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## Hitting the road

MSU's Broad Museum looks at car culture

See page 14



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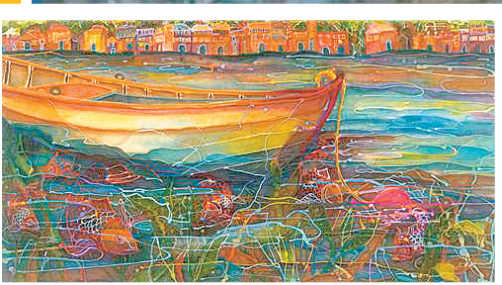
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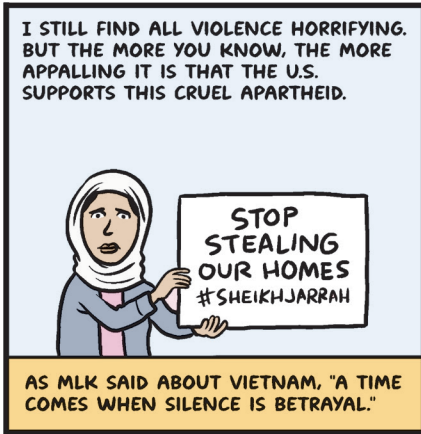
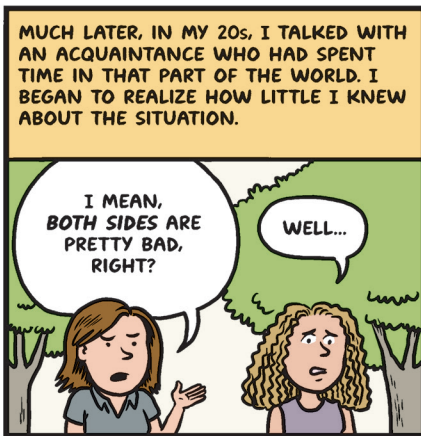
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Witnesses go virtual



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Ben Birney blasts glass



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Flash in the Pan: Strawberry rhubarb shortcake parfait



**Cover Art**

Ron Kleemann, "Gas Line" from City Scapes portfolio (1979) Courtesy MSU Broad Museum

**ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:** (517) 999-5061 or email [citypulse@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:citypulse@lansingcitypulse.com)  
**CLASSIFIEDS & OBITUARIES:** (517) 999-6704

**EDITOR AND PUBLISHER** • Berl Schwartz  
 publisher@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5061

**MANAGING EDITOR** • Kyle Kaminski  
 kyle@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-6710

**ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR** • Skyler Ashley  
 skyler@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5068

**EVENTS EDITOR/OFFICE MANAGER** • Suzi Smith  
 suzi@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-6704

**PRODUCTION** • Abby Sumbler  
 production@lansingcitypulse.com  
 (517) 999-5066

**MARKETING/DIGITAL DIRECTOR** • Aimee West  
 aimee@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-6708

**STAFF WRITER** • Lawrence Cosentino  
 lawrence@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5065

**SALES EXECUTIVE**  
 Lee Purdy • lee@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5064

**SALES ASSISTANT**  
 Earlisha Scott • earlisha@lansingcitypulse.com

**Contributors:** Andy Balaskovitz, Justin Billicki, Sean Bradley, Capital News Service, Bill Castanier, Ryan Claytor, Mary C. Cusack, Tom Helma, Gabrielle Lawrence Johnson, Terry Link, Kyle Melinn, Mark Nixon, Dawn Parker, Dennis Preston, Carrie Sampson, Patrick Sloan-Turner, Nevin Speerbrecker, Rich Tupica, Ute Von Der Heyden, David Winkelstern, Paul Wozniak

**Delivery drivers:** Dave Fisher, Gavin Smith, Jack Sova

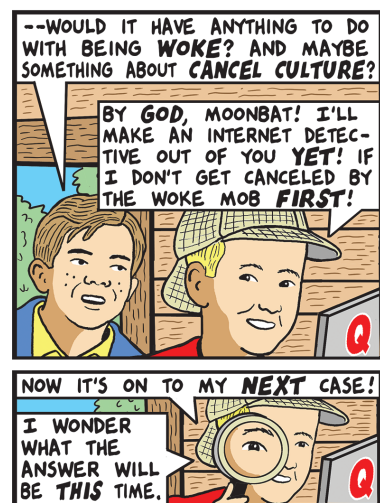
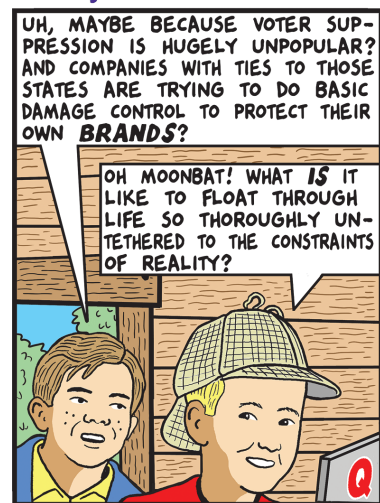
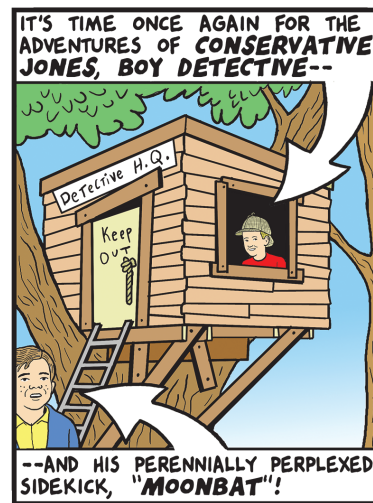
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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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# When kids kill

American jurisprudence has long taken a different view of crimes committed by children. The young brain is not yet fully developed, the argument goes, and therefore juveniles are less culpable than adults who commit the same offense, up to and including violent acts like murder. It is also thought that young offenders are more likely to be rehabilitated. These principles have been recognized in Michigan's legal system since at least 1915, when the state legislature first established 14 as the minimum age at which a minor could be tried as an adult.

The U.S. Supreme Court has frequently weighed in on the subject, striking down mandatory life sentences for juveniles in 2012, then making the ruling retroactive in a 2016 case, which prompted state authorities across the nation to resentence juvenile lifers. Here in Lansing, two such cases were resentenced, leading to the parole of Calvin Wilson and Robert Whitfield, both of whom were convicted of murders committed when they were minors. Last month, with a new conservative majority in place, the nation's high court moved in the opposite direction, ruling that juveniles could be sentenced to mandatory life in prison at the discretion of state legislatures, prosecutors, judges and juries.

Which brings us to the case of Jesus Mora, a Lansing man who was convicted of second-degree murder in 2000 for killing Isaac Rivera, a family friend. Both were 15 when Mora killed Rivera the year before. Mora and his accomplice claimed that Rivera had sexually assaulted Mora's sister. If they are to be believed, Rivera's killing was a brutal act of revenge that sprang from the twisted sense of justice living inside the heads of two angry teenagers.

It was deeply and tragically wrong, of course, but the question now turns on what justice looks like for a 37-year-old incarcerated man who says he is no longer the same person he was then. Is it fair to keep Jesus Mora in prison? Does a teenage killer deserve a second chance?

Although he didn't receive a life sentence, Mora was tried as an adult and sentenced to 40 to 60 years for Rivera's murder. He has spent more than half his life behind bars and is not eligible for parole until 2039, when he will be in his 50s — as would have Rivera. His codefendant, who was 19 at the time of the murder, was sentenced to a minimum of 25 years and will be eligible for parole in 2024. Mora — who fired the fatal shot after he and his accom-



## The CP Edit

### Opinion

plice tortured Rivera with at least 16 others — and his supporters are asking Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to commute his sentence, which isn't likely to happen any time soon. We believe Mora's request should be heard, but we're not convinced he should be released, at least not yet. His request for clemency should be judged on the basis of the severity of his crime, his record in prison, whether he has demonstrated genuine remorse for his actions, and his potential for rehabilitation.

Mora appears to be remorseful and seems to have a thoughtful, mature understanding of the pain he caused to so many. Yet this is what we would expect from someone who has spent the last 20 years behind bars. Mora has had plenty of time to think about why he is incarcerated and to polish his justification for clemency. His lack of a prior criminal record and apparent good behavior in prison also appear to be positive indicators of his prospects for rehabilitation. On the other side of the coin, Mora's crime was particularly brutal, which argues for a lengthy sentence regardless of how much remorse he feels or how well he has behaved behind bars. It is important to note that Rivera's family has never forgiven Mora. Few things are more traumatic and have a more lasting impact for survivors than a young life tragically cut short by senseless violence. Rivera's relatives will always be left to wonder what kind of man Isaac

would have become, the family he might have raised, and the love he would have shared with them. Their opposition to Mora's request for clemency is perfectly understandable and should be a significant factor in any decision made by the governor or the state parole board.

City Pulse is also aware that the Rivera family is deeply unhappy with the story we published on this case in last week's edition, in part because only one member of the family was contacted prior to publication to share their thoughts and feelings. Some family members expressed outrage that we would publish the unproven allegation that Rivera had sexually assaulted Mora's sister prior to the murder. Family members also say they resent the fact that City Pulse would write a story at all about a man who stole the life and future of their loved one.

On the first point, our reporter spoke to Isaac Rivera's older half-sister, Ixchel Esquivel, six days before publication and offered to interview other family members if they were willing to talk. City Pulse did not hear back from any other members of the family prior to our deadline for publication. Nonetheless, we regret that we were not more diligent in locating and interviewing additional family members. As to their second concern, we decided to include the sexual assault allegation in our story not because it justifies Mora's heinous actions, but because — whether true or not — it is central to Mora's claimed motive for the killing. On the family's third point, we respectfully disagree: Our story about Jesus Mora helps to illuminate the very difficult questions surrounding juvenile crime and punishment. That's what newspapers do. And that's why City Pulse will continue to report on issues that matter, even when they are unpopular or upsetting to some.

### Correction

Because of a reporting error, the gender of half sister Ixchel Rivera was reported incorrectly in the cover story last week about efforts by Rivera's murderer to be freed from prison. The error occurred because the only communication was through messaging and the half-sister's Facebook profile photo was of a man, leading the reporter to assume it was a photo of the Ixchel Rivera. City Pulse regrets the error.

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

Please limit them to 250 words



# Lansing deserves a leader with vision and purpose

By **KATHIE DUNBAR**  
**OPINION**



Dunbar

Sixteen years I've served on the Lansing City Council, and, still, no one mistakes me for a "typical politician." I'm known for being funny, outspoken, sometimes brash and unconventional.

I'm also honest, hard-working, extremely knowledgeable and very effective.

I gave up my Council seat to run for mayor because Lansing deserves a leader with vision and purpose. We need a mayor willing to explore bold initiatives to address the complex challenges facing our city. We need a different approach to governance, led by a mayor who demonstrates compassion and empathy and doesn't shy away from accountability.

From the moment I took office, I've been a staunch advocate for resident-driven community and economic development, social equity and human rights, green infrastructure and fiscal responsibility. I'm proud to have a tangible record of service to our residents and business owners.

In my first year on the Council, I worked with local LGBTQ and BIPOC communities to write Lansing's Human Rights Ordinance, with protections against discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations. I also made the case to install stormwater filtration systems along Michigan Avenue to clean toxic runoff before it reaches the river.

In the years since, I worked with our parks department to write the MDNR grant used to purchase the

This is the second in a series of guest columns by candidates for mayor of Lansing in the Aug. 3 primary election. The order was determined by lot. Farhan Sheikh-Omar, chose not to participate after being randomly selected to go fifth.

largest remaining riverfront parcel of land in the city. Those 28 acres of wilderness became Hunters Ridge Park, which is now full of mountain bike trails connecting three parks along the Grand River.

I facilitated a yearlong community engagement process with residents and small business owners to redesign the South Washington streetscape and pave the way (pun intended) for the renaissance that transformed the REO Town commercial district.

When a neighborhood shopping center lost its anchor grocery store, I worked with surrounding neighborhood organizations, adjacent business owners and the Lansing Economic Area Partnership to recruit a new Spartan Valuland grocery store.

I proudly worked alongside members of our Latinx and immigrant communities to create sanctuary policies that protect noncitizen residents' rights to due process.

When the city privatized the parts supplier in our city garage, I worked with UAW leadership to prove that costs were higher and efficiency was lower, and the contract was terminated. We restored two union jobs and saved money.

Most recently, I worked with city attorneys and finance staff to restructure the Lansing Lugnuts contract renewal, saving taxpayers \$2 million

dollars in the process.

Lansing needs a mayor willing to roll up their sleeves, dive deep and get things done.

In addition to serving on the Council, I'm the founder and director of South Lansing Community Development Association, which oversees: the South Lansing Farmers Market, supporting local growers/entrepreneurs and increasing neighborhood access to healthy food; the Hawk Island Triathlon, which promotes South Lansing as a destination for numerous recreational opportunities; and South Lansing Urban Gardens, where we grow thousands of pounds of fresh produce to donate to local food pantries. We also host our own 24-hour food pantry and coordinate with other agencies to provide for unsheltered clients and newly housed families.

As a nonprofit director, I'm privileged to work with our most vulnerable residents, helping them navigate systems that weren't designed for them. As a Council member, I have strong relationships with staff in all city departments and I'm well acquainted with city operations and the budget process. I am the only candidate who brings this unique combination of municipal experience and grassroots perspective to the mayor's office.

Under the current administration,

trust has eroded inside and outside of City Hall. Morale has declined among city employees, to the point that some describe themselves as passengers on a rudderless ship. Community members also deserve leadership. We are in our second year of record levels of gun violence, with two more victims this week, and this mayor has resisted investing in solutions until there's a sustained public outcry.

Under my administration, the organizational culture of City Hall — including our relationships with employees, retirees and the community — will be centered on collaboration, transparency and trust. I will lead by example, empower our employees to innovate, and involve stakeholders in decisions that impact their lives.

My top priorities are post-pandemic recovery, economic and community health, increasing safe and affordable housing options, adopting priority- and outcome-based budgeting which includes reigning in unfunded liabilities, reducing epidemic levels of gun violence that disproportionately impact our Black youth and using integrated technology to foster innovation in systems and services.

Sixteen years ago, I won my first election with \$4,000 and two pairs of Birkenstocks, beating a candidate who outspent me 8:1. I've stayed in office because people trust in their gut that I genuinely care about them as individuals and our larger community. I still have those sandals, and I still care.

I'd be honored to serve as your next mayor. Visit [kathiedunbar.com](http://kathiedunbar.com) for more details.

## CITY OF LANSING SUMMARY OF ADOPTED ORDINANCE # 1284

Lansing City Council adopted an Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to amending Chapter 280 Section 280.03, to provide that the Elected Officer Compensation Commission shall meet in even-numbered years to determine the compensation of elected officers in the manner provided in Chapter 280.

Effective date: June 9, 2021

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

**Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/MiPMC**  
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CP#21-123

## LEGAL NOTICE. TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

**NOTICE** is hereby given that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (Tri-County) is providing the opportunity for public comment on the transportation planning process at the Tri-County Board of Commissioners' virtual meeting on **May 26th, 2021 at 6 p.m.** The public is encouraged to attend and share their views and experience with the region's transportation planning process with representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Tri-County is committed to early and continuous public involvement in transportation and other regional planning. This meeting is part of a review that will assess compliance with federal regulations in the planning processes conducted by Tri-County, MDOT, CATA, Clinton Transit, EATRAN, and tri-county area units of government. For more information about this meeting and how to participate, visit [www.mitrpc.org](http://www.mitrpc.org) or email our office at [info@mitrpc.org](mailto:info@mitrpc.org).

CP#21-128



# Why you should (maybe) care about Whitmer's plane flight

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer flew on a private jet two months ago to check on her dad in West Palm Beach, Fla., who has some chronic health issues.

## OPINION



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

return to Michigan for a more thorough evaluation. The governor left 4:37 p.m. March 15 and returned at 7:01 p.m. the same day.

Earlier this month he underwent a procedure that apparently was successful.

In normal times, this probably isn't news. What makes it news is the following:

— In March, Michigan was still operating under the COVID-19 presumption that we shouldn't be traveling much. Running around here and there, exposing yourself to others spreads the virus. That's what were told,

A Zoom Mother's Day 2020 was followed by a Zoom Thanksgiving, then a Zoom Christmas and a bunch of Zoom get-togethers, if they happened at all. The state was not in lockdown in March, and the governor didn't recommend that Spring Break plans should be canceled.

But the state certainly was left with the impression that travel would be frowned upon. So, the Republicans have a "What's good for me, is not good for thee" argument.

— Who paid for the flight? This is probably the biggest and most legitimate issue. On Friday, the Governor's Office disclosed that the \$27,500 flight was paid by the 501(c)4 that covered the costs of her inaugural celebrations.

The governor paid for her seat out of pocket. That was \$855. One could argue that covering a personal plane flight is not the mission of Michigan Transition 2019, the 501(c)4, and it could be an IRS violation if someone wants to file a complaint.

Also, Air Eagle does not have a charter license, which means it can't take passengers who aren't connected with its corporate owners. Could they and its owners be in trouble with the Federal Aviation Administration?

The story isn't over. The Republicans have a ready-made political argument that the jet-setting governor used corporate money for a personal trip at a time when everyone else was left with the impression they weren't supposed to travel.

Should you care? To the extent it'll be used against the governor politically? Yes.

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

This month-long story isn't Watergate, but it's trickled out longer than necessary. It's given Republicans material to use against her for as long as the focus groups show its resonating.

At face value, the trip is defensible.

She's pulled sunup-to-sundown days for a year, helping steer Michigan through its first pandemic in 100 years. She's been on the national networks nonstop holding former President Donald Trump accountable.

She's made few, if any, trips in a year, even though she has a personal cottage in Elk Rapids and a nice place on Mackinac Island that governors have used for years.

If she wants to check on her 81-year-old pop and she has some money left over in an administrative account, why not?

She isn't the first Lansing politician to hop on a private jet for personal benefit and she probably won't be the last. Whitmer was the victim of a kidnapping plot last year. Of course, she's leery about flying commercial.

It wasn't a vacation. She helped Dad clean up his place. Cooked some meals. Did some dishes. Tidied up the place. She did her day job while there, too. Monitoring the pandemic, etc.

If this is what you're thinking, you're not alone.

You should care because Republicans do and they're going to make sure any COVID-weary voter in this state does, too.

Here are the basic facts. At 7:27 a.m. Mar. 12, the governor took an Air Eagle twin jet IAI Gulfstream to West Palm Beach, Fla., landing at 9:37 a.m. Security detail went with her.

She visited her snowbird father, Richard "Dick" Whitmer, the retired Blue Cross Blue Shield executive. He had started complaining of pronounced fatigue and shortness of breath, and the governor was concerned.

The senior Whitmer was vaccinated at that point. The governor was not. After the governor's visit, the upshot was that Richard Whitmer needed to

## LETTERS to the editor

### Mora story unfair to victim

I am writing regarding the article published on May 13, 2021, titled "Teenager convicted in Lansing murder looks for a 'second chance' at life. Isaac Rivera WAS my uncle. After reading the article, I am distraught, confused and sickened. I find the article one-sided and biased. It seems as the author is glorifying a child killer while the family of the victim is grieving the loss of their 15-year-old son. The claims of sexual assault are completely false and should not have been discussed in this article. There is no evidence to support these allegations, including no police report of the supposed assault. Journalists are supposed to report FACTS, not "he said, she said" stories. In this case it impossible for this article to hold any merit since the person being accused is not able to address the claim, because Mora acted as the judge, jury and executioner. You never once mention in the article that the claim made by Mora's sister may be false. There is data that proves false sexual assault accusations were extremely high during this period, and there are many men and women out there who were killed from these actions, yet Kyle Kaminski failed to report this. Did Kaminski do research on the original trial? Why was the accusation never mentioned during the trials? Maybe because there was no basis for the allegation.

That Mora feels 21 years is enough time for his crime is ridiculous. That is like saying 21 years is enough time to grieve and move on from the loss of our family member. Why should Mora have the right to live the rest of his life free. My uncle doesn't have that option. I don't believe someone asking to be released after fatally shooting someone 16 times deserves any response from OUR community. Your one-sided article is insensitive, cold and warrants no merit to the truth regarding a victim of this heinous crime committed by Mora.

I believe this article was written with biases, as the author seems to be in obvious favor of Mora's being released. My family is very hurt and truthfully disgusted by the claims in this article.

Your journalist Kyle Kaminski should consider doing some research, interviewing all parties

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
- Snail mail: City Pulse, 1905 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48912
- Fax: (517) 371-5800
- At lansingcitypulse.com

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

Contact Berl Schwartz for more information: 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.)

involved, and take a class on empathy before publishing articles of this nature.

**Marisa Vertrees**

### Truth in sentencing should remain

There's a big push in the state legislature from various well-meaning organizations to repeal "truth in sentencing." As someone who has worked as a defense attorney and serves as Clinton County prosecutor, I fear that doing so would cause more harm than good.

Michigan's truth in sentencing law means a criminal defendant must serve the entire minimum sentence imposed by the judge before parole can be considered. While this may seem harsh at first glance, it serves at least two very important functions.

First, it grants victims some peace of mind in knowing that their perpetrator will serve the entirety of the minimum sentence. Who is to say a violent criminal will not game the system by demonstrating good behavior in prison so that he/she can get out sooner, effectively bypassing the judge's sentence, and reoffend? That's not a chance I want to take with my friends and family — or yours.

Second, truth in sentencing serves as a judicial check on the executive power. The Michigan Department of Corrections, an executive agency, can no longer unilaterally control Michigan's prison population by arbitrarily deciding whom it wants to release and when. Rather, truth in sentencing permits the judge to determine, after considering the facts and evidence of the specific case and the harm done to the victim, what minimum sentence is appropriate for the defendant's own choices and actions. I believe the sentencing judge is best situated to make that determination because they are the one who knows the facts and evidence of a case, not the MDOC's unelected, unaccountable bureaucracy.

**Tony Spagnuolo**  
Clinton County prosecutor





This month's Eye Candy is the Music Building on campus at Michigan State University. The original building (seen on the right) was completed in 1939 as a project of FDR's New Deal Public Works Administration. On the left is the newly completed expansion. The way the two buildings work together aesthetically is a stunning example of modernization that protects and preserves the original. The two constructions — separated by nearly 80 years — are visually connected through the use of similar materials. The bricks are the same color, tone and size, for example. Furthermore, the designs are united by complementary fenestration. From the French for window, fenestration refers to the quality, quantity and other aesthetic features of the openings in the building's envelope: doors, windows, skylights. The windows in these two versions of the MSU Music Building are similar but not identical; it is as if the new windows are giving a nod to the former windows, saying, "I'll take it from here." The windows over the front entrance, which is now centered symmetrically in the enlarged building, appear elongated in the modern-day addition. The visual connection between the windows of the two buildings is literally repeated in the atrium that connects the 1939 building to the contemporary one. Overall, the effect creates a new building that pays homage to its history in a thoughtful, well-designed way.

— **CARRIE SAMPSON**

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

# REWIND

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By **KYLE KAMINSKI**

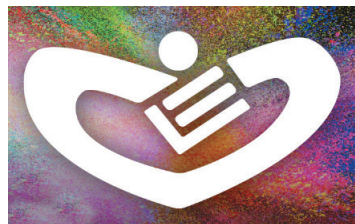


### Women charged in brutal murder

Corey Dalton was found beaten, stabbed and burned to death this month near his apartment on Woodbridge Drive in south Lansing. Sharnae Cook and Marissa Gilbert, 27 and 29, of Lansing, allegedly poured bleach down Dalton's throat, stabbed him, sprayed pesticides on him and drilled through his neck and head.

### Ten winners in art contest

Their work (including that of our own cover illustrator Nevin Speerbrecker) will be featured online and on billboards across Michigan as part of LAFCU's "Act with Love & Equality" art initiative. Winning entries feature graphical depictions of "words of love and equality" that serve as "public reminders about what is important in daily life," officials said.



### City official warns of apocalypse

The director of Lansing's Department of Human Resources, Linda Sanchez-Gazella, cautioned about the "second coming of Christ" — including the "mark of the beast," microchips, martial law, a cashless society and total government dependency — on her personal Facebook page.

*Read more at [lansingcitypulse.com](http://lansingcitypulse.com).*

### Silence at Lansing City Hall

This week marked the first Lansing City Council meeting in at least 20 years that didn't include a single public comment, city officials estimated. Councilman Brian Jackson said he was concerned, particularly because the passage of the annual budget made this week's meeting among "the most

important" of the year. He wrote in his newsletter: "It delegitimizes Council's work. After all, we literally represent the people of Lansing and we need to hear from them."

### Democratic Socialists protest in Lansing

The local chapter rallied outside U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin's office to demonstrate solidarity with Palestinian resistance. The group called on Slotkin to support House Resolution 2590 and to cut off funding to Israel and support a resolution backing human rights for Palestinians.



### Another protest forms at City Pulse

Friends and family of Isaac Rivera, who was brutally murdered at 15, carried signs accusing the paper of advocating for a convicted killer and ignoring the victim in a 1999 murder. Rivera's killer, Jesus Mora, who has applied for a gubernatorial commutation after 21 years in prison, was the subject of last week's cover story.

*Read more at [lansingcitypulse.com](http://lansingcitypulse.com).*



### Lansing celebrates '517 Baby'

Bowen Kurtzhals was the first baby born in Lansing on May 17 — otherwise known as "517 Day." Bowen was born at 8:25 a.m. to Kailee and Austin Kurtzhals, measuring in at 20 ½ inches and 8 lbs. and 15 oz. Hospital staff said Bowen and his parents are "recovering and doing well."

### Two killed in South Lansing shooting

Kian Maliak Miller Jr. and Timothy Isador Minor III, 22 and 23, of Lansing, were shot on Burchfield Avenue. One suspect — who reportedly knew the two men — fled the scene and has not been arrested. Those with information are asked to call the Lansing Police Department at 517-483-4600.

#### CITY OF LANSING SUMMARY OF ADOPTED ORDINANCE # 1283

Lansing City Council adopted an Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to repeal Chapter 650, Section 650.05, a criminal misdemeanor under the General offenses code of the codified ordinances to eliminate parental responsibility.

Effective date: June 9, 2021

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

**Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/MiPMC**  
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CP#21-124



# Health officials use mapping for equitable vaccine access

## Census data drives outreach in Ingham Co.

Officials at the Ingham County Health Department are leaning on census data to identify and drive outreach to areas of the county that are lagging behind on COVID-19 vaccination rates.

Among the areas that need some help catching up: south Lansing zip codes 48911 and 48910, as well as swathes in ZIP codes 48906 (the north side) and 48912 (the east side).

County Health Officer Linda Vail shared parts of the new data program that helps her team identify areas needing increased attention. A heat map guides health officials to certain neighborhoods that could use some extra help.

“My team uses this to plan their community and neighborhood and strike-team clinics,” Vail said.

Those tracts with lower vaccination rates will be targeted for pop-up clinics, “strike team” vaccination initiatives and distribution of informative literature about the coronavirus vaccine.

The U.S. Census Bureau defines census tracts as having 1,200 to 8,000 people — preferably 4,000. This allows the bureau to prepare the census every 10 years and track specific community-level data to build a data tool called a Social Vulnerability Index.

The index is another key piece of data used by Vail and her team to determine high-risk locations to reach out to for testing and vaccination. The index identifies income, race and other factors in determining how the area may be impacted by social obstacles in accessing medical care or have higher exposure to environment-related health issues and economic obstacles.

“That’s what’s so great about this tool,” Vail said. “Show me on a map. That’s why this is such a great tool for me. Once you zoom in, you can see better where the issues are in access.”

Vail said she has been using the census data program for months to determine where vaccines could be distributed to yield the greatest impact across the county. That included shunting some shots to a pharmacy in Stockbridge to increase access to vaccination in that rural community.

Several census tracts surrounding Sparrow Hospital on Michigan Avenue have lower vaccination rates than the countywide average as well.

“I did share this map with Sparrow and said, ‘Look at this map. Look at

the areas shaded pink. Those would be great places to go,” Vail said.

The data also shows that Okemos and Haslett residents are getting shots in larger numbers. Those communities tend to have more access to healthcare than others, Vail explained.

But the southern edge of the county — like in Onondaga and Leslie — have significantly lower vaccine rates. While those tend to be the more politically conservative areas, it’s unclear how much vaccine hesitancy compared to access concerns plays a role there, Vail said.

To help mitigate those disparities, she said that mass vaccination clinics have been centered at the Michigan State University Pavilion, at least 30 minutes north of those communities.

“We have to wait and see what is happening in those communities when we start doing more outreach,” Vail said. “That will show us whether this is a hesitancy issue or an access issue.”

Outreach is a key part of the process of increasing vaccination in the county, Vail added. And that is going to require innovation in how the health department targets certain populations.

“You can’t just do a pop-up vaccination clinic and expect people to show up,” she said. “You need to let them know what is happening and when. That’s where flyers and outreach are going to come into play.”

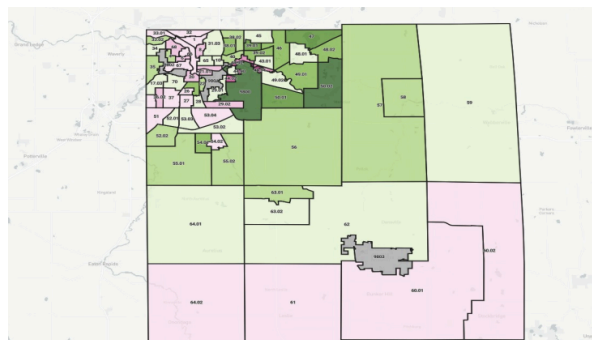
The Ingham County Democratic Party is getting in front of the process. The group launched a weekly “lit drop” this month in the 48911 ZIP code. And the party is particularly well placed to do such activities; door-to-door activities are standard protocol for pushing voter turnout. Those teams can canvass entire neighborhoods in one day, passing out literature on the way.

County Commissioner Derrell Slaughter and eight volunteers dropped 1,000 flyers throughout his district on May 8. Those materials included information on how to access the vaccine — not only through the Ingham County Health Department, but also at various local pharmacies.

Vail said that outreach is directly in line with her department’s overall vaccine outreach strategy.

“Once we identify those areas in need of information, we are going to rely on groups to help us get the word out — whether that’s churches or neighborhood groups or other groups,” Vail said. “We are going to need that help to reach everyone.”

— **TODD HEYWOOD**



Color coded by: Received 1 or More Dose (% Ages 16+)

0-9% 10-19% 20-29% 30-39% 40-49% 50-59% 60-69% 70-79% 80-89% >90% <150 Population



Statewide, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported on Monday that 42.1% of the state’s residents have been fully vaccinated. In Ingham County, that rate is higher at 43.16%.

### City of East Lansing Historic District Commission

#### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AT ELECTRONIC MEETING** Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

The Historic District Commission of the City of East Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan (“Historic District Commission”) will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, June 10, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.**, concerning the following:

1. A public hearing will be held to consider a Certificate of Appropriateness from Dan Smeak for the property at 218 Chesterfield Parkway to replace wood trim, replace gutters, and install a new side door.
2. A public hearing will be held to consider a Certificate of Appropriateness from Catherine Foley for the property at 638 Sunset Lane to construct a new 240 square foot detached garage.
3. A public hearing will be held to consider a Certificate of Appropriateness from Eric Graham for the property at 1103 W. Grand River Avenue to replace windows.

This meeting will only be held electronically pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of 1976, and the capacity restrictions and social distancing requirements set forth in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director’s Emergency Orders. The purpose of the meeting will be to hold the public hearing described above and consider any other business that comes before the Historic District Commission. Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, the City gives notice of the following:

1. **Reason for Electronic Meeting.** The Historic District Commission is holding this meeting by electronic means only due to the restrictions imposed by the MDHHS Director’s Emergency Orders. If the Orders are revised and if an in-person meeting is to be held instead of an electronic meeting, the meeting may be rescheduled to a different date and time. Notice of any such change will be posted at the City Hall and on the City’s website.
2. **Procedures.** The public may participate in the meeting and may make public comment electronically by video/telephone using the following method:

**Join Zoom Meeting by Video:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89993083153>  
**Or Dial In By Telephone\*\* - Call in: 312-626-6799, Toll Free: 888-788-0099**  
**Meeting ID: 899 9308 3153**  
**Password: Not required**

\*\*To unmute microphone from a cell phone dial \*6 (star 6)  
To raise your hand from a cell phone dial \*9 (star 9)

3. **Contact Information.** For those who desire to contact members of the Historic District Commission to provide input or ask questions on the business that will come before the public body at the meeting, please contact Peter Menser at (517) 319-6861 or [pmenser@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:pmenser@cityofeastlansing.com) prior to the start of the meeting.

4. **Persons with Disabilities.** Persons with disabilities may participate in the meeting through the methods set forth in paragraph 2. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services in order to attend electronically should notify Rebecca Urdiales at (517) 319-6922, TDD 1-800-649-377, or [urdial@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:urdial@cityofeastlansing.com) within a reasonable time in advance of the meeting.

Jennifer Shuster  
City Clerk

CP#21-131



# Michigan lifts face mask mandate for fully vaccinated residents

## Businesses diverge on protocols amid loosened pandemic restrictions

State officials eased up on pandemic-related restrictions over the weekend, no longer requiring fully vaccinated people to wear a face mask or socially distance in most settings. And while the updated orders allow for individual retailers and restaurants to continue enacting their own restrictions, many have followed suit and reeled back requirements that all customers mask up.

Under the updated order, businesses can still require masks for all customers. Alternatively, they can make a “good faith” effort to require masks for unvaccinated people, like putting up signs that outline the new rules on face masks. And plenty have already chosen the latter.

Meijer joined Walmart, Kohl’s, Trader Joe’s, Target, CVS, Macy’s, Costco, Starbucks, Chipotle, Best Buy, Lowe’s, Home Depot and several other large national chains in allowing fully vaccinated customers to shop without a face mask this week. Meanwhile, Kroger, Whole Foods, Aldi and

many other businesses in Greater Lansing are still requiring all shoppers wear masks.

Stober’s Bar was among those locally to maintain a blanket mask mandate on their premises.

“Please do not argue with the staff about this policy. We are taking the necessary precautions for safety. They are doing their jobs. If you do not comply with this, you will be asked to leave,” the bar tweeted. “Also, if you haven’t already, how about you go and get yourself vaccinated?”

Deadtime Stories in REO Town is also requiring face masks for everyone, posting to Facebook this week: “Until it’s safe for all of us to walk around unmasked without having to rely on the honor system, the masks stay. The end is finally in sight. We can hang in just a little bit longer.”

Crunchy’s in East Lansing took another route, only requiring masks for unvaccinated guests.

“Masks are still required inside the restaurant at all times (other than while eating and drinking) for patrons who are NOT fully vaccinated,” the bar and restaurant tweeted. “Those who are fully vaccinated may roam about freely without their mask, or still keep it on. It’s up to you.”

The state changes mirror guidance released from the CDC that also provides that face masks are no longer required for anyone at any outdoor gathering regardless of vaccination status. Those who are not vaccinated or in between shots are asked to keep wearing them in Michigan.

Federal guidance also still encourages face masks in crowded indoor settings regardless of vaccine status — including recommendations that

### CORONAVIRUS IN MICHIGAN BY THE NUMBERS... WEEK 61

<u>Michigan</u>				<u>Eaton County</u>			
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.		CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
5/11/21	867,341	18,338	N/A	5/11/21	8,683	190	N/A
5/18/21	878,125	18,710	4,377,717	5/18/21	8,747	198	50,354
<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑1.2%</b>	<b>↑2.0%</b>		<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑0.7%</b>	<b>↑4.2%</b>	

<u>Greater Lansing</u>				<u>Clinton Co.</u>			
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.		CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
5/11/21	36,749	628	N/A	5/11/21	5,887	79	N/A
5/18/21	37,082	641	221,464	5/18/21	5,935	79	38,026
<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑0.9%</b>	<b>↑2.1%</b>		<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑0.8%</b>	<b>0%</b>	

<u>Ingham County</u>			
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
5/11/21	22,179	359	N/A
5/18/21	22,400	364	133,084
<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑1%</b>	<b>↑3.8%</b>	

The “Vaccines” category refers to the total number of residents that have received either two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, according to state data. This data was not compiled last week and percent changes are omitted.

apply on public and shared transportation.

### In related news...

Following federal guidance, the state Department of Health and Human Services recommended that healthcare providers statewide begin vaccinating children ages 12 to 15. State officials also recommended that all types of the COVID-19 vaccine can now be administered at the same time (or on the same day) as other vaccines for children and adults.

Accordingly, the Ingham County Health Department — among other providers like Rite Aid — are accepting appointments for those ages 12 and up. Parents and guardians can schedule appointments anytime at [hd.ingham.org/coronavirus.t](http://hd.ingham.org/coronavirus.t) To 4 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.

The East Lansing City Council also repealed an ordinance that required face masks be worn in outdoor public spaces within the boundaries of the city’s Downtown Development Authority. Additionally, Michigan State University no longer requires masks be worn outdoors on campus.

Also: East Lansing residents experiencing financial hardships during the pandemic can now apply for up to \$7,000 in grant assistance for past due rent or mortgage bills and up to \$3,000 for utility bills. Residents must demonstrate a hardship related to COVID-19, like the loss of a job or an unexpected medical bill, and can submit applications online at [capitalehousing.org](http://capitalehousing.org).

— **KYLE KAMINSKI**

**STATE OF MICHIGAN  
PROBATE COURT  
COUNTY OF INGHAM  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
Decedent's Estate  
File No 21-358-DE

Estate of Avis Anne O'Connor.  
Date of birth: 03/28/1922.  
TO ALL CREDITORS: The decedent, Avis Anne O'Connor, died 01/09/2021. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Thomas Sean O'Connor, personal representative or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 05/13/2021

Kimberly L. Savage P68267  
1483 Haslett Rd.  
Haslett, MI 48840  
517-515-5000

Thomas Sean O'Connor  
6101 Horizon Dr.  
East Lansing, MI 48823

CP#21-127

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

Notice is hereby given that the Charter Township of Lansing Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, June 2nd, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. In compliance with Michigan Public Act 254 this meeting is being conducted via ZOOM Meeting Platform. For the purpose of recommending approval or denial of the following request:

Special Use Permit SP-21-02 Expanse Storage, to allow the use of mini-warehousing and storage within the West Park Planned Development.

Tentative text and other information may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, 3209 West Michigan Avenue, Lansing, Michigan.

Maggie Sanders, Clerk  
Charter Township of Lansing  
CP#21-129

**CITY OF LANSING  
SUMMARY OF  
ADOPTED ORDINANCE # 1282**

Lansing City Council adopted an Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to repeal Chapter 630, Section 630.12, a criminal misdemeanor under the General Offenses Code of the Codified Ordinances to eliminate loitering in places where controlled substances or drug paraphernalia is sold, used, etc.

Effective date: June 9, 2021

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

**Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/MiPMC**  
[www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk](http://www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk)  
[www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope](https://www.facebook.com/LansingClerkSwope)

CP#21-126



# Lansing's largest employers hesitant to force in-person work

## Companies outline 'gradual' transition away from remote employment

All sectors of employment in Michigan can return to in-person work under an updated set of state regulations that take effect on Monday. But employees still working remotely at many of Greater Lansing's largest employers might not want to pack up their home offices quite yet.

Thousands in local government and private sector positions haven't already resumed their daily commute won't be asked to come back to the office until later this summer, officials said. And some may not be asked to return at all while employers stay focused on staff safety, the mental health benefits of working from home and longer-term remote workplace efficiencies.

"We're hearing from all different sizes of businesses, and I think we're looking at more of a gradual, phased-in sort of approach from a lot of businesses," said Steve Japinga, a vice president



Japinga

at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. "We're also hearing a lot of employers are keeping that remote feature because of the talent shortage that's out there."

As of last week, at least 55% of Michigan residents ages 16 and older had been vaccinated against the coronavirus, triggering state officials to reel back precautions that will enable all in-person work to resume across all sectors of employment beginning on Monday (May 24).

Individual workplaces, of course, are free to set their own policies on reopening their offices.

Those that bring back in-person staff must still adhere to several pages of state safety protocols that include face masks, more social distancing and enhanced sanitation efforts. And even after the changes were announced last week, many local employers aren't springing back into action.

"It really depends on whatever works best for individual businesses, but I wouldn't expect any sudden transitions with everybody clocking back in on May 24," Japinga added. "It'll take time."

About 13,000 state employees won't return from remote assignments to their Lansing offices until July. Even then, each department will determine how optional work-from-home policies (including fewer days spent in the office) could remain in place, reported Bridge Magazine.

The vast majority of Michigan State University's 15,000 employees are also still spending most of their workday at home. And university officials don't expect that will change until August.

Vice President Emily Gerkin Guerrant explained: "Generally speaking, we're not bringing back employees in May, but we are asking unit leaders to work on plans for how to bring people back. We've also talked about a phased-in approach to get different units in person at different times."

MSU officials are set on bringing back students for an "on-campus experience" but — like many employers — are working to "evaluate" whether every pre-pandemic job still requires an office.

"Everyone transitioned so quickly when the pandemic blew up last March. Now that we're coming out of some of that, we have the ability to see what worked, what didn't work and what sorts of work can still be done remotely while also ensuring we can be able to support our students," Guerrant said. "I don't know if we're going to have that all figured out by this summer."

Fewer than 20% of Lansing Community College's 3,000 employees are back to working in person this week. Like at MSU, officials there said not to expect any immediate changes, though they anticipate "gradually increasing" the percentage of in-person work beginning in mid-July.

Many employees at some of the other largest employers in Lansing — including Sparrow Health System, McLaren Greater Lansing, Peckham, Dart Container, Quality Dairy and General Motors — never stopped in-person work during the pandemic. Those companies either didn't share details about remote work changes with City Pulse or don't yet have their plans fully developed.

"We are also exploring options for hybrid schedules depending on the

nature of the job duties and the preferences of the employee," said Lorely Polanco, a spokeswoman at Peckham, which employs about 2,500 people in Greater Lansing. "On the other hand, we have some employees



Polanco

who are eager to return to work on site and who will welcome the opportunity to be here in person. Ultimately, our goal is not to simply go back to our pre-pandemic ways, but learn from the experience of the past year and keep the elements that have become advantageous."

A spokesman for Auto-Owners Insurance said company officials will allow their 2,500 local employees to return to the office voluntarily starting May 24 — just as long as "they feel comfortable doing so" and if they are feeling well before their shift. Auto-Owners was the only company to respond this week with plans for immediate changes.

Consumers Energy also won't start bringing back its more than 4,000 employees from remote assignment until July 1. Even then, about half will continue to work from home, MLive reports. Officials at Ford Motor Co. said they won't start bringing back office staff until October. The Lansing Board of Water & Light will also keep about 220 employees at home until at least July.

About half of Ingham County's 1,200 employees are also working at least partially from home in a model that Controller Greg Todd said will continue through the summer while officials develop a plan. Among the considerations: Some remote employees have taken on new childcare responsibilities over the last several months, making any sudden schedule shifts difficult. Todd also said it "makes sense" to stop requiring that every desk job report to the office full time.

Forbes reports employers can save an average of \$22,000 per remote employee annually, with recent surveys also showing that workers themselves can also save \$4,000 annually on things like gas, coffee, business lunches and more professional office attire instead of sweatpants.

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor doesn't

have an exact count on how many city employees are still working from home but plans to begin a "phase-in" approach to in-person work later this month.

"A lot of it will depend on the needs of different departments.

There will certainly be some phasing in, whether that's half-time or some hybrid model. We still have to be sensitive to folks having childcare issues or those who are immunocompromised. It will be a gradual approach."

Schor is willing to consider shifting certain administrative types of city positions out of the office altogether but said municipalities like Lansing tend to rely on "hands-on" sorts of in-person services for residents that can't ever be fully replaced with a virtual, on-screen interaction.

East Lansing Mayor Aaron Stephens echoed those sentiments, noting that any decisions on returning to in-person work at City Hall will be gradual and involve discussions with employees.

"It's a balance where you don't want to go all in immediately," he said. "We're talking about childcare issues, safety issues. It's going to be more of a purposeful approach, but I think this allowance — these milestones — is a good thing. It shows that vaccinations are a clear path forward. It's like: Here's the light at the end of the tunnel. We can start to get back to normal."

The return to in-person work across all sectors marks the first stage of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's "Vacc to Normal" plan, triggered by at least 4.45 million state residents having been vaccinated.

Two weeks after the state hits about 4.86 million people, 11 p.m. curfews could be lifted at restaurants and bars and indoor capacity limitations would be expanded at facilities statewide. All indoor capacity restrictions will be lifted two weeks after 5.26 million people get vaccinated.

State officials said the goal to vaccinate 70% of those over 16 — about 5.67 million people — would then trigger the end of state-mandated restrictions unless "unanticipated circumstances" arise, like the possible spread of unseen vaccine-resistant variants of the coronavirus.

— KYLE KAMINSKI



Schor



Guerrant



# Lansing responds to divestment demands with health workers

## New budget emphasizes public safety reforms

Two community health workers will be stationed at the Lansing Fire Department this summer to help connect residents with social services rather than sending in cops and paramedics for calls to address issues such as homelessness, substance abuse and mental health.

The City Council approved a partnership between the city and the Ingham County Health Department as a \$120,000 contractual line item in the FY 2021 budget, which takes effect July 1. Mayor Andy Schor said it serves, in part, as a response to calls to

defund the police.

“I don’t want to see Lansing criminalize homelessness or drug addiction or any of those social problems. Putting those folks in jail doesn’t get them the help they need,” Schor explained. “This is a way to redirect those calls. I don’t support reducing the Police Department’s budget, but I do support getting more dollars to social service agencies in hopes that we can reduce those calls.”

As part of the arrangement, Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail will hire and oversee two community health workers to work alongside 911 dispatchers to ensure that some non-emergency calls in the city of Lansing are redirected to social ser-

vice agencies instead of unnecessarily sending in paramedics and armed police officers to deal with non-emergency issues. Vail said the efforts are geared toward providing earlier access to community support that can help to mitigate the root causes of crime, ultimately reducing dependence on police.

The two fulltime positions are expected to be filled before fall, Vail said.

“They won’t provide direct services other than conversations with people, connecting them to various resources to get them the help they need,” Vail said. “It can be tough to navigate mental health services and these different agencies — including at the Health Department. This puts advocates in place to help people navigate these systems and access the services they need.”

Schor’s latest spending plan also includes the addition of a second social worker embedded in the Police Department who will assist officers on the ground with those same sorts of non-emergency calls. The community health workers, instead, will work from a distance.

“They’ll help direct calls and where to go. The social workers at the Police Department are embedded. They literally go out on calls and directly help people. The folks at the Fire Department will be more focused on helping people navigate the system, directing them toward social services rather than the penal system. We want to match problems with real solutions.”

Vail said the two new employees won’t need to have any specific college degrees or formal training in social work. Instead, they’ll serve more as peer-to-peer mentors that better understand how to navigate a complex web of city-, state- and county-level social supports. The salaries for the two new positions will be \$32,500 to \$40,000, Vail said.

“This will really help when a call comes in that doesn’t require an emergency dispatch,” Vail added. “We’re talking about access to resources on housing, education, health, transportation — even employment. We’ve had community health workers help people through eviction notices and connect folks with doctor’s appointments. The system can truly be overwhelming.”

Added Fire Chief Greg Martin: “If we aren’t tying up an ambulance, then they’ll be more available to respond to

critical calls. Sometimes we get calls that are medical issues, but not an emergency medical issue. This really allows us to better address those lower priority calls.”

The new budget includes funding for another Police Department staffer to fulfill Freedom of Information Act requests and expedite the unfettered release of public records. The Council also set aside \$240,000 to fund one year of the city’s share in a multiyear anti-violence program called the Advance Peace initiative. Led by a California-based nonprofit, the program aims to use mentoring to support young people and reduce gun violence in the city.

An amendment from City Council President Peter Spadafore also slides \$20,000 from the Lansing Regional Sister Cities Commission to a new quarterly expungement clinic through the Office of the City Attorney. The funding will cover at least four workshops aimed at assisting residents with clearing misdemeanor convictions from their record in accordance with state law.

Additionally, the Council approved policy language from Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley that directs the administration to consider additional funding next year for the Police Department’s Cold Case Unit, which investigates homicides that remained unsolved for one year or longer.

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

A proposal from Councilwoman Carol Wood shuttled that cash into a contingency fund that will require further approval from the City Council before it can actually be allocated to those needs.

The Council also approved policy language from Councilman Brian Jackson that outlines how the city will continue to “reimagine policing” and how city officials remain dedicated to approaching public safety in “a holistic, proactive way that addresses the root causes of crime.”

— KYLE KAMINSKI

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
**East Lansing Planning Commission**  
**NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING**

**Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 7:00 pm**

**THE MEETING WILL ONLY BE HELD ELECTRONICALLY**  
**FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Planning Commission of the City of East Lansing will hold a meeting and public hearing on **Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** This meeting will only be held electronically pursuant to the Open Meetings Act and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Epidemic Orders.

A public hearing will be held to consider an application for Lot Split approval from Bethany McMillan to split the western 30 feet of the existing multi-family residential lot located in the 100-year flood zone at 295 Arbor Glen Drive, to deed to the Remy Chandler Intercounty Drainage District. The property is in the RM-8, Planned Unit Development District.

The Planning Commission may also consider any business to come before it as permitted by law.

Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of 1976, and the MDHHS Epidemic Order, the City also gives notice of the following:

1. **Reason for Electronic Meeting.** The Planning Commission is holding the meeting by electronic means only because of the gathering restrictions, capacity limits, and social distancing requirements set forth in the MDHHS Epidemic Orders.

2. **Procedures.** The public may participate in the meeting and may make public comment electronically by video or telephone conference using the following information:

URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84374740505>

Webinar ID: 843 7474 0505

Call in Number: 312-626-6799

Toll Free Call in Number: 888 788 0099

3. **Contact Information.** For those people who desire to contact members of the Planning Commission to provide input or ask questions on the business that will come before the public body at the meeting, please contact Peter Menser, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 319-6861, TDD 1-800-649-3777 or pmenser@cityofeastlansing.com, prior to the start of the meeting.

4. **Persons with Disabilities.** Persons with disabilities may participate in the meeting through the methods set forth in paragraph 2. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services in order to attend electronically should notify Rebecca Urdiales, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 319-6922, TDD 1-800-649-3777 or rurdial@cityofeastlansing.com, within a reasonable time in advance of the meeting.

Jennifer Shuster  
 City Clerk

CP#21-130





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## Where have all the door-knocking Jehovah's Witnesses been?

**Pandemic pushes religious outreach into virtual mode in Lansing and beyond**

It's been more than a year since the COVID-19 pandemic prompted Jehovah's Witnesses to stop knocking on doors for their ministerial outreach both in Greater Lansing and across the country. For some, it's a welcomed relief from unsolicited guests.

Others have asked: Where did they all go? And what have they been doing instead?

"A lot of phone calls and letters," said Keenan Stutz, a spokesman for the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Stutz said about 1.3 million Witnesses across the country suspended their door-to-door and face-to-face forms of public ministry in March 2020 — shifting congregation meetings to videoconferencing and instead calling thousands of residents rather than making home visits.

That included about 960 active Witnesses from nine congregations in the Greater Lansing area.

"As part of that, we've actually found that we've been able to connect even more with people," Stutz said. "It was always our goal to reach everyone in the community. We're still going house-to-house, but instead of in-person, it's just making calls out address to address."

In pre-pandemic 2019, Jehovah's Witnesses officials had tallied over 2 billion hours spent on streetside outreach among its approximately 8.7 million adherents worldwide. And while members might be losing face-to-face contact, their faith has only continued to grow, Stutz said.

Lansing residents Dave and Susan Price joined a Jehovah's Witness congregation in the late '60s and have since lost exact count of how many doors they've knocked in the last 50 years. They estimate it to be several thousands — mostly in southwest Lansing and Dimondale.

"We were used to meeting people at



Courtesy photo

Local Witnesses Dave and Sue Price stopped knocking on doors more than a year ago.

their homes. Now we're calling them on their phones, writing letters and trying to share a hopeful message with them," Susan Price said. "Some people have been really impacted by the pandemic, are without hope and really appreciate it."

Dave Price said it took him a week or two to stop feeling like a telemarketer. Before the pandemic, he wasn't much of a conversationalist on the phone — even with family and friends.

"Neither of us were comfortable doing it in the beginning, but we both started to really feel the value of it and were enjoying doing it," Price added. "On a day of going door to door, we might visit 50 homes. Maybe 10 would answer the door. Many more people answer the phone."

Unlike home visits, Witnesses can also now leave voicemails for those who are unavailable — further enhancing local outreach efforts, Sue Price added. The shift saved them gas money too.

"I have appreciated how cordial most people have been when we talk to them," Dave Price said. "We appreciate

their kindness and we hope they appreciate our desire to reach out to them."

Added Sue Price: "It's a real privilege to share the Bible's message with our community."

Outside of Michigan, Witnesses reported a 30% increase in outreach in northern Virginia and parts of West Virginia, attributed in part to adher-

ents' ability to contact larger numbers of people.

Officials said nearly 51,000 people nationwide made a request last year for a Witness to contact them, either through a local congregation or jw.org, the organization's official website. Each of them have received a letter or a phone call rather than the usual in-person visit to their homes.

"It has been a very deliberate decision based on two principles: our respect for life and love of neighbor," said national spokesman Robert Hendriks. "But we are still witnesses and, as such, we must testify about our faith. It was inevitable that we would find a way to continue our work."

As case rates decline, local residents are still safe from unsolicited door knocking — for now. Witnesses haven't made any definite plans to resume public ministry in Lansing or elsewhere.

"We are still waiting to see how things develop," Stutz explained to City Pulse this week. "When love of neighbor and the sanctity of life are at the heart of your decision making process, we are careful to make sure we have gathered enough information to make the best decision."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

**CITY OF LANSING  
SUMMARY OF  
ADOPTED ORDINANCE # 1281**

Lansing City Council adopted an Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to repeal Chapter 680, Section 680.06, a criminal misdemeanor under the General Offenses Code of the Codified Ordinances to eliminate drug paraphernalia.

Effective date: June 9, 2021

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

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

CP#21-125

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# Road trip, head trip

Broad Museum's 'Interstates of Mind' looks at car culture

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

The MSU Broad (rhymes with “Road”) Art Museum has the car packed and gassed up with a big summer exhibit, “Interstates of Mind” — a tangled web of stories, concepts and images as sprawling and far-reaching as the interstate highway system itself.

Here, the rubber doesn't just meet the road — it pops off the wall in beautiful black blossoms made from shredded tires. The Broad is an art museum, after all.

But “Interstates” is more than art, a unique blend of historical documents, photography, painting, prints, sculpture and metallic musings on the myriad ways car culture changed Lansing, and the United States, for good or ill.

It's also a watershed exhibit for the Broad and its new director, Monica Ramirez-Montagut.

Under Ramirez-Montagut's leadership, the Broad is blending the kind of displays usually found in a history museum, like timelines and historic photographs, with world-class leaps of artistic inspiration, all of it grounded in local culture. The goal, she said, is to fire up all kinds of neural connections, “provide multiple points of access” to the art and bring diverse new audiences to the Broad.

Since “Interstates” opened in early spring, visitors ranging from Lansing history buffs to retired GM workers to urban planners investigating the effects of the interstate system on the design of cities — none of them specialists in art — have lingered attentively at the photographs and sculptures along with the informational displays.

“They appreciate how artists took tires and metal and made beautiful things,” Ramirez-Montagut said. “We hope it sparks curiosity, but also makes unexpected associations between ideas, materials and areas of expertise, and that's how the creative process takes place.”

Like any epic road trip, “Interstates of Mind” starts locally and ranges for thousands of miles, combining documents and photographs from the Historical Society of Greater Lansing with major works from the Broad's own collection and art loaned from the Flint and Detroit art institutes and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas.

It's an all-American show — even the walls are subtly painted red, white and blue — but it's critical as well as celebratory.

In Lansing, most road trips begin on I-496, and “Interstates of Mind” is no exception. A dense band of aerial images lines the museum floor, depicting the once-vibrant Black neighborhoods on the near south side that were wiped out when the interstate cut its five-minute swath across town. The photos are dotted with stickers placed by visitors whose families or friends lived there, or who once patronized vanished businesses like Johnnie's Record Shop and Matthew's Restaurant.

Broad Museum senior curator Steven Bridges said the Historical Society of Greater Lansing was a “hugely important partner” in putting together this portion of the exhibit and many others.

“I can't overstate their influence and level of support,”

Bridges said.

The Broad's Ramirez-Montagut said that from now on, most major exhibitions at the Broad will include what the staff is calling, informally, a “local corner.”

“Why is this exhibition important to Lansing or East Lansing or to Michigan?” Ramirez-Montagut said. “Are there any community leaders or stakeholders that have knowledge in this area and can we feature that? What do MSU experts say?”

“Interstates of Mind” also includes archival materials on R.E. Olds and his early auto factories, including photographs dating from as early as 1905, showing upholstery production, blacksmiths shops and body shops from the infancy of the automobile, along with Lansing street scenes and other vintage images.

The I496 floor map, like many items in the exhibit, shows that the mobility and the freedom of the auto age came at a cost, and, for many people, never came at all.

From Lansing, the exhibit whisks the viewer to distant ribbons of highway and sprawling cities forever changed by car culture, with side trips to exotic places like Futurama, the GM pavilion from the 1939 New York World's Fair, and Henry Ford's failed rubber plantation city of Fordlandia, deep in the Amazonian rain forest.

“It's a choose-your-own-adventure type of experience,” Bridges said. “We designed it so you could start anywhere.”

See Interstate, Page 15



(Above) Art by Chakaia Booker, a rising international art star based in Allentown, Pennsylvania, who shreds automobile tires into exuberant, burgeoning forms.

(Below) Lansing area artist Bruce Thayer, a former autoworker, graphically depicts a real-life shop accident in one of his three paintings in the exhibit.

Photos of art by Lawrence Cosentino, City Pulse

**“Interstates of Mind”**  
Through Aug. 8  
Eli and Edythe  
Broad Art Museum  
Friday-Sunday Noon-6 p.m.  
Free



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse



# Interstate

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Herding visitors along a rope line, in a regimented sequence of pre-digested lessons, is the last thing Ramirez-Montagut wants to see at the Broad.

“We are not dictating what to see first or what to see next, but allowing you to make those associations on your own,” Ramirez-Montagut said. “The creative process takes place in the minds and bodies of visitors.”

“Double Standard,” a panoramic 1961 photograph by director/actor Dennis Hopper, is a perfect starting point, a nostalgic image with a fragmented, ambivalent viewpoint. A motorist approaches a corner gas station at the convergence of three roads in southern California. The asphalt ahead of the car bristles with power lines, billboards and gas pumps; a column of cars, like bugs, crowds the driver from behind in the rear view mirror. A glimpse of hills in the distance hints at an irretrievably changed world.

“It’s an interesting comment on the work we’re trying to do — celebrating the automobile, but also we’re dealing with its complications, wrapped up with social, racial and economic history of the United States,” Bridges said.

Across from the Hopper photograph is a droll, bleak painting by one of the 20th century’s most significant artists, Philip Guston, on loan from the Detroit Institute of the Arts. (“Yes, we’ve got some heavy hitters in this one,” Bridges admitted.)

Guston’s passenger’s-eye view from a moving car, awash in pink and orange, evokes car-sickness and dread more than open road excitement.

“It’s a nice conversation with the Dennis Hopper, situating us inside the car, from the back seat, having this vantage point to this vast horizon,” Bridges said. “In one sense, there’s the endless possibilities of the journey, but at the same time, that pink-red horizon is a little bit sinister as well.”

“American Roads,” a photo portfolio from the Broad’s own collection, is a showcase for road signs, advertising, roadside attractions and other aspects of the visual culture of the 1950s and 60s.

“Interstates of Mind” co-curator Georgia Erger said the portfolio captures the “excitement and banality of the open road.”

“It’s a great opportunity to show this wonderful portfolio we have, these diverse perspectives on the open road,” Erger said. “There are so many different techniques — from inside the car, aerial views, or a series of small thumbnails integrating text and image in playful ways.”

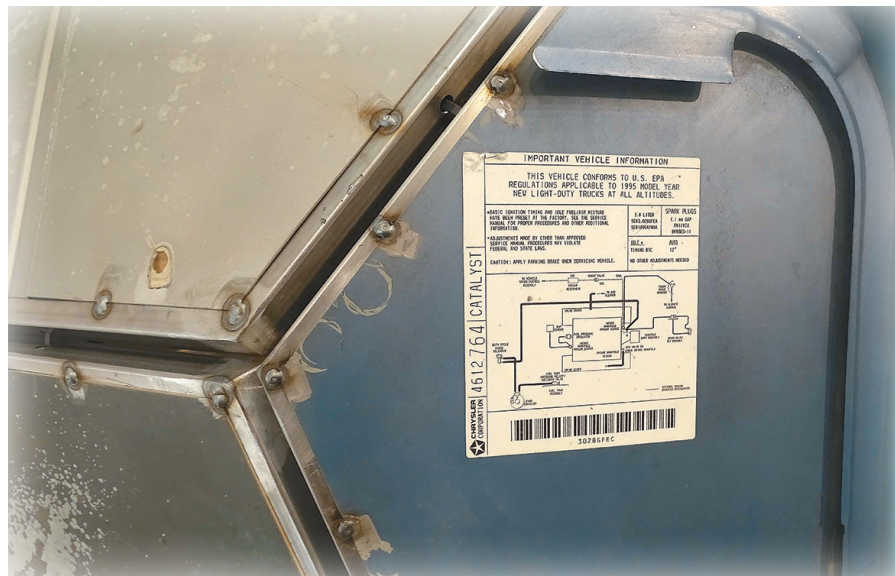
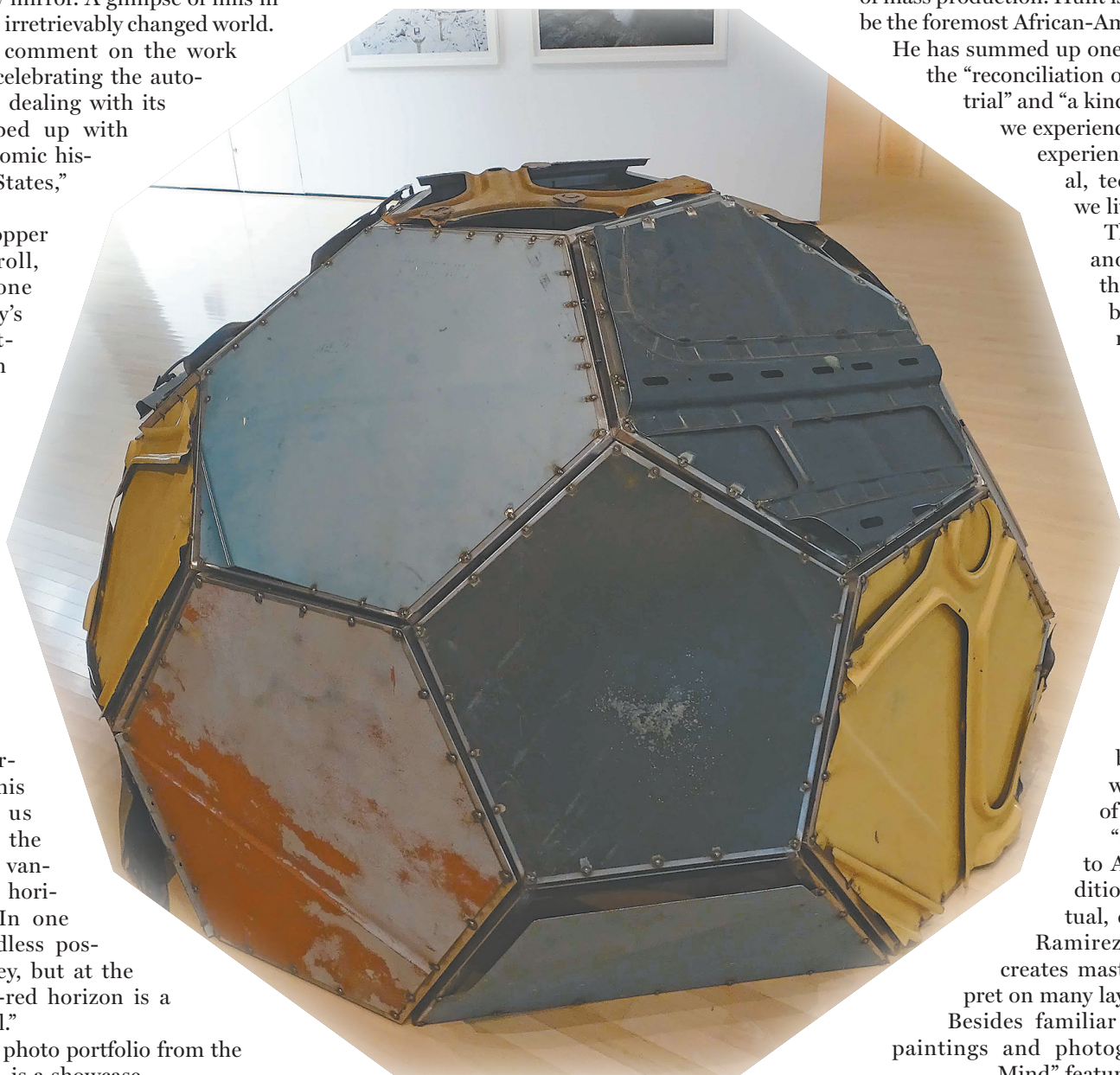
“Interstates of Mind” takes some thought-provoking turns onto little-known byways of commerce and industry.

In a series of striking images by Clarissa Tossin, “When Two Places Look Alike,” the artist’s hand is seen holding

cut-out photographs of houses in Belterra, a rubber plantation village in the Amazon forest, over similar houses in Alberta, a sawmill town in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Both places were part of the supply chain for the Model T in the United States; Belterra provided rubber and Alberta provided timber.

The houses, thousands of miles apart, are so similar you have to check the surrounding foliage (tropical or temperate?) to tell which is which. Photographs on loan from The Henry Ford in Dearborn fill out the story of the failed Fordlandia experiment.

One of the most conspicuous items in the exhibit was riveted together by El Salvadoran artist Beatriz Cortez, now based in Los Angeles — a geodesic dome fashioned from salvaged hoods, doors and trunks. It’s not just a compelling object, but a reminder of a gross material imbalance. As mountains of junk accumulate in the wake of relentless automobile production, consumption, and disposal, too many of the world’s inhabitants still face a shameful lack of the basic shelter such domes once promised.



Photos of art by Lawrence Cosentino, City Pulse

## Fossils and vines

Artists don’t have to pass safety inspections.

Rubber, chrome, glass, metal and plastic — the stuff cars are made of — break out of their assembly line roles and morph into weird and wonderful forms in the artier corners of “Interstates of Mind.”

One of the galleries surges with gleaming and twisting shapes that don’t look much like cars.

“This gallery is about form,” Erger said. “It’s about using the materials of the car as sculptural materials, but in a lot of these works, they become these very organic shapes.”

She pointed to a writhing metal sculpture by sculptor Richard Hunt. “It almost has a human or animal body form to it,” Erger mused. On a nearby partition, striking images from photographer Ralston Crawford turn crushed steel and glass from a Boulder, Colorado, junkyard into abstract forms in light, form and texture.

The act of breathing life into industrial materials has an almost primal appeal, as if humans were wrestling back their humanity from the cold artifacts of mass production. Hunt is widely acknowledged to be the foremost African-American abstract sculptor.

He has summed up one of his central themes as the “reconciliation of the organic and industrial” and “a kind of bridge between what we experience in nature and what we experience in the urban, industrial, technology-driven society we live in.”

The gallery walls pop with another set of sculptures that bridge that gap: black blossoms of shredded rubber tires by Chakaia Booker, who specializes in turning a ubiquitous form of highway trash into exotic inflorescences with mysterious lives of their own.

Booker, based in Allentown, Pennsylvania, is having a major moment in the culture these days, with a recent profile in The New York Times and a big retrospective of her work at Miami’s Museum of Contemporary Art.

“She’s making reference to African cultures and traditions in her very conceptual, chic, sophisticated way,” Ramirez-Montagut said. “She

creates masterpieces you can interpret on many layers.”

Besides familiar art forms like prints, paintings and photography, “Interstates of Mind” features some unexpected and spectacular combinations of materials and subject matter, some of which were created specifically for the exhibition.

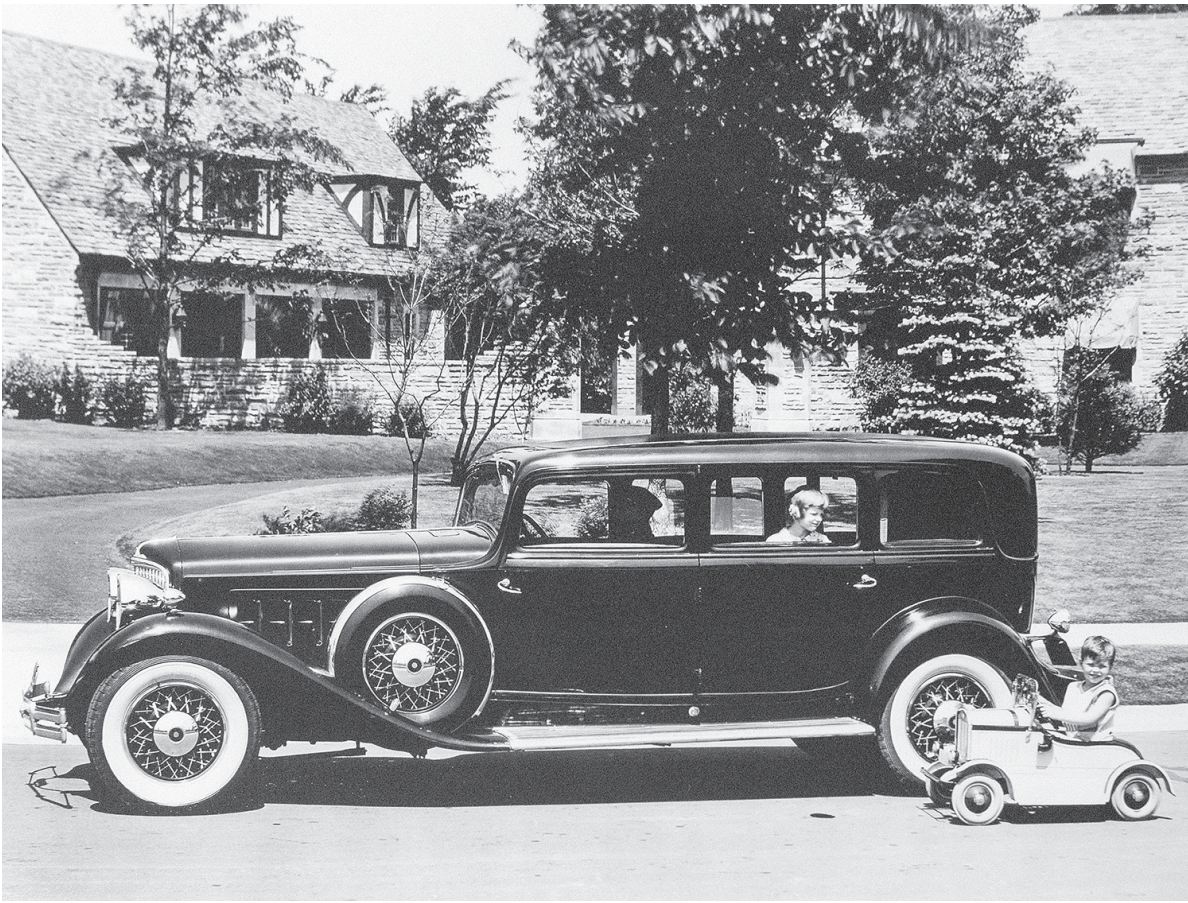
Three striking pieces by Detroit-based Matthew Angelo Harrison embody the exhibit’s hybrid approach by combining high-tech shop skills with bold artistic insight. Parts of cars, precision sheared at various angles and encased in plastic, look like fantastic fossils from the past and artifacts from the future, all at once.

Harrison worked for the Ford

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Beatriz Cortez’s “One Hundred and Eight Point Hood Shield,” from 2019, is a geodesic dome fabricated from car hoods, doors and trunks.





Courtesy Brian Huggler and Ken Ross

(Left) A wealth of archival materials in the Broad Museum's "Interstates of Mind" exhibit include this undated photo of an Oldsmobile in front of the Harper House in Lansing.

## Interstate

from page 15

Motor Co., including a stint as a sculptor. In his cutting-edge studio, he created his own computer numerical control, or CNC machine, that guides cutting tools through delicate processes like bisecting a headlight.

The human brain looks at art like this and instantly fires up with all kinds of associations.

"The headlights are the eyes of the car," Bridges said. "Harrison disembodies them and encases them entirely in resin."

Ramirez-Montagut was happy to showcase Harrison, whose star is on the rise in the art world. Harrison's sleekly rendered black African mask, encasing a silvery disc brake assembly, may refer to exploitation of African-American labor, or, as Bridges suggested, to Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși's bronze sculptor, "The Sleeping Muse" — or both.

"His work is very much of its time, both in terms of technology and cultural content," she said. "It's remarkable for so many reasons, conceptually, but also technically, it's just impeccable."

A subtly subversive wall hanging by Detroit-based artist Margo Wolowiec takes a breathtaking leap from the ancient, hands-on techniques of Navajo weavers to the pixelated signals and glitches of the digital era. Wolowiec's colorful tapestry at the Broad is hand dyed and woven, but the imagery is a thoroughly postmodern blur of images from computer and TV screens, including a glimpse of GM workers striking in 2019. (Bridges said with a laugh that Wolowiec finished the painstakingly crafted weaving "about a week before the show.")

No Lansing area exhibit on car culture would be complete without bold canvases from working-class artist Bruce Thayer, a former GM test driver who blends symbolism, caricatures, whimsy and grotesquerie into an instantly recognizable, stamp-like style.

Thayer, with his working class background and experience, adds a rich layer of authenticity to the exhibit, in Ramirez-Montagut's view. She doesn't blink at highlighting a Lansing area artist like Thayer along with famous international names like Oldenburg and Guston.

"Some of those drawings are inspired by working in the factory, having one of his colleagues injured in an accident," Ramirez-Montagut said. (The colleague lost his hands.) "His drawings communicate on a lot of levels."

How is a visitor to connect all these dots, from 1496 in Lansing to Fordlandia in Brazil, from assembly lines and company towns to rubber vines, chrome fantasias and resinous metal fossils?

The secret of a successful road trip is the same as a successful head trip: freedom. Ramirez-Montagut and the curators encourage visitors to take whichever road strikes their fancy.

"We're trying to present exhibitions, not as a finished product, but as a rich environment where we can all be creative by making associations among all this diverse material," Ramirez-Montagut said.

It's not all fun and games. Creative adaptation may not only make life bearable, but possible, as the road of civilization curves into a precarious future.

"That's exactly what we will be needing in the work force — an understanding that creativity comes from diverse sources of information," Ramirez-Montagut said. "The more diverse our education, the better we can make unexpected associations and make new things for the 21st century."



Photo of art by Lawrence Cosentino, City Pulse

Detroit-based artist Margo Wolowiec freezes blurry images from video screens in painstakingly woven wall hangings.



# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## Lansing area artist finds passion in glass — and extravagant bong

Global Glassworks' Ben Birney describes glassblowing as 'molten dance'

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Ben Birney talks about glass like it's a rare gem or a precious metal. To him, it's a limitless and mysterious medium for creativity, a substance that he has been deeply enchanted with since he was a teenager, something he has spent the last 20 years pioneering into artistic perfection.

And as the cannabis industry expands, so has the world of glassblowing, allowing Birney's artwork to enjoy a recent surge in popularity while stoners across Michigan continue to build on their eccentric collections of glass spoons, bubblers, bongs, chillums, dab rigs, steamrollers and much, much more — with some of the more intricate pieces selling for thousands of dollars.

"Out of everything in our world, glass is one of the more intriguing substances you can come across. There's just so much diversity in terms of what can be done. It's just one of those mysterious substances with amazing optics," Birney said. "The depth, the clarity. It's a substance unlike any other. It just stands apart. Then, you're working with the flame and it's this whole molten dance, timing the movements to achieve these different



### Lansterdam in Review:

#### Global Glassworks

1245 W. State Rd., Lansing  
globalglassworks.bigcartel.com

effects. It's so rewarding."

I met with Birney last week at his North Lansing studio, Global Glassworks, after spotting his products at Lansing Botanical Co. and Su Casa. Last year, I bought a bubbler that was made there by Charlie Sanford — and it's still one of the crown jewels of my personal glass collection.

From the outside, Birney's studio looks more like an automotive garage than a space for exquisite art. There are no flashy signs or colors. Birney is used to keeping a low-key operation, especially after a nationwide crackdown on paraphernalia for years had made his artwork illegal. It was only this month that the city of Lansing actually wiped those outdated laws from its books, though local cops have allowed headshops to sell pipes without issue for more than a decade.

"It's also about making something physically with your hands. That can be so rewarding to people in general," Birney said. "It's a physical thing where you're pulling off these sets of movements to lead to an end result. And if you mess anything up, the end result is messed up."

Birney grew up in Mason, attended Okemos High School and opened his Lansing studio about 10 years ago. Over the years, his staff has shifted size and focus — leaning on both mass production for wholesale orders and also spending weeks crafting a handful of \$3,000 bongs. Birney has also been focused on training new artists and sharing his knowledge of the craft, though the pandemic has stalled his plans to host workshops. Nowadays, it's mostly just Birney and lead artist Ben Biela working in the shop, fulfilling a very limited number of orders, he said.

"I grew the business from a passion to help people learn glassblowing, and that's not something that's exactly lucrative for me," Birney added. "I'm not trying to make a big business



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

and I never was. You churn out production pieces to fuel your art career, to afford the materials to make those pieces that you really want to make, the pieces that sell for several thousand dollars."

Rather than perfect one artistic technique, Birney has focused on a variety of glassblowing styles. Shelves at his studio are filled with dozens of pipes with different shapes and sizes — no two exactly the same. Some are simple designs. Others are shaped into television and video game characters with patterns that glow shades of neon green and purple under UV light.

"I can't make one thing over and over again for years," Birney said. "It just gets boring."

Among Global Glassworks' specialties is millefiori, an Italian glasswork technique that produces distinctive floral patterns that are only viewable from the cut ends of a glass rod or cane. Those rods, once cooled, can be cut into beads or discs for jewelry — or colorfully decorated bongs.

Birney is also particularly proud of glass weaved with a distinctive spiral pattern unlike any other glassware on the market. That "DNA" pattern, as he labeled it, is unique to his studio, he said.

"It's like this really interesting, amazing, unique, art mecca here that is a gem in the coun-



Courtesy

One of a kind glassware crafted by artist Ben Birney.

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# *Favorite Things*

## Sirnico Williams and his skateboard

*Sirnico Williams, 19, discovered skateboarding after a fateful find in his front yard, a busted up skateboard that had been abandoned by its former owner. The sport is his passion, and it's a no-brainer that his favorite thing is his skateboard.*

The current board I have is actually broken. I picked it up less than a month ago at Brush Alley Skateshop, one of my favorite shops in all of Michigan. The people that run that place are super cool. I ride REAL brand skateboards specifically, but this one is different from the majority of REALs I've ridden. It's a twin-tail and it's also 8 inches wide. I love the color and the graphic is sick. I ride Thunder brand trucks, I want to switch to Independent but I've ridden Thunders all my life.

I got my first board when I was 11. It was left in our front yard when I lived in Detroit. It was an old red board of some sort from Target or Meijer. It was Scooby-Doo brand, I remember that specifically. My grandpa, who lived in Lansing while I still lived in Detroit, would pick me up and take me to the skate park in Lansing. I took to the locals pretty well. I'd skate around and make friends. The majority of my time learning was spent trying to pop ollies and watching skate videos and mimicking what they did.

After I found that board, I wasn't immediately consistent. I didn't consider myself a skater right after finding it. Eventually, I wanted to advance my skills and I tried dropping into a bowl. The wheels from the little Scooby-Doo board completely shattered. I compared them to other people's wheels. Theirs were solid polyurethane, while mine were hollow, which is why they cracked so badly. That's why I wanted to get my first actual board from a real shop that could be ridden hard. Two years later, I begged my mom to get me an actual board — those things aren't cheap. It was



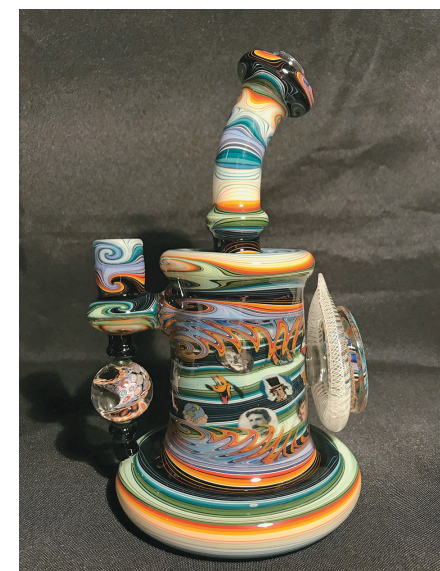
from Modern Skate & Surf when they were still located by Ranney Skate Park.

I started getting serious when I spent the majority of my time watching skate videos and skating at the park with my friends. Even up until now, I'm not 100 percent serious but it is something I do love with a passion. The moment I found out it was serious was during high school, when I turned down multiple organized sports teams.

I ran my current board over with my like an idiot. Now, I'll always remember to secure my board in the car before I take off. Usually they break from actually skateboarding. I ordered a new board already.

The culture of skateboarding is hella diverse. You can be from any walk of life and skateboard. That's why it's so easy to make friends, whether it's in the park or the streets, skateboarding can happen anywhere.

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



## Glass

from page 17

try. There are very few things like this going on but I haven't been able to share it with my community because of the prohibition aspects," Birney said. "With all that changing, it's really opening up my vision for this company. I'm hoping to keep offering learning opportunities."

The pandemic paused Birney's plans to offer community glass blowing classes last year, though he wants to roll out some more opportunities for lessons at

his Lansing studio later this year.

"Even at the beginning level, those don't have to be to learn how to be a glassblower. It's just about learning something new. It can be a couples' night: Come in and learn some glass."

For now, a limited collection of his artwork is available at [globalglassworks.bigcartel.com](http://globalglassworks.bigcartel.com).

*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.*



A selection of glass artist Ben Birney's favorite handcrafted pieces.

Courtesy



# Indie streaming platform created for Lansing musicians

By SKYLER ASHLEY

After being established through a Facebook group, a team of local musicians has moved their live concert streaming series to its own independent website. Established in late 2020, Best Friend's Club has helped alleviate the drought of live music for both performers and fans.

The virtual venue is the creation of Lansing-based musicians Tommy McCord and New Jersey artists Jim Graz, Tim Hoh and Raymond Strife. Seeking a clever way to beat the blues of the coronavirus pandemic, the concept of Best Friend's Club was designed to replicate the social experience of seeing a concert and, well, hanging out with your friends. The

## Best Friend's Club

Next show on Friday, May 21, 7 p.m. w/ Cryptkeeper Five Wild Honey Collective Honah Lee and The Plurals BestFriendsClub.US

livestreaming concert video feed provides the music, and the coinciding chat room can be thought of as the barside banter.

Best Friend's Club found an audience in local circles and in other music scenes, where McCord has made connections as far off as New Jersey. The team eventually found being tethered to a massive corporation like Facebook antithetical to the rigorously independent culture of indie and punk rock music — moving to their own platform without anybody to answer to was the natural next step.

"We began talking about this seriously around October when Facebook began cracking down on people posting music content and enforcing certain copyrights," McCord said. "We said, 'Oh great they might just kick us off.' That didn't happen, but got us pursuing alternatives."

Hoh, who performs in the Lansing punk band Honah Lee, helped get the ball rolling thanks to his friendship with a talented web designer, Hans Garon, who was able to develop a proper independent Best Friend's Club website.

"I had many video conversations with him. It was a friendship formed out of necessity during the pandemic. It was really cool to watch us go from being just a tiny spinning wheel on a screen to having our own website, where we're not paying anybody to do it," McCord said.

Like the raw musical acts it hosts, the site was designed with a simple barebones aesthetic in mind. It features a window to view the concerts, links to more info about performing



Courtesy

Best Friend's Club was formed last year to host livestream concerts.

artists, a shop to buy merchandise and of course, a chat room supported by Discord for viewers to engage with one another. Best Friend's Club launched with a chaotic New Year's Eve gig.

"We didn't really know if it was going to work, but it did," McCord said. "There's a lot I didn't know about using independent servers that I learned. On the tech end, we are able to stream in much higher quality."

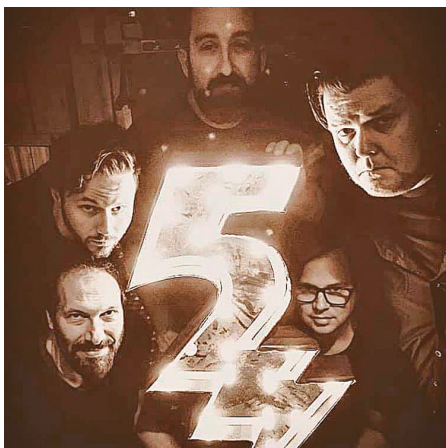
Best Friend's Club is able to broadcast its shows by filming the Lansing-based artists at local studios and venues, while remote performers are asked to provide their own video feed. Some performances are as simple as filming one person with a cell phone, while others feature multiple camera angles and professional audio setups.

"It naturally turned into a variety show. We'll host quick interviews with the acts before they perform. We want-

ed it be a creative seamless viewing experience; we want it to be dynamic and fluid," McCord said.

Since its initial New Year's Eve gig, Best Friend's Club has hosted bigger indie names like Joe Jack Taleum of the legendary punk band The Dead Milkmen and Mikey Erg, who's played in countless projects ranging from The Ergs, SFH and The Worriers. The next big show, a finale for the spring season, is on Friday (May 21) and features headlining act the Cryptkeeper Five. McCord hopes the fall can bring a return to safe outdoor shows.

"I don't think it's ethical to return to hosting an indoor concert right now. I'm comfortable staging some outdoor events," McCord said. "I think that's pretty OK. I'm not looking to be part of a big crowd anytime soon. This will be a great summer for us to get back into it slowly."



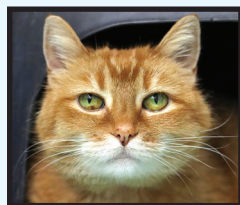
Courtesy

The Cryptkeeper Five will perform on the Best Friend's Club site on Friday.

## Ingham County Animal Shelter

To adopt one of these pets, visit the ICAS at 600 Buhl St., Mason, call (517) 676-8370 to make an appt. or go to ac.ingham.org.

Sponsor a pet on the next Adoption Page for only \$35, \$6 goes to the shelter. To sponsor, call 999-5061 now!! Adopt a pet on this page and Soldan's will thank you with a \$10 gift certificate. Contact (517) 999-5061 after you adopt.



**Seely** is an easygoing sweet senior gal who can be shy at first but warms up to head rubs and ear scratches. Needs regular brushes to keep her coat beautiful.



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515 Lansing St.



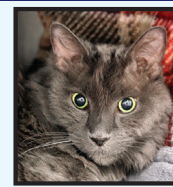
**Frida** is a sweet, goofy lovebug! She's a 10 month old border collie mix who is playful and wouldn't mind a couple of kids to chase around.

Sponsored by  
**Anne & Dale Schrader**



**Nina** is a big bouncy girl who has what we like to call a large "zest for life!" She is very sweet, would do best with sturdy kids and lots of exercise.

Sponsored by  
**City Pulse**



**Rudyard** is a shy longhaired gentleman who would be happiest in a calm home with older kids and other easygoing animals.

Sponsored by  
**Schuler Books**



**Elberta** is a big, beautiful fluffy girl who does well with kids and other cats. She loves attention and is going to be a great cat for some lucky family.

In memory of Rodica's cats



# Running through the memories of Lansing's humble past

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Mary Jane McClintock Wilson is a remarkable woman who serves as a tour guide in her new book, "The Lansing I Knew," in which she reminisces about the people, places and things she observed through her nearly 96 years in Lansing.

The new memoir is an enchanting look at Wilson's childhood and teen years growing up on Lansing's west side during the '20s, '30s and '40s. Wilson's family lived in three homes in Lansing on Drexel Road, Washington Avenue and Moores River Drive.

Many of the sites and businesses she visits in her book have passed into time, but are still fresh in her memory.

"I had saved many items from my childhood and teen years, which helped paint the picture of Lansing," she said.

Her book is the story of an earlier Lansing, featuring people, places and happenings seldom found in history books. In great measure, the work arises from the remembrances of Lansing citizens including the author's own experiences, which ultimately reveal a past Lansing that calls to be shared."

During the author's childhood and teen years, Lansing was booming and new housing developments and apartments were sprouting up. The family first lived in the newly opened Washington Apartments on South Washington Avenue, where the nearby Clapham's Grocery Store supplied most of the neighborhood's needs.

In 1928, the family moved to a new opened subdivision on Drexel Road,

**"The Lansing I Knew" is available on Amazon and at local bookshops. You can get an inscribed copy by contacting the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.**

where her brother William was born. She rambled through the neighborhood and met the families who lived there. She especially liked spending time at the Number 7 Fire Station, which today has become a private home.

"I decided to do the book, since so many memories I have are going to be lost," McClintock Wilson said.

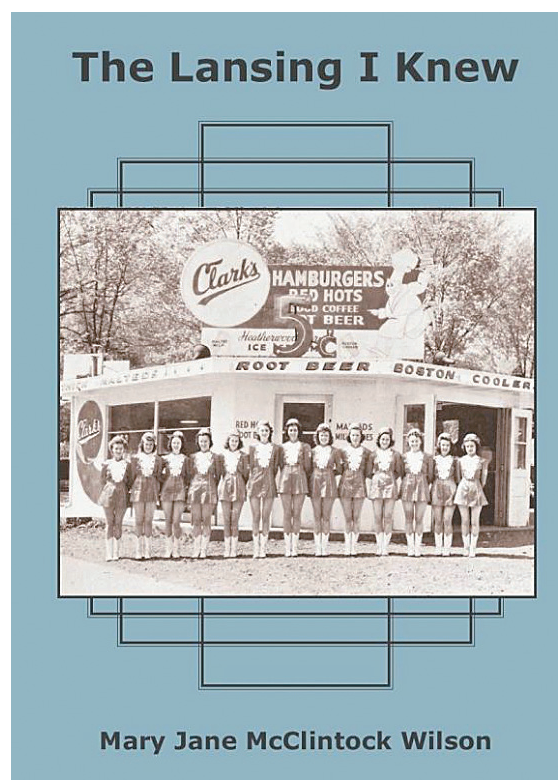
She said she began working on the book two years ago and blocked her story out like a play, creating different topical categories for each chapter like, "A Goodly Neighborhood," "Early Churching" and "Schooling and Pearl Harbor."

"This is about the Lansing I observed growing up," McClintock Wilson said. "My favorite time growing up was my teen years. My good friend Betsie Sessions and I would ride our bikes together all around the town."

Those trips included bike rides to Lake Lansing down dirt roads.

"One of the favorite after school hangouts was Rouser's Drug Store. A group of us would go there after school and fill three or four tables. I still remember the Swiss milk panama sundae and the mud sundae," the author said.

For those who are wondering, a mud



sundae is vanilla and chocolate ice cream covered in chocolate sauce, peanuts and marshmallow sauce.

McClintock Wilson also remembers with fondness the backyard plays neighborhood kids performed.

"We'd put on a play and sell tickets for a dime to neighbors," she said.

When the Great Depression struck, she recalls cutting back on everything from clothes to food, despite her father, Freeman, owning a car dealership.

She recalls her mother, Ruth, giving handouts to "tramps" who knock on their back door.

"We'd share with them what we could," McClintock Wilson said.

When Pearl Harbor hit, McClintock Wilson was about 16 and she stayed in touch with her high school classmates

who had gone overseas.

"I can remember writing to all the boy I knew overseas," she said.

While attending Verlinden, West Junior High, Lansing Central and Sexton, McClintock gravitated toward English and the dramatic arts programs.

In her adult years, McClintock has contributed meaningfully to preserving local history including serving on a committee to save and restore the State Capitol and preserving the history of Sparrow Hospital. She also wrote a biography of her father and his time serving with the ambulance corps in World War I with Ernest Hemingway.

McClintock Wilson is making arrangements to donate her Lansing ephemera to the Local History

Room at the Capital Area District Library.

"Fortunately, all the things I saved over the years help refresh my memory," she said.

McClintock Wilson's memory is keen. She not only remembers the mud sundaes, but taking dancing lessons on the top floor of the Olds Tower — now called Boji Tower — as a child. As a teenager, her family moved to a beautiful home on Moores River Drive, where one of her dreams was fulfilled.

"I always wanted a pair of loafers instead of oxford lace-ups," she said. "Most of my contemporaries are gone, but this is one way I have of honoring them."

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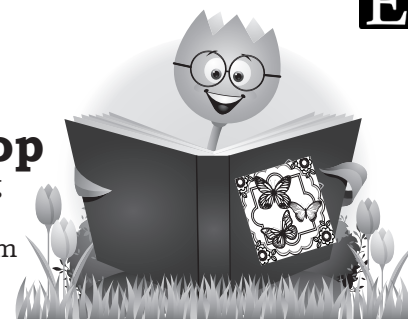
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-Walt Disney

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# Riverwalk makes ‘Working’ work

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Director Kelly Stuible-Clark says Riverwalk Theatre’s latest production, “Working,” is a collection of funny and heartfelt stories collected from all sorts of workers.

## “Working”

May 21-23 & May 28-30  
Viewable online at  
www.riverwalktheatre.com

“I’m thrilled to share the work that this cast of almost 30 has done over the past couple of months,” she said.

The pay-for-view musical, written by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Faso, is based on Studs Terkel’s 1974 book, “Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do.”

Stuible-Clark was in a master class with the Broadway Teaching Group when Schwartz gave a presentation on how “Working” was produced virtually in the fall of 2020. “It piqued my interest,” she said.

Riverwalk’s version is a musical movie made up of vignettes from the perspectives of different professions. Most scenes were self-shot and others were taped at Riverwalk, Urban Beat, ABF Freight in Mason and Woody’s Oasis.

Stuible-Clark has been a part of Lansing theater for over 15 years. “I am also an adjunct faculty member at LCC in the music department,” she said.

“My day job is with Wharton Center’s Institute for Arts and Creativity.”

Stuible-Clark prefers to direct musicals. “I am a musician first and foremost,” she said. Stuible-Clark has a BS in voice music and a master of music in opera and musical theater performance. “I think that music speaks to the soul and brings so much more to a story,” she said.

“Working” went through several revisions since debuting in Chicago in 1978. Riverwalk uses the 2012 revision that features two songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda of “Hamilton” fame.

Brian Farnham plays a caretaker who sings one of them. “I sing one half of the duet in Miranda’s ‘A Very Good Day,’” he said. “Then I have a number of ensemble singing parts. I’m one of those theater people who loves to sing.”

The actor is also known for his directing — most recently Riverwalk’s “A Doll’s House.” Farnham said he was educated by Stuible-Clark’s directing.

“I learned how to herd cats,” he said. “Kelly had to do an immense amount of planning, scheduling and organizing,” Farnham said. “It’s almost like directing a hundred little shows, and she did a great job.”

Farnham related to numerous themes in the musical. “The most prominent one is the notion of feeling responsibility to do your job well,” he



Courtesy

The cast of Riverwalk Theatre’s “Working.”

said. “Feeling that sense of ‘I can’t let the team down’ is something I relate to very strongly.”

Kelly Sandula-Gruner plays Sharon. She found the character — stuck in a job she hates — heartbreaking. “I think a lot of people equate self-worth with a job title and how much money one makes, instead of doing something truly fulfilling,” Sandula-Gruner said. “I love what I do.”

She is a graphic designer who plays French horn in the Lansing Concert Band. “Working” is Sandula-Gruner’s first show for Riverwalk. “I’ve been waiting for the right show to come along,” she said. “Being a musician, the musicals appeal to me the most.”

One such character is Ralf Werner — a 19-year-old pizza delivery slacker who has delusions of success. Kait

Wilson plays Werner and appears in the “Working” ensemble. Wilson is also the pianist and orchestrator for the production.

“I recorded the performance tracks,” she said. “I started with piano accompaniment and added drums, guitar, bass and strings.”

Wilson never worked directly with the singers. “It’s difficult not having all of the singers in the same room as the pianist,” she said. Virtual performances have audio delays and there is no unison singing. “Zoom rehearsals for musicals can be near impossible,” Wilson said.

She also learned something special from Stuible-Clark’s directing. “Anything is possible if you have an army of people willing to do the impossible,” Wilson said.

# Family-owned convenience store open on Lansing’s west side

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

Westside Convenience bears more resemblance to an New York City-style bodega than a typical Midwestern convenience store. You can find hot fresh food, household items, freshly brewed Kool-Aid and a seemingly endless array of snacks.

W. Maurice Summerville, owner and operator of Westside, took inspiration from the convenience stores he remembered frequenting as a kid growing up on Kingsley Court. He’s a proud member of Lansing’s west-side community.

“There was a very similar store when I was growing up. It was actually kitty corner from where Westside is right now,” said Summerville. “From 12 years old on up, that was my place to get hot food, snacks, stuff like that. It inspired



Summerville



## Westside Convenience Store

122 S Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Lansing  
Open 24 hours on Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. for the rest of the week  
(517) 721-1551

me from a young age.”

From his teen years on, Summerville dreamed of one day opening his own convenience store. His two aunts, Jackie and Rosie, also served as inspiration. Sadly, Rosie passed away before Westside ever opened. His aunt Jackie is still around and helping out with the business.

“It feels really good to have a place like this over here. That’s why I named it Westside. We represent the whole city, but this is home,” said Summerville. “It’s where I grew up. You should never forget where you come from, whether you’re successful or have no success.”

The hot food counter is the soul of Westside. It serves a varied selection of delicacies including fried goods, mac-

aroni and cheese, nachos and more. Chicken wings are coming to the menu soon.

On the weekends, Westside serves BBQ hot off the grill outside in the parking lot.

Sometime in June, Summerville is planning a mixture of a grand opening and “community day.” He hopes to have the event fully planned by early June. When the day finally comes, he wants it to be a celebration of the community he grew up in.

Summerville plans to serve free hot dogs and freeze pops to the neighborhood youth.

“This is how I want to give back to my community,” he said. “I just wanted to do something nice for all the people around here.”

So far, the customers have reciprocated Summerville’s appreciative attitude. He said that he’s heard only good things from the people who walk through his doors.

“Customers love that there’s finally a



Courtesy

Summerville was inspired to create his convenience store by memories of one from his childhood.

new convenience store in the neighborhood,” said Summerville. “I just want people to know, we’re here and we have great food for the whole city.”



# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Slammed"-- prepare to be taken down.

by Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 Jacket style named for an Indian prime minister
- 6 Impala, to a lion
- 10 Scoring advantage
- 14 "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," e.g.
- 15 "Game of Thrones" actress Chaplin
- 16 Safe contents?
- 17 "All that over your fireplace--are you trying to put Hummel out of business?"
- 19 Fails to be
- 20 Courtroom fig.
- 21 Beethoven wrote just one
- 22 Detective's lead
- 23 Life sentences?
- 24 Yiddish interjections
- 26 Sweet suffix
- 27 Crumpled into a ball
- 32 "Hello, I'm \_\_\_" (recurring ad line from Justin Long)
- 34 Sans-serif Windows font
- 35 Unteach, in a way
- 39 It immobilizes
- 40 Rock venue
- 41 A couple of gossip columns
- 42 Aim
- 44 When infomercials start running, sometimes
- 45 Wavy lines, in a comic strip
- 46 "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" songwriter
- 48 Visit Vail, perhaps
- 50 Talk and talk
- 52 Machine to watch "RoboCop" on, way

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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53			54		55		56			57	58	59	60
61					62				63				
64					65				66				
67					68				69				

- back when
- 53 Didi of "Grease" and "Grease 2"
- 55 Astronomical flareups
- 57 Automaker headquartered in Bavaria
- 61 Make a clickbait list, e.g.
- 62 "Your hair looks like it was styled by kittens"
- 64 Brews that may be Scotch or pale
- 65 Early Nebraskan
- 66 Lisa, to Patty and Selma
- 67 Stamp inkers
- 68 "Cleanup in aisle four" tools
- 69 To-do list items

**Down**

- 1 Zippo
- 2 Theater sign
- 3 Much of soc. studies
- 4 Michele's "High School Reunion" friend
- 5 "Pulp Fiction" actress

- Thurman
- 6 Mishmash of a "Jeopardy!" category
- 7 Play thing?
- 8 First month on a Mexican calendar
- 9 "And so on"
- 10 Majestic
- 11 "You couldn't even find your own butt on a Waze app"
- 12 Trivial Pursuit edition
- 13 Cosmetics mogul Lauder
- 18 Pizza destroyer of old Domino's ads
- 23 "The Fresh Prince of \_\_\_-Air"
- 25 Home of the Mustangs, for short
- 27 1993 Texas standoff city
- 28 Speedy breed of steed
- 29 "Buying your weed wearing a pot leaf T-shirt? Like that's original"
- 30 Went out with
- 31 "Pet" irritation

- 33 \_\_\_ di pepe (tiny pasta variety)
- 36 Sucks the strength out of
- 37 Blue-green hue
- 38 Model with a palindromic name
- 40 How lottery numbers are chosen
- 43 Gear tooth
- 44 Text-interpreting technology, briefly
- 47 Champagne bucket, e.g.
- 48 Piece of paper
- 49 Australian leaf-eater
- 51 "Otello" librettist
- 54 Loch \_\_\_ Monster
- 56 Abbr. on a bottle of Courvoisier
- 57 Where the Himalayas are
- 58 Partakes of
- 59 Pack of playing cards
- 60 Bad time for Caesar
- 63 "Lord of the Rings" tree creature

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Answers on page 24

## SUDOKU

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

## Intermediate

### TO PLAY

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

Answers on page 24

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezсны

May 19-25, 2021

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Aries playwright Samuel Beckett wrote the play "Waiting for Godot". At one point in the tale, the character named Estragon suggests it might be possible, even desirable, to "dance first and think afterwards." In response, the character named Pozzo says, "By all means, nothing simpler. It's the natural order." With that in mind, and in accordance with astrological omens, I am going to encourage you to dance first and think afterwards as much as possible in the coming weeks. In my opinion, your ability to analyze and reason will thrive to the degree that you encourage your body to engage in enjoyable free-form play. Your power to make good decisions will grow as you take really good care of your physical organism and give it an abundance of pleasure and release.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** As you enter a phase when gradual, incremental progress is the best progress possible, I offer you the concluding lines of Taurus poet Adrienne Rich's poem "From a Survivor": "not as a leap, but a succession of brief, amazing movements, each one making possible the next." I especially want to call your attention to the fact that the small steps can be "brief, amazing movements." Don't underestimate the power of minor, subtle, regular breakthroughs.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Here's a public service announcement for you Geminis from the planet and god Mercury: You're under no obligation to be the same person you were three years ago, or six months ago, or last week—or even five minutes ago, for that matter. Mercury furthermore wants you to know that you have been authorized to begin a period of improvisation and experimentation, hopefully guided by a single overriding directive: what feels most fun and interesting to you. In the coming weeks it will be more important to create yourself anew than to know precisely who you are.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** As a Zen Buddhist priest for 47 years, Kōshō Uchiyama was knowledgeable about the power that illusions can wield over our imaginations. "If we're not careful," he said, "we are apt to grant ultimate value to something we've just made up in our heads." I won't tell you the examples from my own life that prove his point, because they're too embarrassing. And I'm happy to report that I don't think you're anywhere near granting "ultimate" value to something you've just made up in your head. But I do advise you to be on the lookout for milder versions of that phenomenon.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Leo-born professor Sibelan Forrester is an expert on charms, spells, and incantations in Russian folklore. She wrote, "An empty place where no one can see or hear what one says is the proper locus for working magic." Spells often start with these words, she added: "I rise up, saying a blessing. I go out, crossing myself, and I go to an open field." Whether or not you have Russian heritage, Leo, I see the immediate future as being a good time for you to perform magic in an open field with no one else around. What might be the intention of your magic? How about something like this: "I ask my guides and ancestors to help me offer my most inspired largesse so as to serve the health and inspiration and liberation of the people whose lives I touch."

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Spiritual author Stephen Russell wrote, "Don't mask or deny your vulnerability: It is your greatest asset." That's an exaggeration, in my opinion. Vulnerability is a greater asset than your intelligence, compassion, and creativity? Not in my view. But I do recognize the high value of vulnerability, especially for you Virgos during the next three weeks. "Be vulnerable," Russell continues. "Quake and shake in your boots with it. The new bounty and beauty that are coming to you, in the form of people, situations, and things, can only come to you when you are vulnerable—open."

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** My friend Jenny's Swedish grandmother used to say to her on a

semi-regular basis, "Åh tänk om vi vore korskade, vi skulle vara så lyckliga," meaning, "If only we were stupid, we would be so happy." In the coming weeks, I am asking you to disprove that folk wisdom. According to my analysis of the astrological potentials, now is a favorable time for you to explore ways in which your intelligence might enhance and deepen your enjoyment of life. Your motto should be: "The smarter we are, the happier we will be."

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Sometime soon I invite you to speak a message similar to what poet Kenneth Rexroth once delivered to a special person in his life. He wrote, "Your tongue thrums and moves / Into me, and I become / Hollow and blaze with / Whirling light, like the inside / Of a vast expanding pearl." Do you know anyone who might be receptive to hearing such lyrical praise? If not, create a fantasy character in your imagination to whom you can say it. On the other hand, maybe you do know a real person who would appreciate an earthier, less poetical tribute. If so, please convey it; something akin to this: "Your influence on me amplifies my ability to be my best self." Now is a perfect time to honor and extol and reward those who move you and excite you.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Author Aldous Huxley said, "I can sympathize with people's pains, but not with their pleasures. There is something curiously boring about somebody else's happiness." To that I reply, "Other people's pleasure and happiness bored you? Maybe you were suffering from raging narcissism and an addiction to cynicism." In any case, Sagittarius, I hope you won't be like Huxley in the next few weeks. I believe you could glean useful insights and derive personal benefits from knowing about and appreciating the joys of others.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Capricorn businessman Howard Hughes (1905-1976) had great success early in his life. Working as a film director and aviation pioneer, he became a wealthy philanthropist. But as he aged, he became increasingly eccentric and reclusive. For the last 10 years of his life, he lived in expensive hotels, where he placed strict and often absurd demands on the hotel staff. For example, if he called on room service to bring him a meal that included peas, he would measure the peas with a ruler, and send back any he deemed too big. I do hope that you Capricorns will also have an intense focus on mastering the details in the coming weeks—but not as intense or misguided as that nonsensical obsession.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Aquarian author Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was famous and popular. Audiences packed the halls where he did public lectures and readings. His favorite way to prepare for these evening events was to spend the day drinking a pint of champagne, as well as generous servings of rum, cream, and sherry with eggs beaten into the mix. I don't have a problem with that—whatever works, right?—but I suggest a different approach for your upcoming appointments with greater visibility and prominence. Like what? How about sexy meditations on the gratitude you feel for your expanding possibilities? How about fun fantasies focusing on how you'll use your increased clout?

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** In his upcoming book "The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows," John Koenig proposes that we begin using "monachopsis," a word he coined. He defines it as follows: "the feeling of being out of place, as maladapted to your surroundings as a seal on a beach—lumbering, clumsy, easily distracted, huddled in the company of other misfits, unable to recognize the ambient roar of your intended habitat, in which you'd be fluidly, brilliantly, effortlessly at home." Even if you have spent too much time lately experiencing monachopsis, my dear, I predict this malaise will soon dissipate and give way to an extended phase of being fluidly, brilliantly, effortlessly at home.



# TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

FOXGRAVE UNLEASHES ANGSTY, HOOK-FILLED NEW EP



Foxgrave releases its third proper release, "Snake Oil" EP, May 28 via Smog Moon Recordings. (Courtesy images)

## Q&A with guitarist/vocalist Caleb Shook talks 'Snake Oil'

Foxgrave's new release, "Snake Oil," is a five-song single sided 12-inch record that masterfully teeters on the line of loose rock 'n roll and tight, melodic pop punk. It's pissed off, yet poetic. Rowdy, yet reflective—similar to The Replacements in their heyday. Vocalist/guitarist Caleb Shook chatted with City Pulse, here's what he had to say about the band's new release, its third, on Smog Moon Recordings.

**When and how did Foxgrave form?**

**Caleb Shook:** In the summer of 2015, a friend of mine introduced me to his musician cousin, Taylor Doty (bassist). We became fast friends and decided to jam with a friend of his, Josh Fitzgerald (drummer). We jammed on prototypes of the songs we would come to play in our parents' basements. This took place in small towns south of Lansing — Charlotte and Potterville. We started taking things seriously after Skyler Ashley (guitar) joined in 2016. (Ashley is the arts and entertainment editor of City Pulse.) That's when we started gigging and self-producing. Through that, we found Smog Moon who provided us with good quality recordings and help with promotion. We hooked up with them late 2018.

**How was it recording this new EP during the pandemic? I know you worked with a team, including engineer Cody Hobbins and Nate**

**Iversen who mixed and mastered it.**

We recorded "Snake Oil" in our drummer Josh's basement with Cody Hobbins as our engineer. Recording in a COVID environment was difficult. Production was halted multiple times because one member felt a little under the weather or had a tickle in their throat. We made sure to only interact with each other, but one can never be too careful. It was hard because we made deadlines and goals for ourselves but could not reach them because we weren't willing to endanger each other.

**Does Foxgrave have a songwriting process the band follows?**

Songwriting is a mix between myself and Skyler. Though, to say that Josh and Taylor aren't heavily involved would be a lie. Skyler and I come with ideas and we work through the details together. I write a majority of the lyrics, but Skyler contributes a large amount.

**What inspired your lyrics on these new "Snake Oil" tracks? Any recurring themes?**

For me as a lyricist, I entered new territory. To be honest, most of my song writing before this project was negative. I tried to focus on more positive aspects this time with songs like "Still" and "Wall to Wall." Those songs are about positive feelings and experiences. They don't involve

the indecisive and angry feelings that our earlier material touched on. That being said, I do feel angry, scared and dissatisfied with the current state of the world just like everybody else. Those feelings are covered by "Grifter," "Machine Learning" and "Nocturnal." I am upset about the handling of suffering by those with the power to change it, the intolerance and arrogance of those who choose not to evolve and my own brain sabotaging itself for reasons that are unclear to me — all of those respectively. There are not really recurring themes, but I hope that the EP is from a point of view that a lot of people share. I just want it to be relatable. I want it to be human.

**Where did you grow up, how did you first get into music and writing songs?**

I grew up in a small town. The name does not matter, they are all the same. I grew up with a family that loved singing songs and playing music. My family never did anything special with it, they just enjoyed it. They never wrote or pursued any type of career. By the time I was in high school I was obsessed with rock, punk, blues, metal, rap, jazz and all the other bullshit names people have given to music that pisses off your parents. I have pursued a life filled with music, whether it's my job or not.

Early on I was inspired by classic

rock like CCR, Bob Dylan, Hendrix and all that stuff — you know what I'm talking about. In my formative years, I listened to pop punk like Green Day, Fall Out Boy, Anti-Flag, NOFX, Blink 182, and all that, plus earlier punk like The Ramones, Stooges, Dead Kennedys and The Clash. Around the time the band started I got really into David Bowie. I will always credit him as a huge inspiration. My philosophy has always been, "if it sounds good, it's good"

**The cover art for the new EP is terrific, where did that come from?**

[Lansing artist] Craig Horkey did an amazing job on this cover as he does. We asked him to replicate the cover of the 1930s film "Cocaine Fiends." We originally wanted an early 20th century propaganda poster, but eventually settled on the design from the movie poster after I presented it to the band.

**Do you have some plans set for the remainder of 2021?**

Hopefully we'll be touring in late 2021. But as for now, we're doing internet promotion. I would also like to add that we are really thankful for Smog Moon and anybody that takes the time to listen to us. Without people to listen we are just making pointless noise.

**Listen to Foxgrave at:**  
smogmoonrecordings.bandcamp.com  
wearefoxgrave.bandcamp.com



# OUT ON THE TOWN

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

## Wednesday, May 19

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

**Community: WAS Meeting** - 7:10 p.m. Michigan Audubon, 2310 Science Parkway, Suite 200, Okemos. [michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org).

**Dreamscapes Exhibit** - Through June 26. Lansing Art Gallery, 119 N. Washington Square, Lansing. [lansingartgallery.org](http://lansingartgallery.org)

**Greater Lansing Bicycle Ride of Silence** - 6-8 p.m. MSU campus, Wells Hall Plaza, East Lansing. 517-618-1771.

**"Holocaust Cantata: Songs from the Camps" Musical event** - 8 p.m. through May 23. Peppermint Creek Theatre. [peppermintcreek.org](http://peppermintcreek.org).

**Outdoor Paint Party** - 6-8:30 p.m. Cleats Bar and Grille, 5801 N. Aurelius Rd., Lansing. 517-220-0058. [paintyourpoison.com](http://paintyourpoison.com).

**Prosperity Ritual** - Embracing the energy of the Waxing Moon. 6:30-7:30 p.m. [weaversoftheweb.org](http://weaversoftheweb.org).

**Wednesday Workdays at CCBS** - 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Capital City Bird Sanctuary, 6001 Delta River Drive, Lansing. [michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org).

## Thursday, May 20

**Studio (in)Conversation:** Britta Urness visits studio of Seeds of Resistance artist Jackie Sumell. 8-9 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

## Friday, May 21

**Charlotte Fire Flow Jam Series** - 9 p.m. Behind Windwalker Underground Gallery, 125 Cochran Ave., Charlotte.

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

**Mini Zen Gardens** - 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main, Eaton Rapids. [erdl.org](http://erdl.org)

**Take-Home Crafts @ GLADL** - Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge.

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

## Saturday, May 22

**LEGO@Palooza** - Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org).

**Make a Flag to Commemorate 20th Anniversary of 9/11** - 12-2 p.m. 2211 Hilltop Drive, Lansing. 517-515-9662. [retreadart.com](http://retreadart.com).

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

## Sunday, May 23

**"Holocaust Cantata: Songs from the Camps" Musical event** - 8 p.m. through May 23. Peppermint Creek Theatre. [peppermintcreek.org](http://peppermintcreek.org).

**LEGO@Palooza** - Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org).

## Monday, May 24

**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 6-7 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St., Lansing. [refugerecovery.org](http://refugerecovery.org)

## Tuesday, May 25

**Board Game Meet Up** - for ages 18 & up. Everyone welcome! 6:30-10 p.m. Spare Time Bowling Alley, 3101 E Grand River, Lansing.

**Lansing Lugnuts: Sensory Friendly Night** - 7 p.m. 505 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. [milb.com/lansing](http://milb.com/lansing)

**Peckham Spring Speaker Series** - Nora McInerney. 10-11 a.m. [peckham.org](http://peckham.org).

**Preschool Storytime** - 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

**Taco Tuesday and Free COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic** - Sponsored by VFW Post 701, Ingham Co. Health Dept. and Finding Freedom Counseling Center. Noon 1-3, VFW Post 701, 123 Rosemary St., Lansing. More info 517-319-7392

### SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 22

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### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 22

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# FAST FORWARD



## UPCOMING EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS COMING TO LANSING

By SKYLER ASHLEY



## Spring Carnival at the Meridian Mall

**Wristbands cost \$20 Through May 23**

**1982 W. Grand River Road, Okemos**  
**Meridianmall.com**

The Meridian Mall is hosting a spring carnival featuring fun rides and games. There will also be a wide variety of vendors will be serving great food and drinks. Unlimited wristbands are available for \$20, while individual tickets can be purchased for \$1.50.



## Tidy Up REO Town

**Saturday, May 22, 10 a.m.**  
**Facebook.com/REOTown**

The Friends of the Lansing Regional Trails is hosting a community cleanup effort this weekend at REO Town. Volunteers will walk about the neighborhood and the surrounding river trail and pick up any trash they spot. Disposable gloves, trash bags and maps will be provided.



**Artist's Umbrella at Urban Beat**  
**Friday, May 21, 7 p.m.**  
**1213 Turner St., Lansing**  
**Facebook.com/ArtistsUmbrella**

The Artist's Umbrella variety talent show is coming to Urban Beat in Old Town. There will be more than a dozen unique performers, ranging from speed painters to musicians and poets.

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# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

### The parfait solution

By **ARI LeVAUX**

Strawberry shortcake never changes. You can tweak it, but the basic trifecta of strawberries, cream and cake is so stable that there isn't much room for improvement. This means it's near impossible to screw up. These qualities made strawberry shortcake a great starter cake for my 9-year-old self.

I had some help from my friend Sara Lee and her All Butter Pound Cake, found in the frozen food section. The hardest part of the whole recipe was waiting for the pound cake to thaw. I cut it in half along a horizontal plane into top and bottom layers, plastered them with whipped cream and strawberry slices, stacked them into a two-layer cake and coated the whole thing with more whipped cream and strawberries.

My memories of that strawberry shortcake are unassailable, even though I haven't tasted a Sara Lee pound cake in about four decades. So, as part of my 50th birthday festivities, I staged a strawberry shortcake showdown: Sara Lee versus what I would make now, if given the strawberries, cream and the ingredients for a cake.

With so little room for improvement in the formula, I resorted to doubling up on the flavors already present.

Redundancy can be annoying in some contexts, but in the kitchen it's a powerful tool and I use it in almost all my recipes, sweet and savory. As background singers embellish the lead vocals in a band, a chorus of similar flavors can add richness and depth to flavor.

My friend Luci adds yogurt to her whipped cream, which is redundant in terms of both tartness and creaminess. I like it. But Luci admits that years back she used yogurt instead of whipped cream, arguably a borderline violation of the fundamental trifecta.

"As the kids got older and wiser, they began demanding whipped cream," she recounts. "So now we use 50/50 full fat yogurt and whipped cream."

When Luci enters the kitchen to make lunch, she's as no-nonsense as a heart attack. Everything better be in its place, because she's got work to do, including dessert.

Dessert after lunch is part of the daily bargain on the farm when you have a



crew of child laborers. This time of year, it's often strawberry shortcake. Before she starts lunch, she preheats the oven and mixes the simple batter. No butter, hardly any sugar and you don't even have to crack an egg.

I told Missoula's one-and-only Chef Marianne that I wanted to put rhubarb in Luci's cake, as a way of adding more tartness. She suggested slices rolled in sugar and folded into the batter. I also replaced Luci's milk with buttermilk, for more tang with no extra nonsense. Nailed it.

I served the fresh strawberries in a quick sauce with lemon (more tartness) and whipped the cream with nothing but vanilla. Then I prepared for battle, chef versus chef, against my 9-year-old self.

The Sara Lee version looked sharp. The smooth, almost golden pound cake juxtaposed with the stately whipped cream, which was stiffer without yogurt. Eating it was a nostalgic experience, transporting me instantly across the decades. But with a life of experience behind me now, that Sara Lee was too sweet and too plain Jane, and that stiff whipped cream kept the flavors separate when they should have mixed.

My slovenly shortcake, however, was long on flavor. The buttermilk rhubarb cake and strawberry lemon sauce came together like a strawberry shortcake should. The flavors contrasted one another brilliantly, and the textures created a place of divine creamy soggy that you could fall into forever, if only your belly could handle it.

My kids, the new generation of critics, agreed. They were particularly impressed with the whipped cream and yogurt combo, which at first they mistook for store-bought whipped cream. They actually sprinted to the fridge from their plates, in search of the can.

Since my new formulation is messier and harder to contain than the original



Ari LeVaux

Parfait-style strawberry shortcake.

Sara Lee, I served it as parfait, in glasses. Parfait happens to mean "perfect" in French, and strawberry shortcake parfait turns out to be the perfect way to combine the three pillars of shortcake, with every component mixing perfectly in each bite.

It's the parfait solution, if you'll excuse my French, and a reminder that with a little redundancy, you can teach an old recipe new tricks.

#### Buttermilk Rhubarb Cake

Serves 4-8

2 cups flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon crème of tartar

4 teaspoons baking powder

2 tablespoons sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt

1 $\frac{1}{3}$  cups buttermilk

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup of oil (I use a mild, fruity olive oil)

2 teaspoons vanilla extract or equivalent

2 more tablespoons sugar (redundancy is my friend)

1-2 sticks of rhubarb, peeled, sliced into 1/4-inch thick discs (about  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup)

Combine and mix dry ingredients except the second bit of sugar. Mix buttermilk and oil and, before they separate, immediately add them to the dry ingredients. Toss the rhubarb slices in the second sugar and add it to the mix, and stir it all together. Add to a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan. Bake at 375, checking periodically, for about 45 minutes or until a knife comes out clean.

Whipped Cream

1 pint heavy cream

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup full fat yogurt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon sugar

Whip the cream. Add the vanilla, sugar and yogurt and gently stir.

Strawberries

1 pound fresh strawberries, sliced

3 tablespoons sugar (more to taste)

Juice of one lemon (about 4 tablespoons)

Add the sugar and lemon juice to the

pan and stir to dissolve the sugar. Add the strawberries and turn the heat to medium, stirring steadily once it starts simmering. Cook for about ten minutes, or until the strawberries fully soften.

Assembling the Parfait

When the cake has cooled, cut it into one inch-cubes. Add layers to your parfait cup in this order: cream, cubes of cake, sauce. Add layers until the cups are full.

(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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 <p><b>El Oasis</b> 2501 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing (517) 882-1777 eloasistruck.com</p>	<p><b>TRY THE CROWN JEWEL OF LANSING'S FOOD TRUCKS.</b> Serving the Lansing community for 13 years, we extend an invitation to all those to give us a try to find out why we were voted the best food truck in Lansing's 2019 Top of The Town Contest.</p>
 <p><b>Meat Southern BBQ</b> 1224 Turner Rd. Lansing (517) 580-4400 meatbbq.com</p>	<p><b>WE BELIEVE EVERYONE DESERVES GREAT BBQ.</b> Award winning BBQ. Ribs, French fry bar, chili, sides including BBQ pit baked beans, mac n' cheese. 18 rotating taps of craft, Michigan made beers. Craft cocktails. We cater, too!</p>
 <p><b>Art's Pub</b> 809 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing (517) 977-1033 artspublansing.com</p>	<p><b>YOUR FAVORITE SPORTS BAR IS BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER</b> We brought back our famous pizza for you to order whenever you want it-morning, noon or night. We're also pouring seasonal, trending and new beers daily.</p>
 <p><b>King Crab</b> 3218 S. MLK Blvd. Lansing (517) 222-2169 kingcrabcajun.com</p>	<p><b>NEW CAJUN SEAFOOD RESTAURANT &amp; BAR!</b> Fresh all day. Lunch baskets, po boys or seafood boils of all kinds. Hush puppies and other delicious sides to choose from for your perfect meal.</p>

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