk. Any qualified elector that has a Michigan Driver's License or Personal ID can also register to vote at [www.Michigan.gov/vote](http://www.Michigan.gov/vote). Voters who are already registered may update their voter registration at [www.Michigan.gov/vote](http://www.Michigan.gov/vote).

The last day to register in any manner other than in-person with the Lansing City Clerk's Office is **Monday, April 19, 2021**. After this date, anyone who qualifies as an elector may register to vote in person with proof of residency (MCL 168.492) at the following locations and times:

Location	Address	Regular Business Hours
Lansing City Clerk - City Hall	124 W. Michigan Ave. Lansing, MI 48933	Mon - Fri 8am - 5pm
Lansing City Clerk - Election Unit	2500 S. Washington Ave. Lansing, MI 48910	Mon - Fri 8am - 5pm

**Additional times outside of the above listed regular business hours are as follows:**

Location	Address	Additional Hours
Lansing City Clerk - City Hall	124 W. Michigan Ave Lansing, MI 48933	Election Day Sat. May 4 7am-8pm
Lansing City Clerk - Election Unit	2500 S. Washington Ave. Lansing, MI 48910	Saturday May 1 10am - 2pm  Sunday May 2 12pm - 4pm  Election Day May 4 7am - 8pm

**ABSENT VOTER BALLOTS**  
Any registered voter may request an Absent Voter Ballot. No reason required.

The Lansing City Clerk's Office must have an application to issue an Absent Voter Ballot. Applications are available at the locations referenced in the above tables or by visiting our website at [lansingmi.gov/clerk](http://lansingmi.gov/clerk).

Monday, May 3, 2021 at 4:00 pm is the deadline to request an absentee ballot except for those who register to vote on Election Day. Ballots issued on Monday, May 3, 2021 must be requested and voted in person at the Lansing City Clerk's Office, locations referenced in the above table.

Those registering to vote on Election Day, Tuesday, May 4, 2021, are eligible to receive an absent voter ballot at the Lansing City Clerk's Office, locations referenced in the above table.

**Chris Swope, MMC/MIPMC**  
Lansing City Clerk  
Phone: 517-483-4131  
Email: [city.clerk@lansingmi.gov](mailto:city.clerk@lansingmi.gov)  
Website: [www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk](http://www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk)  
[www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope](https://www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope)

**CP#21-056**



The first person to correctly identify the last Eye for Design was Vic Sharrock. That detail was part of the mural behind the Meijer Capital City Market (below) at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Larch Street. It was painted by artist Brian Whitfield and features bright images of fruits and vegetables, which reflect the store's commitment to stocking fresh produce.

This month's Eye for Design (above) looks like breezeblock from the street, but upon closer inspection is revealed to be made up of colored tiles. This detail can be found on the campus of Michigan State University. If you can identify it, send an email to carriesampson@micourthistory.org and you could win an Eye for Design mug from the City Pulse.

— **CARRIE SAMPSON**



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

# REWIND

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By **KYLE KAMINSKI**



### City Council returns to City Hall

In-person Committee of the Whole and City Council meetings will return to Lansing April 14, though its members and the public may participate remotely. The chambers in City Hall will only accommodate 25 people. An overflow space will be opened in the lobby. Other committee meetings are expected to continue virtually for the foreseeable future.

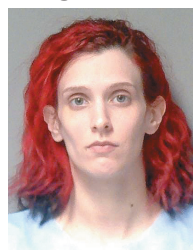
### Developers buy Lansing Mall

Kohan Retail Investment Group, a New-York based company, purchased the Lansing Mall last week, reports the Lansing State Journal. The sale comes fewer than six months after the 81-acre site hit the market. Additional details were unavailable. Kohan reportedly has a portfolio of nearly 40 malls and shopping centers nationally.

ing is reportedly available for "the right person" with good credit and a \$100,000 downpayment. A property listing on Facebook cites a "proven track record and a very profitable business."

### Woman facing shooting charges

Ashley Nicole Person, 30, was charged with assault with intent to murder after authorities said she shot a 23-year-old woman — who remains in critical condition — near the 2100 block of Forest Road on Sunday afternoon. Person, who also faces a felony firearm charge, remains jailed on a \$100,000 cash or surety bond with an April 1 hearing scheduled in 54-A District Court.



Person

### Aquatic Center closed this summer

The East Lansing Family Aquatic Center on Abbott Road plans to reopen again in 2022. City officials cited a need for renovations and lingering uncertainties tied to the pandemic — including difficulties hiring lifeguards and planning capacity limitations.



### Car plant honored for energy efficiency

General Motors received an Energy Star certification for its Lansing assembly plant, naming it among dozens of others in the Midwest as among the most energy efficient in their industries.

### Election season continues in Lansing

Council members Jeremy Garza and Brian Jackson announced their reelection campaigns ahead of next month's filing deadline for the August primary. Council President Peter Spadafore and Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar also have terms expiring this year, though only Dunbar has announced plans to file. Mayor Andy Schor and City Clerk Chris Swope are also up for reelection in November. Garza claims to be "overwhelmingly favored" to retain his seat representing the 2nd Ward. Jackson is running on a record of social justice advocacy and a "record of respect towards all."

### Neogen pisses off south Lansing

Residents voiced frustrations after Neogen erected a fence around its facility at 3400 S. Cedar Street last month, consequently limiting access to a busy shopping plaza and public library at the corner of Holmes Road and Cedar. [Check lansingcitypulse.com](http://Check.lansingcitypulse.com) for more.

### Whitmer honors Atlanta victims

Flags were ordered to half-staff to honor and remember the eight victims of the recent shooting in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Whitmer labeled the murders of six Asian-American women as a "senseless" national tragedy, admonishing the incident as a racially motivated hate crime.



Whitmer

### Arctic Corner up for sale

The beloved ice cream shop in Old Town hit the market for \$440,000, though financ-





# State orders allow crowds to return to Jackson Field

## Vaccine eligibility expands to all on April 5

Outdoor stadiums and sports arenas can now allow up to 20% of their usual capacities under newly loosened restrictions from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. And that means about 1,500 people will likely be able to return to Jackson Field, the home of the Lansing Lugnuts — which kicks off its 2021 baseball season with a home game May 4.

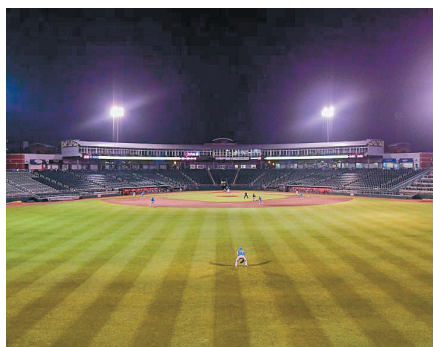
Gov. Gretchen Whitmer billed the extra capacity allowances as an “important step toward normalcy,” but she warned that recently rising caseloads indicate the pandemic still isn’t over. She also encouraged all residents to get vaccinated when eligibility expands to everyone on April 5.

Stadiums and arenas must establish and publicly post an infection control plan before they reopen, as well as administer a testing program for athletes before games. Local and state health officials must also be able to review those plans one week before each game.

The Lugnuts already have a comprehensive COVID-19 plan for this year published online, which includes cashless payments, socially distanced seating and increased sanitation. Staff and guests at the ballpark will also be expected to wear face masks at all times on site.

The expanded state order also increases weekly testing for athletes ages 13-19 to safely participate in sports as more school districts across the state return to in-person learning.

Additional changes to state epidem-



Lansing Lugnuts will play in front of crowds this year at Jackson Field.

ic orders also require residential care facilities to accommodate indoor and outdoor visitation, as long as the facility hasn’t detected a new COVID-19 case in the last 14 days. Visitors will still be required to wear face masks and maintain a social distance. The order also requires residents be kept abreast of new cases.

### In related news...

Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist visited Ford Field alongside members of Congress this week, which opens as Michigan’s first federal community vaccination site today. Plans call for up to 6,000 doses per day to be administered for eight weeks, immunizing more than 300,000 people.

To date, Michigan has administered more than 3.4 million vaccines, including more than 100,000 in the tri-county Greater Lansing region. State health officials have a set goal of at least 50,000 shots per day with plans to vaccinate 70% of the population “as soon as possible.”

Ford Field will be open from 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. daily. All eligible residents can sign up to receive a shot.

## CORONAVIRUS IN MICHIGAN BY THE NUMBERS...

**WEEK 53**

Michigan				Eaton County		
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
3/16/21	612,628	15,810	3,084,284	5,938	153	38,297
3/16/21	633,191	15,919	3,652,762	6,173	157	45,152
Weekly Change	↑3.4%	↑0.7%	↑18.4%	↑3.4%	↑2.6%	↑17.9%

Greater Lansing				Clinton Co.		
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
3/16/21	26,822	504	152,211	4,594	68	21,989
3/23/21	27,754	513	177,410	4,729	70	25,311
Weekly Change	↑3.5%	↑1.6%	↑16.6%	↑2.9%	↑2.9%	↑15.1%

Ingham County			
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
3/16/21	16,290	283	91,925
3/23/21	16,852	286	106,947
Weekly Change	↑3.4%	↑1.1%	↑16.3%

The “Vaccines” category refers to the total number of doses administered to patients that reported living within each jurisdiction, according to state data. Patients require two doses.

This week, that eligibility criteria expanded to include anyone over 50, as well as ages 16-49 with disabilities or pre-existing conditions, which also includes cigarette smokers.

A virtual town hall designed to answer lingering questions about the vaccine is scheduled from 4-5 p.m. on Thursday, March 25. Visit facebook.com/MichiganHHS to watch a live stream.

The state deadline for individual income tax returns has been extended to May 17, in part to give residents extra time to “get their finances in order” amid the pandemic, officials

said. Lansing Mayor Andy Schor also extended the income tax filing deadline from April 30 to June 1.

Whitmer also announced that more than 55,000 employees who work in entertainment, recreational and indoor food-service venues will begin receiving grant payments of \$793 each this week. The grants are part of the Employee Assistance Grants Program, which was created through a \$45 million bipartisan budget appropriation bill signed by Whitmer late last year.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

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# The virus hunters of Michigan

Tracking COVID-19 variants takes time. Here's why.

Twice a month, the coronavirus develops a new mutation. Some of those mutations are harmless. Some are more ominous, like the B.1.1.7 variant originally identified in the U.K., the B.1.351 variant originally found in South Africa and the P.1 variant which was identified in Brazil.

Since last March, even before COVID-19 was confirmed in Michigan, two women have led the state's efforts to study the genetics of various samples of the virus — and other diseases — and have successfully sequenced about 9,000 individual virus samples from Michigan residents.

But sequencing those viruses takes time — often too much time — for communities to get ahead of them. The recent outbreak at Grand Ledge High School last month is a perfect example: A keen-eyed staffer noticed a quick pace of transmission among the basketball team and sent samples to the state lab for sequencing. Meanwhile, public health used traditional quarantine and

isolation protocols and was able to lock down the cluster and slow its spread.

Three weeks after submitting the samples, state health officials confirmed Grand Ledge had the variant known as B.1.1.7. By then, many of those infected had already finished quarantines.

There's a reason it takes so long, said Marty Soehnlen, director of the infectious disease division at the state Bureau of Laboratories. She oversees the sequencing of those variants.

It's a complicated process, and she has a favorite analogy to describe it in simpler terms.

"If I take the entire volumes of the encyclopedia and I toss them in a wood chipper and it spits all of that paper out back in, I'm having somebody sit there with a glue stick and have to put all of it back together in the correct order," she explained. And when the genome of the virus is sequenced out, it produces tens of thousands of codes representing genetic combinations.

Heather Blankenship, bioinformatics and sequencing section manager at the lab, said that the process of "putting it back together," can take two days or



Courtesy MDHHS

(Above) Kourtney Wells prepares for genome sequencing.

(Below) Steve Dietrich performs sample preparation for genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2.



Courtesy MDHHS

more. And once it's back together, the genome has to be read, analyzed and tracked based on mutation variations in certain regions.

"We put it in different ways that you can visualize the data and look to see how closely related something is," Blankenship said. "That process alone is going to take another about half a day to a day to get it into that correct data format."

Once the genetic information is put into a readable map, that information is then analyzed by lab staff and epidemiologists to recommend which public health actions are most appropriate.

Both women said they are particularly focused on virus mutations that impact "spike proteins" — the little spikes that stick up off the surface of the virus and give its "crownlike" appearance. Those allow the virus to enter the cells of the body and begin creating more copies of itself.

But it's also those spikes that are attacked by the body's immune system. Their very specific protein structure is attacked by antibodies. Current vaccines create antibodies that target the wild type, or unmutated version, of the virus. Changes in those proteins can and do impact the efficacy of vaccines and naturally immunity, both Blankenship and Soehnlen explained.


In fact, the P1 variant first described in Brazil has reportedly been infecting people who were already sick with the wild type version of the virus, and is making them very sick. It is unclear what the impact of the vaccine will be on this variant.

Meanwhile, variant B.135, first identified in South Africa, has been shown to be able to work around the immune response, dropping current vaccine efficacy from 94-95% effective to as low as 50% effective. That variant has also been identified in a person living in Jackson County.

"The vaccine is a very strong way that we will be able to combat what we're dealing with over the last year," said Soehnlen, "If there's any reduction in that, then it means that you need more and more and more people to be vaccinated so that you can hit the threshold that you have few enough cases being transmitted so that the likelihood of somebody getting it is so low."

— TODD HEYWOOD

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# Does Lansing need a strong mayor or a city manager?

## Upcoming mayoral election renews charter revision chatter

Lansing is bracing for another mayoral election this year. And with an incumbent accused of racism and a challenger accused of sexual harassment, some residents are beginning to doubt whether the government structure of the Capital City is best run by a so-called “strong mayor.”

Current and former elected officials in Lansing recall quiet conversations that date back to the early ‘90s in which residents have contemplated a revision to the city charter — one that would subvert executive power from the Mayor’s Office, instead handing the reins to a city manager who answers exclusively to the City Council. It’s the most popular form of municipal government across the country. And political dissatisfaction breeds renewed desires for systemic change.

“Historically, strong mayors are visionaries. They don’t focus on the nitty gritty and take a much larger, bigger picture sort of approach,” said former Lansing Mayor David Hollister, who served from 1993 to 2003. “But that’s not automatic just because you’re in the position. You might have a clunker or two along the way, and this conversation always seems to come up at those times.”

Hollister isn’t naming names, but he understands where the latest chatter might be coming from. Mayor Andy Schor is facing multiple racial discrimination lawsuits. Challenger and former three-term Mayor Virg Bernero is accused of two separate instances of sexual harassment.

“This conversation always seems to begin during elections or after the mayor makes a controversial decision



Hollister



Jackson

or does something unilaterally without the Council,” said Councilman Brian Jackson. “Regardless, I think that’s something people might be interested in exploring. I like the idea of separating management of the city and its finances from politics altogether.”

Cities in Michigan operate under their choice of three types of local government structures: council-manager, strong mayor and weak mayor. In Lansing, the strong mayor system is ingrained into the charter, giving broad authority to a directly elected mayor (who doesn’t serve on the Council) to hire and fire administrative officials and to dictate much of the city’s finances.

Lansing’s charter makes the mayor the “conservator of the peace,” the city’s top law enforcement official as well as enables broad supervision over several city departments and properties. Mayors can impose curfews to “suppress disorder.” It’s also their job to prepare and propose the annual budget. They also have power to veto proposed changes from the Council.

The charter also makes the mayor responsible for “reducing any unlawful discrimination and increasing mutual understanding among residents” and requires he or she to “investigate and respond to all requests for information and all complaints concerning the operation of the city.”

It’s a big job — and one held by only 33 mayors in Michigan. The vast majority of Michigan’s 273 cities instead operate under the direction of a city manager, often someone trained in municipal finance, who is hired directly by and serves at the will of the elected City Council.

With a city manager, “weak mayors” can still exist, but they’re effectively reduced to just another member of the legislative body. Like in East Lansing, they serve in a largely symbolic leadership role that wields mostly ceremonial authorities. It’s not much more than a title or a sash.

Michigan Municipal Executives labels the council-manager form of government as the “fastest growing form of government in the United



States.” National surveys also show that about 55% of governments operated under a weak mayor in 2006 — a jump from 48% tracked in 1996.

But is it the right decision for Lansing? Hollister, Schor and Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley — who plans to announce her mayoral

campaign this week — prefer to keep things the same. Bernero didn’t return calls this week, but has never been big on subjugating his own authority.

“It’s just in our DNA to have a strong mayor,” Hollister said. “It takes a sophisticated understanding of how things work, but I think the people want a strong person at the top. The election of a mayor creates a clear line of accountability. They’re supposed to set the tone.”

Spitzley recognizes that she has personal interests in maintaining power in the Mayor’s Office.

“That’s not to say we can’t change the charter to create some additional oversight, even with a strong mayor. There needs to be more checks and balances, particularly when it comes to the mayor’s ability

to enter into contracts, but overall, I support the strong mayor form,” she said.

A spokeswoman for Schor’s office said that a strong mayor system “ensures that the mayor directs how the government serves the people.” And he has no plans to pursue any changes.

Bernero stopped responding to calls from City Pulse after sexual harassment allegations surfaced against him. Other current and former elected officials in Lansing were on the fence.

“I would support looking at alternative forms of governance,” explained Council President Peter Spadafore. “When I looked at it pre-pandemic, it proved to be much more complicated than I thought since the strong mayor form of government is so ingrained in

our charter.”

Changes to Lansing’s charter require a resolution adopted with a supermajority vote of at least six of eight members of the Council or through a petition signed by at least 5% of

registered voters that is later decided through an election. They also require the creation of a nine-member charter commission, and none of them can be elected, appointed or employed by the city. It also requires several public hearings as well as a formal review from the Attorney General’s office.

Only Councilman Jackson voiced any plans to put those wheels into motion, noting that he plans to request guidance from the City Attorney’s office about how to initiate the process. Nobody else was aware of any ongoing or planned petition drives to trigger a voter referendum.

“I do want to explore this,” Jackson said. “I’m willing to work with anyone who does want to see the city charter amended. Ultimately, this could put more power into the hands of the people.”

The council-manager form of government was reportedly born in the early 20th century in response to corruption that plagued many cities, according to Michigan Municipal Executives. The idea was to “professionalize” local government by bringing in trained municipal managers, experienced CEOs who can bring their training and experience to day-to-day city operations.

It can also be much more difficult to corrupt a Council of eight people than one individual official.

Proponents have argued that city managers are more capable of separating politics from city operations because they need not worry about reelection campaigns and catering to special interests.

The formal hiring process can also attract a wider candidate pool and ensure that someone with financial acumen and municipal expertise is hired for the job. Mayoral elections rely on popular votes — which doesn’t



Spadafore



Spitzley

# Four takeaways from Lansing's latest budget proposal

## Schor kicks off budget season with focus on public safety

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor rolled out his budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year to the City Council this week, including plans to hire a second social worker at the Police Department and to reroute non-emergency calls to local social service agencies.



Schor

The proposal includes about \$151.2 million in expenses from July 1 this year to June 30, 2022 — up about 10% from the current budget of \$136.9 million. Revenues are also projected to be up a modest 0.7% from the current budget, which is set to be backfilled with about \$51 million after the passage of the federal American Rescue Plan. All told, that will leave the city with about \$14.6 million in reserve funds next year — up from just \$5.4 million that remains amid the pandemic.

The number of proposed full-time

employees is also up to 904 from 894 in the latest budget, most of which are centered in the Public Service department to staff an upcoming 311 helpline.

Here are a few quick takeaways:

### Biden saves the day

More than \$50 million in federal funding is expected to flow into city coffers over the next two years, which can be spent over the next three years to help offset pandemic-induced revenue declines. Schor said that cash will help to “backfill” some of the losses in the current budget — mostly to offset reductions in parking revenue and to pad funding for the Lansing Center.

Officials are still waiting for exact revenue estimates and federal spending limitations. Schor said it won't be able to be spent on road repairs or to replenish unfunded retiree pension liabilities.

### Police ‘reform,’ not divestment ...

With a 2.4% increase to the Lansing Police Department's proposed \$26.3 million budget this year, Schor killed off any lingering chances of police divestment taking hold in the Capital City. Despite the rallying cry from Black Lives Matter and other groups, the City Council voted last year against setting divestment as a budget

priority, so it is unlikely the Council will intervene.

Instead, Schor dished up plans to hire a second social worker to the Police Department, upgrade police radio systems, buy gun locking mechanisms and to bring on another employee who can help process Freedom of Information Act requests sent to the Police Department.

The Fire Department will also see some extra cash to fund a partnership with Ingham County Community Health, which is designed to bring in trained healthcare professionals to connect non-emergency calls with more appropriate resources rather than an armed and uniformed cop.

Schor also agreed to commit \$240,000 this year to the Advance Peace initiative, a program that relies on regional partnerships and would pair about 25 residents who are statistically more likely to get involved with gun violence with local mentors over 18 months. Those recruited into the fellowship could also earn monthly stipends of up to \$1,000 for their work.

### ... social equity and racial justice

As required by an ordinance the City Council passed last month, at least \$135,000 of Schor's budget will be allocated to local organizations

that aim to advance racial justice and social equity within the city. Exactly how (and where) that cash will be spent remains to be seen.

The latest proposal also calls for \$300,000 to be invested into a new permanent “Equity Committee” following a yet-to-be-released plan from the Mayor's Racial Justice and Equity Alliance. Schor said that cash will be spent mostly on employee training, assessing the racial landscape in Lansing and soliciting community input as longer-term plans continue to unfold.

### Funding unfunded costs

Schor said “challenges” remain as the city struggles to chip away at its unfunded pension and retiree health-care costs, including a proposed \$46.5 million annual payment in his latest budget proposal. That plan would ramp up annual contributions by more than \$4 million this year.

Officials warned that this portion of the budget — though expected to be reduced by up to \$3.5 million annually following recent changes to retiree benefits and union contracts — could remain unstable and subject to market investment fluctuations as the pandemic lingers into 2021.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

## Mayor

from page 11

always result in selecting the most qualified candidates to lead the city.

“I've long advocated for a city manager in Lansing,” said former Councilwoman Jody Washington. “I think it could bring more continuity to the city. Eliminating that election could also do away with a lot of the political foolishness that comes along with this strong



Washington

mayor concept. A manager would broaden power to the entire Council, which is directly elected by the people.”

Washington said she has heard louder and louder conversations about a possible charter amendment, specifically after rumors about Bernero seeking a fourth term became reality.

“I think we're all starting to see it's time to explore a city manager for Lansing,” she added.

Councilman Jeremy Garza doesn't have a stance on whether a strong mayor is good for Lansing, but he said he wants to hear more ideas from the public. He's open to the conversation.

Council Vice President Adam Hussain said a city manager — at least in theory — is a “fantastic” concept for Lansing. But he also acknowledged drawbacks on both sides of the conversation.

“The problem emerges when you

have an individual with a lot of power who does not have the requisite experience to make these big decisions for the city,” Hussain said. “I like the idea of having managerial consistency, but would we be able to attract someone to that position? A city manager would really need to be a very credible individual who is responsive to the Council.”

Detroit, Warren, Flint, Dearborn, Livonia and Westland all operate under the direction of an elected mayor or as their top executive. East Lansing, Grand Rapids, Sterling Heights and

Ann Arbor have city managers. They become more common in cities with smaller populations, where it could be more difficult to attract qualified elected talent into positions with such broad legislative authority.

All told, however, Michigan's Constitution specifically prescribes the authority to the people — and their elected representatives — to decide which government works best for their city. If residents and Council members want a change in Lansing, it's incumbent on them to seek it.

“It's kind of a big machine to do it and these types of charter revisions don't happen often, but it's not impossible,” said Tom Forshee, an attorney for the Michigan Municipal League. “In Michigan, there's a lot of value on the idea that cities can decide what works best for them.”

— KYLE KAMINSKI



Hussain

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## From the border to Walmart

### Local parents foster unaccompanied migrant minors

About 9 p.m. on a Saturday in early March, a caseworker from Bethany Christian Services in Lansing dropped two hungry kids from Honduras off at the home of their temporary foster parents, Elsa and Sebastian.

They walked in and said “Hola!” Elsa showed them their room and eased the culture shock with snacks.

The next two weeks were taken up with clothes shopping, climbing the rope webs at Patriarche Park, fast food adventures and ogling the fancy houses on Moores River Drive.

Dominic, 10, and Eduardo, 11, are part of a growing crush of unaccompanied minors overwhelming U.S. border crossings. They stayed with Elsa and Sebastian in East Lansing while waiting to be reunited with their mother in New York.

To protect the privacy of the kids and the foster parents, we are not using their real names.

Elsa said Dominic’s first English sentence was: “Please drive me to the park in your car.” She took them to Elmhurst Park to play basketball. Dominic loved Taco Bell, but Eduardo “turned up his nose.”

“They’re just normal kids,” Elsa said. “They get along fine. They’re brothers.”

By March 20, the U.S. government was housing about 15,500 unaccompanied migrant minors, including 5,000 teenagers and children housed in Border Patrol facilities not designed for long-term stays, according to CBS News.

Two local agencies, Bethany Christian Services and Samaritas, are working with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement to find foster homes for these minors while they are reunited with their parents.

Both agencies are beating the bushes for experienced foster parents as well as new ones. It normally takes months for new foster parents to be licensed, trained and checked out, but the caseworkers and their supervisors are working to streamline the process.

The average stay ranges from a few days to a few weeks.

Soon after the boys arrived, the temporary family made a rowdy run to a Super Walmart to pick out clothes and shoes. The two brothers came to Michigan with backpacks containing little more than underwear, socks, shorts and a T-shirt.

Elsa got out her measuring tape in the aisle while the boys did their best

**For more information on fostering unaccompanied minors coming over the U.S. border, go to the Samaritas website at [Samaritas.org](http://Samaritas.org) or contact Bethany Christian Services licensing specialist Roberta Haney-Jones at (517) 881-5131. Bethany has on line orientation meetings 6-8 p.m. April 8 and April 20.**

to stand still. Their garbled communications, using the Google Translate app on Elsa’s iPhone, added to the chaos.

“It comes out gobbledygook,” Elsa said. “We just cracked up and tried again.”

The boys haven’t talked much about their old life, and Elsa isn’t inclined to draw them out.

“They’ve only told me it took them six days to get from Honduras to the border,” she said.

Before the boys arrived, Elsa asked program manager Sandra Severo-Lopez what food she should have on hand. Severo-Lopez, Bethany’s transitional foster care site supervisor in Lansing, told Elsa to stock up on beans, tortillas and eggs, but the food sat on the shelf.

“They want pizza and chicken nuggets, chips and ice cream, American junk food,” Elsa said. “They ate so much Kentucky Fried Chicken.”

When the border crisis hit in February, Elsa and Sebastian hadn’t fostered any kids for a year. They first became foster parents in 2013 and have fostered about 25 kids since then, all of them domestic foster children. Elsa works two jobs and Sebastian has a full-time job.

“We were a bit burned out, but we were paying attention to what was going on at the border,” Elsa said. “Every day it gets worse.” They hustled through the training to foster migrant kids from abroad as fast as they could, and were good to go in a couple of weeks.

“We need as many foster parents as we can get,” Severo-Lopez said. Kayla Park, spokeswoman for Samaritas, expressed the same urgency.

“We are going to need a lot of families to meet this need, especially families for older kids,” Park said. “We’re seeing a lot of older youth, a lot of teenagers.”

Nationally, Bethany Christian Services has reunited over 9,000 children with their families since 2013. Statewide, about 100 families are active in transitional foster care at a given time. The 2-year-old Lansing program is one of the newest, with only 14 kids placed in temporary foster homes so far, but director Krista Stevens expects it to



Courtesy Bethany Christian Services

Families in Lansing are temporarily fostering unaccompanied minors migrating from Central America as an alternative to detention centers that are “no place for a child,” in the words of U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

grow “rapidly.”

Samaritas launched a transitional foster care program in late 2019, but the program went mostly dormant when COVID forced a border closing in 2020. Now that the border is open, Samaritas expects to place about 100 kids this year, in the Lansing area and a new office in Ann Arbor, according to spokeswoman Kayla Park.

The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement expects the numbers of unaccompanied minors crossing the border to keep growing.

“If you have ever thought about it, now is the time,” Severo-Lopez said. “The numbers are historic and the need is immense.”

When unaccompanied minors arrive in the U.S., they are detained by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and processed by the Dept. of Homeland Security. A child is referred to the Office of Refugee Resettlement within 72 hours of entry. ORR works with grantees like Bethany and Samaritas to find temporary homes.

The alternative to foster care is a temporary shelter that may have hundreds or thousands of beds.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said Saturday that “a Border Patrol facility is no place for a child.”

“Foster care is the least restrictive environment, the closest you get to a home, and no child deserves less than that,” Severo-Lopez said.

Bethany Christian Services and Samaritas assign a caseworker to each foster family and arrange for medical care, mental health support and other needed help. Samaritas provides a 40-dollar-a-day stipend for foster parents, provided by contract with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee

Services.

The wild card is COVID-19. Severo-Lopez said there are so many kids at the border that some are “going to be coming to us without testing, and without quarantining, and the foster family would have to take on that process.” Park said Samaritas would arrange a COVID test “right before we place them in the home” if requested.

Dominic and Eduardo have had a lot of fun in East Lansing, but last week, after a phone call with their mom in New York, Elsa said they had an “emotional crash.”

“They even had a fight, which is not like them,” Elsa said. “All those emotions, they don’t know how to process.” She said they took the boys on a cruise along Moores River Drive “to look at the rich people’s houses” and went out for ice cream. “They just loved that,” Elsa said. “You can always redirect with ice cream.”

As of Tuesday, the boys were packed and ready to go, expecting a call from Bethany Christian Services any day, followed by a hastily arranged flight to New York and a reunion with their mom.

Park said foster parents sometimes forget to prepare themselves mentally for the moment of parting.

“It’s bittersweet, because you’re welcoming a child into your home, and making a difference in their lives, but they are going to leave at some point,” Park said.

But Elsa won’t have much time to pine. She expects another foster child, a 14-year-old boy from Guatemala, to arrive this week.

“We were going to take a few days off, but there’s 15,000 kids at the border,” she said. “It’s only getting worse.”

— LAWENCE COSENTINO

# Seeds in the soil, seeds in the mind

Broad Museum exhibit celebrates epic experiment at MSU



Courtesy MSU

H.T. Darlington, William Beal's successor at the MSU Botanical Gardens, strikes a Hamlet-like pose with one of Beal's buried seed bottles in the 1940s.

## “Seeds of Resistance”

MSU Broad Art Museum • Through July 18  
broadmuseum.msu.edu



Courtesy MSU

Plant science pioneer William Beal, shown here in the classroom at Michigan Agricultural College in the 1890s, started the 141-year-old Seed Viability Experiment in 1879. It will continue until 2100.

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

One night this spring, on an undisclosed date, in an undisclosed patch of earth near MSU's Beal Botanical Gardens, a group of excited plant biologists will follow a map to a treasure that is unique in the world.

They'll dig about two feet down to unearth the 16th of 20 glass bottles, each containing 1,050 seeds, buried in 1879 by visionary MSU botanist William Beal. They will bring the 141-year-old seeds to a lab, plant them and see what germinates.

The next bottle will be unearthed in 2040, and so on, every 20 years until 2100.

The Beal Seed Viability Experiment started out as a way to investigate how long 21 species of weeds can stay dormant in a farm or garden and survive to germinate. But over the last century and a half, its longevity has captured the imagination of scientists, botanists, gardeners and, now, artists.

To mark this spring's milestone in one of the longest-running scientific experiments in history, MSU's Broad Art Museum has launched a thought-provoking new exhibit, “Seeds of Resistance.”

The exhibit shows how Beal's visionary experiment presaged modern seed vaults, including a “doomsday vault” in Norway where thousands seeds are preserved in case of planetary disaster. Blending science and art, the images and objects in the exhibit unlock the vast potential of humble seeds, both real and metaphorical, to feed our bodies and minds — from lush apple orchards, turgid beans and artfully preserved botanical specimens to a future vision of seeds in space.

### Germ of an idea

The only person alive who has touched the bottles of seeds William Beal buried in 1879 is Frank Telewski, a plant biologist and curator of Beal Botanical Gardens.

“You're down there on your knees, brushing the topsoil off the tops of the bottles and selecting a bottle and removing it,” Telewski said. He described the 2000 dig in an interview on view at the Broad exhibit. “You can't help thinking that the last person to touch the bottle was Professor Beal. That's heady stuff.”

Beal is an MSU icon, a pioneer in the development of hybrid corn, correspondent with Charles Darwin and founder of the oldest continuously operated university botanical garden in the United States. The Broad exhibit begins with rare photographs of Beal, research notes in his own hand, specimens he collected and a box of seed jars he put together.

The seed experiment a wonder all by itself, but it gave Broad Museum curator Steven Bridges the germ of a broader idea.

Beal's bottles, drifting through the sea of time, reminded him of a series of beautiful photographs by Texas-based artist Dornith Doherty, “Archiving Eden,” begun in 2008. Eerie images of the bunker-like Svalbard Global Seed Vault on Spitsbergen Island in Norway, reproduced in a dramatically large format at the Broad, fill the viewer with hope and dread.

This blank-walled bunker in the Arctic is called the “doomsday vault,” built to store up to 2.25 billion seeds and more than 2,500 plant species as a global backup system in case of disaster.

The artist called it a “profoundly optimistic and pessimistic project.”

See Seeds, Page 15

# Seeds

from page 14

“There’s something awe-inspiring, a little bit sci-fi, about this concrete vault inside of a mountain in the Arctic,” Bridges said.

The vault is not a theoretical mind game or demonstration piece. The first withdrawal from the seed bank was made in 2015, when civil war and climate change ravaged crops in Syria.

“They had to go inside and extract a specific variety,” Bridges said. “So it’s already happened. It’s real.”

Bridges deliberately positioned Doherty’s seed vault images, including a look inside the Svalbard vault, near the Beal memorabilia to link the leisurely MSU experiment to an era of more urgent concern over the fate of seeds.

He considers the seed vaults depicted in Doherty’s photographs to be an extension, or even the culmination, of the long-range thinking Beal put into practice at MSU.

The Beal project itself changed in scope over a century and a half. At first, the jars were to be opened every five years, but Beal’s successor, H.T. Darlington, extended the period to 10 years. At about the mid-20th-century, MSU’s plant science faculty decided to stretch the period to 20 years, pushing the last jar all the way to 2100.

The experiment has gone on so long by now that scheduled jar excavations have been delayed by two global pandemics — one in 1919 and another in 2020. The seeds were supposed to be opened last spring, but Telewski had to put it off until this year,

## Fort Knox of dirt

People who associate contemporary art with immersive light shows, vivisectioned sharks or giant metal balloon animals may be sur-



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Clair Pentecost pressed life-giving soil into Fort Knox-style bars to show the modern world’s skewed priorities in “soil-erg,” now at the Broad Museum.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Texas-based artist Dornith Doherty trekked to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in the Arctic Circle and came back with haunting images of doomsday and hope, now on display at the Broad.

prised at the contemplative, spare tableau in the Broad Museum’s main gallery.

The sunlit room evokes a hushed botanical lab more than an eye-popping contemporary art display.

Often, the direct sunlight in the Broad’s main gallery hems in the curators’ choices, especially when it comes to fragile photographs, prints and other works on paper, but the natural light is perfect for “Seeds.”

Right under the gallery’s largest window to the southwest, a rich display of dried plants (“Herbarium,” by American artist San Van Aken) melds scientific research and exquisite graphic art. Van Aken uses grafting to create living artworks that also serve as a genetic store of rare, endangered species. He presses the plants to squeeze moisture out, just as Beal did when logging specimens. He positions the stems, seeds and flowers so every significant detail is visible to researchers while making sure the composition is aesthetically harmonious. Some of the works in the stash at the Broad are the last known specimen of a species.

Works like Van Aken’s “Herbarium” celebrate the life embodied in seeds, but the Broad exhibit isn’t shy about confronting the damage wrought upon the living world by modern civilization.

Chicago artist Claire Pentecost calls soil “the other half of seeds.” Her provocative “Soil-erg” display features stacks of bricks made of compressed topsoil, like the gold in Fort Knox. If our priorities were in harmony with life, the sculpture suggests, vaults would contain

life-giving seeds and soil, not toxic gold.

“Gold is valuable only because we all agree it is,” Bridges said. “What if our priorities were different?”

Next to the soil bricks, a wall is filled with finely rendered imaginary money — “soil-ergs” — that ditch the dead presidents and bear the likenesses of animals and humans that have made direct contributions to sustaining the planet.

Seeing the faces of Charles Darwin, early environmentalist Rachel Carson, Indian food activist Vandana Shiva, biologist Lynn Margulis, African-American agriculture pioneer George Washington Carver and others like them, on money — not to mention soil-enriching critters like a mole, a worm and a tardigrade — conjures up an alternate world where the icons we honor actually bear a direct relation to human well-being.

## Fun with fungi

To appreciate a tiny seed, the beholder must look closely, imagine what it can become and wait patiently for it to get there. For the most part, “Seeds of Resistance” is much like its subject, an exhibit that rewards slow contemplation and doesn’t try to dazzle.

A few of the works on display, however, knock at least one sock off without deviating from to the exhibit’s serious intent.

A delightful circle of about 1,000 clay mushrooms springs right out of the shiny museum floor, smack in the middle of the main gallery.

See Seeds, Page 16

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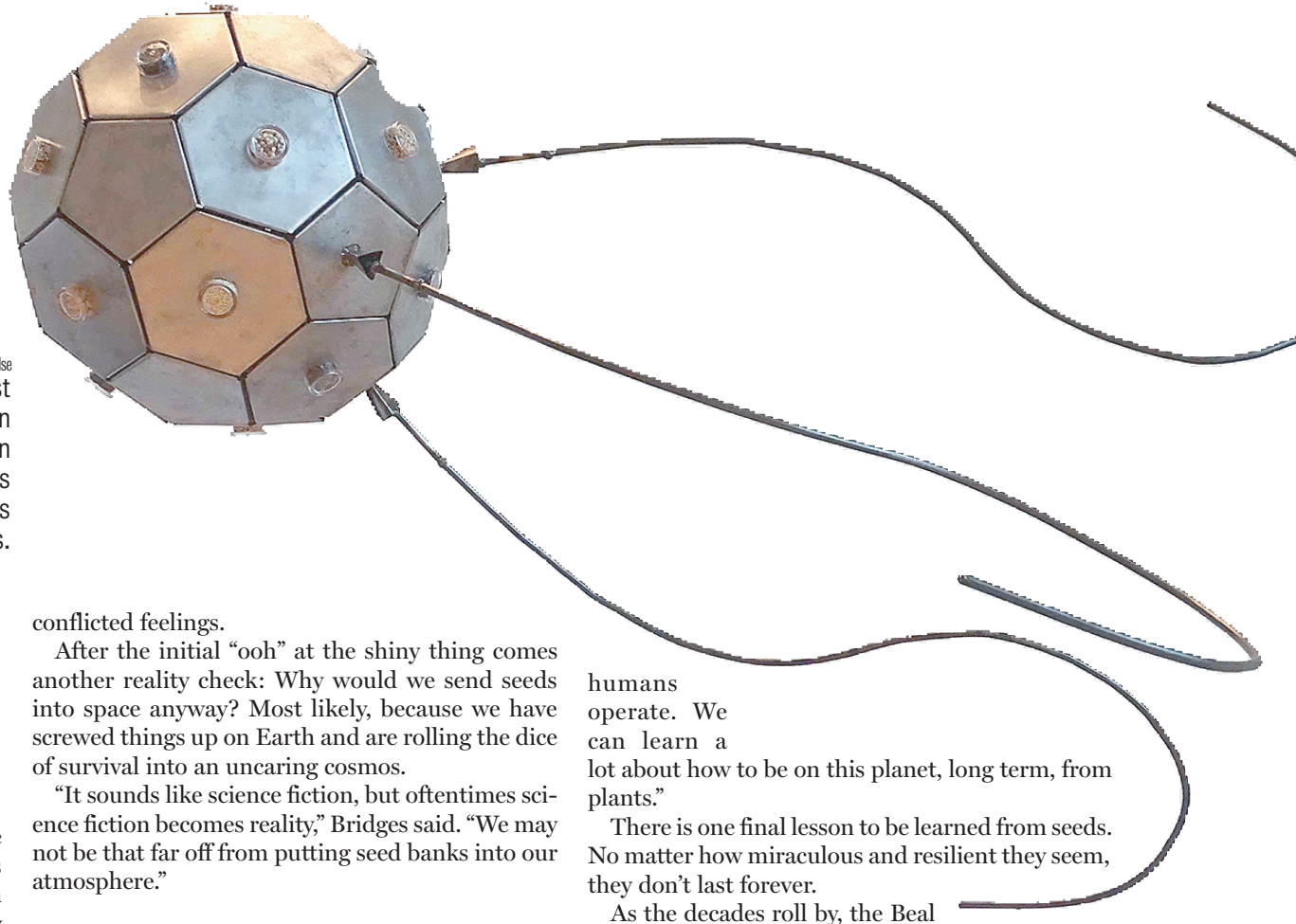
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Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

“Generosity 1” by El Salvador-born artist Beatriz Cortez, now hanging from the main gallery at the Broad Museum, is an imaginary satellite studded with glass bubbles filled with seeds of indigenous Central American plants.

## Seeds

from page 15

Spanish artist Antonio Ballester Moreno’s “Live the Free Fields,” made in collaboration with students from schools in São Paulo, dares you to kneel on the ground, with one eye on the nearest security guard, and scrutinize every stalk, head and mycelium.

Fungi aren’t plants, and they reproduce by spores instead of seeds, but revolutionary new research is revealing the nearly invisible threads fungi weave in the soil, connecting plants up with nutrients and even helping trees communicate with each other in a “wood wide web.” The circle of mushrooms on the floor is a bare hint of the hidden tangle of interconnected life woven under our feet.

Meanwhile, directly overhead, a combination of a Sputnik, a geodesic dome and a chrome spermatozoon seems to drift toward the gallery’s main window. The striking object bears the NASA-like name “Generosity 1,” a sculpture by El Salvador-born artist Beatriz Cortez. A closer look reveals that the Sputnik is studded with glass bubbles containing seeds specific to Central and South American cultures such as sorghum, tamarind and gourd varieties.

“She pulls from ancient indigenous knowledge, but with a touch of science fiction,” Bridges said. “She takes these ancient seed varieties that are culturally rich, and specific to the place where she’s from, and throws them into space.”

Like Doherty’s photographs of the Svalbard seed vaults, Cortez’s seed-studded Sputnik provokes

conflicted feelings.

After the initial “ooh” at the shiny thing comes another reality check: Why would we send seeds into space anyway? Most likely, because we have screwed things up on Earth and are rolling the dice of survival into an uncaring cosmos.

“It sounds like science fiction, but oftentimes science fiction becomes reality,” Bridges said. “We may not be that far off from putting seed banks into our atmosphere.”

### Diminishing returns

When Frank Telewski sets out this spring, shovel in hand, to dig for the 16th jar, MSU plant science Professor Marjorie Weber will be by his side. Weber is among a handful of younger colleagues Telewski has picked to go with him this time around, in the hope that one or more of them will take over the experiment in 2040.

“I’ll be 85 years old in 2040 — I hope,” Telewski said.

“And they’ll pass it along to the next generation, until the experiment is done in 2100.”

Weber said the meaning of the experiment has shifted drastically from Beal’s goal of understanding weeds in order to control them.

“Now we’re more into the realm of wanting to understand how we can store seeds for conservation, how long they might last if there are major disruptions to the ecosystem,” Weber said in an interview on view at the Broad.

If people read the book of seeds closely and lovingly, it will yield lasting and profound profit, and not just for farmers and gardeners.

“They hit the ground and hang out until conditions are right until they can germinate and grow,” Weber said. “That long-term perspective is built into a plant’s life cycle, and it’s different from the way

humans operate. We can learn a lot about how to be on this planet, long term, from plants.”

There is one final lesson to be learned from seeds. No matter how miraculous and resilient they seem, they don’t last forever.

As the decades roll by, the Beal Seed Viability Experiment is confirming what every gardener with a drawer full of unused seeds already knows — seeds have limits.

Enshrined in the glass case at the Broad exhibit is a dried specimen of a small wildflower called *verbascum blattaria*, or moth mullein. The lovely pink blossom, with a stamen that resembles a moth antenna, has been labeled a “noxious weed” in the state of Colorado, but it’s the undisputed champion of the Beal experiment.

When the 15th bottle buried by Beal was unearthed in 2000, half the *verbascum* seeds, 120 years old at the time, germinated — about 23 plants, plus two more related plants that were hard to identify. Only one other plant — a little purple flower called *malva*, or mallow — sent up a seedling.

It’s worth taking a few seconds to salute a tiny package of genes and nutrients that began life in a horse-and-buggy era, when a bearded scholar named Theophilus C. Abbot was president of Michigan Agricultural College, and made it through two world wars, two pandemics and 27 U.S. presidents to put out a little flower in the Internet age.

However, the rest of the seeds in the Beal experiment brought up a big fat row of zeroes in 2000, as they have since about 1930. Every now and then, a seed variety that showed no life in one excavation pops back up in the next, but the overwhelming trend is one of decay. It’s possible that future jars will yield up nothing but *verbascum* and maybe not even that.

The conclusion isn’t hard to draw. It’s not enough to put seeds in a vault or glue specimens on paper for the benefit of future humans who may or may not have their act together. Even seeds won’t wait forever.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Students in Sao Paulo helped Spanish artist Antonio Ballester Moreno create this charming circle of mushrooms that currently springs from the floor of the Broad Museum.





# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## MI Wildlife Conservancy restores the state's natural beauty

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

Since 1982, the Michigan Wildlife Conservancy has fought to restore Michigan's natural wonders. Proof of cougars roaming Michigan? It did that. Reintroducing the moose to the Upper Peninsula? Them, too. The wild turkeys strutting around your yard? They were thought to have completely disappeared in Michigan. But in the '90s, the MWC helped bring them back.

"We basically do habitat restoration. Looking into endangered species, specifically the species who are not being helped by other organizations or the DNR," said John Ropp, president and CEO of the MWC. "University of Michigan partnered with us. We work with some of the tribes in the state."

COVID halted its most recent project — researching the fisher, a weasel-like animal. Most folks assumed fishers in the Lower Peninsula had all left. But Patrick Ruzs, the MWC's resident wildlife biologist, believed that he could find proof of their presence.

"The Odawa tribe put up trail cameras for us on their property," said Ropp. "We spotted one instantly. U-M is doing DNA analysis, but because of COVID, everything was shut down. But now it's starting up again. We've already had some positive results."

### Nonprofit News



This is a new monthly feature highlighting events and milestones at local nonprofits. If you would like to submit a suggestion please email [skyer@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:skyer@lansingcitypulse.com)

#### Wildlife Pub

6380 Drumheller Rd, Bath 48808  
Open Wednesday and Thursday 5 to 10 p.m.,  
Saturday 4 to 10 p.m.  
517-641-7677  
[wildlife@MiWildlife.org](mailto:wildlife@MiWildlife.org)

The MWC doesn't just work with animals, though. It has also done extensive work restoring wetlands, grasslands, prairies, streams and lakes. At the 200-acre Bengel Wildlife Center in Bath — owned and operated by the MWC — you can see the stunning effects of the work Ropp and his colleagues have completed.

"It had been drained off, so it was a mud-bogging pit for years in the '70s and '80s. People had fun, partied, drove their trucks there," said Ropp. "We restored it back to its natural state. Now it's filled with wildlife. There are five species of ducks now, sandhill cranes,



Courtesy of Michigan Wildlife Conservancy

certain nights — catch a live music performance.

"It's a beautiful area. People love to sit on our deck," said Ropp. "It's a gorgeous and peaceful setting. You can get a drink, something to eat and just enjoy the wildlife." The MWC is privately funded. It hasn't received a dime from the federal or state governments. The Wildlife Pub, revenue gained from hosting weddings and small donations help keep the organization alive and fund its mission work.

At the Bengel Wildlife Center, their slogan is "Treat yourself to an

up-north experience without the drive."

According to Ropp, a trip to the wildlife center will make you feel like you're in the UP, even though you're actually only seven miles away from the MSU campus.

"People just haven't heard about us!" he exclaimed. "We'll have two or three people every single night saying, 'Wow, I didn't know you were even here.'"

The Bengel Wildlife Center wears many hats. It's a conference center, wedding venue or the perfect place to host a corporate team-building seminar. There is a nine hole disc golf course, four miles of trails and an archery range, too.

It is also the home of the Wildlife Pub, a hidden gem tucked six hundred yards back from the road. Visitors to the pub can play euchre, cornhole or — on

## Art gallery opens in historic Nelson Building

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

Jen and John Estill dreamed about buying the Nelson Building for years. They didn't get to see the building in its heyday, when it housed the department store Liebermann's. But its striking mid-century design still drew their attention. They toured it in their twenties with intentions to purchase it.

Back then, they couldn't afford it. Now, it's theirs.

"We've just always loved it, watched different businesses come and go," said Jen Estill, owner of the Nelson Gallery and founder of Redhead Design Studio. "When it was time to find a new space for Redhead, I decided to take the leap."

Estill opened up the Nelson Gallery on the ground floor of the Nelson Building. It didn't feel right to her to fill up such a beautiful building with



#### The Nelson Gallery

113 S. Washington Sq.  
Lansing  
Monday to Friday  
11 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Saturday noon to 5 p.m.  
517-853-3681  
[thenelsongallery.com](http://thenelsongallery.com)

desks and chairs. She decided to move Redhead's operations upstairs.

"The space was built to house beautiful objects," said Estill. "It didn't feel good to turn it into an office space."

The gallery houses mainly claywork and pottery. It also has wall pieces, paperwork, fiberwork and more. Everything in the gallery is for sale.

"We have lots and lots of shelves. If you need something on your wall or a gift for someone you care about, there's lots to see and buy here," said Estill.

According to her, the gallery's opening day was a success. She understands that — because of COVID — it may take a while for business to really start booming.

"We have patience," said Estill. "We're going to let this place take its time, see what the first year brings, what the market wants, what people are looking for when they walk in the door. Then, we'll figure it out accordingly."

Estill plans to be flexible and make changes to the gallery whenever necessary. One thing she resolutely will not change, though, is the fundamental look of the Nelson Building. Her and her husband have spent time rehabilitating and cleaning the space. But they will not alter the architecture.

"We are trying to keep the building as true to its original form as we can.

Its architecture is unique. Changing it would be awful," explained Estill.

"It was designed by such an important man."

Owning and operating a gallery will give Estill the chance to interact with and search for new artists who can help stock her shelves. She's excited to explore the art world and gather more talent. The opportunities for growth and change are limitless.

"Galleries are important in growing a community. There is always room for more. More space for art is always a good thing," said Estill. "Finding new artists is going to be one of the most fun things about running this place."



# Author reflects on harrowing Vietnam War experience

By **BILL CASTANIER**

William Murphy was a grunt in the Vietnam War and is proud of it.

“If someone offered me \$1 million for the title. I would tell them no,” Murphy said.

Murphy, who served as a Marine combat grunt for 13 months in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969, tells his story in his new book, “Not for God and Country.”

The title of the book is a play on the motto “For God and Country,” which is commonly used by military units.

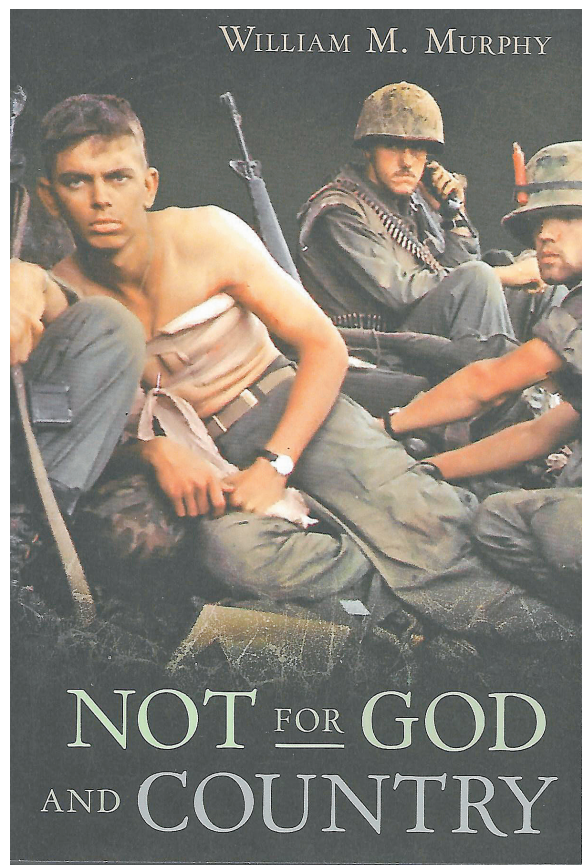
Murphy said the book’s title represents the goal of every grunt. “There was no higher goal. The number one objective was to stay alive,” he said.

Murphy said he decided to write the book because the war was “fading into the background.”

“I wanted Americans to hear this story. Most people then and even now don’t know how we got involved,” he said. “A lot of decisions got us going down the path and it’s important to know why. Nothing happens in a vacuum.”

I caught up with Murphy, as he was about to go on a several mile hike in Northern Michigan near Frankfort. As a Marine in Vietnam he walked a lot, going out on patrol seven days a week for 13 months. He said the average Marine went on 240 combat missions.

Murphy walked point for seven months while in Vietnam, possibly the most dangerous assignment you could get. Point had the responsibility to watch for booby traps while trying to locate the enemy before they saw them. He knows he’s lucky to be alive.



“I often wonder if God’s expecting something in return. That I owe something in return,” Murphy said. The book is part of that payback.

The vast majority of the book is about the day-to-day life of a grunt in Vietnam, most of them spent just trying to stay alive. The book does not glorify combat. If anything, the book makes you cringe when Murphy describes the mayhem of battle.

Murphy describes one of the battles as the worst day of his life. “We were under constant fire; it was hot and we ran out of water and ammunition was running low. We were asked to take a highly fortified position of the NVA. We had to cross an open field with no cover,” he said.

Murphy’s description of the battle is reminiscent of a Civil War or World War I battlefield, where troops ran across an open field under relentless fire. In his book Murphy calls the attack “a suicide frontal assault against the heavily defended fortifications.”

“All of I could think of was I was going to die and it was my sister’s wedding day and I would ruin her anniversary for the rest of her life,” he said.

On that day, he believes his life was saved for a second time by a radio he

was carrying. As a back-up radioman, he carried the radio when the radio operator went down. An explosion tore the radio up rather than his neck and back. Another time while on radio duty, he was unable to fit through a hole in a fence. One of his comrades went through first and was killed when a trip wire triggered an explosive device.

Readers of this book should be aware that this book is intense, and although there have been many notable Vietnam moves like “Platoon,” the reality of the Vietnam War is something totally different.

Even when describing the totems that

most grunts carried it is deadly serious, since the cards were often left on dead bodies of the enemy. Murphy said he wore his rosary around his neck until it broke about six months in and he still has his ace of spades.

Some of Murphy’s descriptions are gut wrenching, and his writing is blunt and to the point. He said unlike other wars, Vietnam wasn’t about acquiring land — it was about killing the enemy in order to kill their resolve.

“We were hunting them, and they were hunting us,” Murphy said.

He said the enemy often had the upper hand. “It was their land, and they had lots of experience fighting in the jungle,” he said.

The author also rebuffs some commonly held beliefs about the Vietnam War. “We weren’t fighting soldier-farmers. The NVA and Viet Minh were highly trained and well-armed,” he said.

Murphy said in boot camp Marines learned little about the history of Vietnam.

“We were told we were going to stop the spread of Communism,” Murphy said.

Murphy is candid about the war. “If we fought World War II in the same manner, I’m not sure we would have had prevailed,” he said.

Although the Marines traveled to Vietnam as a unit, they were sent home one by one, alone, on commercial flights.

In his book he writes, “Though veterans rarely spoke of it the war never faded from their minds.”

About himself he writes: “Over the years, however, I’ve looked down at my hands countless times and wondered how these hands could’ve done the things they did and how these eyes have seen the things they saw.”

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March days when the sun  
shines hot and the wind  
blows cold, when it is  
summer in the light and  
winter in the shade.”  
- Charles Dickens

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# *Favorite Things*

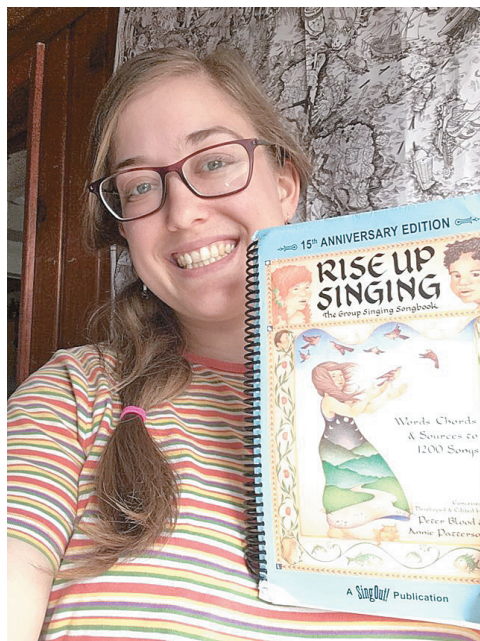
## Laura Drotar and the ‘Rise Up Singing’ songbook

*Laura Drotar, who uses they/them pronouns, enjoys folk music and its ability to bring people together. Their favorite piece of folk music history is the songbook “Rise Up Singing.”*

My favorite thing is the “Rise Up Singing” songbook, by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson. I’ve been fascinated with folk music in my adult life. I didn’t grow up with; my parents didn’t introduce much music to me. I was really interested in folk music after hearing the “Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?” soundtrack. The song “Big Rock Candy Mountain” blew me away.

One summer, in 2016, I decided to do this weeklong visit to a place called Dancing Rabbit Eco Village in Missouri. My sister heard about it and thought I would be interested in it. It’s a sustainable living community and a small village that’s totally off the grid. I stayed for about 10 days. It was really awesome; they would build homes out of natural materials and all sorts of things. My favorite thing about the camp was the singing circle. Everybody would be in the community room and sit around and sing songs. There were a few copies of this book, “Rise Up Singing.” A lot of the songs we sang were in this book.

I spoke with somebody who was born in Dancing Rabbit, and he told me he loved the book. He said the book was kind of like a bible to him. I was blown away by it too. The book has all sorts of categories of songs. Some of them are “Farm and Prairie,” “Hard Times and Blues,” “Unity” and “Women Work.” When I returned home from the trip, I ordered a copy of the book from eBay and made Spotify playlists out of all the songs. I play guitar and I like to sing, so I tried to learn a lot of them. I’m always impressed by how many are in there. I always try



to have at least two copies, so if I am with people we can sing together.

In the “Peace” section there’s a song called, “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier.” It was written in 1914. It was one of the most popular songs in America at the time, and the American government later banned it. Later, another huge song was a propaganda tune called “Johnny Get Your Gun.” It’s really fascinating that this song — a pacifist message from the perspective of a mother — was banned and then the very next year a song comes out encouraging people to fight in the war. My favorite way to learn history is through folk songs. I didn’t understand history in public schools; I tend to do a lot better with natural science. History seemed like memorizing dates. Through folk music, and especially this book, I’ve really gotten a sense of working class and people’s history. It’s given me a sense of the conditions of people through different times. It’s given me more direction and tools to understand the issues we face today.

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

# Lansing shop sells federally legal psychoactive drugs

Delta-8-THC offers affordable alternative to mainstream pot



**Lansterdam in Review:  
Nature’s Kyoor**

4421B W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing  
517-928-0053  
[natureskyoor.com](http://natureskyoor.com)

By KYLE KAMINSKI

A cheaper and federally legalized alternative to traditional marijuana is surging in popularity across the country — including in Lansing, where small vials of intoxicating liquids are flying off the shelves at Nature’s Kyoor. And the local shop doesn’t even need to be licensed to sell them.

The bottles (as well as gummy bears) are filled with concentrated delta-8-tetrahydrocannabinol, one of at least 144 known cannabinoids that have been isolated from the marijuana plant. Local smokers are likely much more familiar with delta-9-THC, the primary psychoactive compound that provides that stereotypical stoned sensation. Delta-8 is a lesser known cousin that carries about half the potency of Delta-9. The biggest difference: Delta-8 is federally legal. And state regulators don’t require any marijuana provisioning center licenses for those that want to sell it.

Since opening in 2019, Nature’s Kyoor has kept busy with selling its own in-house and locally outsourced CBD. This year, however, shoppers in Lansing are more focused on Delta-8. Three other customers bought similar bottles while I waited in line last week. Staff there also said that Delta-8 has accounted for most of the shop’s revenue since it started producing it late last year.

I love weed. And I hate substitutes. So, I was naturally skeptical as I squirted several droppers full of the delta-8 distillate under my tongue. Mine was clear and tasteless. Though the staff offered to infuse the bottle with my choice of a variety of fruity flavors, I opted to keep it simple.

Online reviews describe delta-8 as Marijuana Lite, a less intense high for those looking for a quick buzz without some of the anxious or paranoid after-effects from higher potency products. I usually have 150 mg of delta-9 in my edibles. I thought 300 mg of delta-8 would do the trick.

And I guess I wasn’t wrong. About an hour after my megadose of delta-8, I was starting to have some difficulty focusing on the TV. My subsequent decision to “lay down for a bit” turned into a two-hour stasis of complete mental empti-

ness. I wasn’t sleeping, but floating, sort of like my brain was detached from the rest of my body as I zoned out into oblivion with my eyes closed.

It was then I realized that delta-8 obviously wasn’t too far a distant cousin from delta-9. This was clearly the feeling of overdoing it, something I hadn’t felt since my first few dabs in college.

The next day, I knocked it back to 200 mg and had a much more pleasurable and peaceful experience. And with 2000 mg in a \$60 jar, that’s a steal of a deal. I still have leftovers from last week. Other edibles (typically with only 100 mg of delta-9) routinely retail for \$20-30 at most other shops.

So, how are retailers able to sell these potent products without a license to sell marijuana? It seems like more of an oversight from our beloved ex-president rather than any concerted plan.

Former President Donald Trump was never much of a friend to the cannabis industry. He spoke out against federal legalization. His administration proposed ending a provision that protects states with legal medical marijuana from federal interference. In leaked audio, Trump has also claimed that smoking pot makes you dumb. Still, he was instrumental in delta-8’s legalization.

Trump’s name penned on the 2018 Farm Bill was the final step in federally legalizing hemp production and sales of hemp products other than those that test with delta-9-THC levels above 0.3%. Delta-8 isn’t even mentioned in federal law — opening the door to a lucrative new market.

Legal experts have widely interpreted this change to mean that every cannabinoid other than Delta-9 THC is now federally legalized. Though states can still enact added limitations, Michigan lawmakers haven’t taken any action to narrow those revenue streams for the hemp industry.

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

# OUT ON THE TOWN

Events must be entered through the calendar at [lansingcitypulse.com](https://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, March 24

**Allen Farmers Market** - 1629 E. Kalamazoo! 3-6:30 p.m. 517-999-3911.

**Biomedical Engineering Virtual Seminar Series** - Join us for our weekly series. 11 a.m. [events.msu.edu](https://events.msu.edu)

**Future Present Exhibition** - MSU's Science Gallery Detroit debuts exhibition in E. Broad Art Lab, 565 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing, through April 11th. Info and reservations: [detroit.sciencegallery.com](https://detroit.sciencegallery.com).

**Markers of Time** - Mark Chatterley Exhibition through March 30th. Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center, 119 N Washington Sq, Ste 101, Lansing. 517-374-6400. [lansingartgallery.org](https://lansingartgallery.org).

**LAFCU Listen & Learn: March Magic** - Free, virtual interactive event encourages children up to age 12 to read via a magic show, flute performance and youth readings. 7 p.m. [lafcu.com](https://lafcu.com).

**Our Daily Work, Our Daily Lives Brown Bag Series** - 12:15-1:30 p.m. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](https://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

**Threads of Wisdom: Ordains and Initiation** - Join us on Zoom for a double Threads of Wisdom discussion. 6:30-7:30 p.m. [weaversoftheweb.org](https://weaversoftheweb.org).

**Virtual Science on a Sphere: Animals on the Move** - explore the world of animal migrations and learn how scientists track animals! 12:30-1:30 p.m. MSU Museum. [museum.msu.edu](https://museum.msu.edu)

## Thursday, March 25

**Community Mental Health Authority 2020 Report to the Community** - Virtual. 8:30-11:30 a.m. [ceicmh.org](https://ceicmh.org)

**Elements Synthesis in Stars and the Lab** - This presentation is part of the Great Lakes Lectures series featuring academics from MSU. 8-9 p.m. [bookings.lib.msu.edu](https://bookings.lib.msu.edu)

**Guest Readers for Preschool Storytime** - Friends and neighbors are reading stories virtually! 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library. [gladl.org](https://gladl.org)

**Truffula Trees** - 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library. [eradl.org](https://eradl.org)

## Friday, March 26

**Karaoke** - Hosted by Rico! Fun starts at 9 pm. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. [crunchyseastlansing.com](https://crunchyseastlansing.com).

**Martinis and Music** - 9 p.m.-1 a.m. The Exchange, 314 E Michigan Ave, Lansing. 517-319-4500. [lansingexchange.com](https://lansingexchange.com).

**Mini Pizza Gardens** - 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library. [eradl.org](https://eradl.org)

**Second Opinion Reunion Concert** - featuring Betsy Clinton, Pat Madden, and Sally Potter. From the Archives: Audio of the April 24, 2015 concert. [tenpoundfiddle.org](https://tenpoundfiddle.org).

**Virtual Preschool Family Storytime** - 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, Go to [gladl.org](https://gladl.org) for link.

## Saturday, March 27

**All Women Roast of The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants** - 9 p.m. [frontrowfilmroast.com](https://frontrowfilmroast.com).

**Karaoke** - Hosted by Brad! Fun starts at 9pm. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. [crunchyseastlansing.com](https://crunchyseastlansing.com).

**Letter from Birmingham Jail in 4 EPs** - Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s eloquent 1963 discourse about racism stage reading. 7-8 p.m. [sycamorecreekchurch.org](https://sycamorecreekchurch.org)

**Maple Syrup Saturday** - This year you're invited to register for a 10-person Maple Syrup Saturday tour. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mt. Hope Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4224. [mynaturecenter.org](https://mynaturecenter.org).

**Mulliken Easter Egg Hunt** - We will be paying close attention to the COVID restrictions. 11 a.m. Mulliken District Library, 135 Main St., Mulliken.

## Sunday, March 28

**East Lansing Downtown Underground Market** - is coming to the lowest level (level P1) of the M.A.C. Avenue Garage, 310 M.A.C. Ave., East Lansing.

## Monday, March 29

**Jump Into Reading** - Join Ms. Anna on our Facebook or YouTube channel for story time read aloud and activity. 11-11:30 a.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library. [eradl.org](https://eradl.org)

**Operation** - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](https://impression5.org).

## Tuesday, March 30

**Candy Land** - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](https://impression5.org).

**Guest Readers for Preschool Storytime** - 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library. [gladl.org](https://gladl.org)

**Refuge Recovery** 6:30-7:30pm. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St., Lansing.

# FAST FORWARD



## UPCOMING EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS COMING TO LANSING

By SKYLER ASHLEY

### Root Doctor Livestream Concert

Thursday, March 25, 7 p.m.  
Viewable at: [Facebook.com/CABSblues](https://Facebook.com/CABSblues)

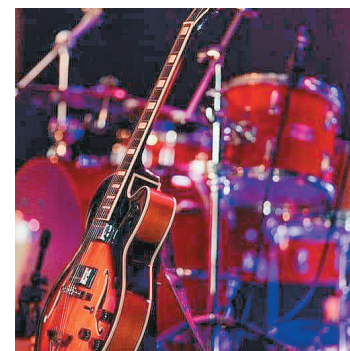
Popular Lansing-based blues band Root Doctor is performing a livestream concert hosted by Capital Area Blues Society. The band will be taking questions from viewers in between songs during the set, and there will be a live interview with the band following the performance.



### Deadtime Stories Grand Opening Saturday, March 27, 10:45 a.m. - 7 p.m.

1132 S. Washington Ave., Lansing  
[Facebook.com/Deadtimestories517](https://Facebook.com/Deadtimestories517)

Deadtime Stories is a new bookstore that focuses on true crime and paranormal stories. Owner Jenn Carpenter, author of "Haunted Lansing," will sign books. There will also be special offers and exclusive merch.



### Craig S. Hendershott Live at UrbanBeat

Saturday, March 27, 6 p.m.  
1213 Turner St., Lansing

[Facebook.com/Urbanbeatevents](https://Facebook.com/Urbanbeatevents)

Musician Craig S. Hendershott is performing at UrbanBeat in Old Town. The event will be an "intimate night of delicious food, libation, live music and good people."

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Don't see it? Please ask a manager.



# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

**"Miss Statement" - don't worry, it's all here.**  
by Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 46 was his veep
- 6 Gridlock problem
- 9 Abacus counters
- 14 "Go \_\_\_!"
- 15 "Dangerous Liaisons" name
- 16 "Don't do that!"
- 17 T, A, or Fiesta, e.g.
- 19 Drops in the mailbox
- 20 Hydroxyl-bearing compound
- 21 Fort \_\_\_, N.J.
- 22 As a maximum
- 23 Go back in a stream, maybe
- 25 Nonprofit that now focuses on ages 50 and older
- 26 Certain caretaker of children
- 32 City regulator
- 35 Like some fails
- 36 "No Ordinary Love" singer
- 37 "My hands \_\_\_ tied"
- 38 Season with heavy rainfall
- 41 Address ender
- 42 Do no better
- 44 Asian country with no coastline
- 45 "Now I get it!"
- 47 Film that's probably subtitled
- 50 "\_\_\_ said ..."
- 51 Menlo Park name
- 55 Twelfth zodiacal sign
- 58 Pre-weekend day, for short
- 60 Smoke detector?
- 61 "The Oracle of \_\_\_" (Warren Buffett nick-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15			16				
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55	56	57				58	59		60			
61						62			63			
64						65			66			
67						68			69			

- name)
- 62 Trait of trashy talking, perhaps
- 64 Madagascar mammal
- 65 "\_\_\_ making sense?"
- 66 Super-\_\_\_
- 67 Expert
- 68 "\_\_\_ voyage!"
- 69 "All I Want for Christmas \_\_\_"
- Down**
- 1 Bid
- 2 Kentucky frontiersman Daniel
- 3 Elevator button symbol
- 4 Time for a crisis
- 5 Convenience store device
- 6 Dame \_\_\_ Dench
- 7 "Don't leave home without it" card, briefly
- 8 "Honi soit qui \_\_\_ y pense"
- 9 Casual eatery
- 10 Gives immunity to
- 11 Part of A.D.
- 12 Root beer brand
- 13 Pt. of GPS
- 18 Betting probabilities
- 22 Transmission repair company with a "beep beep" in its ads
- 24 "Cheers" regular
- 25 Short melodic solo
- 27 Rent payer
- 28 Salts source
- 29 Like some IPAs
- 30 Actress Falco
- 31 Sales agents
- 32 \_\_\_ Dingbats (picture-based font)
- 33 Double Stuf cookie
- 34 Handy
- 39 Gymnast Korbut and comedian Koch, for two
- 40 Old Domino's mascot to "avoid"
- 43 Condiment in a packet
- 46 Really abominable
- 48 Words directly before "Radio" or "Media"
- 49 Bridal cover
- 52 Comedian Sales
- 53 "Bony" prefix
- 54 Beatles' jacket style
- 55 Actress Negri of silent movies
- 56 Chatted online
- 57 Equivalent
- 58 Exclusionary anxiety acronym, and a hint to the four theme answers
- 59 Archaeological dig site
- 62 "Groovy"
- 63 1,501, to Nero

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Answers on page 23

# SUDOKU

# Advanced

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

## 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 23

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

March 24-30, 2021

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** In the novel "House of Leaves", the hero Johnny Truant describes his friend Lude as wanting "more money, better parties, and prettier girls." But Johnny wants something different. What is it? He says, "I'm not even sure what to call it except I know it feels roomy and it's drenched in sunlight and it's weightless and I know it's not cheap." In my opinion, that declaration is far too imprecise! He'll never get what he wants until he gets clearer about it. But his fantasy is a good start. It shows that he knows what the fulfillment of his yearning feels like. I suggest you get inspired by Johnny Truant's approximation to conjure up one of your own. Gaze ahead a few years, and see if you can imagine what your best possible future feels like. Then describe it to yourself as precisely as possible.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** How distraught I was when I discovered that one of my favorite poets, Pablo Neruda, was an admirer of the murderous dictator Joseph Stalin. It broke my heart to know I could never again read his tender, lyrical poetry with unconditional appreciation. But that's life: Some of our heroes and teachers disappoint us, and then it's healthy to re-evaluate our relationships with them. Or maybe our own maturation leads us to realize that once-nurturing influences are no longer nurturing. I recommend that sometime soon, you take a personal inventory with these thoughts in mind. I suspect there may be new sources of inspiration headed your way. Get ready for them.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Self-help author Steve Maraboli has useful advice for you to consider in the coming weeks. I hope you'll meditate on what he says and take decisive action. He writes, "Incredible change happens in your life when you decide to take control of what you do have power over instead of craving control over what you don't." To get started, Gemini, make a list of three things you do have power over and three things you wish you did but don't have power over.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** While he was alive, Cancerian author Franz Kafka burned 90% of everything he wrote. In a note to a friend before he died, he gave instructions to burn all the writing he would leave behind. Luckily, his friend disobeyed, and that's why today we can read Kafka's last three novels and a lot more of his stuff. Was his attitude toward his creations caused by the self-doubt that so many of us Cancerians are shadowed by? Was he, like a lot of us Crabs, excessively shy about sharing personal details from his life? In accordance with astrological omens, I urge you to at least temporarily transcend any Kafka-like tendencies you have. It's time to shine brightly and boldly as you summon your full powers of self-expression.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** To create your horoscope, I've borrowed ideas from Leo-born author Cassiano Ricardo. He speaks of a longing "for all that is tall like pine trees, and all that is long like rivers, and all that is purple like dusk." I think yearnings like those will be healthy and wise for you to cultivate in the coming weeks. According to my reading of the astrological omens, you need expansive influences that stretch your imagination and push you beyond your limitations. You will benefit from meditations and experiences that inspire you to outgrow overly small expectations.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Virgo actor and director Jean-Louis Barrault (1910-1994) aspired to "wake up a virgin each morning." He wanted "to feel hungry for life," as if he had been reborn once again. In order to encourage that constant renewal, he regarded going to sleep every night as "a small death." I recommend his approach to you during the coming weeks. In my astrological opinion, the cosmic rhythms will be conspiring to regularly renew your desires: to render them pure, clean, raw, and strong. Cooperate with those cosmic rhythms!

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Is there anything more gratifying than being listened to, understood,

and seen for who you really are? I urge you to seek out that pleasure in abundance during the coming weeks. My reading of the astrological omens tells me you need the nurturing jolt that will come from being received and appreciated with extra potency. I hope you have allies who can provide that for you. If you don't, search for allies who can. And in the meantime, consider engaging the services of a skillful psychotherapist or life coach or some other professional listener.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** "Blobs, spots, specks, smudges, cracks, defects, mistakes, accidents, exceptions, and irregularities are the windows to other worlds," writes author Bob Miller. I would add that all those things, along with related phenomena like fissures, blemishes, stains, scars, blotches, muck, smears, dents, and imperfections, are often windows to very interesting parts of this seemingly regular old ordinary world—parts that might remain closed off from us without the help of those blobs and defects. I suggest you take full advantage of the opportunities they bring your way in the coming weeks.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Innovative psychologist Carl Jung had a nuanced understanding of the energies at work in our deep psyche. He said our unconscious minds are "not only dark but also light; not only bestial, semi-human, and demonic, but also superhuman, spiritual, and, in the classical sense of the word, 'divine.'" I bring this to your attention, Sagittarius, because now is a favorable time to get better acquainted with and more appreciative of your unconscious mind. For best results, you must not judge it for being so paradoxical. Don't be annoyed that it's so unruly and non-rational. Have fun with its fertility and playfulness and weirdness.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** The fantasy drama "Game of Thrones" appeared on TVs all over the world. But the audience that watched it in China got cheated out of a lot of essential action. Government censorship deleted many scenes that featured nudity and sex, fighting and violence, and appearances by dragons, which play a starring role in the story. As you can imagine, Chinese viewers had trouble following some of the plot points. Telling you about this, Capricorn, is my way of nudging you to make sure you don't miss any of the developments going on in your own personal drama. Some may be hidden, as in China's version of "Game of Thrones". Others might be subtle or disguised or underestimated. Make it your crusade to know about "everything".

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** "Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind," wrote author Rudyard Kipling. Yes, they are. I agree. They change minds, rouse passions, build identities, incite social change, inspire irrationality, and create worlds. This is always true, but it will be especially important for you to keep in mind during the coming weeks. The ways you use language will be key to your health and success. The language that you hear and read will also be key to your health and success. For best results, summon extra creativity and craftsmanship as you express yourself. Cultivate extra discernment as you choose what you absorb.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Piscean linguist Anna Wierzbicka says the Russian expression "Dusha naraspashku" means "unbuttoned soul." She continues, "The implication is that it is good, indeed wonderful, if a person's 'soul,' which is the seat of emotions, is flung open in a spontaneous, generous, expansive, impetuous gesture, expressing full trust in other people and an innocent readiness for communion with them." I wouldn't recommend that you keep your soul unbuttoned 24/7/365, but in the coming weeks, I hope you'll allocate more time than usual to keeping it unbuttoned.

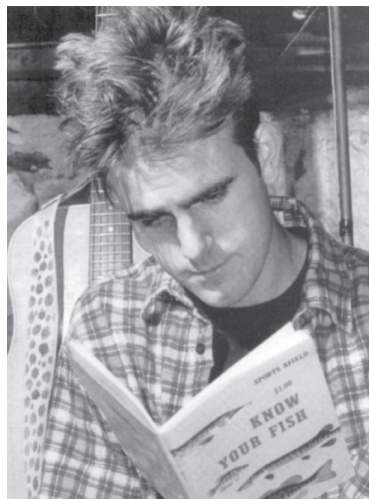
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# TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPIGA

A LOOK BACK AT EAST LANSING'S ANTI-FOLK HERO WALLY PLEASANT



Wally Pleasant emerged on the local scene in the early 1990s and released his latest LP, "Happy Hour," in 2018. (courtesy images)

## A quick dive into a brilliantly pleasant discography

For Lansing scenesters who came of age in the '90s, the name Wally Pleasant no doubt brings up countless memories of acoustic guitars, brilliantly witty verses and earworm hooks.

The local troubadour, known for his barebones folk ballads, frequented several clubs and small venues across the area throughout the '90s—and today still sporadically performs and drops new recordings.

Back in his '90s heyday, while attending Michigan State University, his weekly shows at Cuppa Java usually drew between 30 and 60 people. He also spent time gigging at Castellani's Market, Hobie's on Trowbridge, WhereHouse Records, Erickson Kiva, the MSU Union, and a popular open-mic night at The Riv (this is back when East Lansing welcomed live music). From there, national exposure followed thanks to supportive college radio stations across the country, including the locally operated Impact 88.9-FM, which was the first to spin his earliest cassette demos. Subsequently, The Impact also championed his entire Miranda Records' discography:

- "Songs About Stuff" (1992)
- "Welcome To Pleasantville" (1993)
- "Houses of the Holy Moly" (1994)
- "Wally World" (1996)
- "Hoedown" (2000)
- "Music For Nerds And Perverts" (2004)
- "Happy Hour" (2018)

After "Music for Nerds and Perverts," you'll notice a long gap in there, where he took a break from the studio and started a new professional career and family. He still

lives in Mid-Michigan, and even played a City Pulse-hosted concert in 2016 along with The Verve Pipe at Adado Riverfront Park. The event celebrated the 20th anniversary of The Verve Pipe's landmark "Villains" LP, as well as Pleasant's "Songs About Stuff." Both acts played the classic albums in their entirety. His 2018 return to the LP-record format, "Happy Hour," showed Pleasant as strong as ever, both poetically and musically, but this time with a classic country tinge.

"I probably spend just as much time writing as I ever did," Pleasant said while he was cutting the record. "As for the country record, the late '60s and '70s is my favorite era of country music. They're just well-produced and well-written songs."

Looking back, the stack of CDs he's issued veer from politically inspired ballads to witty ditties about life as a broke college student. His sonic narratives draw inspiration from his heroes, like Phil Ochs and Jonathan Richman, Jim Croce and the Violent Femmes, to only name a few. But his distinct sound, sometimes dubbed "anti-folk," will forever stand on its own. His catalog marries comedy with legit, honest songwriting. It's a hard line to tastefully manage, but somehow Pleasant tap dances on that delicate crossing.

Since the Detroit-born songwriter debuted some 30 years ago, he has penned a string of often relatable fan favorites, like "Denny's at 4 a.m.," "Small Time Drug Dealer," "Stupid Day Job," "I Hate Cops," "I Was a Teenage Republican" and "Dead Rock 'n Roll Stars," to only name a few. His 1993 track "The Day Ted Nugent Killed All the Animals" earned

him facetime with Nugent, aka the Motor City Madman, himself.

"I was on Nugent's radio show," Pleasant said back in 2016. "We played a couple songs together. He was cool about the whole thing. Ted said it would take a day and a half to kill all the animals."

Over the years, his grassroots fanbase grew — and so did his mileage. He performed as far away as the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Between 1992 and 2000, he embarked on countless tours that kept him on the road six months each year. The hard work paid off. His albums performed well on CMJ's college radio charts and even scored airtime and an in-studio appearance on the legendary "Dr. Demento" radio program. His fourth LP, "Wally World," climbed to No. 28 on CMJ's weekly Top 150 chart.

Looking back, Pleasant said in 2016 he

only would've changed one thing: delegate the promo work end of his career.

"I was pretty focused on CD sales and chart positions and promotion," he admitted. "There could've been more focus on the non-business aspects. I probably would've had more fun."

Today, he's back at it. In between his family duties, he's writing and recording fresh material. Last month he laid down a new track for an upcoming Lansing-based covers comp and has other projects in the works, as well. Also, for those in need of an original song for a special occasion, like an anniversary, birthday or retirement, message him on Facebook for a quote — he will pen you your very own Pleasant tune.

Follow Wally Pleasant at facebook.com/WallyPleasant1 and check local record stores for his latest album, "Happy Hour."

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In the Lansing Symphony's online kids' series, we learn that Romanian-born violinist Florina Georgia Petrescu really does come from Transylvania.



Courtesy photo

## One-on-one with a witch

### LSO children's series brings out the strange

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

More than a year of lockdown has done some odd things to the musicians of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra.

A charming online children's series is showing sides of them we've never seen.

Even series host Ashleigh Lore, an enthusiastic elementary school music teacher, was taken aback by the wild glint in Florina Georgia Petrescu's eyes.

Between sharp snippets of Vivaldi and Bach, the Romanian-born violinist does spot-on imitations of a mosquito, a mooing cow, a creaky door and a motorcycle. She brandishes a broom and gleefully tells Lore she comes from Transylvania (really).

"I knew she was very kind, very sweet, but I never saw her playful side before," Lore said.

The first entry in the second LSO Kids series, available online; cuts instantly (and hilariously) from Lore's gentle smile to a deafening snare drum roll by principal percussionist Matthew Beck. He whacks away as if he's been stuck in his basement, with too many things to hit, and is grateful to have someone to talk to.

"The percussion family has hundreds of instruments!" he exults. "HUNDREDS!"

The popular series is attracting a new audience from around the country, and the world, in part because it shows a playful, off-kilter side of the musicians

you'd never get to see otherwise. Music teachers use the series to pique their students' interest in playing music.

The guest artists explain in simple terms how instruments are made, how they produce noise and what it's like to be a part of an orchestra.

Best of all, Lore asks the questions an adult would never ask, but would love to, if given the chance.

Forget minor key modulations and Beethoven's inner turmoil. Don't you get tired blowing on that horn? What's the highest and lowest sound you can make? Can you play something fast and loud?

The guest artists also play some great music, more or less straight. Petrescu plays a demonic Bach toccata, harpist Brittany DeYoung drifts through an enchanting passacaglia by Handel and horn player Corbin Wagner intones Darth Vader's theme from "The Empire Strikes Back."

Future episodes roll out some heavy hitters, including principal tuba player Phil Sinder, principal trombonist Ava Ordman, principal bassist Ed Fedeway, principal bassoonist Michael Kroth and even the LSO's composer-in-residence, Patrick Harlin.

All of them are likely to have some pent-up energy to vent on appreciative kids.

Wagner surprised Lore at the end of the taping by suddenly whipping on his formal jacket.

"Have you ever seen the movie 'Dr. Strange'? Wagner grins. "He has a magic cloak and we have a magic jacket."

"He came out like gangbusters," Lore said. "I only had to make two edits on that one."

## New FOX 47 team focuses on neighborhood reporting

By SKYLER ASHLEY

In an era where local news is evaporating and many cities don't have a source for local reporting at all, FOX

**Check out FOX 47's new team at Fox47news.com**

47 is ramping up on the ground coverage in Greater Lansing. With a new team of multimedia journalists, FOX 47's goal with its "In Your Neighborhood" concept is to embed reporters into the different neighborhoods and regions of Greater Lansing to produce exclusive in-depth reporting.

When FOX 47's contract with WILX News 10 was set to expire, it needed to put together a team that could produce in-house news broadcasts. FOX 47 hired director Jessie Williams, who started in local TV news with WLNS, eventually moving to WXYZ in Detroit and WTMJ in Milwaukee, to help assemble a

body of reporters. With its new team ready to go, FOX 47 began airing its own original news broadcasts in January. The staff consists of four producers, a photographer/editor and 10 reporters

— with plans to add two more by April. "A new startup is not for the faint of heart. There's a lot of work that's gone into this and we wanted people that were excited for this opportunity," Williams said.

Williams described having a blank canvas to work with as a rare opportunity in a shrinking industry. The strategy she's overseeing is to essentially drop a reporter in an area of Greater Lansing and have them develop a strong relationship with its local community members. The endgame is to have that bond help produce reporting that viewers simply cannot get from national news competitors or social media.

"When you're giving this blank slate, you really get to make meaningful decisions around how you'll operate differently, so you're bringing new viewers along for the ride," Williams said. "Our value proposition is local news. That's what people can't get from their iPhone or national news outlets. We have to

hone in on that."

Williams said it was important for the team, which features several African-American women reporters, to reflect the diversity of Greater Lansing. The journalists on the team also have several different backgrounds within the industry — some bring more print experience to the table, while others are more familiar with television reporting.

"We've seen the need to be vulnerable and have perspectives in the room that bring different things to the table. We all learn that way and become better journalists that way and tell better, more well-informed stories," Williams said.

Reporter Joe Gebhardt came aboard as part of the new FOX 47 team in January. He's returning to the news industry after somewhat of a hiatus — his last journalism gig was with WLNS in 2015. Gebhardt's beat is Jackson — a natural fit considering

he's already has a strong background with the city.

Gebhardt said one of the most exciting beat stories he's covered so far was a car accident, which saw a vehicle crash into the Jackson res-



Williams

Gebhardt

taurant Grand River Brewery. The driver was allegedly racing another vehicle and attempted to flee the scene by running from his wrecked car.

"I used to work there, to cover a story such as that one was life coming full circle. It really stuck out to me how crazy it was that a car crashed into such a popular establishment here in Jackson."

Gebhardt's job has him covering a variety of roles, as do most journalists today. "I'm my own assignment editor and camera person. You have to take on everything yourself," he said.

Williams expects that FOX 47's coverage will grow stronger and more in-depth as reporters grow more familiar with their beat and the Greater Lansing community begins to respond to the station's new format.

"We're really committed to strong community journalism. I'm really confident if you give us a little, we'll get it right."

# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

### Tea-dyed eggs

By **ARI LeVAUX**

The egg came first. Let's just get that out of the way. For millions of years before humans domesticated the feathered lizards known today as "chickens," countless generations of amphibia and reptiles, including dinosaurs, were laying eggs. The egg is an amazing system for nurturing young beings that's just plain awe-inspiring when you think about it. It's also a delicious and beautiful form of animal protein that no animal had to die for.

When Easter comes around, people steam their homes with vinegar in order to recreate the pretty colors that come naturally from a diverse set of hens. We backyard hen keepers, aka flocksters, understand the excitement. There is something deeply captivating about a multicolored basket of eggs. We just don't care to wait all year to enjoy it.

For the flockster, every day is like Easter, especially if there is a blue-egg layer in the flock, like an Araucana or an Ameraucana. Then you can have a mix of white, brown and blue eggs. In that company, the brown eggs look reddish next to the blues, and you end up with a haul of red, white and blue eggs.

Each protein-packed spheroid is a reminder of how preferable it is to give your food waste to a chicken rather than a compost pile. The girls cluck pleasantly as they convert soggy noodles, meat scraps, old greens and browned bananas into brunch. They close the loop between your kitchen and garden, and connect your home to the surrounding ecosystem.

There is also something soothing and invigorating about the sound of spring chickens scratching in the dirt. Young chicks have an intoxicating zest for life that is fun to be around. After a long winter, I let the hens out of their coop and let them run around the entire backyard, including the garden, where they turn over the top layer of soil and get it aerated a little, like scratching the earth's head after a long sleep, at the beginning of a big day.

Last year my flock had dwindled down to just two golden buff orpington hens both named Annabelle. At least they had each other through the winter, but they needed company. And thanks



to a deal that went down in a parking lot near the farmers market the other week, we've got some reinforcements.

I bought a cardboard box with six birds stuffed inside from a market vendor whose eggs I buy when my girls aren't laying enough. The timing of this transaction was meticulously planned. The new chicks had to be big enough to not get pecked apart by the old hens, and old enough to be discerned from the roosters, which we could not accommodate. But the new chicks could not be not too big, else they in turn would bully the senior hens.

I set the box of boisterous cargo in the chicken yard and took off the lid. A single feathered head popped up like a periscope. One by one they hopped out. After a polite, deferential period of about 30 seconds, the new chickens quickly made themselves at home. They knew exactly what to do in a chicken yard, and were running around like juvenile delinquents, while the old hens watched from the corner, making concerned squawking sounds in my general direction. But when evening fell, the new girls had all found their way into the coop and were snuggled up on perches alongside the old girls. The flock merger was complete.

The hen party never ends, but if you don't have the yard space, extra bandwidth or desire to take care of living, eating, pooping beings, you certainly don't have to. You can buy eggs from local chicken farmers for your dietary needs. And if you want to make some colored eggs for Easter, buy some cheap white eggs at the store and color them with natural products you can find around the house. Natural dyes give a more "realistic" look to the eggs, with changes in hue and little bumps and flakes that make them look like they came from the nest of a magic bird, rather than eggs with the flawless, airbrushed finish of synthetic dyes.

Many types of household foods, like beets and blueberries, can be used to color anything white. I prefer using



The eggs in the photo were dyed with black tea (brown), turmeric (yellow) and pea flower (blue).

Courtesy Ari LeVaux

dried leaves, spices and flowers, and basically make tea. My favorite materials are turmeric, black tea, blue pea flower, which makes a bright indigo color and is easy to find online.

#### Tea-dyed eggs

Like making tea, the dyeing process is basically the same regardless of which type of leaves are used, but each person has a preference on how strong they like it. The depth of color is dependent on how much material you use, and how long you let the eggs "steep." Some of the eggs in the photo have lighter shades from less time steeping.

If you want to eat the eggs, go for it. Just keep them refrigerated.

6 eggs

1 quart water

1 cup vinegar

Choice of colorant:

1 cup powdered turmeric

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup pea flower  
3 bags black tea

Place the water, vinegar and eggs in a pot over medium heat. Add the dye materials and bring to a boil. Turn down to a simmer, and simmer for 10 minutes. Turn it off and let the eggs steep until they reach the desired hue. For the darkest shades you see on the plate, let them sit overnight (in the fridge, if you plan to eat them).

Remove them very gingerly and set on a rack to dry. When the coating is still wet it can rub off, leaving a lighter shade below like an old coat of paint. Once completely dry they can be handled more easily.

*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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# PURE PICKS OF THE WEEK

## Triple Chocolate Chip /Indica/

Effect: *Relaxed, Sleepy, Happy*

Created by crossing Mint Chocolate Chip and Triple OG, this indica-dominant hybrid is perfect for those seeking a little couch-lock. The flavor is as advertised, with elements of mint and chocolate over an earthy base.

24.62% THC	<b>\$30</b>	NET WT.	<b>SAVE \$5</b>
INDICA		1/8 OUNCE	

Available for medicinal and adult use. Cannot be combined with any other offers or discounts. Offer valid 3/22-3/28, while supplies last.

### NEW STRAIN DROP

## Moonbow /Hybrid/

Effect: *Euphoria, Focused, Creative*

Moonbow is a fragrant hybrid that sends consumers over the stars. Bred by Archive Seed Bank, Moonbow is a cross of Zkittles and Do-Si-Dos. The result combines the flavorful euphoria of Zkittles with the relaxation of Do-Si-Dos for focused, creative and social effect. Expect Pure inspiration.

33% THC	<b>\$50</b>	NET WT.	<b>NEW STRAIN</b>
HYBRID		1/8 OUNCE	

Available for medicinal and adult use. Moonbow drops Friday 3/26.

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