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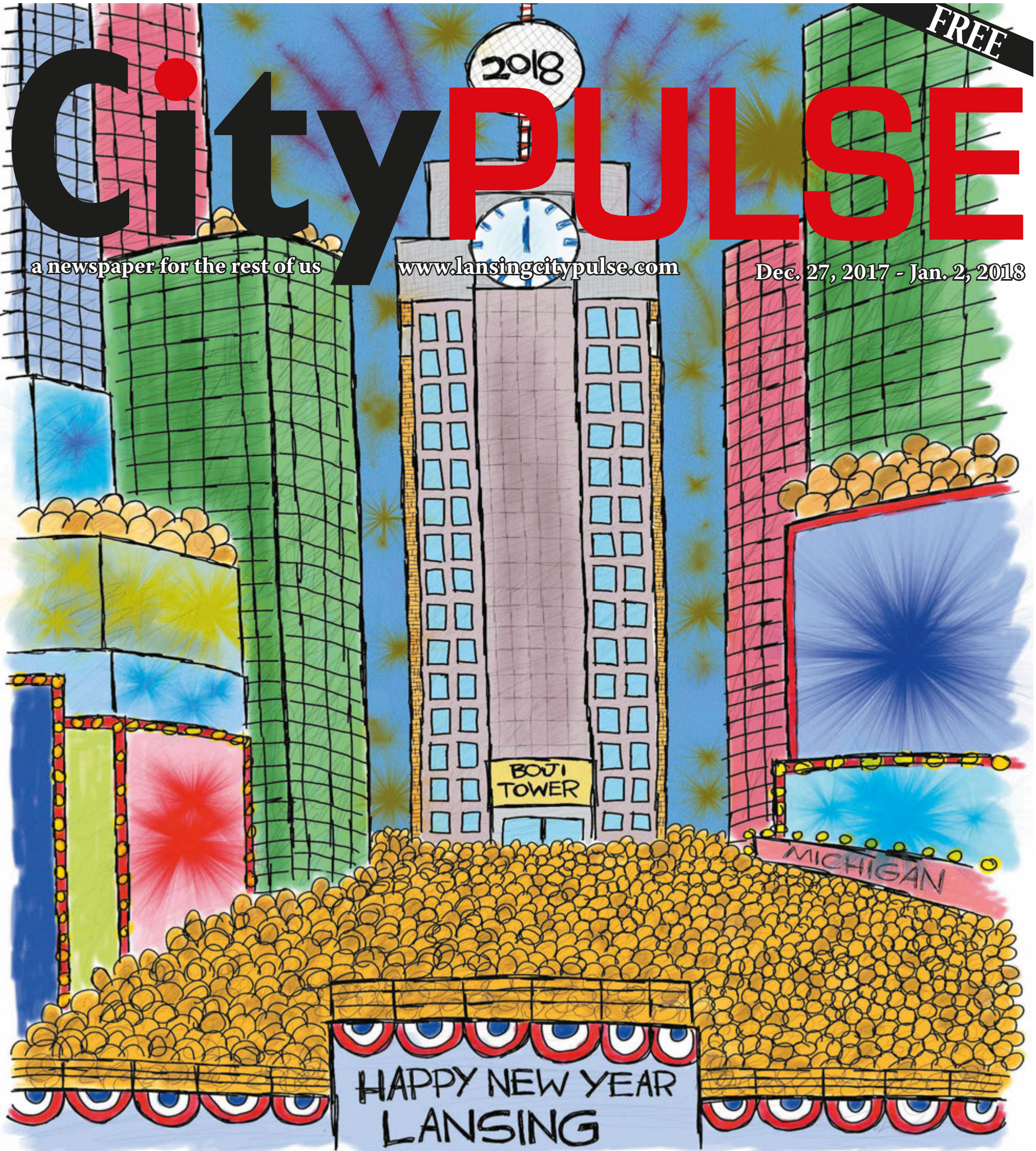
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Dec. 27, 2017 - Jan. 2, 2018





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CP#17-327

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PROPOSED PARKS & RECREATION PLAN

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING
INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

TO THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LANSING, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, and any other interested persons:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Township Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, the 6th day of February, 2018, at 7:00 o'clock, p.m., at the Township Administration Building, 3209 West Michigan Avenue, Lansing, Michigan 48917, for the purpose of reviewing, and receiving comments and input from the public about, Lansing Township's proposed Parks & Recreation Plan (the "Plan").

The proposed Plan will be available for review and examination at the office of the Township Clerk (located at 3209 West Michigan Avenue, Lansing, Michigan 48917) during regular business hours of regular business days until the date and time of the hearing, and may further be examined at the hearing. The proposed Plan will be made available for review and examination by the public for at least thirty (30) days before the public hearing. The plan will be available for review electronically on the Lansing Township website at www.lansingtowship.org.

You may attend the public hearing in person or by representative, and provide comments during the public hearing, and/or submit written comments before the public hearing to the Township Planner, Sam Schultz, at the above-referenced address, or at sschultz@lansingtowship.org.

Susan L. Aten, Township Clerk

CP#17-332



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ISSUE 20**



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A wrap up of 2017 arts and culture around Lansing



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2017 was a banner year for jazz and classical music in Lansing



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Get down with "Boogie" Bob Baldori



**Cover
Art**

Clay Jones

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by TOM TOMORROW

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

'Cheers to the new year — another chance to get it right.' — Oprah Winfrey

By TODD HEYWOOD

Twelve is enough

After a start very false, Bernero says
"Twelve years: enough as
chief executive."

Despite lame duck status,
a gulf like Suez
Did remain with Council,
adversative.

Undeterred Angry Mayor
did push

A road in Ormond Park,
sell City Hall now
Park neighbors a lawsuit
the city ambush
To defend the road in the
park allow.

Judge Jamo from a county
bench remote

Did determine no impact on environment.

City Hall sale for a hotel zygote,
Left citizens asking why fragment
City operations from courts and jail.

That's for the next mayor, I disentail.



Thirty Thousand Dollar candidate

Aaron Stephens, student at MSU,
Tossed a hat in for E.L. Council.
Adored by Realtors, left Woods feeling blue.
Property masters spent money ample.

Thirty thousand plus dollars did they send

Paying for mailings,
outreach and some
more

Realtors backed
Stephens, cash spent
to end

Put the kid in office,
reject Woods for
Unknown offenses,
lackluster campaign.

Swearing he knew
nothing, Realtors are
mum

As to why they backed a
Stephens' reign

Contemplation, political miasm?

Answers unknown, agenda unseen.

Time will tell why Stephens was the scene.



Mayor Nice Guy

After a decade and two years, twas time

For a new Lansing chief
executive

So the candidates did
with a sublime

Excitement toss hats in
ring elective.

Trevino, by Daddy much
controlled;

Harold tilting at wind-
mill fantasies;

Brown Clarke promise
large but campaign
unsold;

Republican Gillenkirk to
lost these.

But in the end, twas Andy Schor won all.

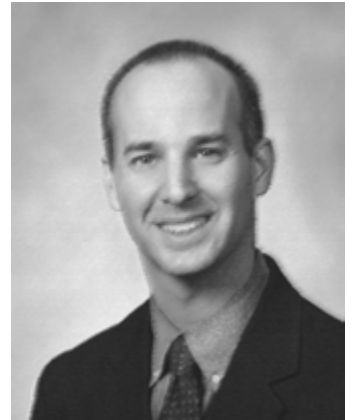
First the primary, with a massive spread —

Head to head with Brown Clarke, alas she did fall.

Schor won office and new needles to thread.

Mr. Nice Guy replaces Angry Mayor

An epoch era unleashed times gentler.



Income Tax

Burdened with debts of promises prior
East Lansing City Council did ask all
Property tax reduction to damper;

Approve now an income tax proposal.
Voters, however, bit their thumbs at Council,

Approving property tax reductions,
Rejecting income tax; pathway fateful

The trajectory prepared inductions.
Mayor Pro Tem Altmann says hack the arts

Cuts to Solstice Jazz and Folk festivals
Lahanas buttress the cuts to part

Because investment doesn't city transferals
Pressure placed and Council backed down

Left with job of finding cuts without frown.

Naughty List

Weinstein, Lauer, Franken, Trump and many more
2017: the year of reckoning.

#MeToo took Twitter to expose the boar,

But locally it was for years, brewing.

MSU under federal review

While women and men complained to all

The secrets did from Simon misconstrue

Sexual assault and harassment appall.

Four football players charged with sexual

Assaults each. Band director dismissed for

Inappropriate sexual blameable.

Then there's Nassar with many victims and more,

Lawsuits and media, criminal charges and

Courts reveal, too many to countermand.

You can't handle the truth

With audit findings suspicion arose

Of the Treasurer's Office day function

County Commissioners sought to disclose

Errors and misdemeanors to bludgeon

Democrats, power wielded, secrecy

Did seek. Voters don't want to know the facts.

Grebner with bellicose voice brusquely

Did dismiss the transparency distracts.

Committee did approve secret review

Only to backtrack when questions were flung

Now we'll speak in coded missives, wahoo!

Secrets and reasons will be triple-tongue.

Two more times disclosure found, secrecy

Operationally needed, Daddy.

An Ode to Ormond

A wee pocket park, trees and toys and green —

Stood strong against administrative power.

A fight unplanned between golfers keen

And neighbors adoring quiet esker.

Ribbon of asphalt to bisect the park.

Entryway to Groesbeck aged and failing.

"Shut up, shut up, shut up!" Mayor did bark

At neighbors fighting to save and wailing.

Deaf ears did meet, the courts reject all pleas.

Judge proclaimed trees and eskers no need

Environmental protection, oh please.

It is a road, thusly no need to plead.

Trees cut down, city staff for bats did watch;

None were found, down they went, The road did hatch.

Green Haze

After years of contentious back and forth

City Council did approve finally

A law so strict pot shops squawked henceforth

Never shall pot economy bloom'n be.

The opposition did cry foul as well,

"Ne'er did we see drafted law you did vote!"

Democracy has died in show-and-tell.

This poison will not stand, we need antidote!

Signatures sought by marijuana friends

Rejected by slippery Clerk Chris Swope

Behind silly legal misapprehends

Can he not see ask they? Is he myope?

Law in place, nearly one hundred apply

Sifting papers more prickly than cacti.

Red Cedar Lament

Sell the golf course, pay off the debt, sang he —

Tis necessary, Tis right, important

Angry Mayor propounded, bossily.

Ideas sought, one choice, dream of accountant.

Ferguson playing ancient credentials

Hooks up Bernero with conversations.

Public finance convenient act ferrules

Happy campers intended of destines.

First to county go, beg lower bond rate;

Controller all but laughs, show the money.

Huffed and puffed and walked irate

Into arms low credit city honey.

And still we wait. And wait. And wait. And wait.

Twill come to be in a year that ends eight.

Sonnets

from page 5

Hate manifest

With man of tangerine hue in office,
The lesser spirits of America
Did reign anew in total bitterness.
The kids did rise: vile and ugly stigma.
DeWitt kids did taunt classmates with a wall.
Chants and jeers and lesser all made to feel
While Trump in triumph tried freedom to maul.

Executive orders issued not ideal.
An immigrant in Lansing attacked —
Fisticuffs and note stapled on his chest.
Police and feds with big words counteract
But months later, no suspects, no arrest.
Whilst in June a murder anti-gay —
Perhaps. The accused's mental health is sought;
The courts in patience wait to fears allay,
The cops unclear no motive have they caught.
Thus was a year in the world of early
Trump presidency darkened quaintly.



Chavez Triumph

Two decades fighting for memorial —
An election revoking previous.
A parking lot instead not of vermeil,
Stung with simplicity of the very falseness.
City Council, faced fighting loud betwixt
Old Town Commercial Association and
Lansing's proud and noble Latinos transfixed
Held hearings and conversations firsthand.
Compromise hammered out, a vote held
With a head nod to Old Town historic.
A second hearing for signs compelled
Approved as well, to avoid the heartsick.
Bernero with his veto pen ligan
Noting name decades ago was Franklin.



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

Now you have two ways to sound off:

1.) Write a letter to the editor:

- E-mail: letters@lansingcitypulse.com
- Snail mail: City Pulse, 1905
E. Michigan Ave., Lansing,
MI 48912

- Fax: (517) 371-5800

- At lansingcitypulse.com

2.) Write a guest column:

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

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

RFQP/18/027 HAULING AND RECYCLING as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing. The City of Lansing will accept sealed proposals at the City of Lansing, C/O LBWL, Purchasing Office, 1232 Haco Dr, Lansing, Michigan 48912 until **2:00 PM** local time in effect on **FEB. 8, 2018**. **Complete specifications and forms required to submit proposals are available from Stephanie.Robinson@lbwl.com, (517) 702-6197 or go to www.mitn.info** The City of Lansing encourages bids from all vendors including MBE/WBE vendors and Lansing-based businesses.

CP#17-331



South Harrison Road developments, East Lansing

This year, East Lansing witnessed the completion of significant construction projects along South Harrison Road, on and around the site of the former State Police Headquarters. The headquarters site, which was owned by Michigan State University, is now occupied by 1855 Place, a 429-unit apartment complex intended for individual students and student families. Named after the founding date of Michigan State University, the facility aims to replace the outdated Cherry Lane/Faculty Bricks apartment buildings, which were demolished in 2011.

Guided by MSU's aspiration to be 'Bolder by Design' the main 1855 building is a striking composition of overlapping planes. Its immense scale is notably reduced through variations of materials and color. Some building volumes seem to float, perched precariously on thin columns. Behind the main building, the complex's collection of buildings extends west from Harrison and are sited south of Kalamazoo. These auxiliary buildings form courtyards and exterior corridors through the complex.

Directly across Harrison, the newly dedicated Gilbert Pavilion serves as a bright anchor at the south end of the Breslin Student Events Center. Although the immediate impact of this work is less obvious than 1855, the new Piazza Seccia replaces an in-between space with a well-defined place, before the southern

entrance. Outside, "Magic" Johnson's statue has been relocated to a prominent location at the plaza's apex. Within, the new Izzo Hall of History highlights the university's basketball programs, including events predating the team's 1989 move from the Jenison Fieldhouse. Memorabilia of notable historic occasions include a sample of the wood floor from the 2000 National Championship game and photos of the 2011 "Carrier Classic" played on the flight deck of the USS Carl Vinson.

Taken together, the two buildings, each accompanied by illuminated public art, form a noteworthy gateway to campus along the approach to East Lansing. The increased density brought about by the additional residents will undoubtedly have a positive impact on this section of the city. In return, residents of the nearby Flower Pot Neighborhood will benefit from access to Sparty's Market, an urban grocery located on the street level of 1855. Construction activity is expected to continue next spring, when the nearby Red Cedar Elementary School is scheduled to undergo a multi-million dollar renovation. Further pedestrian traffic will follow in the fall of 2018, when elementary students once again attend the currently shuttered school. Perhaps some of those students will be members of families living in 1855 Place.

DANIEL E. BOLLMAN, AIA



ARTS & CULTURE

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Kissing 2017 goodbye

A look back at Lansing's cultural landscape

By SKYLER ASHLEY

The new year has all but dawned on Michigan's capital. For most, it's a time of reflection and for those invested in the arts, we've asked ourselves: "What was big in music? Theatre? Art? Radio?" An important year for many fixtures in the greater Lansing cultural community, 2017 is deserving of one last kiss goodbye.

Two of East Lansing's biggest hives of activity, the Wharton Center for Performing Arts and the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum kept the region busy with consistent shows and exhibits. Bob Hoffman of the Wharton Center called it another "amazing season." The Wharton Center brought major Broadway attractions to Lansing such as "The Bodyguard" and "An American in Paris."

The Wharton Center made another important and admirable effort to become more inclusive in 2017 by introducing sensory friendly shows, beginning with an October performance of "Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat." Sensory friendly shows implement specific light and sound conditions that accommodate those with autism spectrum disorder, developmental disabilities and sensory processing disorder.

Across campus, the Broad was granted \$1 million from MSU Federal Credit Union that will support expansion across Grand River Avenue, providing enhanced access and research. Meanwhile, "The Transported Man" was a fascinating collection focusing on the process of belief, and "Another Country" took a look back at the Civil Rights movement with a harrowing series of images observing the other side of American culture.

How locals purchase tangible music went through a shake-up in 2017 after two brick-and-mortar shops celebrated two very different milestones. While stalwart Flat, Black & Circular (FBC) celebrated its 40th anniversary, a controversial property dispute saw the Record Lounge handed an eviction notice after nearly a decade in downtown East Lansing. Owner Heather Frarey, with the help of some friends, successfully relocated to a new storefront in the burgeoning REO Town.

Meanwhile, despite the Michigan State University student turnover rate and the annual exodus of college-age customers every summer, FBC has continued to grow. In September, the vinyl shop celebrated its

milestone anniversary with a party at the Avenue Café, which included performances from local bands the Jonestown Crows and Atomic Boogaloo.

Visually, Lansing livened up some of its drab scenery by introducing a series of murals underneath the US-127 overpass on Michigan Avenue. The project, titled "Under the Bridge," was funded with a \$50,000 online fundraising campaign, which was matched by Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Brian Whitfield was the artist behind the colorful paintings and is known for creating the Mackinac Bridge variant of the Michigan license plate.

The concert scene in Lansing has gone through a strong period of change and evolution thanks to the continued growth of Fusion Shows, which soon celebrates

its 10th anniversary.

What started as the pet project of Nate Dorough of Howell and Irving Ronk of East Lansing to book hometown shows has grown into a larger business that has attracted national acts not only to Lansing, but across Michigan as a whole. You'd be hard pressed to find a show in Lansing that wasn't put together by Fusion Shows.

The operation made good on its policy of "fair treatment for all, and setting a standard for positivity and support for artists and fans alike," at the 2017 incarnation of its annual music festival BLED FEST.

BLED FEST was swift in its handling of a sexual assault scandal tagged to one of its performers, who were immediately dropped from the festival once the lurid story broke. The action set a positive precedent in the overall goal of creating a music scene free from predators.

Another growth to the music community was Urban Beat, a new creative space in Old Town. The venue, spearheaded by Message



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

Makers CEO Terry Terry, is anchored by an aesthetically pleasing brick building and acts as a blank canvas for a myriad of occasions. So far it has hosted weddings, small concerts and even art galleries. It comes as another gathering place for art minded folks and will hopefully bolster the community of Lansing.

On a larger scale, Common Ground Music Festival, Lansing's largest annual music festival, underwent major changes as well. This year's festival shrank from last year's lineup of 55 artists, to hosting just 30. Earlier years in the festival's lifespan saw the event stretch over an entire week to accommodate the larger line up, this time around it was limited to four days.

The festival continued its notable shift from hosting classic bands and artists from the '70s, such as Joe Walsh or Lynyrd Skynyrd, to catering toward modern alternative artists and commercially popular rappers. While Toby Keith had a strong turnout, hip-hop has effectively stolen the show.

The local airwaves also went through some changes when longtime WKAR radio host Mark Bashore signed off for the last

time in February. Bashore began his work in radio at MSU back in 1971, in the glory days of classic rock acts like Alice Cooper and Emerson Lake and Palmer. After working at a Boston station for 19 years, Bashore made his way to WKAR, where he spoke with almost every community leader in Lansing. WKAR has new personalities filling the gap, such as Karel Vega and Reginald Hardwick.

Rachel Santorelli, former director of marketing & communications for the Lansing Symphony Orchestra, left in July for Texas, where she'll work for the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

"I'm very grateful for the time I had in Michigan, from graduate school at MSU to working at Wharton Center and finally LSO," said Santorelli, who started at the LSO in June 2011. "I wouldn't have had such success if it weren't for the amazing support I received from the community."

Looking back, Santorelli said broadening the LSO's scope was the highlight of her tenure.

"I increased our presence in the media, attendance at concerts and social media interactions," she said. "I am also proud of

New Year's Eve events in Lansing

With New Year's Eve comes a cavalcade of events and parties across every town in America. Where you want to be when the ball drops, and what mental condition you want to be in when it happens, is an important and difficult choice to make.

You're the captain and your mission is to steer your crew into a truly excellent night that will either be unforgettable or begging to be forgotten, for all the right scandalous reasons.

Some people make it a point to go out on the town and others choose to host their own affairs. If your circle doesn't have a host for your yearly shenanigans, or perhaps you just weren't invited, there's no reason to be left out in the cold.

There are plenty of places that will gladly host your first regret of the year. We've just cut out some of the leg work with a convenient photo spread. These events will have festivities ranging from DJs, rappers, square dances, '80s glam metal, pop music and otherwise good fun.

Just how debauched you'd like to get is up to you and the restrictions set by the laws and ordinances of the city of Lansing. Most venues, of course, will be serving alcohol, so enjoy responsibly. Please take note of the information within the captions because times and prices of entry will vary.



Graphic created by Ella Kramer

(Below) Glamhammer has played across Michigan for several years, bringing with them the sleaze you would expect from an '80s glam rock cover band. Expect songs ranging from The Scorpions to Mötley Crüe. With an admission price of \$10, they will be rocking the Green Door on Michigan Avenue on New Year's Eve. The doors open at 7 p.m.

(Right) Starfarm is another band that focuses on old hits, although they handle the genre of pop. They've become a favorite around town thanks to strong and highly energetic performances. Starfarm will be at the Nuthouse, across the street from Cooley Law School Stadium, come New Year's Eve, entry costs \$20 and the doors open at 9 p.m.



Other NYE Events

Revival Shows Presents: Neon Sunday (New Year's Eve)

Featuring: Henry Brooks, Don + Hoddy,
Jay Arthur and Mathew Ninko B2B Foglyfe
@ Mac's Bar, 2700 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing:
Sunday, December 31, 9 p.m.
18+, No Entry Fee

Tequila Cowboy's New Year's Bash

Featuring: David Shelby
@ Tequila Cowboy, the Lansing Mall, 5
330 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing
Sunday, December 31, 9 p.m.
All ages, \$10

Ring in the New Year at Old Nation

Featuring: Atomic Annie,
along with a wide variety of food and craft beer
@ Old Nation Brewery, Williamston,
1500 E. Grand River Ave., Williamston
Sunday, December 31, 7 p.m.
21+, \$50

New Year's Eve Late Skate

Featuring: Family friendly
roller skating until 1 a.m.
@ Edru Skating & Laser Tag Center,
1891 N. Cedar St., Holt
Sunday, December 31, 8 p.m.
All ages, \$15

New Year's Eve Dinner at Kellogg Hotel

Featuring: Four-course dinner, midnight cham-
pagne toast,
live music and dancing,
@ Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, 219 S.
Harrison Rd., East Lansing
Sunday, December 31, 8 p.m.
All Ages, \$99



The DeWitt Township Community Center will host the Ten Pound Fiddle Concert & Dance Series' New Year's Eve celebration. Following a community pot luck dinner at 6:30 p.m., attendees will participate in a traditional square dance. First timers need not worry as there will be a quick learning session beforehand. The dance begins at 8 p.m. and will continue until Midnight. Prices range from \$8 to \$18. Visit tenpoundfiddle.org for more details.

Ten Pound Fiddle is best described as an organization of volunteers and friends that have presented concerts and dances in a variety of places since its original 1975 inception. It is not a specific venue and its events are hosted in a myriad of places. It is recommended that you wear loose clothes and comfortable shoes to its New Year's square dance.



The Loft will be hosting a dance party featuring the sounds of DJ Butcher and DJ Crazy Caz. The Loft suggests wearing attire that be considered "stylish, classy and attractive." There will be free food and complementary champagne once the midnight hour passes. Entry costs \$20 and will begin at 10 p.m.

DJ Butcher has been involved in the Lansing hip-hop since the 90s. He has performed at several other New Year's celebrations hosted by the Loft in years previous. A Detroit native, DJ Crazy Caz's career has taken him all the way over to Australia, where he's performed at clubs across each of its major cities. He's even held an in-house position at a club in Sydney.

Lansing Theater Year in Review 2017

Here's our take on the best and most memorable performances and productions of the year

It's been a tough year for our country politically speaking, but theatrically, it has been a great year for our community. Between January and December, our City Pulse theater reviewers covered over 30 local productions. Here's our take on the best and most memorable performances and productions of 2017.

It should come as no surprise that in a politically volatile year, some of the most memorable shows and performances were infused with strong political and social issues. Even productions that did not intend to be overtly political became so by association. The most glaring example, of course, was "1984." A stripped down adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian classic, Williamston Theatre's production of "1984" still featured all of the chilling authoritarian hypocrisy and brutal violence of the book, in an intimate setting. The result was faithful to the text, but deeply unsettling for the entire audience in the best way possible.

Williamston followed up "1984" with "The Taming," a far less incendiary production about finding middle ground that still touched a nerve. In its best scene, "The Taming" addressed the fissures in our country, from the writing of the Constitution and the compromises that would come to haunt us over 200 years later.

While the events of "9 to 5: The Musical" only took place in the 1970s, the situations depicted in the songs felt particularly relevant in a year of high profile sexual misconduct. The Owosso Community Players production opened well before #MeToo began to topple pop culture icons from their perches of power, but the songs and situations reminded audiences that 2017 was not new to issues of power imbalance and sexual harassment.

"Heathers," the film, was a dark satire even in the 1980s, but Peppermint Creek Theatre's production of "Heathers—The Musical," a play about empowered victims of bullying getting lethal vengeance on bullies, felt especially bleak and poignant in 2017.

Finally, Lansing Community College's production of "The Government Inspector," a pre-revolution Russian play, was the most intentional political commentary of local theater. Director Mary Matzke turned her production into a frantic farce, but the dialogue about gross government corruption and ineptitude stood out as a dark reminder of potential events to come.

—PAUL WOZNIAK

Sometimes it hurts so good and sometimes it just hurts. After reflecting on the 2017 theatrical season, often times, I remember hurting.

Over the Ledge's "Elephant's Graveyard" had a stage full of colorful characters, acrobatic players and competent actors. The July play used George Brant's script about the true story of a circus elephant that crushed a man. It got worse. The beloved elephant had a hanging that went terribly wrong.

Although spared actual images of a disemboved elephant, I found the feigned execution believable enough to make "Elephant's Graveyard" difficult to sit through.

In September, Ixion Theatre tackled "Hoodoo Love." An uneven cast of four had the difficult task of making abuse, drunkenness, racism, an unborn baby in jeopardy and incestuous rape, entertaining. Sure, some of the violence was simulated, but that wasn't comforting.

Riverwalk Theatre's "Master Harold and the Boys" was about a spoiled, white rich boy and his relationship with the black man who cared for him all through his youth.

The September and October Black Box production had flaws, but it was true to Gabriel Francisco's story about racism and unfairness in 1950s South Africa. Just when I thought Harold might relinquish his bigotry, he kept the role of master and his black servants remained "boys." That was the final blow to a show filled with gut-punches.

In October, Ixion's "Gideon's Knot" dealt with a child's suicide and the parent's confrontation with a possibly complicit teacher. A pair of stellar performances kept the play riveting, but still torturous to endure.

Owosso Community Players presented "Rabbit Hole" in November. It had actors

who were convincing as a couple who lost their child to a car accident, a grandma who lost a son to suicide, a drug-loving sister who got pregnant and the tormented teen who drove the fatal car.

The grief and anguish of "Rabbit Hole" soaked me like a sweater in the rain. Being a father amplified my misery. Although Owosso's production took the play to a high level, the lows of its dreadful tale dominated my reaction.

The turnout for these plays seemed to indicate I was not alone in my hurting.

— DAVID WINKELSTERN

Well, hey, it's not the end of the world. Not even the end of civilization as we know it, but not the best of years nor the worst of years either.

This year wrapped up in December with Williamston Theatre's "Beau Jest," a humorous homily on Passover, the ritual of the Seder meal and the importance of flexibility in families in a multi-cultural society. Good to see a breakaway from repetitively offered up Christmas chestnut stories.

MSU's Matt Greenburg, who mastered the Art of Moliere's poetic cadences in MSU's production of "The Misanthrope" had a double-double, ending the year at Riverwalk with a staged reading from a Pinter play, in which he demonstrated his understanding of the Grotowski school of Method Acting.

Flipping back to January, Riverwalk offered up a treatise on Ernest Hemingway, inviting three actors to portray the beloved writer and the many ways in which, behind-the-words of his powerful novels and short stories, he was an unpleasant, lonely and boorish man. Acted reasonably well, but destroying the illusion of his literary greatness.

Perhaps the most ambitious theater undertaking of the year was the "theatre-to-film project," wherein MSU Theatre Professor Mark Coulson took a large handful of MSU theatre students through the entire process of both writing and editing a play of their own creation and then through the conversion of that stage play into a full length film.

Theater junkies, of whom I am one, appreciated seeing the working dynamics of academic efforts to teach the various crafts of theater.

This brings me to the entirety of behind-the-scenes efforts that go into live theater. Audiences, for the most part, come for the story, the writing, the acting, but those of us who review and adjudicate notice other things as well: the set design, the costumes, the lighting and the sound.

Mid-Michigan theater venues have a small array of gifted set designers, from the skilled professionals to the merely spectacular amateurs. Jeff Boerger, also a versatile actor, has been churning out clever set designs for several years now and he's joined by professionals like Kirk Domer of MSU and Bartley Bauer, who travels from Purple Rose Theatre, to Williamston, to LCC and beyond to contribute his skills. My favorite set design was Elspeth William's creative use of exposed copper pipes to frame the dinghy tenement apartment of Williamston Theatre's "A Painted Window."

I would be remiss if I didn't comment on Williamston's "1984," which chilled audiences even more than The Ghost of Christmas Future, also known as the Trump administration.

—TOM HELMA



Courtesy photo

Williamston Theatre's production of George Orwell's "1984."

Torn from a tapestry

Classical and jazz highlights of 2017

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

It's impossible to do justice to the riches enjoyed by Lansing area jazz and classical music lovers in 2017 in such a tiny space. A sample swatch of a vast tapestry will have to represent.

Consider these two consecutive nights in February.

On Feb. 10, Israeli-born clarinetist Anat Cohen, one in a series of major jazz artists-in-residence to visit MSU's Jazz Studies program, performed with the student octet. Genre-bending licks of jazz, klezmer, pop and Latin are getting to be standard in jazz, but it was electrifying to see Cohen bump worlds with the enthusiastic, hyper-talented students assembled by Jazz Studies director Rodney Whitaker.

The next night — the next night! — Sharon Isbin, arguably the world's foremost classical guitarist, played a hypnotic, sobbing "Concerto de la Aranjuez" with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra and its music director, Timothy Muffitt. The deep-breathing performance brought the hall to complete silence, swelling from candle-flicker delicacy to vast, tragic scale, and it was only part of a thrilling night of little-heard Latin music

that included a thunderous ride through Alberto Ginastera's thrilling "Estancia."

That's two nights, two star soloists — both women, it's worth noting — two world-class local organizations and two riveting nights of music. It doesn't get better.

Somehow, though, the Lansing Symphony topped itself again May 19, when dynamic percussionist Lisa Pegher joined the home team to perform Ann Arbor composer Paul Dooley's "Northern Nights," a seamless web of acoustic and electronic sounds with real-time samples and other electronic elements. It was daring stuff, requiring split second timing, but it paid off with an almost hallucinogenic performance.

The Dooley foray showed that even in Lansing, classical music does not always stick its bread and butter, centering on Mozart and the romantics. Similarly, MSU's Jazz Studies Dept. is overwhelmingly swing-based, but every year, the needle of diversity is nudged and avant-garde music gets more of a toehold. The Kozmik Picnic, the adventurous side of East Lansing's Summer Solstice Jazz Festival, got better than ever, with the iconic duo of veteran saxophonist Joe McPhee and percussionist Hamid Drake, and a penetrat-



Courtesy photos

(Above) The Lansing Symphony Orchestra premiered "Northern Nights" on May 19 with special guest percussionist Lisa Pegher.

(Below) Saxophonist George Howard listens to a playback in Jim Alfredson's Lansing studio Dec. 13, 2016. His first time in a recording studio at age 92.



ing, intricate set by cellist Tomeka Reid.

Among many highlights of the main festival was Detroit saxophonist Marcus Elliott, who brought a searing set of original compositions in the post-Coltrane, searching, spiritual mode.

The avant-garde needle went into the red Oct. 11 at MSU, when Ann Arbor collective Crystal Mooncone (Chris Peck, Jon Moniaci and Stephen Rush) spun a hypnotic series of electro-acoustic improvisations that ran the gamut from numinous to humorous. New MSU composition professor and sound artist Lyn Goeringer joined the trio on stage, drawing sounds from various objects, including her squeaky chair, and finding other ways to push the sonic envelope.

But let's rewind the chronological tape. Some music shatters all attempts to pigeonhole it as new or old, traditional or avant-garde. One of the greatest of living jazz legends, Wayne Shorter, brought his all-star, late-period quartet with Danilo Perez, John Patitucci and Brian Blade to Wharton Center April 21 for an unparalleled display of telepathy, exploration and instantaneous communication. Shorter is such a strong presence that you could just watch him, listening to the other members of the band, and not feel cheated of your ticket money.

But he played, all right. Shorter is a devotee of astronomy and physics, and he homed in like

a space probe on the signals around him. His perfectly timed statements were spaced apart, like retro-rocket blasts that are only used when it's necessary to change course.

Meanwhile, back on planet Earth, this was the year Lansing fell firmly into the orbit of the quietly brilliant poly-stylistic guitarist Fareed Haque, who performed April 1 at a new venue, UrbanBeat, and returned Nov. 10 for another round. Haque also played to a packed Jazz Tuesday's at Moriarty's Dec. 10.

It's no secret why Lansing is able to snag so many illustrious guests, some of whom come back time after time. It's expensive even for top artists to tour with a band, but when a town has so many talented musicians to draw from and as supportive an audience as Lansing's, a master musician like Haque can practically roll out of a Greyhound bus unannounced and still have a reasonable chance of getting a gig together.

In the case of MSU's Jazz Studies program, a million-dollar grant from the MSU Federal Credit Union is the gift that keeps on giving, with guest artists in 2017 like trombonist Conrad Herwig (March), trumpeter Michael Philip Mossman (October) and a jazz legend, drummer Harvey Mason in December.

Moriarty's Jazz Tuesday's kept rolling along all year, with many memorable nights, but the highlight of highlights was arguably the Feb. 28 CD release party for 92-year-old saxophonist George Howard. After decades of busking in the streets and playing in private groups for fun, a group of local musicians coaxed Howard into the studio to bring his deep, dark, soulful tone into the studio and record his first CD. The love Howard got at Moriarty's, and the love he gave back, was a joy to behold.

A Decade of GTG Records

Local Lansing record label celebrates a productive anniversary year

By DYLAN TARR

Lansing's GTG Records put out 16 records this year. That's over 150 songs and more than 10 hours of music. If you wanted to, you could drive all the way to Tennessee listening to nothing but GTG releases from this year alone. For a record label based out of a house that City Pulse once named "Eyesore of the Week," that's a lot of music. And honestly, it's a lot of music no matter what your headquarters look like.

"This was sort of a special thing," said GTG co-founder Tommy McCord, also known as Tommy Plural, admitting they don't usually release a terabyte of music in 12 months. "We decided that since it was the 10th working year of the label we wanted to celebrate it."

McCord traces the beginnings of GTG Records back to 2007, when he and his bandmates, Hattie Danby and Nicholas Richard, put out the Plurals' first EP.

"We first used it as a way to release our demos and our friends' demos on CD-Rs," said McCord. "In 2007 we put out an EP called 'Professor Nanners,' and that was the first time we had a professional company manufacture the CDs."

Since then, with 10 years on the record and over 100 releases, the label has taken on a life of its own, McCord said, describing it as more of a collective of local musicians than a business.

"I knew bands would be putting things out this year and I thought if I reached out to a few more people I could figure out one release a month," said McCord. "We ended up doubling up in some of those months because there was so much happening."

If you still have some reservations about a record label run out of a dilapidated house on the east side of Lansing, you shouldn't. This is exactly where the music you eventually love comes from.

Def Jam started in Rick Rubin's dorm room while he was a student at NYU. Bruce Pavitt dubbed together compilation tapes

for an obscure fanzine that later turned into Sup Pop. It doesn't matter if bands are recording in a sound proofed studio in L.A. or in a Michigan basement between noon and 11 p.m. to comply with noise regulations; great music is great music.

City Mouse's "Get Right," released in November on GTG, sounds like the band Sleater Kinney could have been if they didn't lose their razor-sharp teeth immediately after their first album. GTG's first release of 2017, The Hunky Newcomers live album, "Harder Stuff Dude," sounds like Black Flag in an alternate universe where Greg Ginn actually possesses a sense of hu-

the concentration of cool bands in Lansing is higher than anywhere else, and I really don't think it's because I'm a hometown pride person. There are just a lot of cool weird things here."

And with a surplus of cool, weird things to foster in Lansing, McCord said that GTG as an organization simply becomes whatever it needs to be to do its job.

"It's like what do you want to do as a band," McCord said. "If the band's not going to play shows very much we'll have a mostly digital release and a small run of CDs to have at the release party."

Similarly, if a band intends on touring and playing out constantly, GTG puts out vinyl releases too.

"With the Plurals, we noticed on tour that bands who had a 7 inch or a 12 inch

so we started to do more house shows. All ages spaces and intimate venues for touring bands who might not get a lot of people out at Mac's Bar are important," said McCord, referring to the GTG House, the label's headquarters and inclusive local venue.

GTG does the dirty work, too. That's right, they book tours, a nightmarish process few bands attempt and even fewer succeed at.

"It's really hard to make people give a shit about you if they don't know who you are," said Isaac Vander Schuur, front man in the Hat Madder and GTG engineer. "There's definitely a lot that the label can provide as far as making sure your tours get booked and you're not thrown to the wolves out on the road."

GTG helped book the Hat Madder's recent west coast tour, insuring Vander Schuur and his bandmates weren't driving 2,000 miles just to play to a different empty room each night.

Sure, GTG Records can pack out a venue, make sure you not only survive on tour but thrive, all while manufacturing and distributing your record, but what about all the hopeless losers like me and you who aren't in a band? What's GTG doing for us besides eating up all the space on our Zunes?

"My goal is to show people there's a lot of great music being made out there and that it's still possible to have fun in America in the Trump Administration," McCord said.

"It's really important in times of discontent to have an outlet for expressing your frustrations and opening up communication with more people," said McCord. "Shows with a positive energy are great ways to meet people and find more allies for your cause."

And whatever your stance on safe spaces is, I'm sure we can all agree seeing a show without getting punched out or molested by some creep is preferable if not important.

"You get all these people in a room together and everybody just enjoys each other's company, you can really tell," said Vander Schuur. "When you play a show in front of a GTG audience you get an inspiring vibe back from them, even if you're not having your best night. They still have your back front and center, waiting to see what you're going to do next. That's why I started playing music in the first place and that's why I'm still doing it, because I'm a part of this label."



Nicole Rizzo/City Pulse

Tommy McCord, Hattie Danby, and Nicholas Richard comprise GTG's flagship band The Plurals. GTG celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2017.

mor. And the Hat Madder's fourth release on GTG, "Rotting On the Vine," is a proggy, Mars Volta-like record without any of the step-dad connotations that prog-rock often comes with.

I could go on comparing GTG bands to other famous bands you've heard of to convince you that Lansing's music scene is undeniably important, but I won't because that's a job McCord happens to be very good at.

"I'll be honest, I tour the country for large parts of the year and I see cool bands everywhere," McCord said. "But I feel like

seemed like they were always selling them," McCord said. "I was like, we can get in on this, right?" he laughed.

But pressing vinyl is expensive. While this might dissuade other independent labels, McCord only laughed and said, "no one gets rich off this stuff." And besides, he said, "Records just look sweet. It's cool to look at it and just to know your music is on it."

GTG has evolved with the scene, picking up the slack where Lansing's shortcomings wear even thinner.

"Around 2009, a lot of local venues closed

Martians: East Lansing's other green men

Books explore persistent belief in things that aren't true

By **BILL CASTANIER**

It was the night before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring — not even a Martian.

Dr. Charles Laughead and his wife, Lillie, of East Lansing, spent several days before Christmas 1954 in Oak Park, Ill., with other true believers, waiting — not for Santa, but for spacemen from the planet Clarion to whisk them away from the terrible disasters that were set to occur on earth.

Their beliefs had already cost them dearly. Dr. Laughead had already lost his job at Michigan State College. Back in East Lansing for Christmas, he and Lillie faced a court hearing to have them declared insane.

The couple was pulled into a Chicago-area cult led by Dorothy Martin, a frail, self-proclaimed psychic who dabbled in Scientology and who declared that a group called the Guardians were warning her about a flood that would be the end of the Earth.

Martin's communication method was as old as the hills. She claimed that when she set pen to paper, she was channeling messages from extraterrestrials, a common technique called "automatic writing" and used by spiritualists of the previous century.

Before joining Martin's cult, Dr. Laughead, director of MSU's on-campus Olin Health Center, was already following UFO sightings and leading a small group on campus called "questers" who gathered to discuss extraterrestrial life. When he started proselytizing to his student patients about the end of the world, MSU President John Hannah stepped in and asked him to resign.

Once media attention died down, this bizarre series of events could have been an asterisk in the history books if it hadn't been for three University of Minnesota researchers who embedded themselves with the true believers. The researchers studied the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance, a fancy term for believing in half-baked ideas (or people) in face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Not only did they observe and document the meltdown of the strongly held beliefs of the believers; they published their findings in a book that became a classic text on the subject and is still used today.

"When Prophecy Fails," by Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken and Stanley Schachter, is still in print, despite the authors' questionable skirting of research principles. The book is used to explore what happens to a group when their beliefs do not come true. Festinger would go on to publish "A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance," a basic field guide to strange social, political and consumer behavior.

Martin convinced her small group of followers that space ships would arrive at 4 p.m. on December 17 to snatch them away from disaster. When their ride didn't arrive, they



Bill Castanier/City Pulse

wrote it off as a "practice session." However, after waiting on the 18th, the 21st and Christmas Eve, the true believers were still stuck on earth.

Dr. Laughead, referred to as "Dr. Armstrong" in the book, told a member of the news media he had seen a "spaceman in the crowd with a helmet on and a white gown and what not." He also made claims that the reason they were not picked up was "I didn't think a spaceman would feel very welcome there in that crowd."

Back in Lansing, the daily newspaper covered the debacle with great joy, taking to the streets for interviews with residents doing their last-minute Christmas shopping.

Laughead's children patiently waited for their parents' return while fielding media questions. (The Lansing State Journal reported that they were dusting and cleaning up about the house.)

The Laugheads weren't the first humans to yield to cognitive dissonance — not by a long shot. Beliefs in UFOs, spaceships, spacemen and a cataclysmic end of the earth have been grist for popular culture for centuries. In 1897, H. G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds" told of an extraterrestrial invasion by Martians. It was later followed by a series of books by Edgar Rice Burroughs, including "A Princess of Mars." Only 16 years before Laughead stood up by Martians, Orson Welles' radio adaptation of "The War of the Worlds" shocked the country. It is widely said that the most infamous "fake news" radio show in history led to mass hysteria and riots in the streets. A seminal book on the subject, "Broadcast Hysteria: Orson Welles's War of the Worlds and the Art of Fake News" by A. Brad Schwartz, an East Lansing author, disproved the mass hysteria itself as a hoax.

A simple Google search will turn up millions of citations detailing such UFO topics as the infamous Roswell Area 51 and, more recently, a secret U.S. Pentagon program costing \$22 million a year that was established to investigate UFOs.

Belief in things that aren't true is just a

part of being human. On December 31, 1954, Charles and Lillian Laughead were examined by two physicians. It was determined that they were not mentally ill and did not need treatment in an institution. However, Dorothy Martin was placed under psychiatric care in Oak Park.

The Lansing State Journal writers named Michigan's Democratic sweep as the city's number one news story for 1954 with second place going to the firing of Charles Laughead. The article summed up the year's big news this way: "Winning Democrats were sworn in and the world did not come to an end." Dr. Laughead sold his home, packed up and moved east where he said he would do research and investigation.

Book Club meets Jan. 11

City Pulse will kick off its book club for 2018 at 7 p.m. Jan. 11 at Schuler Books & Records in Eastwood Towne Center, not Jan. 4, as previously reported. For the entire year, the club will read books related to 1968 in this its golden anniversary year. The first book is "1968 The Year that Rocked the World," by Mark Kurlansky.

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OUT ON THE TOWN

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

Wednesday, December 27

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

Mindfulness. From 7 to 9 p.m. Chua Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S. Washington Lansing.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

MSU Creative Writing Center Group. From 7 to 8 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

MUSIC

Tavern House Jazz Band. From 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 a.m. Tavern and Tap, 101 S. Washington Square Lansing.

EVENTS

*Minecraft Game Night (Ages 8-15). From 4 to 5 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Aurelius Branch, 1939 South Aurelius Road Mason. 517.628.3743.

*Minecraft Game Night (Ages 8-15). From 4 to 5 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Aurelius Branch, 1939 South Aurelius Road Mason. 517.628.3743.

Silver Balls in the City Charity Pinball Tournament. From 6:30 to 11 p.m. \$10 plus cost of games.. The Avenue Cafe, 2021 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing.

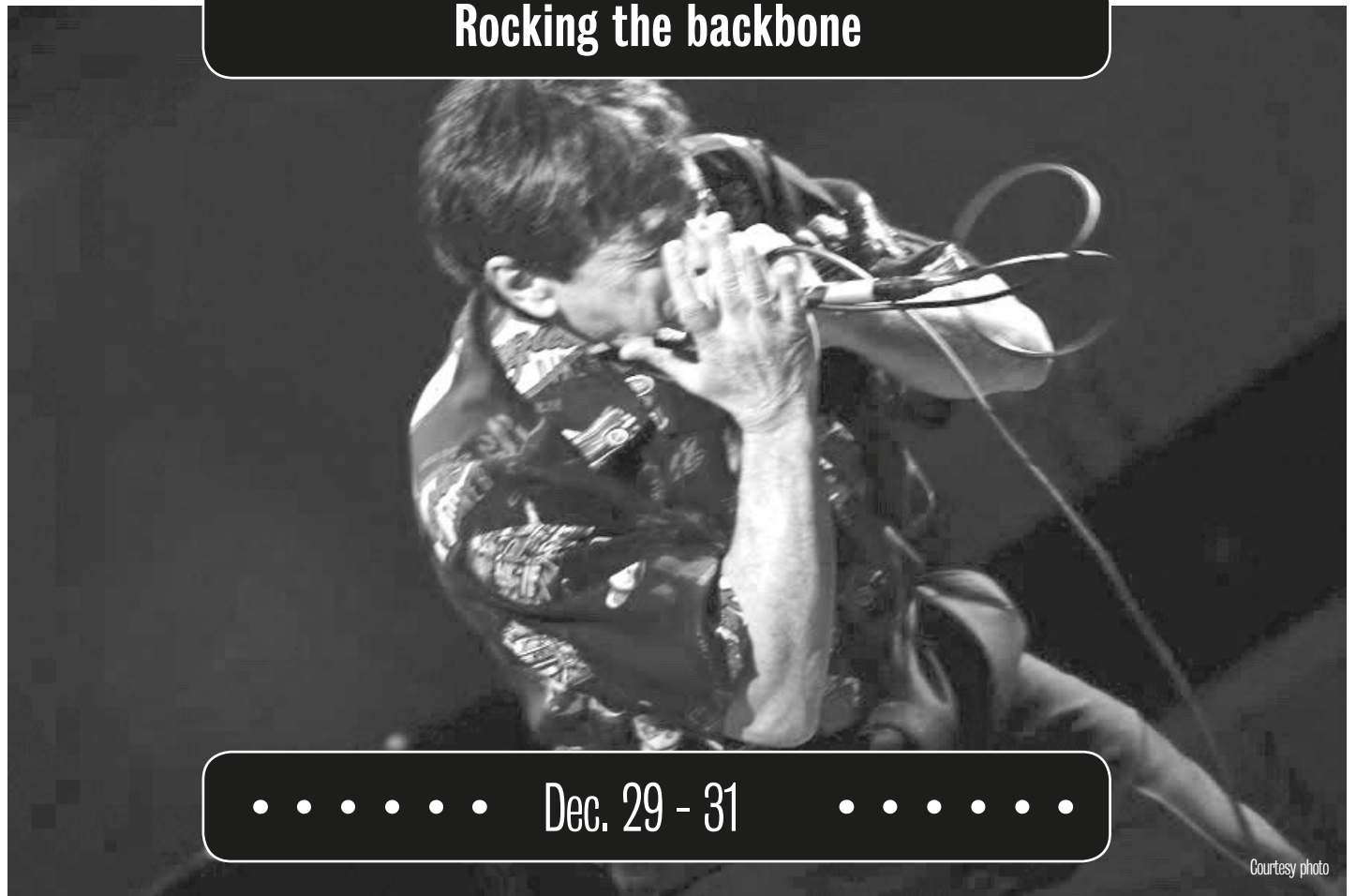
Thursday, December 28

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

(TOPS) Take Off Pounds Sensibly . At 6 p.m. First meeting FREE.. Haslett Middle School, 1535 Franklin St. Haslett.

See Out on the Town Page 16

Rocking the backbone



Courtesy photo

• • • • • Dec. 29 - 31 • • • • •

'Boogie Kings' roll on, from Siberia to Lansing

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

I did a dumb thing. I asked “Boogie” Bob Baldori, Lansing’s own mop-topped rock ‘n roll legend and barrelhouse piano man, if he ever gets tired of playing boogie-woogie with fellow maniacs like his current rumbling partner, New York piano virtuoso Arthur Migliazza.

His genial, crinkly smile smoothed out. He looked at me blankly, as if I had asked why his spaghetti was made of neon.

How can you even ask?

Baldori lives nothing more than to spread the gospel of the rolling, primal, raucous, endlessly nuanced piano style that runs through nearly every American form of music like a rocking rack of vertebrae.

“It has everything,” he said. “Virtuosity, technique, dynamics, pacing and range, but it still grabs you by the balls.”

Baldori and Migliazza, “The Boogie Kings,” will rock out for three nights, Dec. 29-31, at Lansing’s Peppermint Creek Theatre Co., part of a seven-date Midwest tour to bring in the New Year.

Part of Baldori’s mission is to demon-

strate the variety and richness of the style he prefers to call “American piano music.” He might be the only person alive who played with both Chuck Berry and Moscow’s elite Moiseev ballet troupe.

Two years ago, the duo did a choreographed boogie-woogie show with the famed dancers to a sold-out crowd at Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Hall.

At the other extreme, Baldori feared sophisticated New York audiences wouldn’t take to his unpretentious, joyful take on American music, but they did. The duo was held over at New York’s Elektra Theatre for three months.

Baldori treats boogie-woogie the same way Horowitz treated Beethoven. Just when the tumult reaches its peak, he loves to cut the jets and ride the momentum with minimal left-hand plinks and happy, dog-getting-a-bone harmonica yips.

Once you are attuned to it, you can run you fingers along boogie as it runs through American music like a spine, from early syn-copated blues out of Texas and the Deep South to the urban heyday of locomotive piano men like Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis and Pete Johnson, through early R&B and rock to Paul McCartney’s rolling piano in “Lady Godiva” and many other Beatles tunes — and beyond.

“It’s a recognizable, coherent and continuous body of work, starting with the Civil War,” Baldori said. “It evolved after the 50s, when modern American jazz became more cerebral and less accessible, and people like Chuck Berry went into the roots of American pop music and you can still hear it.”

Baldori can speak with authority on Berry. The two were friends and played together many times over a span of 50 years.

After spending time with Baldori, you begin to wonder if everything isn’t made of boogie-woogie.

“We start throwing in stuff like Macklemore and it still fits in,” he said.

The duo’s new CD, “Disturbing the Peace,” is in the can, but Baldori is still wheeling and dealing with labels and promoters, with an eye toward the 2019 Grammys.

Baldori credits producer Mark Stebitz, a “micro-managing obsessive” who has worked with George Harrison, John Mellencamp and other rock stars.

Their current seven-show tour includes three nights in Lansing, the Steinway Piano Gallery in Detroit and one of Baldori’s favorite venues, PianoForte in Chicago.

Live shows are the heart of the Boogie Kings experience.

“Arthur and I are having the time of our lives,” Baldori said. “We’re laughing all the time, because we connect so well. Before one of us gets somewhere, the other guy is already there.”

With all that energy coruscating from 20 fingers, adding a rhythm section of drums, piano and bass would be like bringing snow machines to Siberia.

“Arthur’s left hand puts three musicians out of work,” Baldori cracked.

Best of all, they look happy.

“We’re apart for six weeks, meet again, sit down and start playing,” Baldori said. “I look over at him and say, ‘Now life makes sense.’”

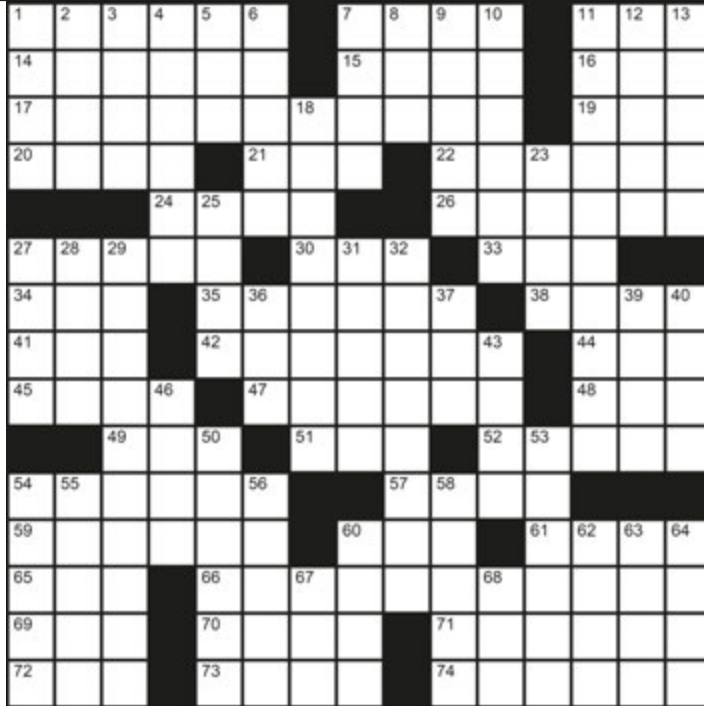
Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"No Two Ways About It"--words and phrases that are *almost* palindromes.

Across

- 1 Anthony of the Red Hot Chili Peppers
- 7 Beethoven and the like
- 11 Maple tree output
- 14 Part of ACTH
- 15 Up to it
- 16 "In Treatment" actress Wasikowska
- 17 Period that doesn't involve levies or charges (almost, except for letters 3 and 9)
- 19 Shapiro of NPR
- 20 Tissue additive, sometimes
- 21 Greek vowel
- 22 FBI agent Kurt of "Blindspot"
- 24 Poet Sandburg
- 26 Chews out
- 27 Wayne's "Wayne's World" cohort
- 30 "___ du lieber!"
- 33 Muscles that are crunched
- 34 It may be shaved or crushed
- 35 When duels may occur, in westerns
- 38 His "Frozen Adventure" appeared before "Coco" in theaters
- 41 "And ___ Was" (1985 Talking Heads hit)
- 42 Place for a soak (almost, except for letters 2 and 6)
- 44 Heady brew
- 45 Daly of "Spider-Man: Homecoming"
- 47 Vitamin B3
- 48 Web portal with a butterfly logo
- 49 Talk incessantly
- 51 ___-Caps (Nestle candy)
- 52 It's really a light crime
- 54 Van Gogh painting that set an auction record



- 57 Superfood seen in seed form
- 59 "I'm not lying!"
- 60 Place with polar bears, perhaps
- 61 Some car cleaners, slangily
- 65 Census info, in part
- 66 Give quick attention to (almost, except for letters 5 and 7)
- 69 Flock formation shape
- 70 Fictitious cookie guy Spunkmeyer
- 71 Plaza Hotel girl of kid-lit
- 72 Mess up
- 73 "Star Wars" universe character Boba ___
- 74 Word before date or jacket
- Down**
- 1 Japanese syllabic writing
- 2 Matinee figure
- 3 Puzzle cube creator Rubik
- 4 Pick up on
- 5 Needle ___ haystack
- 6 Bobby-___ (1940s teen)
- 7 Numbers to crunch
- 8 ___-Wan Kenobi
- 9 Luminesces
- 10 Iroquois Confederacy tribe
- 11 Some trick-taking feats, in bridge (almost, except for letters 5 and 6)
- 12 Broadcast
- 13 Some poker hands
- 18 Legendary sunken island
- 23 Southwestern wolf
- 25 Moby-Dick's pursuer
- 27 Central idea
- 28 Hurting and sore
- 29 Design again from scratch (almost, except for letters 5 and 6)
- 31 Broadway composer George M. ___
- 32 Drink in a mug
- 36 Leather shade
- 37 Rapa ___ (Easter Island)
- 39 As well
- 40 "Twin Peaks" actress Sherilyn
- 43 ___ B'rith
- 46 Facility
- 50 Words in some greatest hits album titles
- 53 One of Buddy Holly's last hits
- 54 "___ my doubts"
- 55 "Copy that"
- 56 What a star may stand for
- 58 Held expectations (for)
- 60 Lemon peel
- 62 Similar (to)
- 63 "Deal or No Deal" container
- 64 Hip or quip ending
- 67 Box full of model components
- 68 Peyton's brother

©2017 Jonesin' Crosswords • For answers to this puzzle, call: 1-900-226-2800, 99 cents per minute. Must be 18+. Or to bill to your credit card, call: 1-800-655-6548. **Answers Page 17**

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsy

Dec. 27, 2017 - Jan. 2, 2018

Aries (March 21-April 19) "I need more smart allies, compassionate supporters, ethical role models, and loyal friends, and I need them right now!" writes Joanna K., an Aries reader from Albuquerque, New Mexico. On the other hand, there's Jacques T., an Aries reader from Montreal. "To my amazement, I actually have much of the support and assistance I need," he declares. "What I seem to need more of are constructive critics, fair-minded competitors with integrity, colleagues and loved ones who don't assume that every little thing I do is perfect, and adversaries who galvanize me to get better." I'm happy to announce, dear Aries, that in 2018 you will benefit more than usual from the influences that both Joanna and Jacques seek.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) In the Scots language spoken in Lowland Scotland, a watergaw is a fragmented rainbow that appears between clouds. A skafer is a faint rainbow that arises behind a mist, presaging the imminent dissipation of the mist. A silk napkin is a splintered rainbow that heralds the arrival of brisk wind and rain. In accordance with the astrological omens, I propose we use these mysterious phenomena as symbols of power for you in 2018. The good fortune that comes your way will sometimes be partially veiled and seemingly incomplete. Don't compare it to some "perfect" ideal. It'll be more interesting and inspiring than any perfect ideal.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) In 2018, half-buried residues from the past will be resurfacing as influences in your life. Old dreams that you abandoned prematurely are ripe to be re-evaluated in light of what has happened since you last took them seriously. Are these good or bad developments? It will probably depend on your ability to be charitable and expansive as you deal with them. One thing is certain: To move forward into the future, you will have to update your relationships with these residues and dreams.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) Poet Diane Ackerman tells us that human tongues, lips, and genitals possess neural receptors that are ultra-responsive. Anatomists have given unsexy names to these bliss-generating parts of our bodies: Krause end bulbs, also known as bulboid corpuscles. (Couldn't they have called them "glimmering rapture hubs" or "magic buttons"?) In any case, these sweet spots enable us to experience surpassing pleasure. According to my understanding of the astrological omens for 2018, Cancerian, your personal complement of bulboid corpuscles will be even more sensitive than usual. Here's further good news: Your soul will also have a heightened capacity to receive and register delight.

Leo (July 23-August 22) Mise en place is a French term whose literal translation is "putting in place." When used by professional chefs in a restaurant kitchen, it refers to the task of gathering and organizing all the ingredients and tools before beginning to cook. I think this is an excellent metaphor for you to emphasize throughout 2018. In every area of your life, thorough preparation will be the key to your success and fulfillment. Make sure you have everything you need before launching any new enterprise or creative effort.

Virgo (August 23-September 22) Experimental composer Harry Partch played one-of-a-kind musical instruments that he made from objects like car hubcaps, gourds, aluminum ketchup bottles, and nose cones from airplanes. Collage artist Jason Mecier fashions portraits of celebrities using materials like noodles, pills, licorice candy, bacon, and lipstick tubes. Given the astrological configurations for 2018, you could flourish by adopting a similar strategy in your own chosen field. Your most interesting successes could come from using things as they're not "supposed" to be used. You could further your goals by mixing and matching resources in unique ways.

Libra (September 23-October 22) I wish I could make it nice and easy for you. I wish I could

proclaim that the forces of darkness are lined up against the forces of light. I'd like to be able to advise you that the opening months of 2018 will bring you a showdown between wrong and right, between ugliness and beauty. But it just ain't that simple. It's more like the forces of plaid will be arrayed against the forces of paisley. The showdown will feature two equally flawed and equally appealing sources of intrigue. And so you may inquire, Libra, what is the most honorable role you can play in these matters? Should you lend your support to one side or the other? I advise you to create a third side.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21) In 2018, your tribe will be extra skilled at opening things that have been shut or sealed for a long time: heavy doors, treasure boxes, rich possibilities, buried secrets, shy eyes, mum mouths, guarded hearts, and insular minds. You'll have a knack for initiating new markets and clearing blocked passageways and staging grand openings. You'll be more inclined to speak candidly and freely than any other generation of Scorpios in a long time. Getting stuck things unstuck will come naturally. Making yourself available for bighearted fun and games will be your specialty. Given these wonders, maybe you should adopt a new nickname, like Apertura (the Italian word for "opening"), Ouverture (the French word for "opening"), Šiši (Yoruban), Oteviráci (Czech), Öffnung (German), or Kufungua (Swahili).

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) I predict that the coming months won't bring you the kinds of opportunities you were imagining and expecting, but will bring you opportunities you haven't imagined and didn't expect. Will you be alert and receptive to these sly divergences from your master plan? If so, by September of 2018 you will have become as smart a gambler as maybe you have ever been. You will be more flexible and adaptable, too, which means you'll be better able to get what you want without breaking stuff and wreaking whirlwinds. Congratulations in advance, my daring darling. May your experiments be both visionary and practical. May your fiery intentions be both steady and fluidic.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Hungarian psychiatrist Thomas Szasz dismissed the idea that a person should be on a quest to "find himself" or "find herself." "The self is not something that one finds," he said. Rather, "it is something one creates." I think that's great advice for you in 2018, Capricorn. There'll be little value in wandering around in search of fantastic clues about who you were born to be. Instead you should simply be gung-ho as you shape and craft yourself into the person you want to be.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18) Is there anything about your attitude or your approach that is a bit immature or unripe? Have you in some way remained an amateur or apprentice when you should or could have become fully professional by now? Are you still a dabbler in a field where you could be a connoisseur or master? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, the coming months will be an excellent time to grow up, climb higher, and try harder. I invite you to regard 2018 as the Year of Kicking Your Own Ass.

Pisces (February 19-March 20) In 2018, one of your themes will be "secret freedom." What does that mean? The muse who whispered this clue in my ear did not elaborate further. But based on the astrological aspects, here are several possible interpretations. 1. You may have to dig deep and be strategic to access resources that have the power to emancipate you. 2. You may be able to discover a rewarding escape and provocative deliverance that have been hidden from you up until now. 3. You shouldn't brag about the liberations you intend to accomplish until you have accomplished them. 4. The exact nature of the freedom that will be valuable to you might be useless or irrelevant or incomprehensible to other people.

SUDOKU

ADVANCED

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

TO PLAY

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

Answers on page 17

Out on the town

from page 14

A Course in Miracles. From 7 to 9 p.m. Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 230 S. Holmes Lansing. 517-371-3010.

Free Yoga for Kids and Youth. From 5:30 to 7:15 p.m. FREE for Youth ages 6-13. Parents pay usual rates. . Bikram Yoga Capital Area, 1355 E. Grand River Ave East Lansing. 517-862-8926.

Lansing Reiki Share. From 6 to 8 p.m. FREE/ Donations accepted. Willow Stick Ceremonies, 335 Seymour Ave., Suite D. Lansing. 517-402-6727.

Spanish Conversation Group. From 7 to 8 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

MusicWaterfronts Open Mic/Jam. From 6 to 10 p.m. free and kids are fine until 9. Waterfront Bar and Grille, 325 City Market Drive Lansing.

EVENTS

12-Step Meeting . From 12 to 1 p.m. FREE. Donations welcome.. Cristo Rey Community Center, 1717 N. High St. Lansing.

Current Events. From 11 a.m. to noon FREE. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos. Ladies Silver Blades Figure Skating Club . From 9:30 to 11:20 a.m. \$5 and yearly dues fee. Suburban Ice, 2810 Hannah Blvd. East Lansing.

Lunch at the Meridian Senior Center. From 12 to 1 p.m. \$5.75/\$3 suggested for ages 60+. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos.

Party Bridge. From 1 to 4 p.m. \$1 Members/\$2 Public. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos.

Winter Recess Ollie and Sphero Robot Adventures (Age 7 & up). From 1 to 2 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Haslett Branch, 1590 Franklin St. Haslett. 517-339-2324.

Saturday, December 30

EVENTS

Holiday Cinema. From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Dansville Branch, 1379 E. Mason St. Dansville. (517) 623-6511.

Saturday Holiday Matinee (All ages). From 11 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Downtown Lansing Branch, 401 South Capitol Avenue Lansing. 517-367-6363.

By ALLAN I. ROSS

You know it's been a weird year when the biggest development news is two big holes in the ground. East Lansing finally eradicated its biggest eyesore, the former Citizens Bank at the corner of Abbot Road and Grand River Avenue, but the demolition of a fleet of perfectly good retail buildings on the next block, between 125 E. Grand River Ave. and 250 E. Grand River Ave., to make way for the \$125 million Center City District project is still a little jarring.

At least Charlie Kang's Restaurant got a liquor license out of it. The Chinese and Korean cuisine eatery had been situated in the demo zone, and it added beer and wine selections when it relocated to the recently renovated corner building, 101 E. Grand River Ave., joining Noodles & Co. and a Verizon store. Vintage boutique Clever Clover also survived by moving, albeit in the opposite direction; it's now situated at 317 E. Grand River Ave.

Other moves this year included the Record Lounge's relocation from downtown East Lansing to 1132 S. Washington Ave. in REO Town, and Thailand, which swaps its Old Town digs next week for a tiny carry-out hut at 2220 N. Larch St. on Jan. 2.

Also in Old Town, the Grid took over 226 E. Grand River Ave. with its bar/arcade concept. And following the death of longtime Unicorn Bar owner Tommy Malvetis last December, developer Pat Gillespie bought the historic dive bar, 327 E. Grand River Ave., and renovated it into the Unicorn Lounge.

Downtown Lansing also saw a wave of new businesses move into the ever-evolving, and seemingly ever-revolving, business lunch/happy hour scene. The French-flavored EnVie, 210 S. Washington Square, and Chicago-style steakhouse Bowdie's Chophouse, 320 E. Michigan Ave., make a play for upscale palates, while Batter Up Bistro, 621 E. Michigan Ave., focuses on gourmet breakfast and lunch offerings.

Downtown also got two new international restaurants: Sahara Delight, 119 S. Washington Ave., serves up Middle Eastern fare and La Cocina Cubana, 123 S. Washington Ave., covers Cuban cuisine. A third place, the fast-casual Mexican place Red Burrito, was but a blip on the downtown radar, lasting for a mere seven months at 212 S. Washington Square.

It may not be new, but Troppo Italian Kitchen underwent an interior overhaul and concept change at 111 E. Michigan Ave., while Blue Night Hookah Lounge, 224 S. Washington Square, is trying to reignite downtown's nightlife scene. And just north of downtown, the new you-buy-we-fry Nu-Wave Fish & Chicken, 427 E. Oakland Ave., opened at one of the busiest intersections in Ingham County.

Traveling south, you'll find Sam's Southern Eatery, 3812 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., offering authentic New Orleans street food. And farther south still, Kazumi Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi Bar joins Lansing's surprisingly robust hibachi scene. Also on the south side, Mega-Bev, 3630 S. Cedar

CITY PULSE NEW IN TOWN YEAR-END REVIEW



St., became the capital city's biggest liquor store, with a 10,000-square-foot footprint. The family-owned outlet offers over 10,000 varieties of specialty spirits, including about 2,000 types of craft beer.

If you prefer a different kind of buzz, however, you can now order a "coffee cocktail" at third wave coffee shops the Crafted Bean, 116 N. Bridge St. in downtown DeWitt, and Blue Owl Coffee Co., 1149 S. Washington Ave. in REO Town. Eastside breakout Strange Matter Coffee Co. also opened a second location in downtown Lansing at 337 S. Washington Square.

And speaking of the east side, Ruckus Ramen, which started as a pop-up Japanese soup/appetizer experiment, took over the kitchen at the Avenue Café, 2021 E. Michigan Ave. Green Dot Stables, 410 S. Clippert St. in Lansing Township, specializes in craft beer and gourmet slider burgers. And the Street Kitchen farm-to-table food truck opened in August, recently adding indoor dining space at 2722 E. Michigan Ave. just in time for winter.

Metro Lansing's eastern suburbs saw a flurry of activity, too. Kingston Kitchen, 4749 Central Park Drive in Okemos, introduced mid-Michigan to scratch Jamaican cuisine. Spartan Brewpub, 3056 Okemos Road in Mason, joined the ever-growing craft brewery biz. Good Eats Diva, 1561 Haslett Road in Haslett, is the culmination of a life of baking and entrepreneurship for owner/operator Kathleen Hanna. And Timeout Play Café, 2650 E. Grand River Ave., gives tots a place to play while active moms can meet up for coffee and pastries.

Vintage shops saw a nice bump in 2017. REO Town's Vintage Junkies moved across the street to serve as the pilot business in the fledgling micro-bazaar, REO Marketplace, 1023-1027 S. Washington Ave. Vintage Marketplace, 1219 Turner St., kept antiquing alive in the former home of Lamb's Gate Antiques. And Dragonfly Boutique helped propel the #CharlotteRising movement at

116 S. Cochran St.

Also rising in Charlotte: The Dolson, a chef-driven upscale bistro that took over the historic Gavel restaurant, 112 S. Cochran Ave. Meanwhile, in East Lansing, the new Sidebar, 246 E. Saginaw Highway, makes a similar play for distinguishing diners. Nearby, Crab Hero, a Cajun seafood joint with perhaps the best logo in town (a decapod poised for combat, claws up, glowering from the shadows of its own cape), and Poké Lab, serving Hawaiian-style "deconstructed sushi," moved in side-by-side at 235 E. Albert Ave. and 245 E. Ann St., respectively, in downtown East Lansing.

And business was so good for some establishments that they added second locations in 2017. While Strange Matter opened its satellite spot in downtown Lansing, its new neighbor, Glazed and Confused, expanded from its downtown store to 1595 W. Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing. And REO Town barbecue hotspot Saddleback BBQ doubled down in Okemos with a new eatery – complete with liquor license! – at 1754 Central Park Drive.

In memoriam

It wasn't all good news this year. We lost these Lansing-area stores in 2017:

- Art's Bar
- Bloom Coffee Roasters (café only)
- Colonial Bar & Grille
- East Lansing Food Co-op
- Hobie's Café and Pub
- Hot Chicken Kitchen
- Jumbeaux
- Knight Cap
- Lamb's Gate Antiques
- Office Furniture Outlet & Supplies
- Sarnie Shoppe
- Velvet: A Candy Store

And the plugs were pulled on three proposed restaurants – Lansing Beer Exchange, Tavern and Tap-Okemos, and Rajje's Taphouse – before work even began in earnest on them.

Check back next week to see what's in store for Lansing in 2018.

Out on the town

from page 16

Sunday, December 31

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

Juggling. From 2 to 4 p.m. FREE. Orchard Street Pumphouse, 368 Orchard St. East Lansing.

HOLIDAYS

Release the past at the Burning Bowl Ceremony. From 10:30 a.m. to noon Unity Spiritual Center of Lansing, 230 S. Holmes Lansing. 517-371-3010.

MUSIC

New Year's Eve party at Rocky's Roadhouse. "Barking Dogs." "Big Bucks and the Loose Change Blues Band," and "Headband" will perform between 8 pm and 12:30 am.

EVENTS

Ten Pound Fiddle: New Year's Eve Contra and Square Dance. From 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. \$15 members, \$18 non-members and \$8 for students and first time dancers. Tickets available at the door and in advance at www.lgmaa.org. Dewitt Charter Township Community Center, 16101 Brook Road Lansing.

TGIF New Year's Eve Dance Party. From 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$25 adv; \$30 at the door. Hawk Hollow Golf Course, 15101 Chandler Rd. Bath.

(517) 641-4295.

Tuesday, January 02

MUSIC

Jazz Tuesdays at Moriarty's. From 7 to 10 p.m. FREE. Moriarty's Pub, 802 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing. (517) 485-5287.

Wednesday, January 03

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

Free Photography Clinic. From 6 to 9 p.m.

FREE!!! First Presbyterian Church, 510 W. Ottawa St. Lansing. (517) 482-0668.

MSU International Student Speaker- Senior Discovery Group . From 10 a.m. to noon free.

Allen Market Place, 6129 E. Kalamazoo St. Lansing.

EVENTS

Lansing Coat Bank. From 5:30 to 8 p.m. FREE. St. Lukes Lutheran Church, 122 S. Pennsylvania Ave. Lansing. 517-339-9119.

JAN. 6 >> ARKHAM HORROR INVOCATION EVENT

Evolution Games is hosting an Arkham Horror: The Card Game event where players will form parties to take down standalone game challenges like Curse of the Rougarou or Carnevale of Horrors. Arkham Horror is a strategic card game based on the works of H.P. Lovecraft. Participants will receive a special investigator figure and card, as well as a limited edition play mat. Spots are limited so plan ahead.

2-5 p.m. at Evolution Games, Admission: \$10 6323 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing, facebook.com/evogames

JAN. 6>>ESHAM "DEAD OF WINTER" TOUR

Legendary Detroit horrorcore M.C. Esham returns to Lansing with his latest concert tour. Esham's acid rap style is perhaps best known as an influence on an entire generation of rappers ranging from Brotha Lynch Hung to the Insane Clown Posse. You can see him at the Loft on Saturday.

9 p.m. at the Loft, Admission: \$15, 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, theloftlansing.com

JAN. 6>>REO TOWN PUB AND GRILLE MAC & CHEESE COOK OFF

Reo Town Pub kicks off its January series of cook offs with a dish that everyone loves, Macaroni and Cheese. Attendees will be able to enter their own special recipe or just show up to try all of the submissions.

1-5 p.m. at REO Town Pub and Grille, cost for food pending, 1145 S. Washington Ave., Lansing, reopub.com



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SUDOKU SOLUTION
 From Pg. 15

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION
 From Pg. 15

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TURN IT DOWN

A SURVEY OF LANSING'S MUSICAL LANDSCAPE

BY RICH TUPICA

Fri., Dec. 29

NO SKULL



No Skull at Mac's Bar

Fri., Jan. 5

HOMEGROWN THROWDOWN



2018 Homegrown Throwdown at The Loft

Fri., Jan. 5

DESMOND JONES



Desmond Jones at The Avenue Café

Friday, Dec. 29 @ Mac's Bar, 2700 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. All ages, \$7, 8 p.m.

No Skull, a sludgy-punk group hailing from the Lansing area featuring guitarist/vocalist Ryan Andrews of Red Teeth, BerT and Dr. Device, return Friday to Mac's Bar. The trio is opening the all-ages show alongside MINUS9, Anvil Crawler and BUBAK – headlining is Scary Women. No Skull, which formed in October 2016, also comprises bassist Jules Purosky and drummer Abby Mogg. The heavy, riff-driven band echoes '70s-era punk rock and early-'90s grunge, creating a soundscape of murky-pop hooks and lethargic vocals. Fans of "Bleach"-era Nirvana, Melvins, Mudhoney or the Wipers, may want to check them out. Aside from No Skull – and his other ongoing strings of heavy music projects – over the last 15 years Andrews has operated his own lo-fi indie label, Madlantis Records, its releases are streamed at madlantisrecords.com.

Friday, Jan. 5 @ The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, All ages, \$10 6:30 p.m.

Mid-Michigan's biggest battle-of-the-bands event, the Homegrown Throwdown, celebrates its 15th anniversary with another long roster of bands competing for \$1,000 in cash, \$3,500 in prizes, a song played on Q106 and a professionally-crafted media kit. Taking the stage in the first round is Revolution in Progress, Suits and Daggers, IEJIR, the 89th Key and the Amber Tide. The Throwdown contest, which spans January-February, ultimately features 24 bands over five nights and, according to its organizers, also grades the bands on "stage presence" and "professionalism." The finals happen February 16 at The Loft. As for the refereeing, the bands are judged live, "American Idol-style," by a panel of "music professionals," according to its organizers. Only 50 percent of the judges' votes factor in to the results, the rest being 25 percent pre-sale tickets and 25 percent crowd votes.

Friday, Jan. 5 @ The Avenue Café, 2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, 21+, \$10, 8 p.m.

Jazzy funk-rock quintet Desmond Jones returns to Lansing for a gig at the Avenue Café. The band, formed in East Lansing in 2012, has since relocated to Grand Rapids. Desmond Jones has opened shows for the Werks, Kung Fu, Tauk, the Verve Pipe and Here Come the Mummies. The improvisational fusion band, known for its high-energy live performances, cites a laundry list of jammy, experimental influences like Frank Zappa, the Grateful Dead, Phish, Charles Mingus, Led Zeppelin and the Band – creating a distinct sound NPR praised for its "eclectic musical diversity." The band, which draws from a catalog of 55 original songs, comprises John Nowak (drums, vocals), Isaac Berkowitz (guitar, vocals), Chris Bota (guitar), John Loria (bass) and saxophonist/vocalist George Falk. Sample some of Desmond Jones' tunes, including its new 2017 self-titled LP, at desmondjones.bandcamp.com.

UPCOMING SHOW?

CONTACT

ELLA@LANSINGCITYPULSE.COM

LIVE & LOCAL

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

The Avenue Café, 2021 E. Michigan Ave.	Service Industry Night,	80's Karaoke	Ramones Tribute	Millennium Karaoke
Crunchy's, 254 W. Grand River Ave.	Russ Holcomb	Karaoke, 9 p.m.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.
Coach's, 6201 Bishop Road	DJ Trivia, 8 p.m.	Pool Tourny, 7:30 a.m.	Alskn "walleye" AYCE	DJ, 9 p.m.
Darb's Tavern, 117 S. Cedar St.				Chris Laskos
Esquire, 1250 Turner St.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.			
The Exchange, 314 E. Michigan Ave.	Live Blues w/ The Good Cookies, 8 p.m.	Mike Skory & Friends, 8:30 p.m.	Summer of Sol	The Rotations
Green Door, 2005 E. Michigan Ave.	"Johnny D" Blues Night, 9 p.m.	Karaoke Kraze!!	Miranda and the M-80's	Frog and the Beeftones
The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave.		Before the Bell Drops Comedy Show	Earth Jones, 8pm	
Mac's Bar, 2700 E. Michigan Ave.			Scary Women 8pm	
Reno's West, 5001 W Saginaw Hwy			The New Rule, 7pm	The New Rule, 7pm
The Robin Theatre, 1105 S. Washington Ave.				
Tequila Cowboy, 5660 W. Saginaw Hwy.			The Hubie Ashcraft band, 8pm.	The Hubie Ashcraft Band, 8pm
Watershed Tavern and Grill 5965 Marsh Rd.			Capital City DJ's	Capital City DJ's



HE ATE

SHE ATE



Mark and Gabrielle's best picks of 2017

By **MARK NIXON**

My pick for this year's best restaurant in town is, alas, not in town. Lula's Louisiana Cook House is a 40-minute drive away in downtown Owosso.

Don't let that stop you. Strap on your road trip shoes, burn a little non-renewable fossil fuel and make haste for Lula's. As I said in my April review, this place has the tastes and aromas of Cajun and Creole cuisine down to an art. Gumbo, red beans, rice, andouille sausage and fishermen's stew. All of it is excellent. Don't ignore the charcuterie either; a generous sampler dish with house smoked meats from pork belly to duck rillettes.

By all means, save room for dessert. The bread pudding with whiskey infused sauce and cinnamon spiced apples is by itself worth the trip.

Two unlikely looking places in this town serve some remarkable smoked meats: Gump's BBQ and Capital City BBQ.

Gump's resides on a dead-end street behind a car wash on Lansing's near south side. The smoked ribs and other smoked meats display the pit master's cherished "smoke ring" huddled beneath the crisp exterior; a true sign of slow smoked authenticity. Its Carolina style sauce with strong hints of vinegar nicely complement the smoked meats.

Capital City BBQ apparently was spawned by a cell phone store, or so I am told. The phone store is still there, joined at the hip with this little restaurant that creates memorable smoked meats and some belly-busting Vietnamese fare.

I recommend any of the smoked beef brisket dishes or the baby back ribs. They sometimes have smoked meat loaf, which I am dying to try. And don't ignore the Vietnamese sandwich, Banh Mi. I chose a Banh Mi with pulled pork and Cole slaw tucked between two ample baguette slices. Terrific.

And since we're talking Asian inspired food, I suggest another road trip, this one in Williamston. Thai Nation has a massive menu with 70 different sushi rolls from which to choose. It's the tempura dishes that stole the show. Shrimp tempura udon is a hot noodle dish in rich broth. The tempura-fried shrimp arrive as a side dish. Pile the shrimp into the noodle-broth combo, and you have an amazing, satisfying meal in one bowl.

Appetizers worth ordering include a shrimp tempura and cucumber topped by tuna and avocado; and an outstanding soft shell crab, also served tempura-style.

For vegetarians, the age dashi (ah-gay-dah-she) tofu is a must-try appetizer.

Some honorable mentions of 2017:

— The Original Steakhouse Philly at Steakhouse Philly Bar and Grill. This sandwich has it all: Shaved sirloin with grilled onions and slightly melted provolone cheese all piled between slices of chewy baguette.

— Bob's Way Mac & Cheese at Beggar's Banquet. Three cheeses are melted and mixed with the pasta, then juicy blackened chicken and bacon are tossed on top.

— Tuna Nicoise salad at Dusty's Cellar. Generous hunks of seared tuna (but still rare inside) are festooned with capers, olives, diced potato and roasted red peppers.

By **GABRIELLE JOHNSON LAWRENCE**

While I don't always love heavily sauced food, sometimes a well executed condiment can make or break a dish. For my 2017 retrospective, I want to tell you about five of my favorite condiments in the area, those little things that add a new dimension to a favorite dish.

Zaytoon is one of our absolute favorite places to grab a healthy dinner and I like to load my chicken shawarma with tons of toum, better known as garlic sauce. This white paste is ubiquitous among our many Middle Eastern restaurants, but Zaytoon's is especially potent, which I like. My clients and colleagues might disagree with that, but I'm just over here trying to fight off vampires.

I love the chorizo and cheese quesadillas at El Oasis taco truck, corn tortillas make my heart sing, and I never eat them without dipping each bite into a little tub of salsa verde. It isn't too spicy and won't leave you sweating, but it cuts through the richness of the meat and cheese and brightens the flavor of the quesadilla while also brightening my entire outlook on life.

I know that I've beaten you over the head with my love for Tavern 109's pear pizza, but the unsung hero of my favorite Williamston restaurant is the champagne vinaigrette salad dressing. It's tangy, without making your eyes water and doesn't it sound fancy? On top of the spinach salad, it gives a perfect balance to the bacon, apples, pecans, and red onion.

To me, homemade ketchup screams attention to detail. The spicy version at The Dolson drove that point home. So many places profess to be a "scratch" kitchen, but their ketchup is Hunt's and their potatoes are formerly frozen. None of this at The Dolson. Paired with their well seasoned, crispy fries, the ketchup is a winner.

Saddleback BBQ red sauce. I would bathe in this, if that wasn't totally unacceptable and disgusting. I've loved this sauce since the first time I had it, during a housewarming party at our old house. I've loved it on burnt end tacos, smoked chicken, and brisket sandwiches. I've loved it on wings, fries (don't knock it) and to add depth of flavor to macaroni and cheese. It's a slightly sweet BBQ sauce, but has a kick from the addition of black pepper.

2018 promises to be just as delicious, with new restaurants to try: Batter Up Bistro, Bowdie's

Chophouse, places to anticipate: Punk Taco and Mr. Taco to name a few, and a sweet little addition to my family, anticipated any day now. Here's hoping that our local favorites continue to innovate and delight even the pickiest of palates.

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