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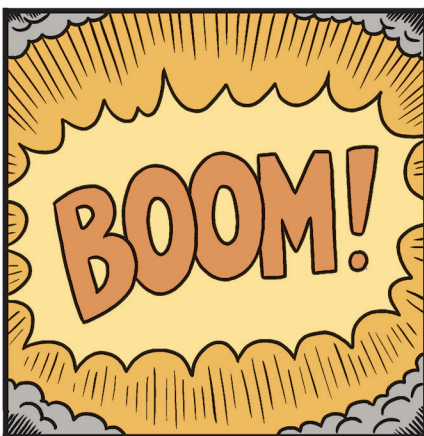
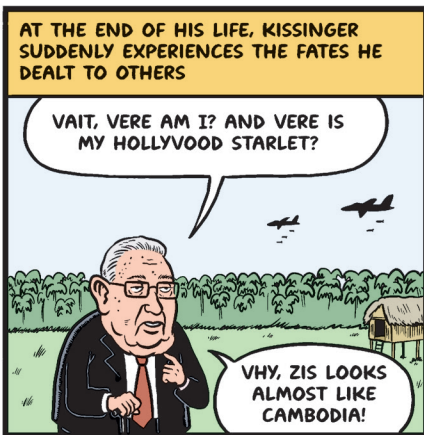
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**VOL. 23
ISSUE 17**

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Drummer Sylvia Cuenca visits MSU for weeklong residency

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Starlight produces cozy adaptation of holiday classic


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A taste of Pho So T's Com Ga Hai Nam

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Cover illustration by Nevin Speerbrecker



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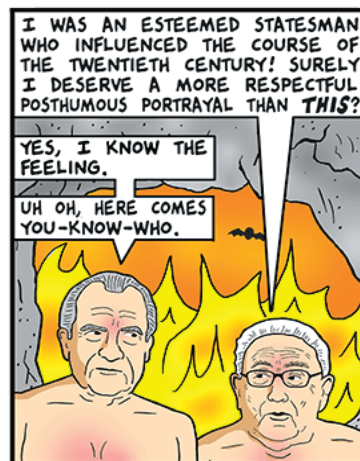
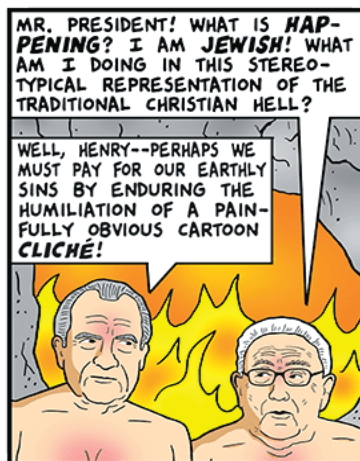
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

East Lansing reports 'some progress' in 5-year deer-culling program

Elinor Holbrook has lived at her home in East Lansing's Lantern Hill neighborhood since 1967. Until about 10 years ago, deer were never a concern.

In the last decade, however, Holbrook said deer have established a "regular cycle" on the properties on her side of Lantern Hill Road, just south of Patriarche Park. On a snowy winter morning, she outlined fresh, muddy deer tracks running alongside her house, near trees and shrubs she'd rigged with netting up to 9 feet high to prevent the creatures from ravaging her garden. Other deterrents have been ineffective, she explained.

"Our area is now one of their passageways. We all have contiguous lawns, no fences, lots of trees and bushes and mature vegetation in our gardens, and we've seen as many as 15 deer at once in the block last year," Holbrook said. "They're happy, they're breeding, there's plenty to eat, so it's very nice for them, and they've decided they're not going to move."

Holbrook's experience is part of a wider problem. Many Michigan cities are grappling with a statewide deer population that has surpassed 2 million. After Texas, Michigan has the nation's biggest deer population, according to World Population Review.

East Lansing began control efforts in 2012, when the Parks and Recreation Department unveiled its first residential deer survey.

Every year since, the department has issued an annual deer management report, bolstered by community input surveys and cameras that detect deer activity. It also hosted community deer management meetings in 2014, 2019 and 2022, resulting in a handful of ordinances. One, adopted in 2014, prohibits residents from feeding the deer. The state followed suit four years later.

In 2021, the city entered into a service agreement with the U.S. Agriculture Department to assign professional sharpshooters to conduct a controlled culling of some of the city's deer. The program, which costs about \$20,000 a year, was made possible in a 2016 ordinance that allowed exceptions to the city's prohibition on hunting in



Courtesy Elinor Holbrook

The deer who frequently forage and breed in Elinor Holbrook's backyard at 812 Lantern Hill Drive in East Lansing no longer fear humans, she said. In fact, they'll often come sit and relax as she watches them. Several fawns have joined the group in the past year.

parks.

In the three culls that have occurred since — in January 2021 and 2022 and March of this year — U.S.D.A. hunters have brought down 193 deer in the city over the course of 10 total nights. The meat from these kills, which totaled 6,700 pounds of venison, was donated to the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

The culls will now continue through at least 2025 after they were approved by the City Council on a 4-1 vote on Nov. 28, with Councilman Erik Altmann voting against after his motion to exclude controlled culls from the program was struck down by the same margin. The rest of the Council opted for a limited cull capped at 80 deer per year.

"I'm still looking for evidence that the current deer population is damaging our public lands. If we don't have evidence that deer are killing our forests, I don't want to kill deer," Altmann said.

Cheryl Marsh, owner of Nottingham Nature Nook, was the only resident to speak against the cull at the meeting, citing 10 does in her area who have produced just three fawns among them this year.

"I believe that the herd in my area self-regulate, and they know what is enough," she explained.

Between public comment and the vote, Parks and Recreation Director Catherine DeShambo presented this year's deer management report. She was joined by three fisheries and wildlife researchers from Michigan State University.

To estimate how the deer population has changed because of the culls, the latter three have utilized footage from city-placed video cameras that capture motion-triggered images. Students reviewing the footage counted the number of deer at each, comparing those rates with data collected since 2019. Last year, they deployed 17 cameras for an average of 112 days. Most were put up at parks and on trails, but three were set up at residences, including Holbrook's. Between Aug. 19 and Dec. 20, 2022, the deer count on Holbrook's half-acre property was 943.

While DeShambo said it would take two to five years "to see measurable impacts," of the culls, Warwick noted that the data indicates some progress. This year, Warwick said all but two cameras registered fewer deer than in 2019. The Harrison Meadows neighborhood saw a slight increase, while White Hills stayed the same.

Resident Lynn Richardson, a hunter

who said she was a "vocal opponent" of the deer cull "as recently as last year," told the Council she now supports it. She cited "reports indicating that there are more white-tailed deer now than when our country was first founded."

"The sad result of this overpopulation includes the almost inevitable deer car crashes. Indeed, I think one cannot truly claim to be a Michigander unless one has had a close encounter with the deer while driving," Richardson said, adding that "the cull has significantly reduced these adverse events."

Michigan ranks fourth among all states in deer-vehicle collisions, with the 58,984 instances recorded in 2022 injuring 1,400 and killing five Michiganders, according to DeShambo. It was a 13% increase, up from 52,218 in 2021.

DeShambo cited 18 of these in East Lansing over the last year, with 20 reported in 2021, 28 in 2020 and 27 in 2022. This phenomenon is reflected in the Lansing area's auto insurance premiums, which average \$2,900. The state average of \$3,000 is the highest in the country and well ahead of the national average of \$1,500.

The threat of Lyme disease is another concern. The disease is frequently carried by adult blacklegged ticks who seek out white-tailed deer as hosts. To address this, MSU wildlife researcher Matt Buchholz has started testing a medication delivery device, made from alfalfa and molasses, that's designed to dispense anti-tick medication when consumed. At present, he's limited to using a placebo as his team records data on consumption trends using non-toxic dye that shows which deer have ingested the device. When it's ready, the finished product will be brought before Council for approval.

In the meantime, as deer continue to flock to Holbrook's garden, she said she's noticed the numbers slowly trending downward since the culls began.

"Staff have gone out of their way to educate people, to get feedback and to do it right. Involving the DNR is important, and it's good that we're getting that backbone, too. I'm very happy that the Council takes this seriously," she said.

— TYLER SCHNEIDER

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
EAST LANSING BUILDING BOARD OF APPEALS**

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearing to be held by the East Lansing Building Board of Appeals on **Thursday December 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.**, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, Conference Room A, Second Floor, East Lansing, Michigan 48823:

1. A public hearing will be held to consider the appeal of **Andrew Kraft, Director of Facilities of DTN Management regarding the property at 1031 W Lake Lansing Road, Valley Forge Apartments**, requesting a **variance to the code** regarding making extensive electrical/wall/ceiling changes that would disrupt the residence and their rental agreements with modifications creating hardship to all who occupies the space.

2006 International Property Maintenance Code

Sec. 604.3. Electrical System Hazards

Where it is found the electrical systems in a structure constitutes a hazard to the occupants or the structure by reason of inadequate service, improper fusing, insufficient receptacle and lighting outlets, improper wiring or installation, deterioration, or damage, or for similar reason, the code official shall require the defects to be corrected to eliminate the hazard.

Sec. 110.3 Examination, Identification, Installation, Use, and Listing (Product Certification) of Equipment. (B) Installation and Use. Listed or labeled equipment shall be installed and used in accordance with any instructions included in the listing or labeling.

2. A public hearing will be held to consider the appeal of **Andrew Kraft, Director of Facilities of DTN Management regarding the property at 295 Arbor Glen Drive, Arbor Glen Apartments**, requesting a **variance to the code** regarding making extensive mechanical ventilation and ceiling changes that would disrupt the residence in their rental agreements with modifications which would create hardship to all who occupies the space.

2006 International Property Maintenance Code

Sec. 604.1. Mechanical Appliances

Mechanical appliances. All mechanical appliances, fireplaces, solid fuel-burning appliances, cooking appliances and water heating appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe working condition and shall be capable of performing the intended function.

3. A public hearing will be held to consider the appeal of **Vincent Rangel of Rangel's Waterproofing & Construction regarding the property at 1217 Mari-gold**, requesting a **variance to the code** concerning the ceiling height of the basement intended for a habitable space.

2015 Michigan Residential Code

R305.1 Minimum Height.

Habitable space, hallways, and portions of basements containing these spaces shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet (2134 mm). Bathrooms, toilet rooms and laundry rooms shall have a ceiling height of not less than 6 feet 8 inches (2032 mm). Beams, girders, ducts or other obstructions in basements containing habitable space shall be permitted to project to within 6 feet 4 inches (1931 mm) of the finished floor.

For more information on the request please contact Scott Weaver at (517) 319-6810 or sweaver@cityofeastlansing.com. Materials related to the request are available for viewing at the Department of Planning, Building, and Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823 between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. Written comments may be sent prior to the public hearing to the Building Board of Appeals, City of East Lansing, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, Michigan, 48823, or by email to bba@cityofeastlansing.com.

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon request received by the City seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring aids or services must contact the City Manager's Office, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823, (517) 319-6920 (TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777) or via email at mwicks@cityofeastlansing.com.

This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and published in compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, 2006 P.A. 110.

Dated: 11/30/23
East Lansing, MI 48823

Marie Wicks
Interim City Clerk

CP#23-314

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REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS

BY TYLER SCHNEIDER



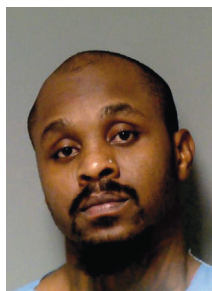
Lansing police officers fatally shot a domestic violence suspect in the 1600 block of Massachusetts Avenue late Friday night. LPD said the officers were dispatched at 11:23 p.m. for a domestic assault call. Meanwhile, a neighbor called 911 and reported hearing a gunshot and a woman crying. Police arrived at 11:26 p.m., when they said Stephen Luis Romero, 33, was armed. “At that point, an officer-involved shooting occurred,” LPD said. Shots were fired at 11:27 p.m., after which police administered first aid. The suspect was brought to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Chief Ellery Sosebee would not say whether Romero had shot at officers first, but he confirmed that two LPD officers are on paid administrative leave and that the Michigan State Police is investigating.



Court in Clinton County, the charges allege abuse against eight of the nearly 30 children the couples had adopted since 2007. All four were previously charged for abuse allegations, Nessel’s office stated, but they were dropped for the Browns and reduced for the Flores. The defendants have until Friday (Dec. 8) to turn themselves in voluntarily.



Two people have been charged in a fatal shooting outside the Capital Area District Libraries’ South Cedar Street branch on Nov. 27. Marquan Jackson, 27, of Lansing, was charged with homicide, discharging a weapon from a vehicle, carrying a concealed weapon and three felony firearm counts for allegedly shooting Joseph Martinez, 30, in the library’s parking lot just after 6 p.m..



Following the incident, Martinez went inside seeking help. He died in a hospital shortly after. Jackson, who faces a life sentence if convicted, was with Autumn Houser, 25, at the time of the shooting. She has been charged with one count of accessory after the fact, with a potential sentence of up to five years. Both were denied bond, with a preliminary hearing scheduled for Dec. 15.

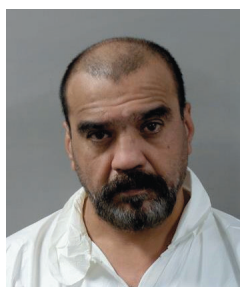
U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg’s visit to East Lansing on Wednesday was met with two groups of protesters. As he spoke at a public service forum hosted by former Gov. Jim Blanchard at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Buttigieg was flanked by ticket-holding members of Climate Defiance, a youth environmentalist organization.



As Buttigieg began to discuss climate change, some of them rushed the stage, chanting “Petrol Pete,” and were escorted out by security. MSU Police arrested and charged one of them with disorderly assemblage and conduct. Another group of several dozen protesters congregated outside around the parking garage to picket and demand that Buttigieg and the Biden administration call for a ceasefire in Gaza.

Attorney General Dana Nessel has issued arrest warrants for two Clinton County couples who have adopted dozens of children whom they allegedly abused “for personal financial gain.” Nessel’s office brought 36 criminal charges against Dewitt residents Joel and Tammy Brown and Jerry and Tamal Flore (pictured). Filed in the 65A District

Jacobo Montalvo, the man charged in the murder of a 29-year-old Lansing woman in October, was ordered Friday to stand trial, the LSJ reported. Montalvo, 57, allegedly abducted Alicia Gallegos from downtown Lansing on Oct. 15. Police say recovered video footage appeared to show someone taking Gallegos near



East Lenawee Street and South Washington Square and noted that person drove an SUV. The next morning, Gallegos’ body was found about 15 feet off the road in a wooded area south of Webberville. On Oct. 21, Police stopped Montalvo for an improper plate in a vehicle matching the description of the one that took Gallegos. GPS data traced Montalvo to the two locations, and testimony by three witnesses led 55th District Judge Donald Allen to rule that there was probable cause to believe Montalvo was responsible. Other evidence included photos allegedly found on his phone that depicted Gallegos tied up with her hands behind her back, plus duct tape and zip ties found in the vehicle. Montalvo is being held without bond at the Ingham County Jail.

Ulana, a 19-year-old lioness at Potter Park Zoo, was euthanized Thursday, having suffered from spinal disease, which had worsened considerably in recent weeks.

Born in 2004, Ulana was moved to the Potter Park Zoo in 2011 along with her sister, Saida. The pair joined up with Kota, a male lion, and the three became a staple attraction for visitors. “Ulana was not just a lioness; she was family. Witnessing her strength and grace was a privilege,” said her keeper, Annie Marcum. The median life expectancy of lions is 16.9 years.



CORRECTION

Because of a reporting error, an item in last week’s Rewind incorrectly identified Avis Damone Coward as the father of the child who fatally shot himself with Coward’s gun in Lansing on Oct. 24. Coward was not the boy’s father. City Pulse apologizes for the mistake.

PUBLIC
Art
OF THE WEEK



“Scrapocaster,” at Elderly Instruments

The new art installation at Elderly Instruments, at 1100 S. Washington Ave., in Lansing, looks like it may have escaped from a Kiss concert. (They are still touring, by the way.)

Elderly purchased the 10-foot-tall metal sculpture dubbed “Scrapocaster” at last summer’s annual ScrapFest in Old Town and recently installed it in front of their store. Scrapocaster is obviously a play on the famous electric guitar —the Stratocaster —played by rock guitarists worldwide.

Introduced in the early 1950s by Fender, the electric guitar has become one of the most highly collectible electric guitars right up there with the Les Paul guitar. If you’ve ever watched a Jimi Hendrix video, he’s likely using a Fender and he is credited with kick-starting the Fender mystique.

Two of the Beatles, John Lennon and George Harrison, played Stratocasters on the album “Help.”

Over the years, Fender reissued some of the more famous Strats, including the famed ‘57 Stratocaster. Also, Fender has worked closely with legendary guitarists Buddy Guy, Dick Dale, Bonnie Raitt, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Eric Clapton and others to issue limited edition guitars.

Dick Dale, who was known as the Father and King of the Surf guitar (you know it when you hear it), played a right-handed Strat upside down, which left the heavy-gauge strings on the bottom. How did it sound? Take a listen to “Let’s Go Trippin’” on YouTube. It’s fun to watch a bunch of stiff suits, The Del-Tones, rock it.

The new sculpture can’t be played, but it makes for the best selfie for rock guitarists and lovers of rock. It was executed by sculptor Rich Quinn and Green Concepts, an Okemos home home landscape company.

— BILL CASTANIER

Public Art of the Week is a new feature that rotates with Eyesore of the Week. If you have an idea for either, please email eye@lansingcitypulse.com or call (517) 999-6704.

Ingham County looking at flagging bias in court system, will hear judge's opinion

Ingham County commissioners may hire a third party to create a criminal justice monitoring system, tasked with breaking down the decisions coming out of the county's courts and Prosecutor's Office by demographic groups.

Under the proposal, the contractor would issue an annual report that would denote whether a specific judge or prosecutor is harsher toward a specific ethnic group, for example.

The idea stems from the Racial Equity Taskforce the county called in the shadow of data that showed vast health disparities in the county's public health system that could not be explained by income class or any other factor. Infant deaths, heart diseases and other conditions were more common in the Black community.

Commissioner Todd Tennis said the proposed study of the courts would start with fresh data, not historical information. The idea is to see if, going forward, Ingham County falls into a trend he's seen in other data that Blacks receive harsher judgments than white defendants.

In theory, once a contractor is selected and a report is finalized at year's end, it would be publicly available, he said.

"For one, the public has a right to know," Tennis said. "Also, I believe people are like subatomic particles in that they act differently when they are being viewed. If there's any bias, the fact that they're in the spotlight might alleviate that."

The proposal to call for bids on this third-party study passed a county committee on Monday (Dec. 4), with the county's Finance Committee scheduled to look at this today (Dec. 6).

Up to now, it's received overwhelming support from the Democratic commissioners, including Thomas Morgan, who chairs the Finance Committee.

"I want to make sure we're doing everything we can to make sure we have complete equity in our criminal justice system, but I also realize that there are some people who are beyond saving and need to be segregated from society. We also need to illegal guns off the street," he said. "As for the details, I'll leave it up to the experts."

Commissioner Mark Grebner also supported the premise, but his request

to add "statistical rigor" to the design criteria by bringing in people with an expertise in data collection and analytics went over with a thud.

The lone opposition on the commission, up to this point, is Republican Monica Schafer, who said she's concerned that the study could influence the judges and prosecutor elected to adjudicate the law. She doesn't want to see judges making decisions based on how it might look on a spreadsheet.

She suggested that working with the courts and law enforcement to gather information will strengthen the relationships within the county and reduce violence.

Planning to speak to the Finance Committee is Judge Joyce Dragan-chuk, the chief of Ingham County 30th Circuit Court. She said she supports the concept of weeding out biases in legal decisions but is concerned the commission may not be spending its money wisely.

Many of the court's sentences are dictated by state law. Those who commit certain crimes must face certain prison time. There's nothing a judge can do about that.

Roughly a third of Dragan-chuk's cases are youthful training cases that are shielded from public view. A third party would never figure out what sentences those offenders received. This would skew a study's results, she said.

In those cases in which a judge has more sentencing freedom, prosecutors and defense attorneys often cut plea deals. Out of respect for everyone involved, a judge tends to sign off on those decisions, Dragan-chuk said.

For the small number of cases that remain, Dragan-chuk noted that the State Court Administrator's Office conducted a study of this type for Washtenaw County's Circuit Court earlier this year. SCAO is preparing something similar for all of the state's trial courts.

"I understand everyone's concerns, but there's a way to do this where you're not paying for something and wasting your money," she said. "You can get this done for free and it will be something meaningful."

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



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

Opinion

Lansing BWL: A clean energy leader in Michigan, committed to green goals

By RON BYRNES, CALVIN JONES and JAN SIMPSON

On behalf of BWL's over 800 employees, members of the IBEW Local 352 and 800 retirees, we want to respond to some of the inaccuracies published in last week's City Pulse in an opinion piece by City Council member Brian T. Jackson on the BWL's clean energy plan and policies.

It's no secret climate change has been an increasing concern for decades, and it should be no secret the Lansing Board of Water & Light has been preparing for and responding with a robust clean energy transition plan for years. The fact is the BWL stands as a clean energy leader in Michigan, committed to achieving ambitious climate improvement goals.

The BWL has been a leader in the state of Michigan as the first to adopt a renewable energy portfolio in 2007. In 2022, the BWL closed its last coal-fired power plant in the Lansing area, which reduced its direct coal consumption to zero. The BWL has also embarked on one of the most aggressive and comprehensive clean energy plans in the state of Michigan, setting commendable goals of 50 percent clean energy by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2040.

To this end, the BWL announced in July its largest planned growth in BWL's nearly 140-year history, which includes a robust package of 160 megawatts of battery storage, 65MW of solar in the Lansing region, 195MW of additional solar throughout the state, 238MW of wind energy, and continued growth of our energy waste reduction program, as well as expansion into demand response programs for our customers. Several of those projects are very close to final design and permitting.

Anticipating enactment of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's "MI Healthy Climate Plan," which calls for 1,000MW of energy storage by 2025, the BWL's portfolio would supply 16 percent of the state's energy storage goal even though the BWL only supplies 6 percent of the state's total energy. This is just one example of many that demonstrates how BWL can significantly support Michigan's goals, amplifying the impact of energy policies to our customers, and helping to propel the entire state toward a

greener future.

As part of this push forward to more renewable energy resources, the BWL has included a new Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine — or RICE — plant that can respond instantly to the ups and downs of intermittent renewable power resources that depend on the sun or the wind to supply power that is needed instantly by customers. Council member Jackson's criticism of the RICE plant is, at best, an oversimplification. Nat-

ural gas, which is a significantly cleaner source of energy than coal, represents a transitional step toward a full renewable energy portfolio. Until the day when we can reliably store energy at the scale necessary for utilities to supply energy without one second of delay, natural gas is the cleanest resource available to fill that role. In the meantime, the BWL will also make increasing use of battery storage to offset the intermittent nature of renewable generation.

It's also important to note the BWL's supply of energy to the new electric vehicle battery plant in Delta Township is also contributing to the automotive industry's commitment to a cleaner transportation future. This relationship demonstrates how together, we can work to achieve shared environmental goals to support reliable energy needs while also powering future regional economic growth.

Leadership in climate and environmental issues demands both community engagement and realistic, fact-based decision making that fulfills the mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable energy using strategies that are climate conscious and innovative. The BWL has always shared its energy plans at meetings open to the public. At its core, that is what public power is all about.

For those who would like to know more about local efforts to address climate change, reach out to BWL rather than Council member Jackson at www.lbw.com/cleanenergyprojects.

(Ron Byrnes, is BWL International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 352 business manager. Calvin Jones is BWL government & community relations director. Jan Simpson, BWL Retirees Association president.)

Opinion

'Child care desert' cuts swath across Michigan, including Lansing

By JOAN NELSON

Not housing, parking, or jobs. Rather, it was child care near the top of the list of unmet eastside Lansing needs.

This was the opinion of 67 neighbors who attended a recent charrette, hosted by the Allen Neighborhood Center and facilitated by Jennie Grau of Grau Interpersonal Communication. The charrette was designed to identify community uses that might make sense in the empty spaces remaining in the building that ANC owns on Kalamazoo Street.

A short time later, I listened as Emma Bostwick of LEAP — Lansing Economic Area Partnership — noted at a public meeting that “there is a child care desert in our community. For every child that is enrolled in child care, another is unable to secure placement.”

I wondered if the challenges of reliable child care during COVID might be having lingering effects, but the MI Untapped Potential Report put out by the Michigan Chamber of Commerce notes that the shortage existed well before COVID. Of course, COVID didn't help: One in four licensed child care

centers in Michigan closed during the pandemic and have not re-opened.

As the chamber reports, “A 2020 study by the Michigan League for Public Policy found that there was a significant gap between the demand for childcare and the availability of state-regulated childcare in Michigan. ... Across the State, 44% of Michigan

residents live in a child-care desert with limited access to licensed child-care providers.”

Locally, we don't fare much better. LEAP's Bostwick notes that our three-county region contains about 415 licensed child care providers (some operating under-capacity given labor and other chal-

lenges), which altogether provides 18,000 openings for over 300,000 children needing care. (In researching this column, I'm having flashbacks to what was by far the most stressful aspect of my single-parenting experience: securing quality, affordable and reliable child care. I'll bet I am not alone in this.)

While acknowledging that the greatest concern of insufficient child care is the loss of developmental benefits of high-quality child care for young

children, the Chamber Report looks at “the impact that Michigan's lack of accessible and affordable childcare has had on our state's working parents, job providers and economy.” It estimates that the direct financial impact of insufficient child care coverage on Michigan's economy exceeds \$2.8 billion each year. This is the annual financial cost of parents deciding to quit jobs, job training programs, and schools because of child care difficulties.

The chamber report concludes that “childcare is a central determinant in whether a parent can participate in the labor force, a reality that is on full display as the state continues to push for job growth. Michigan ranks 39th in labor force participation relative to other states, and our findings indicate many parents may not be able to continue working without adequate child care options

In response to all of this, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has created Caring for MI Future, allocating \$100 million to “help child care entrepreneurs open 1,000 new or expanded child care programs by the end of 2024.”

Regionally, LEAP has co-organized a 60-member Childcare Coalition to develop and implement a plan to address a wide range of child care issues, including assisting providers with business development and licensing/certification assistance; encouraging family-centric zoning that supports a range of options, including home day-care and child care centers in neighborhoods; expanding universal Pre-K, developing “navigation systems” to link parents to providers, increasing child care during non-standard hours (fewer than 5% of providers offer care on weekends, evenings and overnight); and offering child care subsidies for parents. Important, there appears to be a commitment to growing the field by addressing the historically low pay of \$12-\$13/hour for child care workers and lack of small business funding support for child care centers or home daycare.

LEAP's Coalition includes a substantial number of child care providers of all sorts, as well as representatives from government, education and business. Intensive data gathering and discussion will inform an action plan ready for implementation near the

start of the year. Once implementation begins, Bostwick said that the coalition will shift to raising funds to support an ambitious set of strategies. Given that child care has historically never received continuous or robust funding, the coalition will have its work cut out for it.

My go-to on all things zoning is Andy Fedewa, Lansing's chief planner, and so I asked him about the coalition's look at family-centric zoning policies. He replied that the city makes sure that “child care facilities are allowed citywide with reasonable regulations to ensure that children have a safe outdoor environment.”

“We welcome suggestions from the Childcare Coalition,” said Fedewa, whose team carries out its periodic review and that child care may well be a focus of possible modifications to the zoning code.

I asked Joe Enerson, ANC's executive director, about whether any of its available space might be a good fit with child care. Though doubtful about suitable space in Allen Place, he pointed out other ways that ANC could assist, e.g., by providing meeting space for professional development trainings and for providers to meet for mutual support, linking parents to eastside providers and growing its already existing after-school and summer youth programs.

What neighborhoods offer in the way of child care options does matter. As noted in the chamber report, after affordability and quality, proximity to home, work, or school is the third leading factor, with 38% of parents agreeing that it is a key decision criterion.

So, if you think your calling is the care and nurture of your community's children, this may be a fortuitous moment. With mobilization of people and resources at state, regional and neighborhood levels to address the complicated challenges of child care, we might just begin to turn this intractable issue around. Wouldn't it be amazing if the child care field offered good jobs, decent business opportunities and enough openings to meet the needs of Michigan's children?

(Joan Nelson is the retired founding executive director of the Allen Neighborhood Center. She contributes this column monthly.)



Opinion

CITY OF LANSING 2024 Meeting Schedule

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Wednesday, January 3, 2024 | Monday, June 24, 2024 |
| Monday, January 8, 2024 | Monday, July 8, 2024 |
| Monday, January 22, 2024 | Monday, July 22, 2024 |
| Monday, February 12, 2024 | Monday, August 12, 2024 |
| Monday, February 26, 2024 | Monday, August 26, 2024 |
| Monday, March 11, 2024 | Monday, September 9, 2024 |
| Monday, March 25, 2024 | Monday, September 23, 2024 |
| Monday, April 8, 2024 | Monday, September 30, 2024 |
| Monday, April 15, 2024 | Monday, October 14, 2024 |
| Monday, May 6, 2024 | Monday, October 28, 2024 |
| Monday, May 13, 2024 | Monday, November 18, 2024 |
| Monday, May 20, 2024 | Monday, December 2, 2024 |
| Monday, June 10, 2024 | Monday, December 16, 2024 |

Except as otherwise noted, all meetings will be on Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers, 10th Floor City Hall.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation to fully participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (517) 483-4131 (TTY 711). 24-hour notice may be needed for certain accommodations. An attempt will be made to grant all reasonable accommodation requests.

To be added to the email list to receive alerts when the City Council Agendas and approved minutes are available on the web, please visit www.lansingmi.gov/clerk or contact the City Clerk's Office at 517-483-4131

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

The decedent, Enedina Montalvo, who lived on 1924 New York Ave., Lansing MI 48906, died 11/17/2021. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Jaime Montalvo, trustee at 57656 Lillian Dr., Washington MI 48094, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice. 12/6/2023 — Jaime Montalvo, Trustee for the Estate, 57656 Lillian Dr., Washington MI 48094

ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Singing on the drums

Sylvia Cuenca brings melodic rhythms to MSU

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

When jazz drummer Sylvia Cuenca tried to explain her first musical love, a sparkly drum kit she got before she was in her teens, her voice sounded like a sweet lick on a high hat.

“I don’t know why, it just caught my eye,” she said.

Cuenca, this week’s artist in residence at MSU Jazz Studies, is among the select few musicians who can conjure clear and vibrant melodies on the drums, an instrument that doesn’t produce definite pitches.

She knew it could be done as soon as she pulled the classic album “At Basin Street,” with the late trumpeter Clifford Brown and the late drummer Max Roach, from her dad’s collection, at a tender age.

“Max was singing on the drums, not just comping and soloing,” Cuenca said. “He was incredibly melodic, and I was drawn to that.”

The same words describe Cuenca’s own nimble, tuneful approach. She is sharing her skills, passion and experience this week with MSU jazz students in a series of workshops, classes and trips to high schools across the state, culminating in a concert 8 p.m. Friday (Dec. 8) at the Fairchild Theatre.

Cuenca’s affinity for song comes naturally.

“My mother loved to sing, and she knew the lyrics to hundreds of songs,” Cuenca said. “My heritage is Mexican, so she would sing boleros in Spanish.”

Her father played jazz guitar, and her brother played upright bass and mandolin.

“Every family gathering was full of music,” she said. “It was fun.”

She started playing snare drums at 11 and worked for hours each day on her beloved “sparkle kit.”

At the Stanford Jazz Workshop in Stanford, California, the great jazz drummer Victor Lewis was a valued mentor and deep influence.

“I learned about being a sensitive team player in a small group setting,”

Cuenca said. “I call him a spontaneous composer. He seems to know exactly what to play at the right time on the kit.”

Lewis saw her talent and passion for music and pushed her to go to New York City.

In spring 1985, a two-week immersion in a city still brimming with jazz legends changed her life.

One night, she sat within a few feet of the late drum master Elvin Jones, a longtime member of John Coltrane’s historic quartet, at the Village Vanguard, then rushed down the street to Sweet Basil to hear another drum legend, the late Billy Higgins, play with the late pianist Cedar Walton.

“There was so much going on,” she said. “I went out every night. You’d sit at the bar next to some legendary player. I went home all fired up — ‘I’ve got to try this.’”

She packed her drums and a suitcase and took a \$99 flight on People Express from San Jose, California, to New York, where she only knew two people.

“I was so young. It seems crazy now,” she said.

It took a few months for her to get traction. She played every gig that opened up, from weddings to club sessions.

She draws on her own experience when she tells her students to never say no.

“Play every chance you get, keep developing your craft,” she said. “You never know who’s listening out there.”

As a drummer, the key is listening. Be patient but ready.”

Day jobs, including stints as a caterer and a legal proofreader, helped pay the bills. In the rare off-hour, she studied and transcribed music and practiced on the drums.

“It evolved into better and better work,” she said.

One night, Cuenca went to hear the late tenor-saxophone great Joe Hen-

derson at the Village Vanguard.

To her surprise, Henderson remembered her. The two had met years before, when Henderson came to San Jose City College as a guest artist.

He asked for her card, but she was certain her encounter with jazz history would end there. About three weeks later, however, two friends called Cuenca and said, “Joe’s looking for you.”

When Henderson himself called, she thought it was a gag at first, but there was no mistaking his baritone voice.

In a matter of days, she got a passport and jetted off to Europe for a whirlwind, zig-zag tour with Henderson. The band featured an all-women rhythm section, with Cuenca, pianist Renee Rosnes and bassist Kim Clarke.

“We were all over the place, driving 10 or 15 hours a day, packing up and driving from southern Europe to northern Europe,” she said. “It was one of the best times of my life. I was living my dream.”

“We had earthquakes on the bandstand,” Henderson later said of the tour.

Thanks to Cuenca’s familiarity with the music of piano legend Kenny Barron, she got a “dream call” in 2000, touring Japan and Korea with Barron, the late saxophonist Michael Brecker and bassist Ray Drummond. Barron asked Cuenca to replace the late drummer Ben Riley, who took

suddenly ill.

“I remember thinking, ‘This is really happening,’” Cuenca said. You can hear her put a fire under this matchless combo in a series of YouTube recordings from a Tokyo gig.

On Friday, Cuenca and the MSU students will play arrangements of classic Henderson compositions and tunes from the songbook of the late trumpeter-bandleader Clark Terry. Cuenca played with Terry for 17 years.

The ensembles will also play an eloquent and lyrical tune by Cuenca,



Courtesy photo

Drummer Sylvia Cuenca is sharing her skills, passion and experience with MSU Jazz Studies students in a series of workshops, classes and trips to high schools across the state, culminating in a concert Friday evening (Dec. 8) at the Fairchild Theatre.

“Resiliencia (Resilience),” a samba dedicated to “all the musicians around the world for what we went through during the pandemic and are still going through.”

Flexibility and openness to new genres, instruments and styles are key values for Cuenca. On the tour with Barron, she was pleasantly shocked to see Brecker nonchalantly sit behind the drums and erupt like Vesuvius.

“The guy sounded like Elvin Jones,” Cuenca said. “Ask some musicians. He had the vibe, the sound, the technique. He knew what he was doing.”

During the pandemic, Cuenca bought a nylon-string guitar, and she’s working on learning to play Brazilian music.

“I’m not a purist,” she said. “It’s important to branch out, learn other styles, music from other cultures. The more you know, the more you can express, and the more you can hear when you play with other musicians.”

MSU jazz orchestras with drummer Sylvia Cuenca

Friday, Dec. 8
8 p.m.
MSU Fairchild Theatre
\$7-17
517-353-5340
music.msu.edu

Riverwalk presents 'intentionally tacky' Christmas comedy

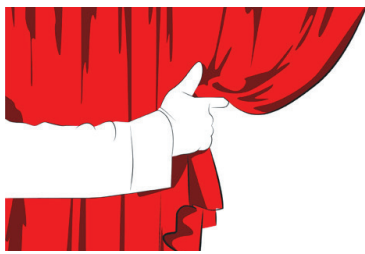
By **CHELSEA LAKE ROBERTS**

A board member of the Riverwalk Theatre since 2020, Kate Clark is making her Riverwalk directorial debut with "Christmas Belles," a "farce about squabbling sisters, family secrets, surly Santa, a vengeful sheep and a reluctant Elvis impersonator." The show focuses around a Southern church program that spins hilariously out of control.

"It's a feel-good show, a great way to unwind with your family during the holidays," Clark said.

A theater person from a theater family, Clark shared that she was in a production of this same show 10 years ago, directed by her mother. Although the show

BEHIND THE CURTAIN



isn't new to her, she said the new faces keep her on her toes when it comes to directing.

"People always say, 'I'm so excited to audition for your show.' Well, I only saw two people who I was expecting to show up. But a total of 30 people auditioned for 10 parts," she said. "The surprising thing about Riverwalk is that

people just come out of the woodwork. And it's different working with people who are new to theater, versus a bunch of seasoned professionals. Working in community theater is a good reminder for me. I get to test myself and see if I'm be-

ing a good director."

The show, which runs Thursday (Dec. 7) through Sunday (Dec. 10) and Dec. 14 through 17, features both new and returning actors. One new face on the stage is Jerome Kluck, who is getting a crash course in community theater.

"The difference between watching the show and being in the show is surprising," he said. "There are 400,000 decisions over the course of a few months. Right now, I'm working on where I place my feet, which is such a weird thing to think about. And then it's like, 'Darn, I'm supposed to be talking right now!'"

Kluck plays John Curtis Buntner, the quintessential "zany, wacky sheriff," according to Clark.

"I told him to be even zanier!" she said.

The group laughed, and Clark interjected, "I'm giving Jerome a crisis. He'll never be the same."

He quipped back, "It's such a bizarre thing to think about. When you're in the audience, you take everything for granted and consume the show as a whole. Now, holding my feet still, it seems like such a simple task. There are a lot of special skills that go into this."

A Lansing transplant, Kluck said that since he relocated to the area for his wife's job at Michigan State University, he's been taking their daughter to Impression 5 Science Center.

"I kept looking at the marquee at Riverwalk and thinking that it might be nice to go to a show there. Eventually, I found some time to audition," he said.



Photo by Ariniko Artistry

The cast of Riverwalk Theatre's production of "Christmas Belles," running Thursday (Dec. 7) through Sunday (Dec. 10) and Dec. 14 through 17.

Returning to the Riverwalk stage after 20 years is Holly Kay-Cannon, who recently moved back to Lansing from Los Angeles. She plays Twink Futrelle.

"She was done wrong by her ex-man. He took advantage of her, but going to jail for her crime has started her on a new path," Kay-Cannon said. "She loves her family, but they can grate on her. There's a lot for people to relate to here."

Kay-Cannon's character has a lot of physical comedy on stage. But after so many years off stage, she says she's fallen right back into the work.

"There are some hilarious gags we've thrown in. It's taxing, for sure — someone is now sitting in my lap, someone is grabbing me and throwing me around. You just go with it. In live theater, you just have to be willing to go with whatever happens in the moment. Even if it's a mistake, you roll with it and make it work. It was an easy transition," she said.

Kay-Cannon said she didn't grow up in a theater family, but it was something she had always wanted to do. Before moving away in the late 1990s, she acted in productions for Riverwalk, the Lansing Civic Players and the now-defunct Spotlight Theatre. A few years after returning to the Lansing area,

she thought, "I want to go audition for something." She said that she came to the "Christmas Belles" audition with hope, partly because the age ranges in the show included older women.

"That was promising, so I auditioned and went all out," she said.

She reported that even after two decades, it's still a great group of people.

"I've loved coming back to the theater community at Riverwalk," she said.

The show is not a musical, but there are musical elements.

"I don't want to give too much away," Clark said, "but the scenography has come together really well. Elisha Smith has done a great job making it what I call 'intentionally tacky.' She's made things look churchy, Southern, small-town. You know, we're scraping together what we can. And from the moment people enter the theater, I think they will begin to get the vibe. We've got a stained-glass type of design that is really striking."

For her directorial debut at the Riverwalk, Clark chose experienced technical professionals for her team.

"We're getting ready to hand over the show to Rita Sobish for tech week. It's all very exciting," she said.

December theater productions

"Murder for Two: Holiday Edition"

Through Dec. 23
8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday; Dec. 20
2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday; Dec. 13 and 20
Williamston Theatre
122 S. Putnam St., Williamston
williamstontheatre.org

"Christmas Belles"

Dec. 7-17
7 p.m. Thursday
8 p.m. Friday-Saturday
2 p.m. Sunday
Riverwalk Theatre
228 Museum Drive, Lansing
riverwalktheatre.com

"Holiday at Lebowsky"

Dec. 8-10
7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday
2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday
6:30 p.m. Sunday
Lebowski Center for Performing Arts
122 E. Main St., Owosso
lebowskycenter.com

"It's a Wonderful Life"

Starlight Dinner Theatre
Dec. 8-10
Delta Presbyterian Church
6100 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing
7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday
2 p.m. Sunday
starlightdinnertheatre.com

"A Christmas Carol"

All-of-Us Express Children's Theatre
Dec. 15-16
7 p.m. Friday
3 p.m. Saturday
Hannah Community Center
819 Abbot Road, East Lansing
allofousexpress.org

Starlight's 'It's a Wonderful Life' exemplifies the importance of fellowship

By **DANA DEMINK**

For people all around the world, the late Frank Capra's iconic 1946 film, "It's a Wonderful Life," is a holiday staple. The film tells the story of everyman hero George Bailey, who faces a Christmas Eve existential crisis. Thinking that he's worth more dead than alive, Bailey reflects on what he believes is a life of failures and makes the grim decision to end his life. With the help of a guardian angel sent from heaven to set him straight, he's provided a glimpse of what his close-knit community of Bedford Falls would be like if he had never existed. Despite the sentimentality, the film flirts with some dark subject material, like the 1918 influenza pandemic, the Great Depression, parental loss, unrealized dreams, alcoholism, unbridled capitalism, war and suicide.

Philip Grecian, who adapted the 1983 film "A Christmas Story" for the stage, transformed "It's a Won-

derful Life" into a two-act play that somehow seems to smooth out the social and political messages that make the film beloved. All that remains is a healthy schmear of holiday schmaltz.



Review

"It's a Wonderful Life"

Starlight Dinner Theatre
Dec. 8-10
Delta Presbyterian Church
6100 W. Michigan Ave.,
Lansing
7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday
2 p.m. Sunday
starlightdinnertheatre.com

Still, the central message of the story, that "no man is a failure who has friends," delivers a heartwarming reminder that a life of service and selflessness is a life worth living. When Bailey's friends come together in the second act to replace \$8,000 lost by his elderly uncle, Bailey realizes that it's his family and his connection to the community that define him.

Similarly, this beleaguered Starlight Dinner Theatre production is a triumph of community spirit. After founder, president and artistic director Linda Granger's July announcement that the theater would sign the controversial Guy Sanville, former artistic director of Purple Rose Theater Co. in Chelsea, to direct two shows, it was later announced that he

would not be directing "It's a Wonderful Life" due to an urgent medical issue. Cast member David Brooks stepped into the director role. With casting changes and a venue change during production, Brooks notes in the playbill that without the wonderful cast and crew, this Bedford Falls could have easily turned into a contentious Pottersville.

Speaking of Pottersville, this reviewer loves a good villain, and Douglas Foy delivers as the monstrous Henry Potter. Reminiscent of the bombastic and disputatious Gene Hackman as Sen. Kevin Keeley in the 1996 comedy/thriller "The Birdcage," Foy's delivery is comical and captivating.

As Bailey, Mark Polzin gives the audience a solid portrayal of a character synonymous with the late Jimmy Stewart, complete with Stewart's stammering cadence and frenzied pacing. Stephanie Spagnuolo Vosburgh also receives honorable mention as the faithful wife of Bailey — and the true hero of this drama.

While the show was technically glitchy — telephones rang out of sync, lights flashed indiscriminate-



Photo by Ron Jones Sr.

Mark Polzin (left) as George Bailey and Stephanie Spagnuolo Vosburgh as Mary Hatch-Bailey in Starlight Dinner Theatre's production of "It's a Wonderful Life."

ly, and pre-recorded audio was ill-timed — like Capra's vision of the power of community, Starlight Dinner Theatre's production reinforces the idea that community theater betters everyone.

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LCC students portray climate change through imaginative lens

By **CHELSEA LAKE ROBERTS**

Since 2015, the Climate Change Theatre Action festival has been produced biennially to coincide with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Conference of the Parties. This year's theme was "All Good Things Must Begin," a quote from famed science-fiction writer Octavia Butler. Lansing Community College was one of 65 groups from around the world that participated in the festival, doing so for the first time, and it presented two evenings of five-minute plays, accompanied by informational booths and collective poetry.



Review

The LCC organizers chose six plays from a list of 50 works that were written specifically for the festival by playwrights from across the globe. The playwrights chosen by LCC represented Anishinaabeg territory, Brazil, Canada, Kenya and the United States, with another play by a Detroit playwright. Melissa Kaplan, LCC's academic and arts outreach coordinator, told the LCC student newspaper, *The Lookout*, that more than 150 students were involved in this inaugural festival.

I attended the second evening of the performances on Saturday night (Dec. 2) and found the event to be an intimate exploration of hope. It was the first of what I expect will be

many Climate Change Theatre Action events on campus. Since these shows were presented by student actors, my only note is to speak up! For those of us on the side of the thrust, we had a little trouble hearing. That being said, I believe the plays offered a new way to think about climate change by showcasing the special skill cultivated by artists that's often blunted by stress, chaos and capitalism — I'm talking about imagination.

The short plays were at their best as students acted out, with vivid intensity, a vision of New York City populated by pedestrians instead of cars, crawling with plants instead of trees and powered by solar panels instead of stinking of garbage. Or when portraying the Native American legend of the Thunderbird and the distress of climate change that cuts underneath spoken language and is communicated in symbols. We're going to need plenty more imagination in the years to come, and I applaud the LCC staff, faculty and students who took action to participate in this event that brings the global response to climate change home to us.

Beyond a small theater festival with big potential, I saw young,



Photo by Kevin W. Fowler

From left: Lansing Community College students Christopher Chamberlain, Ashley Weinbrecht-Morris and Leo Ackerman perform "Magical Fungi in Times Square," by Chantal Bilodeau, during the school's Climate Change Theatre Action festival.

talented students building a strong foundation in the skills that theater teaches — and the skills that we're going to need to get through this climate crisis: collaboration, listening, responding, persuading, creating, storytelling and taking action.

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B/24/071 GIER PARK PUMP TRACK as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing. The City of Lansing will accept bids at The City of Lansing, Purchasing Office, 124 W. Michigan Ave. 3rd Floor, Lansing, Michigan 48933 or electronically submitted thru MITN Site (www.Mitn.Info) until 2PM local time in effect on DECEMBER 15, 2023. Complete specifications and forms required to submit bids are available by contacting Marilyn Chick at (517) 483-4282, or Marilyn.chick@lansingmi.gov or go to www.mitn.info. The City of Lansing encourages bids from All Vendors Including MBE/WBE Vendors and Lansing-Based Businesses.

CP#23-313

**Eagle Township, Clinton County
Board Meeting Synopsis**

November 16, 2023 at 6 pm - Present: Supervisor Stroud, Clerk Briggs-Dudley, Trustee Strahle, and 43 citizens. Absent: Treasurer Oberg, Trustee Jones.

Board Actions:

- 1) Public Hearing – Paxton Countertop Application for Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate
- 2) Scheduled special meeting to consider Paxton IFT on December 8, 2023, @ 6 pm.
- 3) Approved bills for November as presented.
- 4) Approved authorizing lawyer to research rescinding all NDAs.
- 5) Approved annual subscription to Microsoft Office 365 Basic for board members.
- 6) Approved meeting minutes for October 19, 2023, as amended.
- 7) Approved purchase of Quickbooks Enhanced Payroll subscription.
- 8) Approved allowing Eagle Township Planning Commission to help establish guidelines for all land use districts.
- 9) Appointed Trustee Dennis Strahle to Clinton County Broadband Task Force.
- 10) Resignation of Township Treasurer not accepted until new Treasurer is appointed.
- 11) Approved posting requesting applicants for Township Treasurer position and a special meeting November 29, 2023, @ 6 pm for interviews.
- 12) Approved purchase of MTA Township Essentials book package for Supervisors.

A complete copy of the minutes is available by contacting Laurie Briggs-Dudley, Clerk. Next regular meeting of the Eagle Township Board is December 21, 2023, at 6 pm at Eagle Township Hall, 14318 Michigan St, Eagle, MI. See www.eagletownship.org for latest updates.

Prepared by: **Laurie Briggs-Dudley, Eagle Township Clerk**
Approved by: **Troy Stroud, Eagle Township Supervisor**

CP#23-311

LANSING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
HOLIDAY POPS!
 DECEMBER 17 • 3:00 PM



Christmas comes early at Wharton

Voctave aims to spark holiday spirit through song

By NICOLE NOECHEL

When Voctave, an 11-member cappella group based in central Florida, was founded in winter 2015, the first show the members played together was a Christmas concert. Since then, the group has released three Christmas albums, including one that dropped earlier this year, and has taken its annual Christmas tour all across the country.

The new Christmas album will be the star of this year's tour, according to founder, producer and arranger Jamey Ray, who felt both audiences and the group itself deserved a change-up in the setlist.

"Last year, I said, 'You know what? That's enough. We need new music.' So, I started writing stuff in the spring for us to change our show up so that we could go back to places and people could see us again for Christmas, but with new material," he said. "We've gotten really into those songs, and we very much are starting to like them as

much as some of the old ones. We're hoping that in a few years, these will be the old ones, and we'll be cycling into some more new ones."

But fans shouldn't worry about losing out on any of the classic Voctave sound when the tour hits the Wharton Center Tuesday (Dec. 12).

"We've got a lot of songs that people want to hear again and again," Ray said. "We still have some of our old favorites in the show. It's kind of a mixture of some of our old songs that we just can't get rid of yet because we love them so much, along with pretty much all of the new album."

Ray said the group has been enjoying the tour, which kicked off Nov. 26 in Orlando, Florida.

"It's been good so far. We've had really good audiences — a lot of people excited to hear new music. It's fun for us that we've gotten to get started so soon after Thanksgiving," he said. "This first leg of the tour wasn't anything crazy. The furthest north we

Voctave: "It Feels Like Christmas"

Tuesday, Dec. 12
 7:30 p.m.
 Wharton Center Cobb
 Great Hall
 750 E. Shaw Lane, East
 Lansing
 517.432.2000
 whartoncenter.com



Courtesy of the Wharton Center

Central Florida-based a cappella group Voctave brings its annual Christmas tour, complete with an album's worth of new songs, to the Wharton Center on Dec. 12.

went was North Carolina. But over these next few weeks, we're getting ready to get our heavy coats out because we're not quite ready for this cold weather that we're gonna have up in the Midwest."

For those who have never seen the group live, Ray said the shows are much more than just a standard a cappella performance.

"A lot of people know us from our videos and social media posts, whether it's just a short little video or a full song they listened to. And so a lot of people have no idea what to expect when they're coming to see a Voctave show. We try to save something special for the people who come and see our live show, versus people who just know us from our videos," he said. "It's not a concert. They're not gonna come and sit and listen to song after song and then leave. They're going to see a full Christmas show. They're still going to hear high notes, they're still going to hear low notes, they're going to hear all the chords and all the exciting things that are in the videos, but it's going to be so much more than that."

If audience members aren't in the Christmas spirit by the time they leave

the show, Ray said, it's on them.

"We want to make you laugh, we want to make you cry and everything in between. We definitely want to take you on an emotional journey, as cheesy as that sounds," he said. "It's not going to be just sitting and golf clapping. We want people to be laughing out loud. We want them cheering and screaming. We want everything from our audiences because that makes our show so much better."

Beyond the tour, Voctave has been singing, recording and traveling as much as possible and hopes to have some new music out early next year.

"We've got a number of shows coming up. We've got a couple of things in January, and then February through April, we've got a number of stops that we'll be doing. That's kind of a little bit of growth on our Disney and Broadway tour," he said. "We've also got a few new different albums, or at least recording projects, that are in the works. I can't say anything specific. Some things we're really excited about. They're going to be released hopefully in the beginning part of this coming year. We're excited for it."



Courtesy of the Wharton Center

"We want to make you laugh, we want to make you cry and everything in between. We definitely want to take you on an emotional journey, as cheesy as that sounds," said Jamey Ray, Voctave's founder, arranger and producer.

Holiday events both familiar and fresh

By NICOLE NOECHEL

In the coming weeks throughout Greater Lansing, the spirit of the holiday season will come alive through events both new and old. Tried-and-true favorites like the Lansing Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Pops concert, Downtown Lansing Inc.'s Kringle Holiday Market and Potter Park Zoo's Wonderland of Lights will be joined by festivities such as a Krampus celebration, a touring circus show and a hip-hop rendition of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker." Whether you choose to celebrate the holidays with the community or prefer to spend close-knit time with family and friends at home, City Pulse wishes you the happiest of holidays.

'The Hip Hop Nutcracker'

Wednesday, Dec. 6

7:30 p.m.

Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing



Courtesy of the Wharton Center

The touring production of "The Hip Hop Nutcracker" stops at the Wharton Center 7:30 p.m. Wednesday (Dec. 6). The show blends music and dance from Tchaikovsky's beloved Christmas-themed ballet with hip-hop influences to "create one of the most awe-inspiring dance performances of the modern era," the Wharton Center wrote in a press release.

"Just like the original, in 'The Hip Hop Nutcracker,' Maria-Clara and the Nutcracker Prince go on a dream adventure, battling a gang of mice, visiting the land of sweets and learning the lessons of the holiday season," the show's website reads. "Innovative digital graffiti and visuals transform the landscape of E.T.A. Hoffmann's beloved story from traditional 19th-Century Germany to the vibrant, diverse sights and sounds of contemporary New York City."

The show, directed and choreographed by Emmy Award-winning and Tony- and Olivier-award nominated artist Jennifer Weber, features a cast of a dozen dancers, a DJ, a violinist and an opening set by MC Kurtis Blow, one of hip-hop's founding fathers.

To learn more about the show, visit hiphopnutcracker.com. Tickets for the Wharton Center date are available at whartoncenter.com, by calling 517-432-2000 or 1-800-WHARTON, or at the Wharton Center Ticket Office.

Holiday Cheer with MSU Symphony Orchestra and choirs

Saturday, Dec. 9

8 p.m.

Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing



Courtesy of the MSU College of Music

More than 300 students from Michigan State University's Symphony Orchestra and choirs will take

the stage of the Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall 8 p.m. Saturday (Dec. 9) to perform classic and beloved holiday music.

"Choral music provides a tremendous sense of unity and brings communities together, especially during the holiday season," said Jonathan Reed, associate director of choral programs and conductor of the MSU Choral Union. "Our choirs have been working really hard and are energized to share a terrific program that we feel will leave concertgoers inspired."

Reed will share the podium with Octavio Más-Arocas, director of orchestras, and Sandra Snow, director of choral programs, to guide the students in performances of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," by Charles Wesley; "Gloria," by John Rutter; "O Holy Night," by Chad Rehmann; "Radetzky March," by Johann Strauss; "Sleigh Ride," by Leroy Anderson; "A Holly and Jolly Sing Along," by James M. Stephenson; "Waltz of the Flowers," from Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker"; and select movements from George Frideric Handel's "Messiah."

Tickets are \$22 for adults, \$20 for seniors ages 60 and older and \$12 for students and can be purchased at whartoncenter.com, by calling 517-432-2000 or 1-800-WHARTON, at the Wharton Center Ticket Office or at the door if available.

Living Nativity

Saturday, Dec. 9

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Mason First United Methodist Church
201 E. Ash St., Mason



Courtesy of Suzanne Kuenzli Goodwin

Mason First United Methodist Church will host a free Living Nativity 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday (Dec. 9), where live actors and animals will recreate eight scenes from the biblical Christmas story. Visitors can view the displays while driving through the church's parking lot, embarking on the journey with Mary and Joseph to the fateful stable in Bethlehem from the comfort of their cars.

Attendees should enter the parking lot from Rogers Street. There will be signs and people directing guests to the line. For more information, visit the Mason First United Methodist Church Connection Facebook group at facebook.com/groups/379444135463181.

Old Town Krampusnacht

Saturday, Dec. 9

6-9 p.m.

Old Town, Lansing



Shutterstock

Lansing's Old Town neighborhood aims to honor its "rich" German heritage with a Krampusnacht celebration 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday (Dec. 9), featuring a traditional Krampus parade, photo opportunities

with Krampus and St. Nikolas, a costume contest, a Misfit Market of vendors, food and drink merchants, live performances, crafts, games, story readings for kids and warming stations to beat the wintry weather. In addition, Old Town shops will offer Krampus sales and specials for those who haven't completed their holiday shopping.

"Krampusnacht, or Krampus Night, is a celebration that dates back hundreds of years to Europe, where it was popular in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands," the neighborhood wrote in a press release. The counterpart of St. Nikolas, who delivers presents to well-behaved children, Krampus is a horned figure who scares children who have misbehaved during the Advent season.

The event is free and open to all ages. All proceeds earned will support the Lansing Makers Network.

Christmas in the Village

Sunday, Dec. 10

2-4 p.m.

Meridian Historical Village
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos



Courtesy of the Meridian Historical Village

Visit the Meridian Historical Village 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday (Dec. 10) for an afternoon of Christmas traditions from the Victorian Era. Activities include meet-and-greets with Santa, children's crafts, a gift shop, a silent auction, portraits by photographer Raymond Holt, a skit and song by Girl Scout Troop 30074 at 2:30 p.m., a concert by the Renaissance Singers of Greater Lansing at 3 p.m. and the township's annual Christmas tree lighting at 4 p.m. The village's buildings will also be open for tours.

For more information about this free event, visit meridianhistoricalvillage.org or call 517-347-7300.

Mannheim Steamroller Christmas

Dec. 14

7:30 p.m.

Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing



Courtesy of the Wharton Center

Mannheim Steamroller, a music ensemble founded and directed by Grammy Award-winning percussionist and composer Chip Davis, is bringing its annual Christmas tour — the longest-running concert tour in the entertainment business — to the Wharton Center on Dec. 14.

The group, best known for its reworkings of classic Christmas songs, will perform numbers from its many Christmas albums in its distinctive neoclassical sound. The albums have become Christmas classics, selling more than 31.5 million copies and occupying top positions on Billboard's Seasonal Chart each year.

"I remember when I came out with my first Christmas album in 1984, followed by our first tour. Back then, many in the music industry said focusing on Christmas just wouldn't work," Davis said. "Now, over 35 years later, we are still going strong. I want to thank our fans for making us part of their holiday tradition, especially after the hardships of the last few years. Today we

often see multi-generational families join us during the holidays each year."

Tickets for the shows are available at whartoncenter.com, by calling 517-432-2000 or 1-800-WHARTON, or at the Wharton Center Ticket Office. For complete tour details, visit mannheimsteamroller.com.

Lansing Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops

Dec. 17

3 p.m.

Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing



Courtesy of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra, accompanied by Broadway vocalist and Michigan native Terri Hansen, will bring the joy of the holiday season to the Wharton Center on Dec. 17 with a concert featuring a range of holiday music, from newer, fan-favorite tunes to traditional carols.

The program will include "Festive Sounds of Hanukkah," by Bill Holcombe; "My Favorite Things," from "The Sound of Music"; "All I Want for Christmas Is You," by Mariah Carey; "Suite from the Polar Express," by Alan Silvestri; and much more.

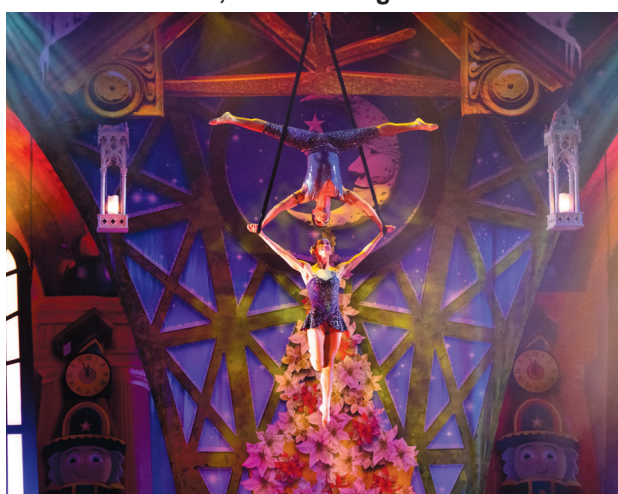
Tickets are available at lansingsymphony.org or whartoncenter.com.

Cirque Dreams: 'Holidaze'

Dec. 18-20

7:30 p.m.

Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing



Courtesy of the Wharton Center

The Wharton Center will host a "merry and bright holiday circus" Dec. 18 through 20 as Cirque Dreams,

part of the Cirque de Soleil Entertainment Company, takes its "Holidaze" tour to the people of Greater Lansing.

The show's storyline is loosely based on Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker," but the main events are the individual circus performances. These include jugglers that use only their mouths, contortionists able to squeeze into 2-by-2-foot boxes, aerial dancers that hang from the ceiling by their hair, hula-hoopers, jump-ropers and potentially even Santa Claus on a flying reindeer.

Cirque Dreams, known globally for its two productions, "Holidaze" and Celebration," has been performing at casinos, theme parks, theaters and more throughout the world since 1993.

Tickets for the all-ages shows are available at whartoncenter.com, by calling 517-432-2000 or 1-800-WHARTON, or at the Wharton Center Ticket Office. For more information, visit cirquedreams.com.

Kringle Holiday Market

Through Dec. 22

4-7 p.m. Friday-Saturday

Reutter Park

400 S. Capitol Ave., Lansing



Courtesy of Downtown Lansing Inc.

Downtown Lansing Inc.'s annual Kringle Holiday Market returns 4 to 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 22. Visit Reutter Park for local holiday shopping, free ice skating and other wintry activities.

"We are excited to open our Kringle Holiday Market for another season," said Cathleen

Edgerly, executive director of Downtown Lansing Inc. "DLI's mission is to create a downtown that is accessible and welcoming for all residents. Our Kringle Holiday Market is the perfect place to come together as a community to celebrate the holiday season while supporting local businesses and our residents."

Vendors include Impression 5 Science Center, Tiny Bit of Wood, Heaven Scent Body Products, Butterfly High, Ray's Candy & Crafts, various Old Town shops and other local and regional businesses.

Additional holiday activities include free horse-drawn carriage rides and music on Friday (Dec. 8), free pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus on Saturday (Dec. 9), caroling and gift wrapping on Dec. 15, cookie decorating with Sweet Encounter Bakery & Cafe on Dec. 16 and a community vendor night and skate party on Dec. 22.

Downtown Lansing Inc. will also collect monetary donations and other items for various local nonprofits each week. To keep up with each week's selected nonprofit and view a full list of vendors, visit downtownlansing.org/kringle-holiday-market or facebook.com/downtownlansing.

Wonderland of Lights

Through Dec. 23

5-8 p.m. Thursday-Sunday

Potter Park Zoo

1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing

Potter Park Zoo's annual Wonderland of Lights runs 5 to 8 p.m. Thursdays through Sunday until Dec. 23. Attendees can enjoy holiday music while they tour the zoo, which is decorated with thousands of lights and holiday decorations. An audio tour is available at potterparkzoo.org/audio-tours for a more guided experience.

There will also be a Zoo Nights event 5 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 13 for guests ages 21 and up, offering a chance to



Courtesy of Potter Park Zoo

view the light display and animals while sampling a variety of food and drinks from local restaurants and beverage companies. Tickets are \$15 for zoo members and \$20 for non-members. For the kids, Santa will be available for photos Friday and Saturday evenings.

"This is your chance to create unforgettable family memories amid the breathtaking and dazzling light displays," the Zoo wrote on its website. "Join us for these special Michigan winter evenings and immerse yourself in the beauty of this holiday tradition!"

Tickets are \$9 for adults; \$5 for kids ages 3-12, seniors ages 60+ and military members; and free for infants under 3. For more information, visit potterparkzoo.org/event/wonderland-of-lights-3.

Holiday Open House

Dec. 16-30

1-7 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday

Noon-5 p.m. Friday-Sunday; Dec. 25

Turner-Dodge House

100 E. North St., Lansing



Raymond Holt for City Pulse

The annual Holiday Open House at Lansing's historic Turner-Dodge House, sponsored by Friends of the Turner-Dodge House and Lansing Parks and Recreation, brings seasonal cheer to the Classical Revival-style home for the third year in a row. Local businesses, organizations and individuals will decorate all three floors for the holidays, sure to be a dazzling visual delight.

The admittance fee is \$5 for adults and free for children 12 and under. All proceeds go toward the restoration and preservation of the mansion. The exhibit will be open on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

If you'd like to volunteer to help decorate the house, email barbara.loyer@lansingmi.gov or send a message through the house's Facebook page, facebook.com/turnerdodgehouse.

**For more holiday events,
see Out on the Town,
pg. 23**

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Holiday Sing celebrates two decades of festive, musical cheer



Courtesy of Ten Pound Fiddle



Courtesy of Ruelaine Stokes



Courtesy of Ten Pound Fiddle

Local hammered dulcimer player Doug Berch (left) and local poet Ruelaine Stokes (center) are two of the special guests that will join song leader Sally Potter (right) at the 20th annual community Holiday Sing.

By **NICOLE NOECHEL**

Twenty years ago, Sally Potter, a local singer, banjoist, booking manager for the Ten Pound Fiddle and general manager of the Eastside Lansing Food Co-Op, brought the concept of a large-scale holiday sing-along to the Lansing area.

“There are lots of communities all around the country that do holiday sings, whether they’re secular in nature or whether churches do it,” Potter said. “You know, there are big “Messiah” sings, where people sing Handel’s entire “Messiah” score. They’ll have open sings where they’ll have soloists during the performance, but for a lot of those choral songs, they’ll invite hundreds of people in the audience to sing along. There’s always been singing at Christmas.”

Potter said the event ended up being a “natural fit” in the area.

“People’s hearts are just filled with the music that they have helped to create. And how powerful is that? I mean, without their voice, there is no sound,” she said. “So, everybody comes and sings. And it’s powerful. And it’s warm. And it’s just a wonderful feeling that people get, and a lot of people use it to kick off their holiday season with new and old friends.”

This year’s Holiday Sing will take place 7:30 p.m. Friday (Dec. 8) at University United Methodist

Church in East Lansing. Pianist Doug Austin, hammered dulcimer player Doug Berch and poets Ruelaine Stokes and Cruz Villarreal will accompany Potter, who will serve as song leader.

“Since the beginning, I’ve just asked different people to either lead songs or add instruments,” Potter said. “We’ve had a variety of panel players. The last few years,

Doug Austin has been the piano player. He’s a semi-retired corporate real estate attorney, but he also writes musicals for fun. He also plays the piano incredibly well, and he just adds so much. Berch is a nationally known hammered dulcimer player. He actually makes lap dulcimers, but he plays hammered dulcimer really well. Ruelaine Stokes is the president of the Lansing Poetry Club. Every year, she adds a couple of spoken word pieces. We also have a special guest, Cruz Villarreal, who wrote an essay that was published in City Pulse last year. He’s going to read it as part of a little subsection about home and traditions.”

Potter said that despite the lineup of performers, the event itself is all about community members coming together to perform holiday music as a collective.

“Every year, there are different guests that help lead songs or do spoken-word things. But in reality, when people come, we hand them

a little booklet. We give you all the words, and then we just start the song,” she said. “People can sing anything they want. If they know harmony lines, they can sing that, they can sing the melody, they can sing an octave above or an octave below, it doesn’t matter. Because the sound, especially with the piano and the hammered dulcimer, is so overwhelming and so powerful. People just have a grand time.”

Potter tries to choose songs about a wide range of subject matter, not just religious holidays, so that people of all backgrounds can enjoy the event.

“It’s not very religion-based. It’s more focused on the general holiday season. I mean, there are some songs with Christ in them. But there are also lots of songs about snow and the solstice and peace and the new year,” she said. “It’s different every year. But the idea is that the same people come, and they are in a lovely, safe space.”

Beyond being a fun holiday-themed event for the community, the Holiday Sing is also a fundraiser for the Ten Pound Fiddle.

“Every year, the Ten Pound Fiddle produces between 45 and 50 events. This event will raise a little over \$1,000, maybe more, for the Ten Pound Fiddle, and it just goes into supporting the work that the Fiddle does,” Potter said. She mentioned that the Fiddle gives around \$60,000, or about 60% of its revenue, to artists.

“That’s pretty powerful. In order to do this work, it doesn’t hurt to

make a little money on a Holiday Sing fundraiser,” she said.

According to Potter, the event hasn’t changed much in the 20 years it’s been running, beyond venue and themes.

“When we first started, we were at the Unitarian Church, and then the Ten Pound Fiddle took over and moved it to the Michigan State University Community Music School. We did several, I think six or eight, holiday sings over there,” Potter said. “And then right during COVID, the Ten Pound Fiddle moved all its concerts to University United Methodist Church. There are three venues in the church. The Holiday Sing is going to be in the sanctuary, which is absolutely gorgeous.”

Overall, Potter said throughout her years of organizing the Holiday Sing, her favorite part has been sharing music with others.

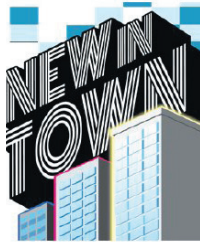
“I get to lead over half the songs. I have the best seat in the house! I have hundreds of people singing, and I get to hear all those parts. And so do they, but I just like sharing music, and through the years, people have shared wonderful songs,” she said. “There’s a huge pool of music that we get to choose from. Different cultures, different themes, different ideas. We choose 20 songs, and everybody sings on at least 16 or 17. It’s almost too simple. You show up, we give you the lyrics. There are no rules to what part you have to sing. Even if you don’t know all the songs, you’re going to know at least 15 or 16.”

20th annual Holiday Sing

Friday, Dec. 8
7:30 p.m.
University United Methodist Church
1120 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing
tenpoundfiddle.org/event/20th-annual-holiday-sing

Element Massage expands in the heart of downtown Lansing

By TYLER SCHNEIDER



Element Massage

215 S. Washington Square, Suite A, Lansing

Hours (by appointment)
10 a.m.–9 p.m.
Monday–Friday
10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Saturday
248-388-1337
massagelansing.com

Colton James Hughes, owner of Element Massage in downtown Lansing, used to tell his mom he wanted to be a wizard when he grew up. As it turns out, he'd already found his true calling. He just didn't know it yet.

"I started working on my mom when I was 6 or 7. I'd rub her feet and shoulders, and she'd tell me I had strong hands.

Whether that was true or not, it perpetuated the idea," he said.

For the remainder of his youth and teenage years, his proclivity for relieving tension for his friends and family persisted as a hobby. But it wasn't until about a decade ago that Hughes officially took up the role of a massage therapist in his professional life.

Prior to opening Element, he had been providing independent massage services in a room at 215 S. Washington Square for about seven years, but he eventually grew tired of seeing the other rooms go frequently unused.

"I had just seen so much potential with this space. I was here, and it was just me, and I kept seeing these rooms empty," he said.

Alongside fellow massage therapist Caryn Disbrow, he took the steps to secure the whole suite, which now offers four rooms, a team of six therapists and a growing list of new and existing clients that has already surpassed 1,000 people.

On Friday (Dec. 1), Element hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony where members of the community and neighboring business owners had the chance to take part in a raffle, enjoy food and refreshments, sign up for chair-massage trials and book services at discounted rates.

"It's mostly for people who are in pain. I hear it every week: 'I hold all my stress in my shoulders,' which makes sense because everything we do has us in front of a computer or

driving, and our shoulders are up to our ears," Hughes said. "People could be having the worst day, but when they get here, I always get the best of them. On the first day they walk in the door, they're so happy to see me, but they're even happier when they leave."

While Hughes, a myomassologist, specializes in deep-tissue work, each of the studio's six therapists offers something unique.

"Everybody always wants deep tissue, they want their pain taken away," Hughes said. "But everybody here is great. We all do a different type of massage because everybody learned from different schools and has a different background, but we're all efficient at what we do."

Hughes, a 15-year Lansing resident, described Element as "a professional yet down-to-earth experience focused on improving body, mind and soul."

"I want this to be accessible to anyone," he said. "I want people, whoever they are, to feel comfortable in this space. It is an intimate experience. You have to trust somebody. It's not like doing hair, where you can see a



Tyler Schneider/City Pulse

Colton James Hughes, owner of downtown Lansing's Element Massage, at the studio's grand opening celebration.

picture of what they do. You have to go by reviews and actually experience it."

Thank you!



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Love for three rocks

Cartoonist Bill Griffith's obsession with Ernie Bushmiller and 'Nancy'

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

On the surface, "Three Rocks," a new graphic novel by Bill Griffith, is a tribute from one syndicated cartoonist to another. But do we really need a biography of the late Ernie Bushmiller, creator of the corny comic strip "Nancy?"

As King Lear cried out, "O, reason not the need."

Look beyond the unlikely subject of "Three Rocks" and thrill, as they say, to the strangest love story of our times.

Griffith is best known as the creator of "Zippy," one of the most bizarre comic strips ever to go into syndication. It's a labyrinth of obscure cultural references, etched in baroque cross-hatching that overwhelms flimsy newsprint.

So, why is Griffith so obsessed with the noodle-simple graphics and cornball gags of "Nancy?"

"They just trigger some sort of endorphin surge in me," Griffith said during a phone interview. "It's like my shrink is saying, 'Tell me, Bill, what is it about this Nancy character that has such a hold on you?' I try to explain it, but it's difficult to explain why you simply like, or love, something."

In a recent "Zippy" strip, Griffith declared that his series has "eight followers." He depicted them as a shadowy group of eight misfits standing on a beach, alienated and isolated.

Bushmiller, by contrast, sought to ap-

peal to the widest audience possible.

In "Three Rocks," Griffith depicts Bushmiller on his honeymoon at the Bronx Zoo in New York, tossing peanuts to the seals. "Everybody loves peanuts," Bushmiller tells his wife.

That's Bushmiller's formula to a T. It's also a veiled reference to the late Charles Schulz's "Peanuts," a wildly popular strip that evokes mixed feelings in Griffith.

Is it better to be popular or to be good?

In Griffith's loving eyes, "Nancy" has it both ways.

"'Nancy' appeals to people who just want to have a humorous punchline at the end of three or four panels," he said. "And then there's also this cult, which started developing in the 1940s, of intellectuals who maintain that there's a lot more depth to 'Nancy' than there appears to be. Of course, if you're really a 'Nancy' aficionado, you appreciate the strip on both those levels at one time."

In the 1970s, Griffith was a key creator in the San Francisco underground comix scene, along with "Maus" creator Art Spiegelman.

"We talked about what a great strip 'Nancy' is," Griffith said. They discussed their favorite strips as if they were Zen koans or short stories by Chekhov.

Spiegelman pointed out Bushmiller's unvarying practice of rendering the same three rocks, in exactly the same position, in the background of many "Nancy" strips.

Once Spiegelman pointed out the three rocks, Griffith couldn't un-see them. The recurring rocks put Griffith into a Zen-like state of mind that has

inspired hundreds of "Zippy" strips and gave the Bushmiller book its title.

Griffith got to work on "Three Rocks" within days of handing his 2019 graphic novel, "Nobody's Fool: The Life and Times of Schlitzie the Pinhead," to his publisher.

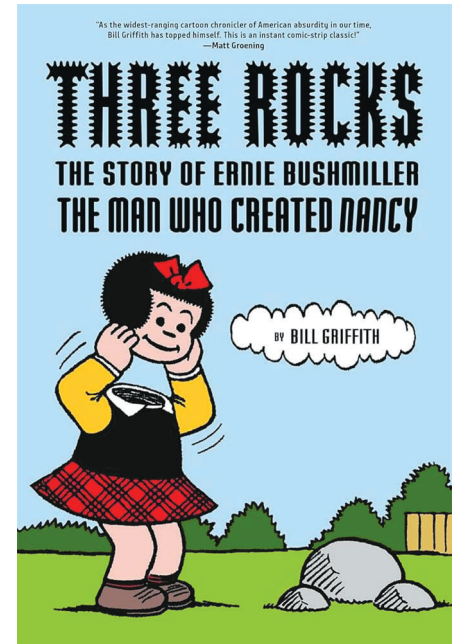
Although he pushes a lot of boundaries in "Zippy," graphic novels give Griffith the chance to create gorgeous set-piece drawings, long narrative arcs, dream sequences and many other devices that are hard to cram into a daily strip.

"I felt the empty nest syndrome," Griffith said. "I thought, what's missing is that rhythm, that part of me that can only get used in a long form, and I always thought about doing something with 'Nancy' and Bushmiller."

He's already hip deep in another graphic novel about his great-grandfather William Henry Jackson, a famous photographer who helped run the Detroit Publishing Co. in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

Jackson died in 1942 at age 99, two years before Griffith was born. To bring the story to life, Griffith will draw upon a remarkable set of transcripts of conversations between Jackson and a "fan-boy" named Elwood Bonney who lived in New Jersey, just across the Hudson River from Jackson's hotel room in Manhattan.

"Bonney would come over on Saturday, and they would both go to the automat to have lunch, or they'd have dinner at Childs in Manhattan," Griffith said. Bonney wrote their conversations down every day, like Boswell did with Samuel Johnson, even noting what



Courtesy photo

"Three Rocks," a new biography of the late "Nancy" cartoonist Ernie Bushmiller, written and illustrated by fellow syndicated cartoonist Bill Griffith.

Jackson ordered for lunch.

"So, I have this personal and detailed view of him," Griffith said.

The book will give Griffith a chance to expand his artistic horizons well beyond the lovingly etched New York and Los Angeles locales of "Three Rocks." Recently, Griffith learned that the Library of Congress has 888 photographs Jackson took on an 1898 world tour.

"Some of them are amazing — the pyramids of Egypt before there were any tourists, just incredible stuff," he said. "I'm looking forward to my time at the Library of Congress."

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LUNAR LEMON

FRESH DROP
12.7.23

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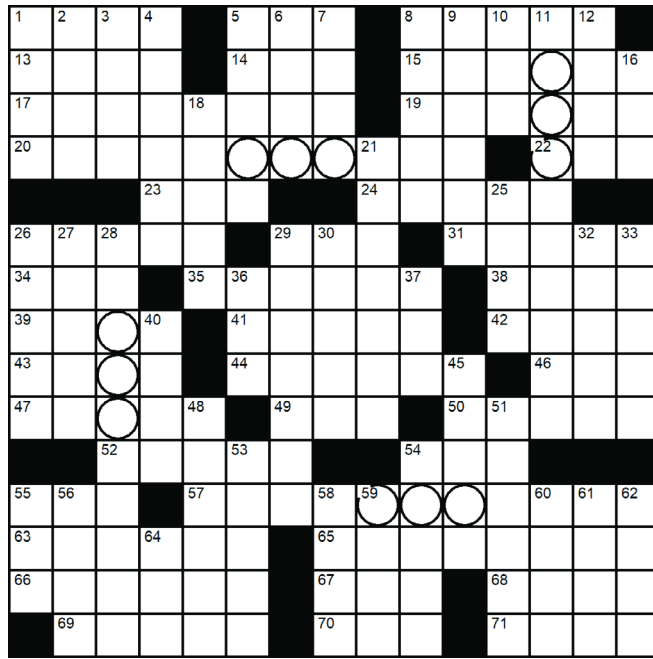
Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"I'm Not Lost" -- we did it!
by Matt Jones
© 2023 Matt Jones

ACROSS

- 1. ___ fides (credentials)
- 5. Coll. deg. for artists
- 8. Mowed path
- 13. Long, long time
- 14. ___ Gatos, CA
- 15. Breathing space
- 17. "Are You Being Served?" and "Friday Night Dinner," for example
- 19. Shakespeare title setting
- 20. Minced veggie for stews and casseroles
- 22. Preschool activity
- 23. Near-eternity
- 24. Belief statement
- 26. Alcohol type used as biofuel
- 29. "Cats" poet's monogram
- 31. Backward-looking
- 34. Night sky feline
- 35. Urban growth
- 38. What lumberjacks do
- 39. They're on the books
- 41. Video game protagonist with a 2023 movie
- 42. Aucklander, casually
- 43. "Nah, it's all good ..."
- 44. Use your blinker
- 46. Former All-Star closer Robb
- 47. Video game character on a roll?
- 49. Poe's "Annabel ___"
- 50. Postal Service symbol
- 52. Piano practice piece
- 54. Bob ___ apples
- 55. "A Wrinkle in Time"



- director DuVernay
 - 57. Tops that don't require a bottle opener
 - 63. Download the wrong way, maybe
 - 65. Closet-organizing device
 - 66. "Stormy" seabird
 - 67. Winner's take
 - 68. Volunteer's statement
 - 69. Go for a spin?
 - 70. "All opposed" reply
 - 71. Heartless
- DOWN**
- 1. Word before Ruth or Bjorn
 - 2. Fiona, eventually
 - 3. First name among astronauts
 - 4. Rick often behind a slick click
 - 5. Like some fuses or glass
 - 6. Acronymic anxiety about exclusion
 - 7. Part of WNBA
 - 8. Take time to enjoy
 - 9. Type of "mobile" for Oscar Mayer
 - 10. Musical adaptation abbr.
 - 11. Early score in a baseball or basketball game
 - 12. 1980s tennis star Mandlikova
 - 16. Talk excessively
 - 18. Becomes less hot
 - 21. Drink made from frozen grapes
 - 25. Card pack
 - 26. Author Bret Easton
 - 27. "I love you," in Spanish
 - 28. Words of astonishment
 - 29. Promo of sorts
 - 30. "Beetle Bailey" character
 - 32. Spiked wheel on a boot spur
 - 33. State one's views
 - 36. Some U.K. statespeople
 - 37. Mauna ___ (Hawaiian peak)
 - 40. Comedy scene
 - 45. Sierra ___ (Liberia neighbor)
 - 48. General killed at Little Bighorn
 - 51. Northern region
 - 53. Flashlight battery size
 - 54. Australian Rules, informally
 - 55. Smartphone download
 - 56. Vantage point
 - 58. "SportsCenter" network
 - 59. "Hold on there!"
 - 60. West Coast gas brand
 - 61. Bell ringing
 - 62. Outlook action
 - 64. Actress Graynor

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

December 6-12, 2023

ARIES (March 21-April 19): In 1849, Harriet Tubman (1822-1913) escaped from enslavement on a plantation in Maryland. She could have enjoyed her new freedom in peace, but she instead resolved to liberate others. During 13 bold forays into enemy territory, she rescued 70 enslaved people and ushered them to safety. She testified that she relied on her dreams and visions to help her carry out her heroic acts. They revealed to her the best escape routes to take, the best times to proceed and information about how to avoid the fiendish slave catchers. In alignment with astrological omens, I invite you to be like Tubman and seek practical guidance from your dreams in the coming weeks — to solve problems or to seek bliss.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Jack Nicholson has often played mavericks and anti-heroes in his movies. His life away from the silver screen has also been less than steady and predictable. For example, he has fathered six children with five different women. His fellow actor, the late Carrie Fisher, said Nicholson is "fun because he doesn't make sense." A person with casual knowledge of astrology might be surprised that Nicholson is a Taurus. Your tribe isn't typically renowned for high eccentricity. But in his natal chart, Nicholson has the brash planet Uranus near his sun in Taurus, indicating he's quirky. Aside from that, I have known plenty of Tauruses whose commitment to being uniquely themselves makes them idiosyncratic. These themes will be in play for you during the coming weeks. (PS: Taurus musician David Byrne starred in the concert film "Stop Making Sense.")

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): The platitude says that if life gives us lemons, we should make lemonade. I've got a variation on this theme. Consider the Neva River in northwestern Russia. It freezes every winter. During the frigid months of 1739 to 1740, Empress Anna Ioannovna ordered her workers to cut huge blocks of ice and use them to construct a magnificent palace on the riverbank. She filled the place with furniture and art, making it a hub of festivities celebrating Russia's triumph over the Ottoman Empire. I bring these themes to your attention, Gemini, because I suspect that in the coming weeks, you will have substantial redemptive power. Whether you make lemonade from lemons or a palace from a frozen river is up to you.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): "If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy," wrote Cancerian author E. B. White. "If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day." According to my astrological analysis, your fate in recent weeks has been more challenging than seductive. You've been pressed to work on dilemmas and make adjustments more than you might like. But this rhythm is about to change. Up ahead, life is seductive, welcoming and appealing. Are you prepared to drop any unconscious attachment you have to your interesting discomfort so you can smoothly make the transition toward more ease?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): I want to prepare you for the delights of the coming days. I want to make sure you are fully alert for them and primed to appreciate them. So, I give you the thoughts of Leo psychologist Carl Jung. "It is important to have a secret, a premonition of things unknown," he said. "We must sense that we live in a mysterious world — that things happen and can be experienced that remain inexplicable; that not everything can be anticipated; that the unexpected and incredible belong in this world. Only then is life whole."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Have you taken a refreshing break lately? Maybe even a soothing sabbatical? Have you treated yourself to a respite from the gritty grind? If not, please do so soon. And while you are recharging your

psychic batteries, I ask you to give your fantasy life ample room to wander wildly and freely. In my astrological opinion, your imagination needs to be fed and fed with gourmet food for thought. For the sake of your soul's health, I hope you dream up fantastic, unruly, even outrageous possibilities.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): My Uncle Ned advised me, "The best gift you can compel your ego to accept is to make it your servant instead of your master." An early Buddhist teacher sounded a related theme when she told me, "The best things in life are most likely to come your way if you periodically shed all hope and practice being completely empty." The girlfriend I had when I was 23 confided, "You may get more enjoyment from the witty ways I confound you if you don't try to understand them." I offer these three ideas to you, Libra, because you're in a phase when the moral of your story is that there is no apparent moral to your story — at least until you surrender your notions of what the moral of your story is.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): I believe you Scorpios are the zodiac sign most likely to benefit from being empathetic. By that I mean you have substantial power to thrive by reading other people's moods and feelings. You are often able to figure out angles that enable you to gather what you want while helping others to gather what they want. You are potentially a genius at doing what's best for everyone and getting paid and rewarded for it. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, this knack of yours will soon be operating at peak levels.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun died more than 3,300 years ago. When his mournful entourage placed him in his tomb, the treasures they left included a pot of honey, which was meant to sweeten his travels in the afterlife. In the early 20th century, archaeologists excavated the ancient site. They dared to sample the honey, finding it as tasty and fresh as if it had just been made. Amazingly, this same longevity is a characteristic of most honey. I propose we use this as a metaphor for your life. What old resources or experiences from your past might be as pure and nurturing as they were originally? And now could they be of value now?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Screenwriter John Patrick Shanley writes, "Life holds its miracles, good erupting from darkness chief among them." I predict a comparable miracle for you, Capricorn, though I suspect it will arise out of confusion or inertia rather than darkness. My advice: Don't be so bogged down in the muddle that you miss the signs that a great awakening is nigh. Start rehearsing how you will feel when deliverance arrives.

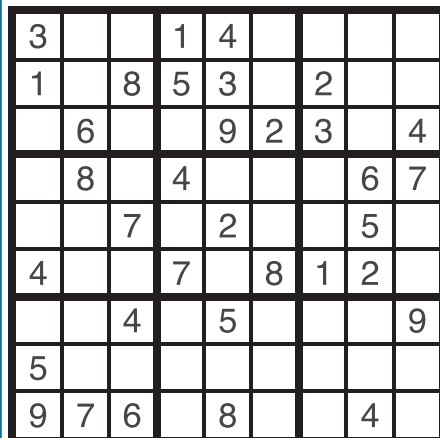
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Before he reached the height of fame as a novelist, Aquarian Charles Dickens experienced financial instability. When he was 31, the situation got desperate, and he resolved to take extreme measures. For six weeks, beginning in October 1843, he obsessively worked on writing the story "A Christmas Carol." It was published on Dec. 19 and sold out in a few days. Within a year, 13 editions were released. Dickens' economic worries were over. Dear Aquarius, I think the near future will be a favorable time for you, too, to take dramatic, focused action to fix a problem you're having.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Many religious people believe God can hear their prayers and intervene in worldly affairs. Other religious folks think God can hear their prayers but may not intervene. Then there are the non-religious folks who don't believe in God and think praying is useless. Wherever you might be on the spectrum, Pisces, I'm pleased to reveal that you will have extra access to support and benefaction in the coming weeks — whether that's from God, fate, nature or other humans. So, seek out blessings and assistance with alacrity. Be receptive to all potential helpers, even unlikely ones.

©2020 Jonesin' Crosswords (jonesincrosswords@gmail.com) Answers on page 27

SUDOKU

Beginner



Fun By The Numbers

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

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

OUT on the TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

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

Wednesday, Dec. 6

"A Course of Love" Book Study, Facilitated by Lucille Olson & Bill Dietrich - 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

Acting & Glee Music Class for Kids - Ages 5-12. 4:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Allen Farmers Market - 3-6:30 p.m. 1629 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. 517-999-3911. alleneighborhoodcenter.org/market.

"Fitness Over 50" Senior Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at Central Park Pavilion. 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

"The Hip Hop Nutcracker" - A remixed and reimagined version of classic hip-hop dance and Tchaikovsky's timeless music. 7:30 p.m. Wharton Center Cobb Great Hall, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com.

Hot Cocoa Present-Making - Grades 4-12. 4 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. 517-663-0950. eradl.org.

Improv Acting Class - 8:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Jazz Dance Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

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

Michigan Young Birders Network Virtual Meeting - Free virtual networking group for individuals ages 13-18 interested in birding. 7 p.m. Meeting ID: 946 4329 0865. Password: Chickadee.

Mid-Michigan Art Guild FALL MEMBER ART SHOW - 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Neighborhood Empowerment Center, 600 W. Maple St., Lansing. midmichiganartguild.org.

Mindfulness Meditation in the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition - All are welcome to join our weekly practice! 7-9 p.m. Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S. MLK Jr. Blvd., Lansing. iamc.info.

"Mixed Media Medley," by Bobbie Margolis - 9 a.m.-8 p.m. CADL - Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. Call 517-347-2021 beforehand to ensure gallery space is open. facebook.com/MidMichiganArtGuild.

Nature photography display by Joyce Felzke - Hours subject to change as the Bookend Gallery is staffed by volunteers. Noon-4 p.m. CADL - Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. 517-339-2324. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Scratchboard Drawing with Matt Mulford - Join us as we draw a fun, holiday-themed subject. 10 a.m. Lansing Art Gallery, 300 S. Washington Square, Suite 100, Lansing. 517-574-4521. lansingart-gallery.org.

Tap II Class - 6 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Weaving the Web: Astrology - Join us online or in person for discussions, rituals, meditations and more! 6 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-657-5800. weaversoftheweb.org.

Thursday, Dec. 7

20th Annual Not So Silent Night for REACH - Featured Artist talk with David Torgoff and Eric Staib of the "A Not So Silent Night" exhibition. 7 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

"A Course in Miracles," Facilitated by Lisa Schmidt - 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

Acting 101 Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Acting Ensemble Class - 8 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

BOGO Book Sale at Friends of the Delta Township District Library Bookstore - BOGO sale on books, jigsaw puzzles, CDs, DVDs, magazines, etc. Cash or check only. 10:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. 517-816-8259.

"Christmas Belles" - 7 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

Eloquents Toastmasters Weekly Meeting - Safe and positive environment to practice public speaking and leadership skills. 6:30 p.m. Okemos Presbyterian Church, 2258 Bennett Road, Okemos. eloquents.toastmastersclubs.org.

Jazz/Hip Hop II class - Ages 9-13. 4 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Karaoke Thursday - 8 p.m.-midnight. The Green Door Bar & Grill, 2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 517-325-9897. greendoorlive.com.

Ladies Silver Blades Skating Club - Join other adult women for fun, exercise, friendship and skating practice. 9:30-11:30 a.m. Suburban Ice, 2810 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. ladiesilverblades.org.

Laingsburg Farmers Market - 5-8 p.m. First Congregational Church of Laingsburg, 401 E. Grand River Road, Laingsburg. 517-295-8128. laingsburg-business.org/farmers-market-1.

Mid-Michigan Art Guild FALL MEMBER ART SHOW - 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Neighborhood Empowerment Center, 600 W. Maple St., Lansing. midmichiganartguild.org.

"Mixed Media Medley," by Bobbie Margolis - 9 a.m.-8 p.m. CADL - Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. Call 517-347-2021 beforehand to ensure gallery space is open. facebook.com/MidMichiganArtGuild.

Lansing Old Newsboys Spoof Journal Sales Day - Old Newsboys paper sellers will be out at area businesses and on street corners with the Lansing "Spoof" Journal. 100% of money raised goes toward new shoes and boots for children in Lansing and surrounding communities. 517-334-0269. lansingoldnewsboys.org.

"Murder for Two: Holiday Edition" - 8 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org.

Musical Theatre Performances - Students enrolled in the musical theatre performance class perform a variety of songs and duets from new and popular musicals of every genre. 8 p.m. LCC Black Box Theatre, 411 N. Grand Ave., Lansing. lcc.edu/showinfo.

Winter Fest

Saturday, Dec. 9
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Hannah Community Center
819 Abbot Road, East Lansing

East Lansing's annual Winter Fest runs 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday (Dec. 9) at the Hannah Community Center, offering a chance to celebrate the winter season with games, live performances, shopping and more.

Activities include ice carving, an indoor bounce house, Nerf games, a photo booth, crafts, outdoor fire pits for making s'mores and a Winter Farmers Market, with local vendors selling everything from beeswax candles, home décor, dog treats and baked goods to homemade maple syrup and barbecue sauce, fresh-roasted coffee, holiday-themed wreaths and much more.

The live entertainment lineup includes performances by School of Rock at 11 a.m., ventriloquist Richard Paul at noon and indie-folk/Americana band The Dangling Particles at 1 p.m.

In addition, there will be information tables provided by the East Lansing Public Library, East Lansing Art Festival, East Lansing Police Department and East Lansing Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit cityofeastlansing.com/464/Winter-Fest.



Nature photography display by Joyce Felzke - Hours subject to change as the Bookend Gallery is staffed by volunteers. Noon-6 p.m. CADL - Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. 517-339-2324. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Perler Bead - Explore and create with Perler beads! Choose from patterns or create your own, then use yarn or magnets to turn your creations into ornaments. Registration req. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

Red Cedar Lodge Senior Living First Anniversary Celebration - Live entertainment, chef-prepared appetizers, cocktails and opportunities to explore the lodge's offerings. RSVP by calling 614-348-0226 or visiting continentalseniorcommunities.com/red-cedar-lodge/anniversary-party. 4-7 p.m. 210 Dori Lane, Lansing.

Ruhala Broadway Ensemble - Learn to excel equally in singing, acting and dance. 5:30 p.m. 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Smart Home Technologies - A discussion and demonstration of some home automation. Intended for adults. 5 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. 517-663-0950. eradl.org.

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

Take Off Pounds Sensibly - Weight-loss support group. Weigh-in 5:30 p.m., meeting 6-7 p.m. Haslett Middle School, 1536 Franklin St., Haslett. 800-932-8677. facebook.com/HaslettTops.

Yoga with Maja McKeever, Slow Flow for Better Mobility - 6 p.m. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. 269-762-3189. unitylansing.org.

Friday, Dec. 8

20th Annual Holiday Sing, hosted by Sally Potter, wsg Doug Austin, Doug Berch and Ruelaine Stokes - Annual fundraiser for the Ten Pound Fiddle. 7:30 p.m. University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org/event/20th-annual-holiday-sing.

BOGO Book Sale at Friends of the Delta Township District Library Bookstore - BOGO sale on books, jigsaw puzzles, CDs, DVDs, magazines, etc. Cash or check only. 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. 517-816-8259.

"Christmas Belles" - 8 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

Christmas PJ Story Time - Come dressed in holiday-themed pajamas and enjoy festive stories! Classic Kona Kocoa will be served afterward. Available for families with children of all ages. 6:30 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

Divination Roundtable - Learn a new divination method, get a reading and compare notes with others in your field. All readings free, all systems of divination welcome. 5 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540. manifestlansing.com.

Thank you for naming All-of-us Express the second-best Local Theatre Organization in Top of the Town 2023! We hope you'll join us for:

A Christmas Carol

two shows only, December 15 & 16
East Lansing Hannah Community Center

Information: allofusexpress.org
 Tickets: bit.ly/AECTtickets
 Box Office: 517.333.2580, ext. 0

Events

from page 23

"Fitness Over 50" Senior Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at Central Park Pavilion. 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Holiday Road Rally - 6 p.m. Foster Community Center, 200 N. Foster Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4313. lansingmi.gov/968/Holiday-Road-Rally.

Immanuel Wilkins Quartet - 7:30 p.m. Wharton Center Jackson Lounge, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com.

JP Peters at the Peanut Barrel - 8 p.m. 521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. 517-351-0608. peanutbarrel.com.

Junior Architects - Children ages 2-4 and their caregivers explore science through hands-on, inquisitive learning in a responsive, playful, exploratory environment. 10 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

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perform a variety of songs and duets from new and popular musicals of every genre. 8 p.m. LCC Black Box Theatre, 411 N. Grand Ave., Lansing. lcc.edu/showinfo.

Nature photography display by Joyce Felzke - Hours subject to change as the Bookend Gallery is staffed by volunteers. Noon-4 p.m. CADL - Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. 517-339-2324. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Take-and-Make Craft: Snowy Pine Tree Mug Ornament - This adult take-home craft will be available starting at 11 a.m. Available while supplies last. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

Saturday, Dec. 9

20th Annual Not So Silent Night Gala - Put on your party attire and enjoy light appetizers, music and an art-filled silent auction. All proceeds help REACH provide free and sliding-scale-fee arts programs. 7-9:30 p.m. 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

BOGO Book Sale at Friends of the Delta Township District Library Bookstore - BOGO sale on books, jigsaw puzzles, CDs, DVDs, magazines, etc. Cash or check only. 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. 517-816-8259.

Capital Pro Wrestling - 3 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St., Lansing. 517-894-4589. americanluchalibre.com.

"Christmas Belles" - 8 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

Eco-Friendly Art Gift Bags with Steph Joy Hogan - Learn waste-minimizing studio tips while creating one-of-a-kind gift bags and tags. 10 a.m. Lansing Art Gallery, 300 S. Washington Square, Suite 100, Lansing. 517-574-4521. lansingartgallery.org.

See Events, Page 26

Congrats
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as voted on by the people of Lansing

BERL SCHWARTZ PUBLISHER
FOX47 NEWS

CityPULSE

Contact Steve@lansingcitypulse.com or **517-999-6705** for details.

Sponsored Content

I'm thankful for being able to put these writings in front of you every week. I received a few messages from some of you this past week that got me feeling all warm and fuzzy, and at the same time, gave me chills. Thank you for your stories and support, I genuinely appreciate it.

I got to thinking this week about how incredibly lucky I am. Coming from a broken family, I was lucky to meet my wife, who had a strong family and support network. It could have been entirely the opposite. I could've met someone who was as alone as I was at the time, and I could still be living in survival mode.

I'm also lucky to have always been generally healthy, physically and mentally. I certainly struggle sometimes to remain positive and hopeful, and I do get scared and anxious. Running a business means I have people depending on me every week to provide them with work so they can support themselves.

All of you who support us make it possible to continue placing these "ads." I truly believe these essays are helpful, not just for you, but for me, too. Your support also means that we can continue to do other things as well. The week of

Thanksgiving, we gifted a family with a free furnace and AC. We couldn't have done that without YOU. For Giving Tuesday, we gifted a single mom a major repair on her furnace. We couldn't do that without YOU.

I hate marketing. I prefer this over all the other marketing we do, because it's organic and authentic. I cringe at our television ads, even though everyone else seems to like them. I see myself on TV, and it feels unnatural and constrained. There's just no easy way to put into a short clip who we are and what we stand for. I like the full-page print to be able to express myself and create something new every week. It's fresh and relevant. But again, only YOU make it possible.

So thanks to all of you for enabling us to be the type of company your mom would approve of!

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Events

from page 24

Environmental Stewardship Work Day - Restore East Lansing's park biotic communities by removing problematic invasive plant species and replacing them with native species. 9-11 a.m. Azaadiikaa Park, 2801 Abbot Road, East Lansing. 517-319-6804. cityofeastlansing.com.

Holiday Open House - Shop handmade gifts crafted by Michigan artists. Enjoy 10% off all purchases, free tote bag for purchases over \$75, complimentary gift wrapping and free sugar cookie decorating. 2-6 p.m. Lansing Art Gallery, 300 S. Washington Square, Suite 100, Lansing. 517-574-4521. lansingartgallery.org.

Inebriated Insights - A night of intoxicated witchcraft! Variety of tarot cards, oracle cards, bone readings, astrology, runes, reiki and more. 5 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540. manifestlansing.com.

Intermediate Ballet class - 11 a.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Living Nativity - Enjoy the Christmas story from the comfort of your car. Free admission. 5:30-8:30 p.m. Mason First United Methodist Church, 201 E. Ash St., Mason. 517-676-9449. masonfirst.org.

Mason Symphony Orchestra concert - Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2. Krush: Concerto for Bass Trombone, soloist Stefan Stolarchuk. Borodin: Symphony No. 2. Various holiday pieces. 7 p.m. Okemos High School, 2800 Jolly Road, Okemos. masonorchestras.org.

"Mixed Media Medley," by Bobbie Margolis - 9 a.m.-7 p.m. CADL - Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. Call 517-347-2021 beforehand to ensure gallery space is open. facebook.com/MidMichiganArtGuild.

"Murder for Two: Holiday Edition" - 2 and 8 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org.

Nature photography display by Joyce Felzke - Hours subject to change as the Bookend Gallery is staffed by volunteers. Noon-2 p.m. CADL - Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. 517-339-2324. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Old Town Krampusnacht - 6-9 p.m. Old Town, Lansing. iloveoldtown.org.

Presentation on "American Roulette" - Join us in our Spartan Room as Cheryl Bychek (CHS 1975) discusses her newest collaborative effort, the groundbreaking novel "American Roulette." 1 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

Scandinavian Society of Greater Lansing St. Lucia/Christmas Celebration - Please bring a dish to pass. \$2 per person, kids 5 and under free. For rides, call 517-589-9350. 2-5 p.m. Bretton Woods Covenant Church, 925 Bretton Road, Lansing. 517-482-8357.

Stickerpalooza - Sift through our collection of stickers and create a sticker journal. Journals will be provided (while supplies last), or you can bring your own. Intended for kids. 11 a.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. 517-663-0950. eradl.org.

Wine in the Woods - Bring your favorite beverage and enjoy a guided walk through the woods. After the walk, "unwine" by the campfire and enjoy gourmet s'mores. 21+, registration req. 7 p.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos. 517-349-3866.

Winter Fest - 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing. cityofeastlansing.com/464/Winter-Fest.

Sunday, Dec. 10

Big Bucks and the Loose Change Blues Band holiday show - Wild Christmas attire encouraged. 2-5 p.m. Mulliken Roadhouse, 70 W. Grand Ledge Hwy., Mulliken. 517-948-6008. mullikenroadhouse.com.

Christine Aidala & Gabriele Carcassi: Seven Misconceptions in the Foundations of Physics virtual discussion - 1 p.m. Visit frib.msu.edu/gateway/events/talk-carcassi-and-aidala.html to register for Zoom link.

"Christmas Belles" - 8 p.m. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing. 517-482-5700. riverwalktheatre.com.

Christmas in the Village - An afternoon of Christmas traditions from the Victorian Era. 2-4 p.m. Meridian Historical Village, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. 517-347-7300. meridianhistoricalvillage.org.

Delta Community Choir Winter Benefit Concert - song selections include "The Christmas Wish," "Crowded Table," "Christmas 1915," "First Cradle," "This Christmastide" and "93 Million Miles." Free, donations will be accepted for Capital Area Diaper Bank. 3 p.m. Our Savior Lutheran Church, 7910 E. St. Joe Hwy., Lansing. 517-627-6202. deltacc.org.

"Feel, Drop, Release" - Self-care and healing tools with Janet Cortright. 9:30 a.m. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. 269-762-3189. unitylansing.org.

GLAD Drum Circle - All ages and experience levels welcome. 2-4 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-803-2392. facebook.com/GreaterLansingAreaDrummers.

"Jesus Christ Superstar" Movie - It's movie and pizza day. No charge, but we welcome donations to help cover the cost of pizza. Noon. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. 269-762-3189. unitylansing.org.

JUGGLERS AND WOULD-BE JUGGLERS - Jugglers meet at the Orchard Street Pump House at 2 p.m. Sundays. 368 Orchard St., East Lansing. mikemahanka@gmail.com.

LCC Concert Choir & Vocal Jazz/Pop Ensemble Concert - Free admission. 3 p.m. Okemos Community Church, 4734 Okemos Road, Okemos. lcc.edu/showinfo.

LCC Rock Band Concert - Free admission. 6 p.m. The Avenue, 2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. lcc.edu/showinfo.

"Mixed Media Medley," by Bobbie Margolis - Noon-6 p.m. CADL - Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. Call 517-347-2021 beforehand to ensure gallery space is open. facebook.com/MidMichiganArtGuild.

"Murder for Two: Holiday Edition" - 2 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. 517-655-7469. williamstontheatre.org.

Red Cedar Quaker Friends Worship - 10:30 a.m. 1400 Turner St., Lansing. redcedarfriends.org/join-us-for-worship.

Sunday Brunch - Visit lookingglassbrewingcompany.com for menu. Noon-5 p.m. Looking Glass Brewing Co., 115 N. Bridge St., Dewitt. 517-668-6004.

Monday, Dec. 11

Ballet II for kids - Ages 9-13. 4 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Beginning Ukulele for the Family (six-week class) - Taught by Michigan's ukulele ambassador, Ben Hassenger. Registration req. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

Book Arts: Accidental Literature and Upcycled Books - Instructors present examples of creatively repurposed prose and poetry, including erasure, black-out poems and found text, while constructing books from upcycled materials. 6 p.m. REACH Studio Art Center, 1804 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. reachstudioart.org.

Burger Night - Choice of hamburger, cheeseburger or olive burger, plus fries. Dine in or take out. \$8. 5-7 p.m. Columbus Hall, 5300 N. Grand River Ave., Lansing. 517-321-2209.



Holiday Road Rally

Friday, Dec. 8
6 p.m.

Foster Community Center
200 N. Foster Ave., Lansing

Lansing Parks & Recreation is hosting a Holiday Road Rally 6 p.m. Friday (Dec. 8), where teams of four to six adults will participate in a photo scavenger hunt around town, beginning at the Foster Community Center.

Lansing Parks & Rec said the event will be "a night of adventure, scavenger hunting, clue solving, bonding, eating, drinking and exploring Lansing." Community members can connect with old friends and meet new ones while celebrating the holiday season.

Each team will receive a clue book and rules and will then depart in one vehicle to capture as many photos and videos as possible before time runs out. The event will end with a ceremony offering food, games, prizes and a chance to share stories with other teams.

To register a team, visit the link at lansingmi.gov/968/Holiday-Road-Rally or call 517-483-4313.

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See Events, Page 27

Events

from page 26

“Fitness Over 50” Senior Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at Central Park Pavilion. 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Improv Acting Class - 8:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Jazz Dance Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Jump Into Reading - Ages 0-5 with caregivers. 11 a.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. 517-663-0950. eradl.org.

“Letting Go,” by David Hawkins: Book Study with Lucille Olson - 1:30 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

LIBRARY BOARD - 7 p.m. City Hall, 114 S. Woodhull Road, Laingsburg. laingsburg.us.

Mid-Michigan Art Guild FALL MEMBER ART SHOW - 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Neighborhood Empowerment Center, 600 W. Maple St., Lansing. midmichiganartguild.org.

“Mixed Media Medley,” by Bobbie Margolis - 9 a.m.-8 p.m. CADL – Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. facebook.com/MidMichiganArtGuild.

Nature photography display by Joyce Felzke - Hours subject to change as the Bookend Gallery is staffed by volunteers. Noon-4 p.m. CADL - Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. 517-339-2324. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Ruhala Broadway Ensemble - Learn to excel equally in singing, acting and dance. 5:30 p.m. 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Stored Grain and Soil Fumigation Training - Registration deadline Dec. 4. 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. MSU Livestock Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane, East Lansing. canr.msu.edu/events/stored-grain-and-soil-fumigation-training.

Tuesday, Dec. 12

Acting 101 Class - 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Acting Ensemble Class - 8 p.m. Ruhala Performing

Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

December 2023 Grand River Connection: Lansing Brewing Co. - Network and connect with other young professionals at Lansing Brewing Co. 5:01 p.m. 518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing. 517-490-2138. lansing501.com.

Intro to Acting/Improv for Kids - Ages 5-12. 4 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

LAGE Game Night East - 6:30-11 p.m. The Junction, 410 S. Clippert St., Lansing. meetup.com/lansing/events.

LAGE Game Night West - 6:30-11 p.m. Frank's Press Box, 7216 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing. meetup.com/lansing/events.

Level I Dance Class - Ages 5-8. 4:45 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Mid-Michigan Art Guild FALL MEMBER ART SHOW - 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Neighborhood Empowerment Center, 600 W. Maple St., Lansing. midmichiganartguild.org.

Minecraft Mania! - We'll have our Minecraft server set up and laptops ready to go. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

“Mixed Media Medley,” by Bobbie Margolis - 9 a.m.-8 p.m. CADL – Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. facebook.com/MidMichiganArtGuild.

Nature photography display by Joyce Felzke - Hours subject to change as the Bookend Gallery is staffed by volunteers. Noon-4 p.m. CADL - Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. 517-339-2324. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

On the Same Page Book Club - Chat, eat snacks and have book-related fun. Grades 7-12. Registration req. 6 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. 517-543-8859. charlottelibrary.org.

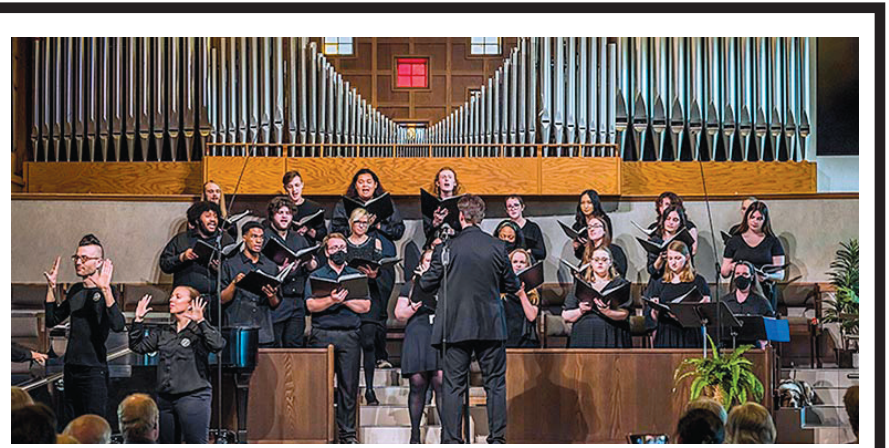
Preschool Family Storytime - Join us for stories and literacy-enhancing activities, including songs and rhymes. Ages 1-6. 11 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. gladl.org.

Trivia at Lansing Shuffle with DJ Trivia - 7:30-9 p.m. 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. 517-940-4619. lansingshuffle.com.

Yoga with Maja McKeever: Slow Flow for Better Mobility - 6 p.m. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. 269-762-3189. unitylansing.org.

The Ingham County Land Bank is requesting proposals for **Demolition & Debris Removal and Asbestos Containing Material & Hazardous Materials Removal & Disposal**. The Request for Proposal packet is available December 6, 2023 at the Ingham County Land Bank, 3024 Turner St, Lansing, MI, 48906, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday-Friday or at www.inghamlandbank.org/contractors. Responses are due at the Land Bank offices by 10am on January 5, 2024 and will be opened at 10am, January 5, 2024. The Ingham County Land Bank is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply. RFP# PGS-Demo-Abatement-2024

CP#23-315



Lansing Community College end-of-semester performances

Dec. 7-10

Multiple venues

Lansing Community College is hosting a series of free student performances Thursday (Dec. 7) through Sunday (Dec. 10) to cap its fall semester and allow students to show off what they've learned.

Kicking things off 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday at the school's Black Box Theatre, students enrolled in the musical theatre performance class, led by instructor Kelly Stuble-Clark, will perform a variety of songs and duets from new and popular musicals of various genres.

The school's Concert Choir, led by Jon Ten Brink, and Vocal Jazz and Pop Ensemble, led by Nada Radakovich, will perform at Okemos Community Church 3 p.m. Sunday. Later, at 6 p.m., the school's Rock Band, directed by Christopher Rollins, will perform at The Avenue Café.

Donations to the school's music scholarship fund will be accepted at all the shows.

For more information, visit lcc.edu/showinfo.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 22

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SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 22

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

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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

A rice dish with a rich history

By LIZY FERGUSON

When the weather begins to indicate that winter is, in fact, going to happen again this year, turning to food for edification seems to be the natural choice. I don't just look to meals for warmth but also color, freshness and variety — basically everything for which we'll have to wait very patiently to see out of our windows again. And where better to look for this inspiration than the vibrant cuisine of Southeast Asia?

Pho So 1, located in East Lansing's Hannah Plaza, has the most expansive menu out of all the Vietnamese restaurants in the Lansing area, so it's a great choice to expand your horizons beyond classic dishes like phở and bánh mì sandwiches. Pouring over the six-page menu, I was torn between many exciting, new-to-me options, but I ultimately went with the Com Gà Hải Nam.

Hainanese chicken rice was adapted by immigrants from southern China's Hainan province who spread across

Southeast Asia in the mid-1800s. It's based on Wenchang chicken, one of the four pillars of Hainan cuisine, which dates back to the first dynasty of imperial China. The dish has iterations distinct to Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and, of course, Vietnam, and there is contention as to which country can lay claim as the true ground zero. This controversy is understandable after the first bite.

Chicken seasoned with what tastes like a blend of lemongrass, ginger, soy and plenty of garlic rests upon a bed of fluffy, fragrant, turmeric-broken rice. Atop is a field of fresh cilantro, basil, carrot and pickled daikon radish, along with a self-administered gin-

ger-and-lime-inflected fish sauce. It's a kaleidoscope of color, flavor and texture, from the dazzling, warmly spiced yellow of the rice to the fresh, bright green of the cilantro and basil and the crunch of the carrot and acidic pickled radish. Hidden throughout is the best part: little bits of crispy chicken totally caramelized in the marinade.



Com Gà Hải Nam

\$10.95

Gỏi Đu Đủ

\$12.95

Pho So 1

4790 Hagadorn Road, East Lansing

11 a.m.-9 p.m. daily

517-333-6683

phoso1.weebly.com



Lizy Ferguson/City Pulse

Pho So 1's Com Gà Hải Nam is a kaleidoscope of color, flavor and texture.

I added an order of Gỏi Đu Đủ, or green papaya salad, which included crushed peanuts, fried shallots and shrimp, heaps of which I tossed in with my rice, seeking to lose myself even more fully in the labyrinth of flavor. As for the Vietnamese menu standbys, I

can vouch for the restaurant's tofu bánh mì and chicken phở. Eating a meal with me almost ensures I'm going to ask for bites from your plate, and my dining companion was kind enough to oblige me. After all, we must stick together to survive the coming months.

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TOP 5 DINING GUIDE

THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN GREATER LANSING AS DECIDED BY CITY PULSE READERS

TOP 5 BAKERIES

Based on your votes in City Pulse's 2023 Top of the Town contest. Bon appétit!

1. Bake N' Cakes

Long-established bakery offering a range of sweets, plus custom cakes
3003 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing
517-337-2253
bakencakes.com
7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday

2. Baked Goods by Dominic

19-year-old Okemos baker makes and

delivers a variety of treats by request
facebook.com/p/Baked-Goods-By-Dominic-100063913788968

3. Flour Child Bakery

Family-owned, made-from-scratch bakery
323 S. Bridge St., Grand Ledge
517-622-4772
flourchildbakeryandcafe.com
6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday
6 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday

4. Groovy Donuts – both locations

Retro bakeries serving handmade donuts and locally roasted coffee
See groovydonuts.com for locations, hours and phone numbers

5. Sweet Encounter Bakery & Cafe

Scrumptious gluten-free, peanut-free and vegan desserts
300 S. Washington Square, Lansing
517-730-5005
sweetencounterbakery.com
8 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday
8 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday
9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday

A takeout-free Jewish-American Christmas

By **ARI LEVAUX**

The Jewish-American tradition of eating Chinese food on Christmas is rooted in pragmatism and loneliness. In the mid-1900s, America's two largest non-Christian immigrant populations shared the experience of watching the world grind to a standstill each December as their friends and neighbors vanished into their extended families, leaving behind empty cities where everything was closed — except the Chinese restaurants.

On a windy Christmas night in Albuquerque, New Mexico, I took a walk in the footsteps of my immigrant forefathers and took my two little boys out for Chinese food. My wife isn't of the tribe, but she works on Christmas like a good Jewish-American, making it easier for observant co-workers to take the day off. Like the Chinese-food-eating trailblazers who started the tradition, we had nowhere to go and not much else to do.

I was the restaurant critic of record for the local paper and had eaten at every Chinese restaurant of note, so I knew exactly where I wanted to go for Chinese Christmas: Budai, a strip-mall gem by Interstate 25, housed between a dollar store and an accountant's office.

Budai is run by a Taiwanese-born couple who opened the restaurant because Hsia, the husband, was turned down for a job at Panda Express. In the dining room, his wife, Elsa, cheerfully calls him “Panda Express reject.”

Elsa helped us craft a meal in the spirit of our Chinese-food-eating ancestors, many of whom took advantage of the pleasures of those non-Kosher kitchens.

We ate mapo tofu, also known as

“pockmarked grandmother's bean curd.” It didn't look like it contained pork — just a plate of tofu with a tasty, chunky sauce. I also smacked down an order of dong po pork — chunks of braised pork belly in a thin, dark sauce — to commemorate those times when an errant forefather might have had the opportunity to dine alone and eat glorious pork in full view.

Before leaving Budai, we placed an order for my wife, a veggievore, who was slaving away for that holiday pay. Budai's vegetable entrees include heaping, oblong plates piled high with lightly seasoned Asian greens such as pea tips, sweet potato leaves and water spinach.



I reached out to Elsa recently, in search of guidance for another Chinese-Jewish-American Christmas.

Specifically, I wanted to know about greens cooked qing-chao-style, which means “clear stir-fry.” It's a simple, subtle recipe that doesn't even require soy sauce, focusing the eater's attention squarely on the vegetable itself.

But despite being simple, Elsa cautioned, it's not necessarily recommended for civilians to try at home.

“It needs a very high-temperature stove and a high-powered exhaust,” she said.

I'd heard her warnings before. Sure, she was right about the gooey oyster-and-bean-sprout omelet thing on the secret menu.

Still, I was glad to have at least tried that omelet and tested my limits, and I was ready to try qing chao stir-fry. I went on a bit of a rampage, making it with any greens I could get my hands on, including spinach, bok choy and even peeled celery. It was fantastic every time I made

it, with every green I tried, different types of broth and every other variation Elsa suggested.

The technique begins with a puddle of hot oil in a wok or pan, into which you add either garlic, shallot or Sichuan peppercorns and briefly fry at high heat. The most interesting flavor comes from Sichuan peppercorns (no relation to black pepper). These pink seeds have an otherworldly tingly and piney taste that's as much a feeling in your mouth as a flavor. Tossed in a mound of spinach, the Sichuan peppercorns give the arrangement a taste that's hard to pin down and a look of mistletoe.



Courtesy of Ari LeVaux

Qing chao spinach with Sichuan pepper.

Qing chao spinach

I leave spinach leaves whole, even big ones. Other greens, like bok choy, should be chopped or they will be too tough to chew through.

Makes two servings

1 tablespoon peanut oil
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
1 teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns (or substitute one clove minced garlic)

1 pound spinach
1/2 cup broth (chicken or clam)
1/2 cup rice wine
1/2 teaspoon white pepper
Salt to taste

Heat the oil on high in a wok or heavy pan. Add the Sichuan peppercorns and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add the spinach, broth and wine, in that order. Stir the mixture around quickly, cooking everything evenly. Add the white pepper. Stir-fry for one minute on high heat so the sauce starts to thicken but doesn't completely evaporate. Season with salt and serve.

Dong po pork

Don't panic at the quantity of soy sauce and sugar. Most of it stays in

the braising liquid.

Makes four servings

1 pound pork belly, cut into 1-and-a-half-inch square pieces
1 bunch of scallions, roots trimmed, cut into thirds
1 thumb-sized piece of ginger, peeled and sliced lengthwise into thin sheets

1/2 teaspoon five spice powder
1 cup brown sugar
1 1/4 cups soy sauce
1 cup rice wine

Optional: Sichuan chili peppers or similar small, thin-skinned peppers

Boil a large pot of salted water. Add the pork and simmer for five minutes. Remove and drain.

Add the scallions, ginger, five spice, chili peppers (if using) and sugar to a clay pot or any pan that has a tight, heavy lid. Add the chunks of pork, skin sides down. Pour in the soy sauce and wine and add enough water to just cover the pork. Cook for two hours on low heat with the lid on, turning the pieces after an hour. Thicken some gravy if you wish with cornstarch or simmering. Serve hot, drenched in the sauce.



Courtesy of Ari LeVaux

Dong po pork, a non-Kosher Christmas indulgence.

Appetizers

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Best Wings
Best Catering Service
Best Curbside Pickup
Best Chef: Sean Johnson

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Ring in the holidays with Puerto Rican egnog
From METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Tradition reigns supreme during the holiday season. From minced pies in England to kutia in Ukraine to spiced hot chocolate in Peru, many different foods and beverages are savored this time of year around the world.

Individuals of Puerto Rican descent might enjoy whipping up batches of coquito around the holidays. It's similar to traditional eggnog, but Puerto Ricans will tell you it's even better. The beverage is served throughout Navidad, or starting after Thanksgiving and ending in mid-January with the celebration of Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián.

Traditional Coquito

- 1 can condensed milk
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 can cream of coconut (most Puerto Ricans prefer Coco López)
- 1/2 cup white rum (preferably Don Q or Bacardí)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon (add more to taste)

In a blender, add evaporated milk, cream of coconut, sweetened condensed milk, rum, vanilla extract and cinnamon. Blend on high until the mixture is well combined, about one to two minutes. Transfer the mixture into glass bottles and chill in the refrigerator until cold. To serve, pour the coquito into small serving glasses and garnish with ground cinnamon or a cinnamon stick.

State of Michigan Ingham County Probate Court. Publication of Notice of Hearing. File No. 23-479-GA. In the matter of Andrew Schulz. To all interested persons including Andrea Schulz (sister), John Lueman (brother) and Jennifer Clark (sister), whose address(es) is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following: **TAKE NOTICE:** A hearing will be held on December 14, 2023 (full hearing) at 9:15 a.m. at 313 W. Kalamazoo St. Lansing, MI before Judge Dunnings for the following purpose: Guardianship hearing for cognitive capacity to make informed decisions, Andrew does not demonstrate capacity to identify proxy to assist with decision making process. Dated 11/30/2023 Liberty Yako, 5303 S Cedar St. Lansing, MI 48911 (517) 275-0749. **CP#23-318**

State of Michigan Ingham County Probate Court. Publication of Notice of Hearing. File No. 23-1176-GA. In the matter of Michael Young. To all interested persons including: whose address(es) is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following: **TAKE NOTICE:** A hearing will be held on December 14, 2023 at 10:45 a.m. at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI, before Judge Dunnings for the following purpose: Guardianship/Conservatorship hearing. Client is developmentally delayed (neuro-cognitive disorder), with an unspecified neurodevelopmental disorder, and recommended to have a guardian. Dated 11/27/2023 Liberty Yako, 5303 S Cedar St. Lansing, MI 48911 (517) 275-0749. **CP#23-317**

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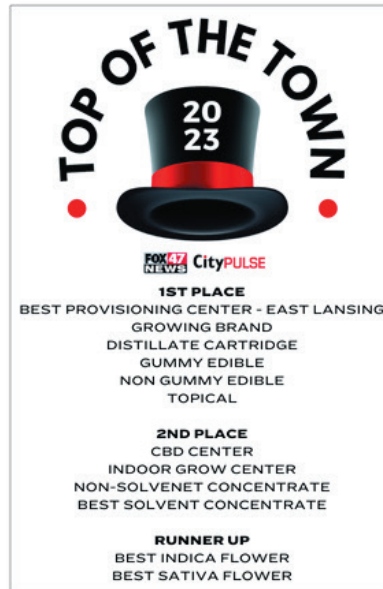
COMMUNITY. CANNABIS. CULTURE.

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And best it is, according to City Pulse's 2023 Top of the Town Contest. Recognized as Best Cannabis Provisioning Center – East Lansing, Pincanna earned first place in many other product categories, and secured 12 awards in total.

In just over two short years, the two-story cannabis store on E. Grand River Ave has become a staple in the East Lansing community. Its impressive modern store design, combined with a variety of medical and recreational products as well as its top notch customer service, has made Pincanna the place to be for cannabis. Not to mention its exceptional rewards program and weekly deals that keep customers coming back for more.

"It means so much to our team to be recognized by the East Lansing community, as we make it our goal every day to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable, while offering superior customer service," said Maria Wadenstorer, Pincanna's Chief Retail Officer. "There's lots to explore and learn about at Pincanna – and we pride ourselves on knowing and sharing the nuances of cannabis."



BUILDING A CANNABIS CULTURE.

Those who frequent this flagship store also benefit from the company having their pulse on cannabis trends – as Pincanna grows and processes its own products at its Farm and Lab in Pinconning, Michigan. At its state of the art facility, Pincanna grows multiple premium flower strains and produces a variety of vapes, pre rolls, concentrates, edibles and topicals. Among the many brands Pincanna sells, company house brands include Fruit & Fuel, Funky Extracts, Michigan Organic Rub, HeadStash, 181 Brand and more. The store shelves even boast a few of the gold High Times trophies the products have won.

Additionally, there are familiar faces in store, as many have been on the retail team since the store's inception. One such team member is Eric Potter, General Manager, Pincanna East Lansing. "Working at Pincanna is very rewarding, as our team is like a family. Beyond building relationships with each other, we feel a lot of joy in connecting with our customers, and being able to recommend how cannabis can be additive to their lifestyles."



ENHANCING THE COMMUNITY

Upon opening in 2021, Pincanna showcased its commitment to the East Lansing community with its commission of a stainless steel sculpture, Vital Nature, that sits on the store's front lawn. Resulting from a contest Pincanna held in collaboration with the East Lansing Arts Commission, this art piece was created by Detroit-based artist Foster Willey.

Pincanna also gives back by donating annually to local non-profit organizations and holds its annual Funky Extracts Holiday Sock Drive to help keep everyone warm this winter. Donation boxes are currently in store through December 31 and customers receive a free gift for donating. The energy will be high at Pincanna this season as the store celebrates the end of 2023 with giveaways and more. From Michigan State Basketball games being broadcast on the big screen, holiday gifts and promotions, vendor discovery days and even a tribute to Snoop Dog, be sure to stop in for your cannabis holiday needs.