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March 21 - 27, 2018

Shuto Con: Lansing's anime fans' 'second home'



See
page 12

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We're delighted to host a visit from the author of *Behold the Dreamers*, this year's Capital Area Reads book. Her presentation will be followed by a book signing, with copies available for purchase. Registration is required at 517-367-6348 or cadl.org/events.

Free parking is available in the Lansing Center lot or parking garage by mentioning the words "Library Author Event." For more information on this Speaker, visit prhspeakers.com.

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HOLY WEEK: MARCH 25 – APRIL 1, 2018

MSU Music

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FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2018

8:00 PM, FAIRCHILD THEATRE, MSU AUDITORIUM

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EVENT INFORMATION AND MORE
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CITY OF LANSING
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Act-4-2017, Easement for Consumers Energy's North Lansing Pipeline Project

The Lansing City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 9, 2018, at 7:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, 10th Floor City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, Michigan, to consider the conveyance of a non-exclusive easement on four City of Lansing Board of Water and Light properties for the Consumers Energy project commonly known as North Lansing Pipeline, a gas distribution line extending from North Grand River Ave., then southwest under the Grand River and across a City of Lansing/LBWL parcel to Melvin Court, then south along the east side of Sunset Ave., then west to run southward, west of and parallel to a Lansing Manufacturers (A.K.A. Jackson and Lansing) Railroad right-of-way to end south of I-496. The easement is specifically described as:

That part the South Half of Section 5, Town 04 North, Range 02 West, City of Lansing, Ingham County, described as: Commencing at the South 1/4 corner of said Section 5; thence North 00°50'33" West 993.38' along the North and South 1/4 Line of said Section 5, to the PLACE OF BEGINNING OF THIS DESCRIPTION: thence South 62°52'26" West, 599.81'; thence South 64°05'16" West, 297.03'; thence South 50°43'16" West, 638.61'; thence North 00°18'51" East, 38.93'; thence North 50°43'16" East, 617.32'; thence North 64°05'16" East, 300.23'; thence North 62°52'26" East, 614.31'; thence North 62°52'26" East, 406.20' to the approximate centerline of the Grand River; thence South 27°37'00" East, 30.00' along said approximate centerline; thence South 62°52'26" West, 421.27' to the Place of Beginning,

AND That part of Lot 38 of Assessor's Plat No. 11, as recorded in Liber 10 of Plats, Page 14, at the Ingham County Register of Deeds described as: The West 15.00 feet of the following Parcel Description as recorded in Warranty Deed, Liber 524, Page 57, Ingham County Register of Deeds: Beginning at a point 650 feet South of the Northwest corner of Lot 38 of said Plat; thence East, 120 feet, thence South, 50 feet; thence West, 120 feet; thence North, 50 feet to the place of beginning,

AND That part of Lot 42 of Assessor's Plat No. 11, as recorded in Liber 10 of Plats, Page 14, at the Ingham County Register of Deeds described as: The West 15.00 feet of the following Parcel Description as recorded in Warranty Deed, Liber 524, Page 57, Ingham County Register of Deeds: Commencing at a point 15.55 feet South of the Northwest corner of Lot 42 of Assessor's Plat No. 11 in the Northwest 1/4 of Section 8, Town 04 North, Range 02 West, City of Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan, and running thence East, 124.5 feet; thence South, 46 feet; thence West, 124.5 feet; thence North, 46 feet to the place of beginning,

AND Lot 51, of Bella Vista Homesites Subdivision, as recorded in Liber 7 of Plats, Page 7, at the Ingham County Register of Deeds,

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

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/CMCC
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CP#18-059

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.)



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Great Lakes Folk Fest on pause for 2018



East Lansing Community Theater tackles "Twelfth Night"



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THIS MODERN WORLD

BY TOM TOMORROW

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GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME! BY THE WAY--YOUR COMPUTER BANKS ARE SECURE, AREN'T THEY?



ALL RIGHT! I ASKED HIM SEVERAL TIMES AND HE DENIED IT! ANOTHER CRISIS AVERTED BY ME, WITH MY EXTREMELY GOOD BRAIN!



TOM TOMORROW © 2018

Tilting for windmills

Opposition growing to BWL's \$500 million gas plant

Opponents of the Lansing Board of Water and Light's plan to build a \$500 million gas plant have opened up a pipeline of communication to the BWL board, with the help of a commissioner representing the city's First Ward.

"I feel confident it's the best plan and I support building it 100 percent, but I'm willing to listen," Commissioner Dennis Louney said. "We're trying to build a fluid model. It's not 'we build this, this is what we're doing, and good luck, everybody.'"

He cautioned that he does not speak for the entire board and met with opponents of the plan March 5 "out of respect for them."

Louney noted that earlier this month, he also sat down with a homeowner who was upset about squirrels displaced by drastic tree trimming.

"She's passionate about the squirrels," Louney said.

The Lansing Environmental Action Team, or LEAT, has bigger squirrels to fry. The group has grown to over 100 members since the BWL announced its plans to build the plant in December, according to LEAT member Anna Fisher. About 30 members rallied in front of City Hall March 12 to oppose the BWL's plan. The state's Sierra Club chapter also opposes the plant.

A growing coalition of environmentalists, utility experts and ratepayers are trying to dissuade the BWL from committing to large-scale fossil fuel use for another generation when the cost of renewable energy and storage is plunging to unprecedented lows.

"We think it's astonishingly misguided, but we're going to continue to try to

work with them," Fisher said.

Fisher said the timing of BWL's announcement, in late December, made it harder for opposition to gain traction at first.

"It was the peak of the holidays and people weren't paying attention," she said. However, since then, a joint meeting of the BWL board and the Lansing City Council Feb. 15 drew 80 people and



Courtesy Photo

Members of the Lansing Environmental Action Team rallied at City Hall March 12 in opposition to the Lansing Board of Water & Light's proposed \$500 million gas plant.

30 speakers opposing the plant.

"It's invigorating to see such a positive response from the community," Fisher said.

Andrew Sarpolis, organizer of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign, was at the meeting with Louney March 5, along with two members of LEAT. Sarpolis' takeaway was mixed.

"I found BWL staff to be open, and that's not the case with every utility," Sarpolis said. "At the same time, they seem pretty committed to building the gas plant."

LEAT is fired up to fight the plant, with more heat expected at the BWL Commission meeting Tuesday, but the Sierra Club is showing signs of a strategic pivot.

A fresh dialogue with BWL, Sarpolis

said, should be more nuanced than a confrontation over the proposed plant.

"We will continue to oppose the plant and ask for alternatives, but I think we can do that in the context of some larger negotiations that might get the BWL's gears to turn a little bit" on a long-term vision, he said.

That vision, in Sarpolis' view, should be coordinated with Lansing's resolution to develop a climate action plan this year. Two City Council members, Kathie Dunbar and Peter Spadafore, are meeting bimonthly with LEAT members as the plan develops.

"This gas plant is just a piece, and it's not fitting together with anything," Sarpolis said.

Responding to a request made by Louney at the March 5 meeting, LEAT is drawing up a list of 10 "asks" it will submit to the BWL.

A draft document the group shared with City Pulse Tuesday calls for the utility to scale down the proposed 170MW natural gas plant, which would include

self-contained units called "peakers," to smaller, modular units that can be

used to back up renewables. LEAT also wants the BWL to use "all source bidding," including renewables and energy efficiency, to meet its future needs.

"Other jurisdictions are already canceling plans for new gas peakers because these other options are proving capable of beating the peakers in head-to-head competition," the draft reads.

Louney said the BWL will start to review its strategic plan next year, but that's after the first shovelfuls are expected to turn on the new plant.

"We recognize it's a business model that's changing because of renewables and battery storage that could change the game," Louney said.

With the coal-fired Eckert and Erickson



500 N. Butler Blvd.

This 102-year-old, five-apartment building looms over the intersection of Butler Boulevard and Genesee Street in the Genesee neighborhood. Its doors and windows have been boarded up since 2007 when the entire structure was deemed unsafe. The building's outside shows signs of graffiti that has been poorly painted over, and debris is nestled alongside the building. According to city property records, the building has received five notices for trash. Those notices are sent to the property owner, Pretty Pink Houses LLC. Pretty Pink Houses LLC bought the property in 2012 for \$8,550. The DeWitt limited liability company tracks to Mary Hausbeck on Norris Road in DeWitt. She did not return calls seeking comment about this property.

TODD HEYWOOD



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

Regional court & lockup?

Schor pause on City Hall sale could pave way

The announcement Tuesday by Mayor Andy Schor that he has pushed the pause button on the sale and redevelopment of Lansing City Hall is rekindling a discussion to create a regional district court and police lockup facility.

Talk of combining Ingham County's three district courts — 54A in Lansing, 54B in East Lansing and the 55th for the rest of the county — started in 2010 as the local leaders looked for cost savings in the wake of the Great Recession.

"It's time to have that conversation," 55th District Judge Thomas Boyd said Monday in an interview in his chambers. Previous discussions didn't go very far, said Boyd. But a review conducted by the chief judges of each court eight years ago showed combining the courts administration could save as much as \$1.7 million. The savings would come from eliminating duplicated positions such as chief clerk. The plan did not consider combining all the operations into one building.

"I have been in many conversations about locations for Ingham County District courts over the past eight to 10 years," Boyd wrote in an email. He said sites that were brought up included the Frandor shopping

center area and at Jolly and Dunckel roads.

East Lansing Mayor Mark Meadows said the previous recommendations did not find support from the East Lansing City Council or the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office.

"It kind of bit the dust," Meadows said, but he added, "It's still a good plan."

Local leaders, such as Meadows, said they are open to possible partnerships in creating a combined district court lockup facility but caution consolidations could take years.

"I've talked to Andy about what we would hope to achieve out of a consolidation and we're still taking a look at that," said Meadows. "I think he wants to move on his City Hall decision, but what I've tried to make clear is that it's a complicated issue. It is not something that happens overnight."

Ingham County Commissioner Mark Grebner concurred with Meadows.

"We're happy to cooperate," Grebner, an East Lansing Democrat and long-time commissioner, said. "We've been pitching court consolidation over 20 years" to the county Board of Commissioners. "We could never get their interest."

Grebner said the city of East Lansing's



Courtesy Photo

City Hall as revised by Beitler Real Estate of Chicago as a hotel. The Bernero administration selected Beitler's plan, which also called for converting the old Lansing State Journal building into a new City Hall. New Mayor Andy Schor is delaying any such moves until the city decides where to put the courts and lockup, which are part of the current City Hall and were left up in the air in the Bernero proposal.

growing financial concerns give consideration of court consolidation more urgency.

"East Lansing has suddenly noticed that the court is draining money from them, although with fake accounting they can pretend it's not," he said. "And now they want to save a lot of money because they're desperate for cash."

Meadows said the city has been quietly discussing the courts as a cost-saving measure for "some time" but it's been in the shadows.

"It's something that you look at if you

don't have the partners to actually accomplish it, then you sort of upset the court and everybody else with the idea that something might happen when it is far more complicated and difficult than people realize," Meadows said.

Cart before horse?

Schor's decision delays a plan worked out in the last months of the Bernero administration to sell City Hall for rede-

See City Hall, Page 7

BWL

from page 5

plants retiring in 2021 and 2025, respectively, there's no getting around building one more large-scaled baseload generator, Louney said.

"We've got federal capacity requirement we have to meet," Louney said. "We have to get power if everybody turns on their air conditioner at once."

Louney told the opponents of the plant

March 5 that if they don't like the direction the BWL is going, they can lobby for commissioners who are more sympathetic to their

goals.

Chairman David Price's and Second Ward Commissioner Beth Graham's terms expire June 30.

"If you're not getting responses from people, push to get someone who's going to talk to you," Louney said.

"There are some on the board who are



not as active and don't want to be."

Louney's own term at the BWL expired in February to fill the seat left vacant at the beginning of the year, when Schor named former Commissioner Brian McGrain to be the city's director of economic development and planning.

Louney is running for a full term as county commissioner this year. He didn't say if he would step down as BWL com-

missioner if elected.

"Let's just say I'll consider the workload and would re-evaluate it at the end of this year," he said.

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

City Hall

from page 6

velopment as a hotel by a Chicago firm, Beitler Real Estate. In turn, the city would move into the old Lansing State Journal building, on Lenawee Street on the south side of downtown.

The Bernero plan, however, did not determine what would happen with the city's district court or police operations, including a short-term lockup facility, which are housed in the City Hall complex at Michigan and Capitol avenues.

Four proposals for the sale and redevelopment of the complex were considered last year. Mayor Virg Bernero selected Beitler to redevelop the mid-century building. The developer told the Council that it was prepared to invest \$42 million into developing the hotel.

Redevelopment of the LSJ building, also by Beitler, could cost as much as \$50 million, Beitler Real Estate and city officials told the City Council in December. City Council President Carol Wood said city officials last year said the lockup and courts building could cost an additional \$40 million.

But at the breakneck pace set by Bernero, the city would have found itself moving the courts and lockup at least twice before they got into a final location. Schor said that would be hard on the employees and the operations, as well as on citizens.

A critical City Council hammered Bernero administration officials about the missing plans for a police and courts during a Dec. 11 public hearing on the proposals. Grebner called the Bernero plan "half a plan."

Whither City Hall preservation

The delay potentially jeopardizes preserving the current City Hall, considered a significant example of mid-century architecture in mid-Michigan.

Schor said his "preference" remains the Beitler plan, which of the four considered by the Bernero administration best preserved City Hall.

He said Paul Beitler, president of Beitler Real Estate, said he "understood" the reason for the delay "and he said he is still interested in moving forward but we can't lock him into anything until we have an understanding of the timeline, but I still very much like his proposal and we will see what the future holds."

He cautioned, though, that "you never know what's going to happen with the economy, what's going to happen with costs and things, so once we know, you'll know and he'll know and then he will let us know."

Moreover, Schor said that while his preference remains the Beitler plan, "We had four submissions for this building and there could be others."

"If he were to say at some point 'I'm out,' then we would consider other proposals."

Moreover, his preference for the Beitler plan is "not enough to add additional costs."

"The citizens of Lansing have to come first, and they have to have access to courts, we have to have a place to house



Schor

our inmates. So to get out of this building in two or three months into a transitional space not knowing where the courts and the lockup are going to be I believe would be irresponsible on our part."

All he would say about the Bernero administration's decision to move ahead without a plan for the courts and the lockup was,

"They moved on their own timeline."

The only location Schor specifically mentioned as a location for the courts and lockup was the Veterans Memorial Courthouse, on Kalamazoo Street in downtown Lansing, but he did not preclude other sites.

He said the courts and lockup are "separable, but I wouldn't put them too far apart."

East Lansing's Meadows has previously said he had an interest in a shared lockup facility but expressed concern about the time it would take an officer off the road to transport a prisoner to the location. He opposed setting up a joint facility at the Veterans Memorial building, but he said

would be interested in a location nearer the border of Lansing and East Lansing.

Grebner, who chairs the commissioners' finance committee, notes that any deal would ultimately have to be a "good deal" for the county. That means the agreements will have to provide a solid and proven system to pay for the buildings and operations.

Schor said he is interested in having the Ingham County Sheriff's Office operate lockup. "They can take on that liability because this is what they do," said Schor. "I think in my ideal world the county would agree to do a lockup for district and circuit court."

Sheriff Scott Wrigglesworth has previously said he would not be opposed to that, but it would have to be a cost-neutral option. That means the city would have to foot the bill for deputies to staff the facility, cover insurance and other associated costs.

— TODD HEYWOOD

CITY OF LANSING NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION

THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF LANSING, will consider Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants at its regular meeting on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, 10th Floor Lansing City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI

The City Council will hear public comment and consider adoption of the following three (3) Land Acquisition Grants, one (1) River Trail Connection Grant and one (1) Walking Path Development Grant to be located at:

- Acquisition of Willard Avenue Parcel 33-01-01-27-426-001
- Acquisition of 4000 Hunter's Ridge Drive Parcel 23-50-40-25-451-022
- Acquisition of Wise Road Parcel 33-01-05-06-202-021
- Develop the River Trail connection from Cambridge Rd. to Frances Park River Trail
- Develop a One-mile Walking Path within the Rudolph and Dorothy Wilson Park

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

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk
www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk
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CP#18-065

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED MINUTES

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING WAS HELD AT THE TOWNSHIP OFFICES LOCATED AT 3209 WEST MICHIGAN AVENUE, LANSING, MICHIGAN ON TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018, AT 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Hayes, Clerk Aten, Treasurer Rodgers
Trustees: Broughton, Harris, McKenzie, DeLay
MEMBERS ABSENT: None
ALSO PRESENT: Michael Gresens, Attorney

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD:
Meeting called to order by Supervisor Hayes.
Minutes of the meeting held on February 20, 2018 approved.
Agenda approved as amended.
Site plan SPR-17-4 approved with conditions.
Special fund 810 budget amendment approved.
Authorized fire chief to order new truck.
Authorized fire chief to sell old engine #521.
Authorized fire chief to hire replacement firefighters.
Adopted Resolution 18-4: Re-appointments to Planning Commission.
Authorized Clerk to publish annual weed notice.
Adopted Resolution 18-6: Re-appointments to Construction Board of Appeals.
General fund budget amendment #3 approved.
Claims approved.
Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor
Susan L. Aten, Clerk

CP#18-060

CITY OF LANSING NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Act-5-2017, Easement for Consumers Energy's North Lansing Pipeline Project.

The Lansing City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 9, 2018, at 7:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, 10th Floor City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, Michigan, to consider the conveyance of a non-exclusive easement on one City of Lansing property for the Consumers Energy project commonly known as North Lansing Pipeline, a gas distribution line extending from North Grand River Ave., then southwest under the Grand River and across a City of Lansing/LBWL parcel to Melvin Court, then south along the east side of Sunset Ave., then west to run southward, west of and parallel to a Lansing Manufacturers (A.K.A. Jackson and Lansing) Railroad right-of-way to end south of I-496. The easement is on 162 Sunset Ave., and is specifically described as:

That part of Lot 38 of Assessor's Plat No. 11, as recorded in Liber 10 of Plats, Page 14, at the Ingham County Register of Deeds described as: The West 15.00 feet of the following Parcel Description as recorded in Warranty Deed, Liber 599, Page 589, Ingham County Register of Deeds: The South 472.65 feet of Lot 38, Assessor's Plat No. 11, except the West 120 feet of the North 50 feet of said described land.

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

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

CP#18-058

Groundbreaking expected in May for Ingham Co.'s new animal shelter

Last August, Ingham County voters approved a property tax increase to fund a new animal shelter. This week, officials from Ingham County Animal Control unveiled the designs and location for that building.

They also revealed the price tag: \$7.1 million. That's \$300,000 more than the \$6.8 million raised by the millage. John Dinon, director of Ingham County Animal Control, said a nonprofit, the Ingham County Animal Shelter Fund, has pledged to raise the additional \$300,000.

"They've already raised \$100,000," said Dinon of the Ingham County Animal Shelter Fund. "That money will help finish off the costs and if there is more raised? Well we can always find ways to use that."

Dinon said he expects to break ground in May, with a construction period between 10 months and a year.

The new building is a replacement for the county's 47-year-old building. It's unsanitary, cramped and a stressful environment for the animals that are brought in, Dinon said. The current building is 10,500 square feet and every inch is being used. A former custodial closet has been converted into a cat enclosure, while a garage bay has been made into a surgical and medical suite. The entire building shares the same air handling system, allowing airborne infections to spread easily through the animals. That single air handling system also leaves the smell of animal waste and cleaning solu-

tions hanging in the air.

On top of that, the dogs and cats are so close together, barking stresses the cats. In addition, dogs have to be removed from kennels before they can be cleaned. That is potentially dangerous since the shelter is required to house aggressive animals under quarantine after attacking other animals or people.

Using the new money, Dinon and his team will build a 16,000-square-foot facility on county land on the other side of the Sheriff's Office and jail, near the Drain Commissioner's Office on Buhl Street in Mason, not far from the current shelter.

The plans show a facility designed with animal safety and human interactions in mind. It will have two entrances for the public.

"You want to make sure that animals coming in, say a stray, don't interact with animals already here," said Kate Turner, the shelter's outreach manager.

"We don't know

what their health status is, but with this system they can be walked right into medical and vaccinated immediately."

Indeed, the desk designed for surrendering animals is across the hall from a medical suite, which includes a prep area, sur-



Courtesy Photo

John Dinon is executive director of Ingham County Animal Control.



Courtesy Photo

A rendering of the new Ingham County Animal Shelter, designed by the Lansing office of Hobbs+Black Architects of Ann Arbor, with construction by Granger Construction.

gery recovery areas and two surgical bays built specifically for surgeries.

Dogs will be housed in kennels that allow workers to clean them without touching the animals. There will be sliding doors between two equal-sized kennels in the isolation area so that aggressive dogs can be lured into one side while the other is cleaned. In the adoption area for dogs, the same set-up will also exist, but the sliding doors will separate the indoor space from the outdoor space. There will also be several play yards for volunteers and staff to socialize with the dogs, as well as to introduce a family to a dog.

Smaller dogs will have a separate housing space as well, reducing their

stress.

For cats, the space adoption space will be on the opposite side of the building with its own air handling system to keep the temperatures a little bit higher for the felines. It will also include colony rooms, which cats can cohabitate, that attach to an enclosed patio.

"That way when someone says they are looking at an indoor/outdoor cat, we can say here is an idea to allow that to happen but prevent them from harms," said Dinon. Those harms include injuries from fighting or being hit by a car as well as infections such as feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus.

— TODD HEYWOOD



Courtesy Photo

The new shelter will feature kennels similar to those pictured above with glass doors and colorful panels, as opposed to fence-like enclosures in the current shelter (left).

What's in a fee?

City struggles to fully explain what pot licensing fees pay for

Lansing's top two elected officials are quick to justify the \$5,000 fee the city's new ordinance is charging annually for medical marijuana facility licenses.

"The enforcement and police effort are going to cost more than what we anticipate bringing in with the fees," Mayor Andy Schor said.

Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope said the city will at best break even on regulating the businesses paying the fees.

But press them on details and they get, well, vague.

The city has collected \$725,000 from 145 applicants. It stands to keep as much as \$562,500, and that's not a one-time potential windfall. Annual renewals are \$5,000 as well.

The story that expenses will justify the fees traces back to City Attorney Jim Smiertka, according to City Council President Carol Wood. She said Smiertka had been noting the likelihood of costs exceeding revenues dating back almost a year.

Wood said determining the true cost of the additional work would require sanctioning a time study, which she said she assumed would back up Smiertka's narrative. That time study would need to demonstrate how city time will add up to \$5,000 a year per marijuana business, presumably for policing and building inspections.

Smiertka did not respond to requests for comment. He could not be asked whether, for example, the fee is based not on antic-



Swope

ipated expenses but on getting the city the maximum it could collect — which under state law is \$5,000. As in, these businesses are rolling in it, so charge them the max.

Time will tell if the pot fee passes the smell test.

"The license application process is ongoing, so it is difficult to say whether the amount of revenue received will offset costs to the city," said Valerie

Marchand, communications manager for the city of Lansing. In other words, she's not sure the licensing fees will pay the city's full expenses.

If the fees are higher than actual costs, then they are not really fees. They're a tax, and a tax requires public approval in Michigan. That's the result of a Michigan Supreme Court ruling from 1999 over Lansing's rain fee that constrained how much a municipality can charge for fees before it becomes a tax, requiring voter approval. The city attorney who lost that case? You guessed it: Smiertka.

Here's where the city's haul is coming from: 85 applicants for dispensary licenses; 44 from growers; 14 from processors and one from a transporter; and one more for a testing facility. Those are the five types of licenses the new state law allows.

Half of the city's \$5,000 fee will be refunded to applicants who are denied licenses. That will be the case for at least 65 of the 85 provisioning center applicants in this first round of applications, because of a ceiling the City Council put on the number

of dispensaries. The city ordinance allows 25 dispensaries, but there will be a second round starting in November for the other five.

Eighteen applications — all provisioning centers — have already been denied, according to city records. These applicants may have appeals pending before the clerk or the city's Medical Marijuana Commission, which will hold its next meeting on April 20.

Requests for comment from the Lansing Police Department for the specific costs and added responsibilities of enforcing the city's marijuana facility licensing ordinance were forwarded to Marchand, who said LPD is working in concert with other city departments on enforcement measures related to marijuana.

The city has been able to determine one exact cost. To assist in the application review process, Swope's office brought in ICF Inc., to the tune of up to \$80,000.

ICF is responsible for reviewing application materials like business plans and financial statements, as well as providing feedback on how licenses should be distrib-

uted.

"Scoring the applications is a huge project, but there's also all the review of the applications by various departments of the city," Swope said. "Are the buildings up to code, is their zoning correct — all those departmental checks to make sure that they meet the requirements of the city ordinance."

It costs even more to apply for a state license: \$6,000.

And an applicant could be on the hook for additional state fees if the cost of processing the application exceeds the original \$6,000, said David Harns of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

Harns said if an applicant was a large company with many individuals to investigate, or if they had a long legal history requiring an in-depth investigation, those additional fees might be necessary.

On top of \$11,000 annually in state and city licensing fees, businesses will be required to pay a regulatory assessment fee to the state.

The fees for recipients of a Class A grower license — good for up to 500 plants — will be capped at \$10,000. For all other facilities, this could run anywhere from \$10,000 to as high as \$57,000, depending on the number of licenses granted.

— MAXWELL EVANS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING EAST LANSING ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearing to be held by the East Lansing Zoning Board of Appeals on **Wednesday, April 11, 2018**, beginning at 7:00 p.m., in the 54 B District Court, Courtroom 1, 101 Linden Street, East Lansing:

A public hearing will be held to consider a variance request from Mohamed Shetiah for the property located at 947 Trowbridge Road, in the B-2, Retail Sales Business District from the following requirement of Chapter 50 – Zoning Code of the City of East Lansing:

Section 50-813(2) – Minimum number of stacking spaces for restaurant uses of 10 per window. The applicant is proposing a Biggby coffee shop with a drive thru window with six stacking spaces.

Call (517) 319-6930, the Department of Planning, Building and Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, for additional information. All persons interested in these appeals will be given an opportunity to be heard.

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 should write or call the Department of Planning, Building and Development, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823. Phone: (517) 319-6930. TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#18-062

B/18/065 RIVERTRAIL REPAIRS as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing. The City of Lansing will accept sealed bids at the City of Lansing, Purchasing Office C/O LBWL, 1232 Haco Dr, Lansing, Michigan 48912 until **2:00 PM** local time in effect on **APRIL 10, 2018** at which time bids will be publicly opened and read. **Complete specifications and forms required to submit bids are available by calling Stephanie Robinson at (517) 702-6197, email: stephanie.robinson@lbwl.com or go to www.mitn.info.** The City of Lansing encourages bids from all vendors including MBE/WBE vendors and Lansing-based businesses

CP#18-064

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS EAST LANSING PLANNING COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearings to be held by the East Lansing Planning Commission on **Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.**, in the 54-B District Court, Courtroom 2, 101 Linden Street, East Lansing:

1. A public hearing will be held to consider a Site Plan application from EL 16, LLC, for the property at 1001 East Grand River Avenue, to construct a 1,858 square foot building addition and associated site improvements. The property is located in the B-2, Retail Sales Business zoning district.


2. A public hearing will be held to consider a Modified Site Plan and Special Use Permit application from Burcham Hills Retirement Center, for the property at 2700 Burcham Drive, for a four story (49 feet) building addition, including underground parking, to the existing continuing care retirement facility. The proposed building addition will include 16 one-bedroom residential units and 60 two-bedroom residential units. The property is located in the RM-8, Planned Unit Development zoning district.

Call (517) 319-6930, the Department of Planning, Building and Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, for additional information. All interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard. These matters will be on the agenda for the next Planning Commission meeting after the public hearing is held, at which time the Commission may vote on them. The Planning Commission's recommendations are then placed on the agenda of the next City Council meeting. The City Council will make the final decision on these applications.

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 should write or call the Planning Department, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823. Phone: (517) 319-6930. TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#18-061



Library of Michigan's
MICHIGAN
NOTABLE BOOKS
2018

20 Books Celebrating Michigan People, Places & Events

Arthur Vandenberg: The Man in the Middle of the American Century,
 by Hendrik Meijer, University of Chicago Press Books

August Snow,
 by Stephen Mack Jones, Soho Press

Black Detroit: A People's History of Self-Determination,
 by Herb Boyd, Amistad/HarperCollins

Brewed in Michigan: The New Golden Age of Brewing in the Great Beer State,
 by William Rapai, Wayne State University Press/Painted Turtle

The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits,
 by Tiya Miles, The New Press

The Death and Life of the Great Lakes,
 by Dan Egan, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Designing Detroit: Wirt Rowland and the Rise of Modern American Architecture,
 by Michael G. Smith, Wayne State University Press

Detroit 1967: Origins, Impacts, Legacies,
 ed. by Joel Stone, Wayne State University Press/Painted Turtle

The Goat Fish and the Lover's Knot,
 by Jack Driscoll, Wayne State University Press

Grown-Up Anger: The Connected Mysteries of Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, and the Calumet Massacre of 1913, by Daniel Wolff, HarperCollins

Harborless,
 by Cindy Hunter Morgan, Wayne State University Press

The Kelloggs: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek,
 by Howard Markel, Pantheon Books

Marlena: A Novel,
 by Julie Buntin, Henry Holt and Company

The Marsh King's Daughter,
 by Karen Dionne, G.P. Putnam's Sons

Rowing Inland,
 by Jim Daniels, Wayne State University Press

Sailing into History: Great Lakes Bulk Carriers of the Twentieth Century and the Crews Who Sailed Them, by Frank Boles, Michigan State University Press

Saving Arcadia: A Story of Conservation and Community in the Great Lakes,
 by Heather Shumaker, Wayne State University Press/Painted Turtle

We're Going to Be Friends,
 by Jack White and illustrated by Elinor Blake, Third Man Books

The Year of the Pitcher: Bob Gibson, Denny McLain, and the End of Baseball's Golden Age, by Sridhar Pappu, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Zingerman's Bakehouse,
 by Amy Emberling and Frank Carollo, Chronicle Books

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Proposal seeks to curb laughing gas abuse

By BAILEY LASKE
 Capital News Service

LANSING — A bill awaiting Senate action would make it harder for people under 18 to misuse potentially dangerous nitrous oxide — better known as laughing gas.

Commonly known as “whip-its” — small metal containers made to refill canisters in restaurants and bakeries — they give people who inhale the nitrous oxide a short-lived euphoric high, said Scott Masi, an outreach and referral specialist at Brighton Center for Recovery in Brighton and the founder of the nonprofit Unite to Face Addiction.

According to Masi, whip-its can be sold at liquor stores and gas stations, available to anybody who walks in the door.

Although people of all ages can get high with nitrous oxide, it's popular among youth because they often have a hard time getting alcohol and other drugs, said Brad Uren, a co-chair of the committee on state legislation and regulations at the Michigan State Medical Society in East Lansing.

Masi said that because of its easy accessibility, whip-its are viewed as far less harmful than they actually are.

For example, Masi went through a period of his life when he struggled with drug addiction. During that time, he did whip-its, and he said there's not enough public understanding of their dangers.

According to Masi, the high is very

short-lived so many people do a lot of inhalations in a short time.

According to Eden Wells, the chief medical executive at the Department of Health and Human Services, there are a myriad of negative effects.

Upon inhalation, brain cells are damaged. When the nitrous oxide is released it gets extremely cold and can result in frostbite, Wells said.

The use of whip-its has been linked to anemia, convulsions and death, she said.

And according to Wells, nitrous oxide is addictive and should be treated as such.

The bill wouldn't eliminate other ways youth get access to nitrous oxide. According to Masi, even cans of whipped cream at the grocery store contain nitrous oxide that can be used to get high.

Sponsors of the proposal include Reps.

Scott Dianda, D-Calumet, and Beth Griffin, R-Mattawan.

The bill covers only containers that contain only nitrous oxide. That would leave many other ways in which people can get high in the same way.

Even so Uren, Masi and Wells all said the bill would be a step in the right direction.

Uren said it's important that those products are no longer sold in places where they're obviously not going to be used correctly.

“When bakery owners need to buy more supplies for their business, they aren't going to go to a liquor store,” he said.

Uren said education is another big part of reducing the improper use of nitrous oxide.

The bill has passed the House and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.



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Some colleges tackle homeless students' problems

By **AGNES BAO**
Capital News Service

LANSING — Although homeless college students have access to various types of assistance, many are reluctant to be identified as homeless because of stigma, experts say.

“There is a sense of denial about what homelessness actually is,” said Lynn Stufin, a public information officer at the Department of Health and Human Services.

“Stable housing is a stressor for many individuals,” Stufin said. Being identified as homeless may bring “stress they are unable or unwilling to handle at that time.”

Pam Kies-Lowe, the coordinator for homeless education at the Department of Education, said, “Lots of folks think about the homeless as bad people in the park, or they think the homeless are on the corner of an intersection with signs saying ‘homeless and hungry.’”

However, an invisible group of homeless consists of students, Kies-Lowe said. They don’t live on the street and some of the older ones who are unaccompanied by parents stay with their friends or relatives.

The definition of homeless children and youth isn’t limited to those sleeping on the streets, but also includes lacking a regular nighttime residence, sharing housing or sleeping in places that aren’t supposed to be a regular accommodations, according to federal law.

More awareness and better identification of homeless students are needed, Kies-Lowe said.

“The whole experience of being homeless hurts their mental health a lot more than being identified, because once they are identified we connect them with the services and support they need to stay and succeed in school,” she said.

Those services typically include financial aid, housing, food and transporta-

tion. Wayne State University launched the HIGH (Helping Individuals Go Higher) program for homeless students in 2013.

The program aims at helping homeless, precariously housed and financially challenged students to earn their degree and prevent them from dropping out because of financial problems.

“Sixty-one percent of the applicants are seniors, and so we do what we can to provide a bridge so that they graduate,” said Pearlanne Pollard, the program’s executive assistant.

“At the point, we have a 100 percent graduation rate of our seniors that come in [to the program],” Pollard said. But still, many homeless students haven’t been identified yet.

As homeless students don’t necessarily sleep on the street, “we don’t have any way of identifying them,” she said. If they don’t apply for the program, “then we don’t know who they are.”

The HIGH program puts in great efforts on reaching out to potentially homeless students through social media, flyers, deans, advisers, financial aid staff and a welcome center.

Michael Hansen, the president of the Michigan Community College Association, said the challenges facing homeless students are a growing concern.

“The colleges in the state are not really set up to deal with homeless students,” Hansen said. Connecting them with local agencies and organizations is better.

Colleges are educational institutions and aren’t experts on homelessness, he said. “But we are doing what we can to connect homeless students to appropriate services and service providers.”

Eastern Michigan University and Washtenaw Community College collaborate with the MORE Support program provided by Ozone House, which is a nonprofit agency based in Ypsilanti with the goal of helping young homeless peo-

ple. The MORE Support program partners with campus “coaches” to provide health care for homeless students.

Many problems cause homeless students to suffer trauma, including abuse, the disruption of care and changes in housing, said Dave Zellmer, the program’s therapist.

Partnering with colleges reduces the barrier for students who need care, Zellmer said. “The stigma around homelessness can make it hard for students to talk about that, and they might not want other people to know.”

The program isn’t about labeling homeless people but it’s about providing support for students and making sure they get what they need to succeed in

school, he said.

With the program’s mental health care, 80 percent of participants showed reductions in traumatic stress and 75 percent demonstrated reductions in symptoms related to depression and anxiety, according to Ozone House.

They also had higher class attendance rates and higher academic achievement, the agency said.

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
INGHAM COUNTY
CIRCUIT COURT**

NOTICE OF HEARING

In the matter of Larry Lee Nixon

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including: Ray Nixon & Larry Travino, 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 04/12/2018 at 1:30 AM, at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933 before Judge Economy for the following purpose(s):

Petition for probate and/or appointment of personal representative.

If you require special accommodations to use the court because of a disability, or if you require a foreign language interpreter to help you fully participate in court proceedings, please contact the court immediately to make arrangements.

Date: 03/21/2018
LoAlice Jackson
2006 Georgetown Blvd. #2
Lansing, MI, 48911

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
EAST LANSING CITY COUNCIL**

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearing to be held by the East Lansing City Council on **Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.**, Council Chambers, 101 Linden Street, to consider the following:

Ordinance 1422: An ordinance to Amend Sections 8-181 and 8-182 Of Division 1 – Generally – of Article IV – Restaurants and Take-Out Stores of Chapter 8 – Businesses – of the Code of The City of East Lansing. Ordinance 1422 proposes to repeal the standards set for establishments selling alcoholic beverages related to food to alcohol sales ratios and associated reporting, commonly known as the 50/50 rule.

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable accommodations, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at this meeting, upon notice to the City of East Lansing, prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should write or call the City Manager’s Office, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 (517) 319-6920, TDD 1-800-649-3777.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#18-063

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With spring comes Shuto Con and its devoted fans

Why the anime convention is 'home' for so many

By SKYLER ASHLEY

For the past seven years, a telltale sign spring has begun in Lansing is not just the blooming of trees or melting of snow, but the appearance of several thousand anime fans roaming in costumes along the city's riverfront — to the awe, or ire, of bewildered onlookers.

"We went to the local colleges and said, 'We're putting on an anime convention, you guys should come!' We expected about 300 people, and we wound up with 1,300," Shuto Con founder Stefanie Shall said, recalling the convention's 2011 debut.

Shuto Con

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www.shutocon.com

Lansing's eighth annual Shuto Con begins Thursday at the Lansing Center.

What exactly is an anime convention? If you're familiar with any typical gathering of comic book fans, you're not far off. The primary difference is swapping Batman for Pikachu.

The trappings of Shuto Con include dressing in costume — in this instance known as cosplay — video game tournaments, a bustling marketplace of Japanese toys and electronics, dance parties and a variety of panelists. Essentially, it's a three-day sensory overload for Lansing anime fans.

"I had always been interested in anime conventions, but I didn't know there was one so close to where I live," Shuto Con frequenter Kelsea O'Meara, 24, said. "My husband said, 'You should go with me!' We went and I've been hooked ever since."

Conventions like Shuto Con are attractive to many because they offer opportunities for fans to meet the talent behind the anime industry. These casual interactions between fans and creators or actors aren't as commonplace with other media and helps to make anime more of a lifestyle than merely a hobby.

Talking with congoers revealed that Shuto Con doesn't just provide a space to geek out for a weekend. Depending on the person, Shuto Con can resonate with their deepest personal emotions. Many congoers describe their favorite anime conventions as a second home.

"It's a little sentimental. I call Shuto Con my 'home con.' By way of my husband, I've introduced my brother and his children, and now my mother is going for the first time this year," O'Meara said.

Anime conventions are described by certain congoers as one of few places they feel completely socially uninhibited. The masquerade like environment provides a strong social lubricant, allowing wallflowers to finally feel not so self-conscious.

"Part of it comes from the fact that we're not appearing as ourselves. It takes away a certain measure of insecurity, because people aren't seeing our real selves," Shuto Con first-timer Rachel Walkowski, 20, said. "They're seeing a character. There's this particular feeling of contentment and gratification when somebody yells out your character's name and gets super excited to see you."

"I can't just yell out to somebody on the street, 'Hey girl with the green hair, you look so cute!' Whereas at a con, it's a more open atmosphere," Walkowski added.

With a wide-open and free environment for all types of social interaction comes a feeling of unity between congoers.

"There's always a great sense of community and a willingness to be accepted for whoever and whatever you are. I myself became more accepting of people doing all sorts of fun stuff," Shuto Con regular Jaime Peralez, 41, said. "As long as you're having fun, why not enjoy yourself? That's the spirit I feel when I'm over there. There's a great sense of camaraderie."



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

(Left) Alex Kearns gets on one knee to propose to his now wife, Brandy Kearns. (Above) She said yes!



Courtesy photo

Shuto Con's mascot Sumi-jaki.

Peralez has traveled from South Dakota to attend Shuto Con with his wife Sarah Vaa since 2014, where the two find time to bond over their mutual love for cosplay and anime. Like the Peralezes, many congoers' romantic relationships are either formed or developed at anime conventions.

When the question, "How did you meet your significant other?" gets asked on Shuto Con's community Facebook page, there is a surprising amount of responses that answer, well, at Shuto Con. These couples explain how their chemistry developed with answers often as simple as just liking the same anime. During the cosplay contest at last year's Shuto Con, congoer Alex Kearns proposed to his girlfriend, now Brandy Kaye Kearns, onstage before a crowd of several hundred.

For some congoers, cosplay is the only thing that matters. Many attendees will visit conventions solely to show off cosplays of their own, or to admire the work of others.

Those possessing exceptional talents with a thread and needle have even made careers out of cosplay, akin to internet celebrities that make a living off social media.

See Shuto Con, Page 13

Shuto Con

from page 12

They travel from con to con seeking the sometimes lucrative top prizes from cosplay contests. Or they simply earn cash through commissions from anime fans hoping to dress to impress.

“I got into cosplay after making a Halloween costume with a friend, based on a show we both liked,” avid cosplayer Kristie Good, 36, said. “Then I found out you could go to year-round conventions where there’s other people dressed up, and I was like ‘This is the best!’”

Good doesn’t select which costumes to craft solely by aesthetics, but by how strongly she relates with the character. The clothing in that regard becomes a flamboyant expression of personality and identity.

While outsiders may jeer at poorly constructed outfits, of which there are often many, it’s hard to hate a homemade mecha-suit costume that appears to have stepped straight off a manga page.

“There are some people that say, ‘Oh, it’s not true cosplay if you didn’t make it yourself,’ but there’s a much larger part of the community that says, ‘Are you in costume, are you having fun? Then, yes, you’re in cosplay,’” Good said. “To me it’s all about having fun. Cosplay is for everyone, even if you can’t sew or think you’re not the right body shape, you can still cosplay. Don’t let anything stop you.”

Shuto Con has a staunch safe space policy, where nobody is allowed to make others feel uncomfortable based on any aspect of their identity, be it race, gender or sexual orientation. But Raya Ghist, a black cosplayer, 18, said there could still be improvement within the community.

“Despite how much we’ve grown in accepting people of different shapes and skin tones in cosplay, there’s always going to



Courtesy photo

Shuto Con cosplayers use EVA foam to craft impressive homemade armor.

be those few that have a disdain for someone in their cosplay, because they’re not the correct height, weight or skin tone,” Ghist said. “When I cosplayed as Mercy from Overwatch, I got a lot of positivity, but there were people that said, ‘Isn’t she white? Isn’t she Caucasian? Why are you cosplaying her?’”

Shuto Con is also notable for its vendor room, where over 50 merchants from around the country trade wares. Some vendors make their living on the conven-

tion circuit, like Shawna Bourne of Geeky Endeavors.

“This life is definitely not for everyone, it’s hard. From the long hours of travel to not knowing if your show will be successful and if you will have to tighten your belt for awhile,” Bourne said. “Conventions are very hit and miss, and oversaturation is a real thing. We watch the economy closely.”

The anime community was at first only an extension of Shuto Con founder Stefanie Shall’s hobbies, but with the growth of Shuto Con, it has effectively taken over her life. But, like most that have made a career out of a passion, she’s not complaining. Her devotion is perhaps best summed up by the tattoo directly on her heart of the con’s mascot, a cartoon imp named Sumi-jaki.

Shall and her staff are doing something right, as Shuto Con manages to continuously attract thousands. That original number of 1,300 in 2011, has since climbed to nearly 6,500 paid attendees

in 2017. It’s not too unrealistic to expect that one day, especially as it draws increasing attention nationally, Shuto Con could break 10,000 — sealing its status as one

of the biggest annual events in Lansing.

Shall’s love for anime conventions was developed during her college days in Jacksonville, Florida. Upon making her return to mid-Michigan, she was surprised by the lack of a similar scene up north.

“There was a convention in my area of Florida every single weekend, it was something I grew accustomed to. When I moved up to Michigan in 2009, at the time, there wasn’t a lot here, there was Youmacon in Detroit and JAFAX in Grand Rapids,” Shall explained. “I wanted something in Lansing, because there wasn’t anything in the middle ground of the state.”

After conceiving of the initial idea, Shall consulted Youmacon and JAFAX’s organizers, receiving their blessings, so long as her convention wouldn’t create a schedule conflict for potential attendees.

Shall’s experience running the anime club at her school in Florida put her in close contact with the heads of several Florida based conventions. She already had a picture in her head of how she would pull off one of her own.

“Running the club, I got to know a lot of the organizers that were putting on the events down there,” Shall said. “The leadership I learned from the club helped me out when I was starting to put together a small staff to run Shuto Con’s different departments.”

Shall’s team managed to rent out the Lansing Center and book a lineup of guests to provide the day’s entertainment without much trouble. But they found themselves caught off-guard and in a frantic environment when more than double the people they expected turned up.

“We were scrambling around the entire time, because we had no idea how to handle everything. But, it was a happy thing to happen to us, and because of that we were able to continue on each year,” Shall said.

Though Shall is the face of Shuto Con, she makes it known that the convention is an impossible feat without her employees.

“My staff have really stepped up this year by helping me handle the many aspects of the convention that I normally would have taken on myself,” Shall said. “I can’t thank them enough for that. We’re all dedicated to making this year great.”



Shall



Courtesy photo

A group of cosplayers dressed as characters from the anime “Love Live!”

ARTS & CULTURE

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Enlightening an institution Folk Festival facing retooling for a 2019 return

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Too old and too white.

Those are major reasons the Great Lakes Folk Festival won't return to East Lansing next year.

"The main demographic for the festival is older, white and middle class," said Mark Auslander, director of the MSU Museum, which has coordinated the event since 2002. "We can, I think, do better. We have diverse kinds of performance groups, but nowhere near the kind of diversity that reflects what greater Lansing has."

It's not out of step for Auslander. When City Pulse profiled the newly arrived museum director last year, he said museums should challenge themselves to "tear down walls" socially. Auslander was tasked in the late '90s to broaden the demographic of the Smithsonian's Africa exhibit, which — before his adjustments — was criticized for feeling too voyeuristic and attracting few black visitors.

"We're reimagining the planning process so that historically excluded voices are centrally involved in this. It's going to be fantastic, otherwise, it's just the same old thing over and over again," Auslander explained. "I don't think any of us want to be reproducing the same festival that existed in 2003. Art is like a shark, if it doesn't go forward it sinks."

Though a revamped version will appear in 2019, the Great Lakes name, according to the co-founder and longtime festival director, Marsha MacDowell, is likely to be retired for good. MacDowell said the museum's new vision under Auslander will probably see an entirely different event rise from her festival's ashes.

Under her direction, MacDowell said the festival had been working hard to diversify

its target audience — one of Auslander's key points of contention.

MacDowell offered several examples, such as sending fliers to black church bulletins, printing festival literature in several languages and providing festival information to regional Native American pow-wows.

MacDowell also cited the help she had promoting the festival from WKAR's Spanish language radio host, El Chayo Cervantes, in hopes of reaching beyond a white audience.

But MacDowell wasn't too quick to jump onboard with Auslander's assessment that the festival was suffering from a lack of diversity. What Auslander hopes for, according to MacDowell, might prove more difficult than he imagines.

"It's hard to do. We've had studies done that gathered information that showed the demographics of the festival reflected the population of Lansing," MacDowell said. "Cultural organizations in general can struggle to attract what's outside of their demographic."

"If you look at past groups that have been onstage, they are not all old and they are not all white. The question is, 'How do you draw those communities in?'" said Ten Pound Fiddle booking manager Sally Potter.

Potter argues that the suddenness of the announcement and the bad taste left in the mouths of many, may harm Auslander's ability to retain community support through the reconfiguration process.

"The irony is you need community members to help you. If you're gonna pull the rug out from under your community, you might not get any help when you need them," Potter continued.

While MacDowell and the greater Lansing folk music community worry the year-long delay will crush public interest in future



City Pulse Archives

MSU Museum Director Mark Auslander wants an "edgier" event for East Lansing.

events, Auslander sees it as the only effective option. He believes that only taking a few months to reconfigure the festival would result in changes that are simply "tacked on."

"The problem is, when a group of well-meaning, privileged white people get together and say, 'We're going to add on a little bit of underrepresented folks,' that is not a serious solution," Auslander said. "A serious solution is saying, 'We're all going to learn together and the white folks involved are going to critically examine their own white privilege and class privilege.'"

Auslander detailed the process of his solution as one where the board of organizers closely consults and integrates a group comprising diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds.

"Sure, the easy thing is to keep doing the same thing with just a little bit of addition," Auslander said. "But, if we're serious about transformation, if we're really going to change the nature of the cultural conver-

sation, sometimes you have to slow things down to bring everybody together and move things forward."

But Auslander and the MSU Museum aren't looking toward retooling the festival on their own. Auslander is pushing for stronger collaboration between the museum and the city, in an effort to create a "mixed form of governance." Auslander said this entails discussions between the city, artists and the public about what can "push the envelope" and what needs to "absolutely stay and be repeated."

"Everyone is worried that there isn't going to be traditional music. In fact, we expect there's going to be a lot of folk and traditional music in the months ahead. Part of the planning process is creating jam sessions and juxtapositions of different performing artists," Auslander said. "So we need music throughout the whole process. I think people will ultimately be pleased and excited with the results."

Deep down soul Steve Wilson digs in for weeklong residency at MSU

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Monday afternoon, Steve Wilson, a compact, laser-focused jazz saxophonist from New York, turned the exotic tent setting of "Caravan" into a benign crime scene.

He started with quick stabs, like a dagger poking through a red silk veil. The stabs elongated into slashes, running up and down until streams of sound flew like ribbons in the convection currents of a red-hot rhythm section.

On the first day of a week-long whirlwind of classes, performances and trips with MSU students to Michigan high schools, Wilson joined the Professors of Jazz for a scorching gig at the headquarters of the MSU Federal Credit Union, sponsor of four jazz residencies every year. Wilson will team up with the student big bands for a concert Thursday at MSU's

Fairchild Theatre.

The hall was packed with people, with standees against the wall and students dancing in the wings. After trading licks with the professors, Wilson shook his head in amazement.

"I've taught in a lot of great programs, but this one stands out," he said as he took his sax apart and put it away. "I've never seen anything like this, including Juilliard, or anywhere else."

For Charlie Parker's "Parker's Mood," the rest of the horn players took a walk while Wilson dug into the blues so deeply he might as well have poured a half-thousand whiskey sours, lit as many unfiltered cigarettes and passed them out to everyone in the place.

Freshman saxophone student Sam Corey stood in the wings, slack-jawed. "That was incredible," Corey said. "He plays with such soul, deep down."



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

MSU jazz professors Rodney Whitaker, Randy Gelispie, Diego Rivera, Michael Dease and Etienne Charles perform with guest artist-in-residence Steve Wilson (far right) Monday at the MSU Federal Credit Union.

with, they come prepared, rooted in tradition and knowing what the deal is," he said.

Wilson, 57, is not the biggest name in jazz, but he's made over 150 recordings and is often called a "musician's musician" and a tireless educator.

"It's common to find that students at this stage are trying to get the mechanics of your instrument, and of the music," he said. "I was at that stage myself at one time, but this music means nothing without a cultural context. It's about our humanity."

In his teen years, Wilson played in symphonic band and marching band in his home

"We are re-discovering the blues on a bunch of levels," Wilson said after the gig.

Wilson said he's worked with several MSU graduates after they went on to graduate studies in New York.

"Every one of the grads I've worked

town of Hampton, Virginia, while playing in a garage band on weekends. He went on the road, playing R&B and funk.

In 1987, after signing with Blue Note Records, Wilson moved to New York, where he got a gig with Hampton, a living legend of the big band era and pioneer of jump blues and rock and roll.

"Even with the wonderful academic setting that has proliferated in the last 40 or 50 years, it's still an oral tradition, a folk music," Wilson said. "There are things you can only learn from older peers and mentors."

Lately, Wilson has been working with one of the greatest of them all, 80-year-old bassist Ron Carter, a mainstay of Miles Davis' second great quartet and a scheduled guest at MSU's Jazz Spectacular in April.

"These great leaders and legends — they're in their 70s and 80s but they're not coasting," Wilson said. "They want to know what's next. Charlie Parker was trying to find the next thing up until the day he died."

Wilson has played with everyone from Lionel Hampton to Joe Henderson and Chick Corea, but playing with the MSU professors, he said, is the "real deal."

"I've taught in a lot of great programs, but this one stands out," Wilson said. "It's rooted. They take all of that history with them. Every one of those cats on the bandstand takes you to another level, make you want to reach higher."

Cellist from Piano Island

Hong Hong takes center stage at Lansing Symphony

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Hong Hong is one of the most watchable musicians in the Lansing Symphony. When he takes a solo, he channels a dark, liquid tone from a trance-like zone only he can reach. As section leader, he pulls at the oars like Agamemnon when the ship goes into ramming speed.

Lansing Symphony Orchestra

Hong Hong, cellist
8 p.m. Saturday, March 24
Wharton Center Cobb
Great Hall

After seven years with the orchestra, four of them as principal cellist, Hong will get his first solo spotlight Saturday, playing the first cello

concerto by Camille Saint-Saens.

"I hear so many comments from audience members who really enjoy him as a musician," LSO maestro Timothy Muffitt said. "He's a very strong musical personality and something of an audience favorite."

Hong seems game for anything.

He was yanked onto the Scottish highlands for a stomping 2016 LSO encore by guest violinist Rachel Barton Pine and Scottish fiddler Tim McDonald. While the two fiddlers jigged and reeled, Hong set them up with a resonant drone and earthy harmonies.

"We only had one rehearsal, about 10 or 15 minutes, then we went onstage," Hong recalled. "It was really cool. It was my first time doing that kind of music and I hope I get another chance."

Hong hails from the tiny island of Gulangyu, a dot on the map that's barely 500 acres in size but is so rich in beautiful architecture and natural beauty it has been named a UNESCO World Heritage site.

"It's like a smaller version of Mackinac Island," Hong said. "There are no motor vehicles and everybody gets around by walking." Even bicycles aren't allowed in the island's narrow streets.

Gulangyu also has China's only piano museum, and the most pianos per capita of any place in China — hence its nickname, "Piano Island." Several of China's foremost classical musicians hail from there.

So it's no surprise that Hong started on piano, but that doesn't make you stand out much on Piano Island. At the relatively late age of 13, a teacher suggested he take up the cello.

"I had no idea about the cello at first," Hong said. "But I loved it better than the piano."

When asked to name a favorite cellist, Hong bypasses legends like Pablo Casals, Mstislav Rostropovich and Yo-Yo Ma and instantly names his MSU professor, Suren Bagratuni. Hong has been studying with Bagratuni at MSU since 2012, after studying in Singapore and at the Peabody Institute near Baltimore.

"I was shy at first and he gave me confidence," Hong said. "You have to enjoy the music, don't think too much."

When Hong's MSU studies are over, he'll probably gravitate to greener lands, but for now, he's savoring the best of Lansing, which he called a "second home." He loves the Old Town restaurant Meat and enjoys trips to northern Michigan and Chicago whenever possible.

"It's an excellent orchestra," Hong said. "Timothy Muffitt has brought it to a higher ground. Everyone prepares before the rehearsal and that makes it a good atmosphere,



Courtesy photo

After seven years as an audience favorite, Lansing Symphony principal cellist Hong Hong gets his first solo spotlight Saturday.

very happy."

A hypnotic, tender solo in Stravinsky's "Firebird" in 2015 is one of many memorable Hong Hong moments over the years. He had a ball playing the "William Tell" Overture in his first year. "I got a very big solo, unforgettable," he said with a laugh.

Besides his piano-playing father, his mother is a singer and his wife is an organist and pianist. They play together at home and perform onstage together. Hong's classical tastes lean toward meaty stuff like Prokofiev and Brahms, but he loves pop and jazz too.

The Saint-Saens concerto means a lot to Hong. It was the first concerto he learned, as a teenager, and his audition piece to get into MSU.

"It's very interesting," he said. "The second

movement is really lovely, but the whole concerto is really one movement. I can't wait. I'm a little nervous and very excited."

Saturday's closer is the joyful, brisk Symphony No. 3 by Finnish master Jean Sibelius, but the opener will be a bittersweet moment for Lansing-area music lovers. It's a rare treat to hear the lyrical music of James Niblock, who was head of MSU's music department in the 1950s through the '70s and concertmaster of the LSO for 15 years. Saturday's performance of Niblock's "Three American Dances" was intended to cap a celebration of Niblock's 100th birthday, which he marked last fall, with the composer in attendance. But Niblock died at his East Lansing home Jan. 3, so the performance will serve as both memorial and celebration.

Neither farce nor melodrama

'Lily, The Felon's Daughter' swings and misses

By TOM HELMA

Some call the genre farce, others melodrama. Riverwalk Theatre's current production

Review

"Lily, The Felon's Daughter"

March 15-18 & March 22-25
7 p.m. Thursdays,
8 p.m. Fridays and
Saturdays
Location: 228 Museum
Dr., Lansing
Price: \$10 (adults) \$8
(children)
www.riverwalktheatre.com

of "Lily, The Felon's Daughter," however, lacks the buffoonery and exaggerative bluster to qualify for one or the other.

It's hard to resurrect a theater chestnut about the gay nineties, and why bother. Especially when it's been done more than a handful of times over the years in mid-Mich-

igan theater venues.

Walking into the theater, one observes Bob Nees' intricate set design, a highly convincing Victorian-era sitting room. Exotic set dressing by Carol Ferris and unique properties provided by Sharon Straubel and Althea Phillips, contribute nuance and subtlety.

Soon after, Jacqueline Payne enters, costumed as Mrs. Bloodgood, a landlord with a broom, to announce cleverly an imperative for audience members to silence their cell phones.

As the story begins to unfold, however, the men's costuming is distracting. In an era of sartorial precision, coat sleeves are too long while pants are both too short and too long. Some suits are wrinkled, sports coats are mismatched by color and black shoes, somehow, are worn with brown clothes.

Jan Ross as Betsy Fairweather, comes onstage, faring much better. Her magenta gown

is resplendent with a subtle design, but this is contrasted by the drape-shroud of the dress worn by Lily, her daughter (played by Monica Holland).

One is finally brought back to the story by Tom Klunzinger as "Rob and Steal" (Robin Steele), whose characterization of a petty thief comes right out of Oliver Twist.

Riverwalk's program suggests that several actors are making their debut on the Riverwalk stage. It shows. This production of "Lily," is a tedious decaffeinated version of a melodrama.

There are moments that are amusing. Two actors squint to read the inscription on a wedding ring. They keep describing paragraph after paragraph of what they suggest is written inside the ring. Ha!

Jim Coyer is Craven Sinclair, the designated villain. He slinks across the stage effectively, twirling his moustache in a most dastardly manner. Newcomer Candace Seymour Myers, in a bit part as Mrs. Kingsley, steals the stage in her two moments of local fame.



Courtesy photo

Jim Coyer plays the villain, Craven Sinclair, in "Lily, The Felon's Daughter."

In the final analysis, one questions the need to dredge back up an outdated form of theater, but if one does? Make it work.

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www.williamstontheatre.org

BY STEPHEN SPOTSWOOD

CURTAIN CALL

Down but not quite broken

'Broke-ology' tests the limits of abject poverty

By TOM HELMA

The title "Broke-ology" is explained up front as the study and science of being broke and, in this case, black. The play, however, is also about a whole lot more than that. It's about family, dignity and pride, about the delicate relationship between two adult sons who are trying to carve out a life for themselves, while still attending to an increasingly debilitated father struggling to stay alive.

"Broke-ology"

March 24, 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.
25, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
\$15
The Robin Theatre,
1105 South Washington
Avenue, Lansing,
www.therobintheatre.com

Rico Bruce Wade is the father, William King, once strong and industrious, working long hours and two jobs to support a family of four.

He tries to protect his two growing teenage boys while living in a gang-ridden urban neighborhood in Kansas City.

William has been stricken with muscular dystrophy, is slowly going blind, and, to add insult to injury, has experienced the loss of his loving wife, Sonia. Wade is convincingly vulnerable in this role as William's disease progresses, his mind begins to drift, and he begins to need full time care.

His sons attempt to be up to the task. The

elder, Ennis, is played by Daniel Bonner, his character much like that of his father — a man with two jobs and a pregnant wife who quickly becomes a new mother. Subsequently, he readily admits to now being overwhelmed with responsibility.

Ennis is the inventor of the Broke-ology concept, much to the amusement of the younger brother, Malcolm. Unlike Ennis, a true-blue working-class guy, Malcolm has gone off to college, completed a master's degree and is now working for the Environmental Protection Agency doing research on climate change.

He's come home to help take care of Dad, but he also yearns to return to Connecticut to pursue an academic career and a love relationship. He feels caught between competing values — love for his father and desire for a life of his own, outside of the bubble of his father's shrinking life.

Malcolm, played by Lekeaton Wilson, is the more measured and analytical of the brothers. Portrayed with a steady and dry determination, he comes across as quite real.

The brothers duel back and forth with playful banter, competitive dominoes, earnest confrontation and a scene where, while tipsy, they together laughingly steal a gnome — making it a silent fourth partner in the

domino game.

Ennis is trying to get his brother to stay and help care for Dad so that he might have a moment to breathe and have a small slice of life for himself.

Both brothers convey a strong sense of authenticity as they grapple with the universal dilemma of how to find adequate eldercare.

Meanwhile, Dad inadvertently complicates their challenge by regularly guilt-sharing a dream. In the dream he, his wife and Malcolm are in a boat drowning, and he has to decide who to save, his wife or his elder son.

This is the moment where the idea of "Broke-ology" begins to crystallize, to make sense. All three men realize that none of them have sufficient resources to pay for a reasonable quality of assisted living care. Together they reflect on family values — on what is really important — no matter how much or how little a family has, economically.

Tyra High is Sonia, and floats in and out of the play, mostly as a ghostly hallucination in the mind of William, when no one



Courtesy photo

Rico Bruce Wade and Tyra High in "Broke-ology."

else is there. Tyra, consistent with her surname, brings a high level of energy and a lyrical singing type of speech to her role as Mama Sonia. She conveys a strong sense of what her character has contributed to the integrity and upbringing of her two sons.

In the end it is William who assists his sons with resolving the irresolvable.

Broke-ology is a concept most understood by those who have grown up in abject poverty, with parents who worked very hard to protect their children from feeling they were lesser beings.

Confident through the confusion

An old Shakespeare standard

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

It's not their fault there were more people onstage than in the audience. "Twelfth Night" debuted when there was a glut of play openings. Michigan State University students were on break. Basketball tournaments were on TV. Besides, it was a William Shakespeare play.

Most of us endured the Bard in middle and high school. I was one of those English teachers who required my students years ago to dive into centuries-old scripts with the hopes they would enjoy the plunge.

In 2018, a wish to attract crowds to Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," seems about as likely as hoping for eager swarms of swimming cats. Alas, the play written around 1600 can be confusing with complex verbiage and a complicated plot full of mistaken identities.

"Twelfth Night"

Thursday, March 22, 7 p.m.
Friday, March 23, 7 p.m.
Saturday, March 24, 7 p.m.
East Lansing Hannah Community Center
819 Abbot Road, East Lansing
https://www.cityofeast-lansing.com/1819/
East-Lansing-Community-Theatre

The East Lansing Community Theatre version — true to the original dialogue — is even more puzzling with modern outfits, furniture, and characters that are supposed to be look-alikes that show no resemblance. Viola, played by Ann

Marie Foley, who barely disguises herself as the male, Cesario, looks nothing like Mark Polzin's Sebastian. Kameron Going's switches between Malvolio and Antonio are also awkward because he dresses and looks like both characters.

It's notable that Going took on the additional role of Malvolio on short notice when a cast member dropped out. Like the entire cast, he sails through complicated language and Shakespeare's wordplay without any significant stumbles. The 13 ELCT thespians directed by Mike Stewart deserve kudos for smooth and enthuse-astic deliveries.

Sure, there were some accent deviations, curtain issues and first night flaws, but each actor's performance shows determination and competence. Iris Raine Paul stands out as a rude Lady Olivia. Tim Lewis as a captain, priest and servant, brings a clear



Courtesy photo

The cast of "Twelfth Night."

voice to each part. Holy Engler is a heady Maria and Steve Ledyard is convincing as the drunk, Sir Toby Belch.

And yes, there is belching, farting, crude gags, and sexual innuendos in the over two-hour play. After all, "Twelfth Night" is one of Shakespeare's comedies. Its rudimentary humor was outrageous in his day. I know that from my English teachers.

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Realism creates richness in 'The Flick'

A play about talking about movies

By PAUL WOZNIAK

Annie Baker's "The Flick" — an LCC Performing Arts production in partnership with Peppermint Creek Theatre — is essentially a theater production where people talk about movies. It's also a fascinating, methodically paced, naturalistic diorama of three people working

"The Flick"

Peppermint Creek Theatre Co.
7:30 p.m. Friday, March 23-Saturday, March 24; 2 p.m. Sunday, March 25
\$15/\$10 LCC Staff/senior 65+/\$5 LCC Students
Miller Performing Arts Center
6025 Curry Lane, Lansing
(517) 927-3016,
peppermintcreek.org

in a small-town movie theater. What "The Flick" lacks in glitzy dance numbers and action scenes, it more than makes up for with the heartbreaking honesty of realistic characters.

The audience's first cue that "The Flick" is different is the position of the stage. Instead of sitting in the regular seating of the Miller Performing Arts Center, the audience sits on risers where the stage would normally be and faces the permanent theater seating.

You are inside and essentially behind the screen of The Flick, a small town theater in Worcester County, Massachusetts. A man (Quinn Kelly) sits in the darkened space eating a veggie wrap, his face illuminated by the unseen movie screen. After that, theater employees Sam (Steve Lee) and Avery (Ndegwa McCloud) come into clean the popcorn and assorted litter from each row before exiting.

Sam and Avery talk about everything. The first scene is Avery's first day, the two talk about movies they love and hate, hopes and dreams, and Sam's crush on fellow theater employee Rose (Hannah Feuka).

If you have ever worked in a service industry job like this, you probably had identical conversations with your co-workers. But these conversations don't bog the show down, they are the show itself. Like the intimate chats between John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson's characters in "Pulp Fiction" — a film referenced heavily in this show — these conversations are the point and essence of the show.

Avery is a true film snob. He can connect two actors like Michael J. Fox to Britney Spears like dots with his vast knowledge of film trivia. He doesn't believe a great American movie has been made in the last 20 years. And unlike his co-workers, he actually loves movies and is going to college. McCloud is wonderful as the nerdy, hyperarticulate Avery who connects better with characters on screen than people in real life. If you're a film nut like this critic, you may wish you could debate this character in person.

By contrast, Sam is a 30-something lifer at this theater who doesn't know how to pursue his real dreams. He's kind and knowledgeable with an undercurrent of self-loathing. Lee doesn't look as old as his character, but he credibly acts like a man who has lived a hard life. Lee is solid throughout, but his best scene comes in the first act when he realizes Rose is not interested in him. As Rose flirts with Avery, Lee slumps in his seat with a sunken face and a broken heart. It's both painful and beautiful to watch.

As Rose, Feuka embodies all of the lazy charm of her slacker, tomboy character. Rose is happy to delegate her responsibilities because she's often hung-over. But she's also sexually curious and playful. For Sam, she's just uninterested. Like Sam and Avery, Rose has a flexible moral compass that justifies stealing or self-preservation as needed.

In addition to being a beautiful character



Courtesy photo

Hannah Feuka and Ndegwa McCloud in "The Flick."

study of service industry employees, "The Flick" is layered with references to great cinema like "Pulp Fiction" and "The Wild Bunch." But they're not just lines of dialogue or cues to great movie soundtracks, they're parallel analogies about characters dealing with existential crisis and changing worlds beyond their control.

Set and Light Designer Bob Ferholz provides just enough ambiance to make the audience feel like they are in the screen watching people go about their lives.

Costume designer Chelle Peterson made some great, oversized polo shirts complete with the company logo. Further aiding that sense of naturalism is director John Lepard. As the Executive Director of Williamston Theatre and frequent guest director with MSU and LCC students, Lepard inspires strong, natural performances from even novice actors. In this case, Lepard pushes seasoned students at the end of their program to be completely real.

"The Flick" is not short (two hours and 30 minutes including intermission) but like many great movies, it earns its runtime. It may

not take you to a far-away world, but it will provide a richer understanding of the world you live in.

Welcome to the fun house

'Dog Act' creates punk vaudeville

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

With over 20 F-words in its opening moments, "Dog Act" got my attention quickly.

When the play with colorful language and characters ended almost two hours later, I was still wide-eyed and fully attentive.

For "Dog Act," Michigan State University's Arena Theatre is transformed into a unique fun house. Like the carnival versions, the fun comes from shocks and scares. The MSU Department of Theatre production of the Liz Duffy Adams

play features eerie embellishments, sounds, lights and costuming.

Hanging moss, odd props like an exit sign box for a portable fire pit, and earsplitting noises that sound like a rail car being dragged across an aircraft carrier, are beguiling. Occasional strobes, black lights, and flashing spots above and below are dazzling additions.

Despite a minimal black box-type of setting, Ray Kelly's scenic design, Griffin Irish's sound design, and Freddy Pascolini's lighting adds complexity. Eye-popping costume, hair, and makeup design by Jenna Light is the icing, ice cream, chocolate syrup and cherry to it all.

The clever costumes are a blend of Mad Max, Alice Cooper, and uniforms for punk chimney sweeps. Post-apocalypse vaudevillian Rozetta Stone — played with fire and athletic finesse by Karen Vance — wears a bustier and boots.

Kristy Allen as theatrical truth-teller, Vera Similitude, sports a soiled, belted jacket and

wild headwear. Both gifted actors have intricately assembled, towering hair-dos. A merit badge is deserved for constructing the knotty masterpieces.

In oversized mirrored goggles, Kathryn Stahl, as Jo-Jo the Bald-Faced Liar, often sulks but sometimes spurts out machine gun sprays of speech with an astonishing precision. Greg Hunter as the all-too-human Dog — with gloves of tools and metal scraps for claws — also shifts from brooding to impressive, dramatic outbursts.

In the role of Coke, the nimble Curran Jacobs wears ram horns and an air mask. Matt Greenbaum's Bud is the scruffiest of the two scavengers, artfully wandering and climbing around the stage surrounded by audience bleachers. Their where-are-they-now antics directed by Christina Traister are gleefully unsettling.

The entire cast consists of Master of Fine Arts candidates who await final certification. The skills, confidence, and ability to command attention they demonstrate in "Dog Act" are all masterful.

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Take warning: Janesville's tragic GM plant closure

Book unravels the aftermath of GM shutdown in WI

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Cities and corporations adore being on lists like "Best City to Raise a Family" or "Best Company to Work For." But, beginning in 1988, there was a list that neither wanted its name on: the Federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification, or WARN, which provides details to communities facing impending plant closings.

The WARN law requires businesses planning a mass lay off or closing to notify the state where the layoffs will take place 60 days before the action. The idea was simple: advance notice would prohibit companies from padlocking their doors and would

give states time to plan reemployment services.

Throughout the '90s and '00s, an ever-growing number of communities went on the list as the auto industry struggled with massive restructuring, trimming its workforce in half.

On June 2, 2008, Janesville, Wisconsin, found itself on the ignominious list. It began with a phone call. There was always a phone call. This time, Rick Wagoner, Chairman and CEO of General Motors at the time, placed a call to congressman Paul Ryan, who hailed from Janesville. His news was straightforward. Wagoner told Ryan that some 2,800 workers were headed to the scrap heap of unemployment and the plant would shutter by 2010.

Goldstein Appearances

March 26
12:15 p.m.
MSU Museum Auditorium
409 W Circle Dr.
East Lansing, MI 48824
and
March 26
7 p.m.
R.E. Olds Transportation Museum
240 Museum Dr.
Lansing, MI 48933
Free
Books will be for sale

the effects of the housing crisis and the middle class recession when she decided to look at the impacts of a major plant closing.

"Most of what had been written was from a macro level. I wanted to look at it differently," Goldstein said. "I was looking for a small city that had lost a lot of jobs and Janesville lingered in my mind. It was never in the Rust Belt and I didn't want to



Goldstein

write about Detroit, an old union town."

She turned her focus to telling the story of a plant closing through the eyes of individual workers and their families, while putting the closure into the context of a dramatically changing political climate.

Initially, Goldstein spent five months identifying and talking with people in Janesville who would ultimately become the focus of her book. She would return numerous times and spend countless hours on the telephone.

"I thought it was important to not just include workers, but also people coming of age. There was a lot of teenagers caught up in the closing and families tended to keep this private," she said. "I got to know many more residents who would not fit in the book, but the characters in the book are representative of the community."

Goldstein delves into the post layoff lives and blues of a union official, housewives, recent and long-time UAW workers, community boosters, local and state politicians, educators, business leaders and family members.

As the author follows the individuals and families, the layoffs ramp up, supplemental benefits run out and savings are depleted. Workers enter retraining programs with great hope, but with little chance of an equivalent job.

Some, like Matt Wopat, become GM nomads — transferring to another GM plant, a four and half-hour drive away, returning home to their families on weekends.

Goldstein also tells how average folks step up. Amy Venuti, a high school teacher, helps manage a "closet" where teenagers who can't afford new clothes and toiletries go to when in need. Social worker Ann Forbeck helps start Project 16:49, a program for the bur-



geoning number of homeless teenagers.

Goldstein is especially good at telling the dramatic story of two women, Kerri and Barb, who take classes at the local technical college to work as jail guards. They're decent jobs, but the pay is less than one-half of a GM job. For a time their future looks bright, but soon Barb can no longer handle the job and leaves. Her best friend Kerri begins an affair with a prisoner and when

she is discovered, commits suicide.

But there are slivers of hope. The Whitaker's twin daughters, Alyssa and Kayzia, step up by taking two and three after-school jobs to earn extra money for the family.

In one emotional scene, the twins take their mother shopping using their hard-earned money to splurge on things like meat, which had disappeared from the family's dinner menu.

Working with a local university to conduct a survey of worker attitudes, Goldstein confirms one of her worst suspicions: federal job training programs are ineffective.

Goldstein writes, "Job retraining, it turned out, was not a path to more work or better pay in an around Janesville."

"I also learned just how personal leaving work is. People are losing sleep; there are strains on the family," she said. "The laid off workers take it personally even if it is not about them."

Another observation Goldstein makes is, "falling out of the middle class is harder than being poor all along."

Eight years after the Janesville closing, the unemployment rate has dropped to 4 percent, but the author cautions that does not tell the whole story. "Wages haven't come back," she said.

The Goldstein event is the inaugural program in a lecture series exploring historical and contemporary topics relating to the auto industry, according to one of the event's organizers John Beck, an MSU professor and chairperson of Lansing's Motor Cities National Heritage Area.

The Lecture Series is co-sponsored by the Motor Cities and MSU's Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives.

SCHULER BOOKS & MUSIC

Detroit Free Press Sports Writer KEITH GAVE presents *The Russian Five*

Saturday March 24 @ 2pm

Meet long-time Detroit Free Press sports writer Keith Gave as he presents his fascinating book *The Russian Five: A Story of Espionage, Defection, Bribery, and Courage*, a gripping story featuring our beloved Detroit Red Wings!

Talk & Signing with #1 NYT Bestselling Young Adult author GAYLE FORMAN

Wednesday, March 28 @ 7pm

We are so excited to welcome Gayle Forman, author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *If I Stay*, for an event celebrating the release of the highly anticipated *I Have Lost My Way*! Tickets available now. Please visit SchulerBooks.com for details.

#1 NYT Bestselling author VERONICA ROTH: OWN YOUR FATE Tour

Tuesday, April 10 @ 6pm

Join Veronica Roth -- New York Times bestselling author of the acclaimed *Divergent* Trilogy -- in conversation with Somaiya Daud as they discuss Veronica's new book *The Fates Divide!* Tickets available now. Visit SchulerBooks.com for details.

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The City Pulse Book Club selection for April is "Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63," by Taylor Branch. The book is the first of a three-part series on the Civil Rights Movement. Upcoming books include "Slouching Towards Bethlehem," by Joan Didion (May) and "Bobby Kennedy," by Chris Matthews (June).

An attorney general who actually knows the law

By **STEPHANIE WHITE**

Gay or straight, right or left, Bernie Bro or Tea Partier, regardless of your politics, I bet you agree with me on one core principal: Whoever serves as the attorney general should at least understand the law, as well as be capable of following it. That's just the basics, right? We might disagree on interpretation and application of the law and we might disagree about how to prioritize the work, but we assume a person who wants to be the top lawyer in our state at least understands what they are dealing with.

Unfortunately, as we've seen in Michigan, that isn't always the case. Sometimes we elect an attorney general who is either incapable of understanding and/or following the law, or they just don't care. They are too focused on their own self-promotion and their own political agenda to worry about facts.

Such is the case with Attorney General Bill Schuette.

We all know his personal opposition to equality — he never misses a chance to fight against us. But his manner of fighting against the LGBT community in our request for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission to issue an interpretative statement regarding whether sex discrimination includes sexual orientation and gender identity calls into question his basic grasp of the law. Last year Schuette had his office issue guidance to the commission that a) they weren't allowed to take up this issue and b) if they did they could be personally liable for any legal challenges. Since both points



White

are clearly false, he either doesn't know the law that guides this decision, or he simply chooses to mislead the commission in his advice to them. Regardless of

your personal beliefs, these errors ought to concern us all.

It's a bedrock principal of administrative law generally, and the Michigan Procedures Act specifically, that the Civil Rights Commission is responsible for implementing our civil rights laws. The Legislature writes and passes laws, but since it can't plan for every contingency or spell out every detail of how a law will be put into practice, commissions must interpret that law. And, since our state law is based on federal civil rights law that has increasingly been interpreted by the federal courts to include sexual orientation and gender identity under sex discrimination, it raises the question of how, or if, this impacts the application of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. The law's ambiguity, plus the commission's duty to interpret ambiguous laws calls for action. Furthermore, Michigan law is clear that commissioners are immune from personal liability when they are engaged in a government function.

Meeting as a commission to fulfill the functions of their appointed position is clearly a government function.

You don't have to be a legal scholar to understand this, but it's no wonder that dozens of top legal scholars in our state sent a letter to the Civil Rights Commission last year explaining these basic concepts. They agreed that our attorney general could use a refresher course on Michigan law. And with the recent ruling by the 6th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals that a Michigan funeral home violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act when they fired an employee simply for her transgender status, this issue is not going away. When the commission takes up the question again, he'll have

the chance to either issue sound legal advice, or at least not actively interfere with their work.

Michigan deserves better from our attorney general. We can disagree on the question of gay and transgender rights, but LGBT Michiganders are part of this state. And every Michigander (regardless of personal beliefs) deserves to have an attorney general who respects the law enough to understand it and represent it fairly. May we all keep that in mind as we choose our next attorney general this year.

(Stephanie White is the executive director of Equality Michigan. She writes this column monthly.)



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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, March 21

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

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

STUDIO LIFE DRAWING. From 7 to 9:30 p.m. Model fee: \$2 students (LCC, MSU, High School), \$5 all others.. Kresge Art Center, 600 Auditorium East Lansing.

TURN YOUR HOBBY INTO A BUSINESS. From 9 to 10:30 a.m. Free - to register call (517) 483-1921. Small Business Development Center, LCC, 309 N. Washington Sq. Suite 110 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.

THE POETRY ROOM PRESENTS: Workshop Series Round 2. From 7 to 9 p.m. Strange Matter Coffee, 337 S Washington Square, Lansing, MI 48933 Lansing.

EVENTS

FAMILY STORYTIME (AGES UP TO 6). From 10:30 to 11 a.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Williamston Branch, 201 School Street Williamston. 517.655.1191.

GAMES AT THE MERIDIAN SENIOR CENTER (See Descriptions for Dates and Times). From 12:30 to 4 p.m. Bingo and Bridge- \$1 - \$2 per person to play. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos.

PRACTICE YOUR ENGLISH. From 7 to 8 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

TEEN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM. From 2:30 to 6 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

VOLUNTEER EXPO. From 1 to 4 p.m. Free. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos.

Thursday, March 22

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

FRIENDS IN TIMES OF PEACE AND WAR: The Lessor-Known Relationship between Russia and America. From 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This course costs \$119.00 To register for "Friends in Times of Peace and War" visit www.lcc.edu/KeepLearning. Or call 517-483-9853.. LCC East Campus- Room 113, 2827 Eyde Parkway East Lansing. 517-483-1415.

(TOPS) TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY . At 6 p.m. First meeting FREE.. Haslett Middle School, 1535 Franklin St. Haslett.

BACH FLOWER ESSENCE & STRESS RELIEF. From 6 to 7:30 p.m. Donation / Free. Willow Stick Ceremonies & Healing Arts, 335 Seymour Ave, Suite D Lansing. 517-402-6727.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

IPAD STORYTIME. From 10:30 to 11 a.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

MUSIC

FRANCES LUKE ACCORD @ THE ROBIN THEATRE WSG; Michael Beauchamp. From 7 to 10 p.m. \$15 General Admission. The Robin Theatre, 1105 S. Washington Lansing. Events Global Digital Humanities Symposium. From 1 to 6 p.m. free. MSU Library, 366 W. Circle Drive East Lansing. (517) 353-8700.

COMIC CREATIONS (AGES 7-18). From 4 to 5 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Holt-Delhi Branch, 2078 Aurelius Road Holt. 517.694.9351.

LUNCH AT THE SENIOR CENTER. From 12 to 1 p.m. suggested donations of \$3.00. If you are age 59 and under, there is a charge of \$5.75 (this is not a suggested donation). Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos.

MEET STORYBOOK CHARACTER PETE THE CAT (AGES 3-6). From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries South Lansing Branch, 3500 S. Cedar St. Lansing. 517-272-9840.

PRESCHOOL STORYTIME IN WACOUSTA. From 11 a.m. to noon Grand Ledge Area District Library , 131 E. Jefferson St Grand Ledge. 517.627.7014.

SPANISH CONVERSATION GROUP. From 7 to 8 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

ARTS

BALLROOM LESSONS (CHA-CHA/MERENGUE). From 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. \$41 per couple \$21 individual. Jackson School of the Arts, 634 N. Mechanic St. Jackson. (517) 784-2389.

Friday, March 23

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

DINOSAUR STORYTIME. From 10:30 to 11 a.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

RELEASE PARTY FOR RANDY D PEARSON'S LATEST NOVEL - TRAC BROTHERS. From 5 to 7:30 p.m. free . Everybody Reads Books and Stuff, 2019 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing. (517) 346-9900.

STORYTIME. From 10:30 to 11 a.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

THEATER

THE FLICK. From 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. \$5 students, \$10 faculty/staff/seniors (65+), \$15 general admission. Tickets can be purchased on the Peppermint Creek website peppermintcreek.org or at the door 30 minutes before curtain. . Miller Performing Arts Center, 6025 Curry Lane Lansing.

EVENTS

GLOBAL DIGITAL HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. free. MSU Library, 366 W. Circle Drive East Lansing. (517) 353-8700.

ARTS

MARCH 2018 ARTIST IN RESIDENCE: SHANI PETERS. From 3 to 5 p.m. Events are held throughout the entirety of the month of March. All events are free and accessible to the public. . MSU Union, MSU Campus East Lansing.

Saturday, March 24

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

3D PRINTING WORKSHOP. From 4 to 5 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

FLOWER ESSENCES & EMOTIONAL BALANCE. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$150. Willow Stick Ceremonies & Healing Arts, 335 Seymour Ave, Suite D Lansing. 517-402-6727.

'Street Scene' by Kurt Weill



Starts March 21

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Pinned to an anvil of August heat, a Brooklyn tenement in 1947 seethes with frustration, anger, jealousy and murder, with a songful break for ice cream.

Kurt Weill's "Street Scene" is a big American mess, a massive piece of theater with 90 roles that mixes Broadway-type tunes with operatic singing and reams of dialogue by the great poet and novelist Langston Hughes, all set to a wall-to-wall score by Weill at his most expressive.

The opera is beyond the means of most professional opera houses, but MSU's College of Music has put all hands on deck, with 50-odd students doubling roles and learning multiple skills.

"I'm about five boys short of what I could really use," director Melanie Helton said.

Helton has worked with many great American composers, including Leonard Bernstein, but she has never performed in "Street Scene," let alone directed it. When she dusted it off for a closer look, she was shocked at how topical it is in 2018.

MSU Opera Theatre With the MSU Symphony Orchestra

"Street Scene" by Kurt Weill
Fairchild Theatre, MSU Auditorium
7:30 p.m. March 21
8 p.m. March 23-24
3 p.m. March 25
\$5-20
(517) 353-5340
music.msu.edu/opera

Sexual harassment and assault are routine. Immigrants and immigrant haters are packed together like turkeys in a pen before Thanksgiving. The angry socialist downstairs rails against the "the capitalist press," while the angry conservative upstairs sings an aria wishing

things could be "like they always was." "The melting pot aspect of the play spoke to Kurt Weill as an immigrant," Helton said. Weill fled Nazi Germany in 1933. "The second act gets very dark and intense but there is hope."

The action will play out on a spectacular two-story street set, a full-sized brownstone

with a six-step stoop and working windows.

Last week, the cast spent hours working out hundreds of entrances, exits, window openings and closings — including one visit, with a stretcher, by an ambulance — until the moves are second nature and inspiration can take over.

Weill's music, played by the MSU Symphony Orchestra, flows freely under the whole panorama, including long stretches of spoken dialogue. The score earned Weill the first Tony Award for best original score.

"He set out to create something that was truly American in the sense of both being operatic and coming out of the Broadway tradition," Helton said. "Marble in a Star" is an easy sort of jazz ballad. "Wrapped in a Ribbon" is a great big Broadway number. And there are duets and arias that require operatic singing."

Today's voice students need to be ready to turn from opera to show tunes to jazz and pop on a dime, so Weill's polystylistic approach in "Street Scene" make it an ideal university production.

It's not a feel-good show, but people expecting an earful of the acidic, decadent Weill of his 1920s Berlin period are often surprised by the composer's deft adaptation to American culture — including commercial pressures.

"He was very practical, wanted to make a living, and he knew there was no way to make a living as a classical composer in America," Helton said. "He wrote a number of very successful Broadway shows, like 'Knickerbocker Holiday' and 'One Touch of Venus.'"

But "Street Scene" works in a few knife twists of Berlin-period Weill.

"The neighbors are very gossipy and not very kind," Helton said.

To take it all in, audiences will have to buy tickets. Setting up the usual MSU Opera livestream would have meant paying four-figure royalties to the heavyweight estates of Weill, Hughes and Pulitzer-winning playwright Elmer Rice, who wrote the original play.

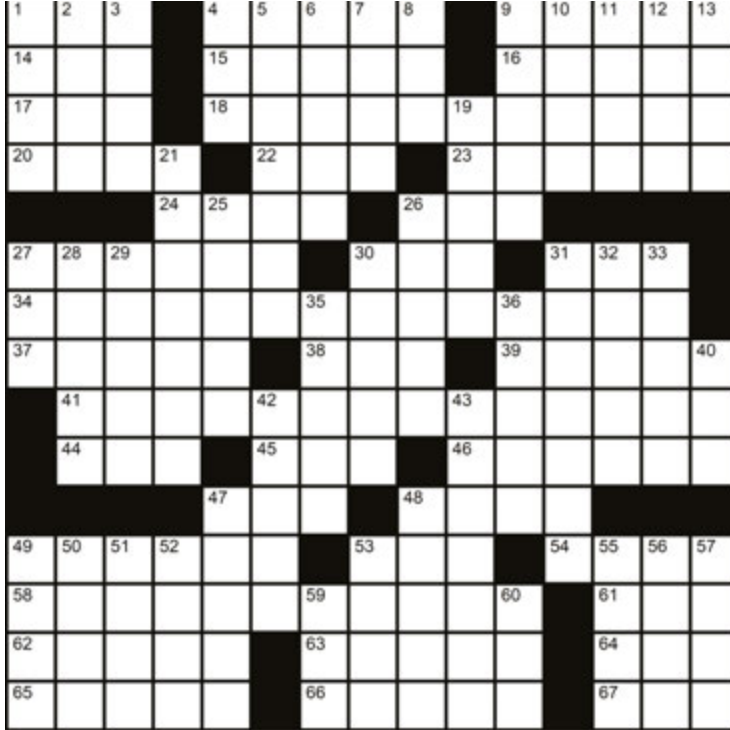
Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Surround Sound"--one way to take it all in.

Across

- 1 Fly fast
- 4 Amy of 2016's "Arrival"
- 9 Retool
- 14 Fire truck accessory
- 15 Addition to a bill or contract
- 16 Boisterous
- 17 Flock formation
- 18 Venus, when visible after sunset
- 20 "Back in Black" rockers
- 22 Some board members
- 23 Light nap
- 24 "In memoriam" write-up
- 26 Corrosive cleaning stuff
- 27 Know with certainty
- 30 Bass or buff ending
- 31 Bother, to the Bard
- 34 Smoking-based practical joke that's hardly seen anymore



- 37 Have an ___ the hole
- 38 Opus ___ ("The Da Vinci Code" sect)
- 39 Drew, the detective
- 41 It's tough to hear without an amp
- 44 8 1/2" x 11" size, briefly
- 45 Geek blogger
- 46 James of "Gunsmoke"
- 47 Family member, informally
- 48 "___ bien!"
- 49 They may be tough to break
- 53 Like the Beatles
- 54 "As far as I can ___"
- 58 Way up (and down)
- 61 Director Ang
- 62 The Chi-___ ("Have You Seen Her" group)
- 63 Siberian forest region

- 64 "Chandelier" singer
- 65 Strap for a dog walk
- 66 With 67-Across, what each of the long answers displays
- 67 See 66-Across

- Down**
- 1 Coffee nickname
 - 2 CFO or COO, e.g.
 - 3 Irked, with "off"
 - 4 "What ___ the odds?"
 - 5 Split (up)
 - 6 Skillful
 - 7 Department store section
 - 8 ___ Lanka
 - 9 Harmon of "Rizzoli & Isles"
 - 10 Spoonful, maybe
 - 11 British isles
 - 12 Exam for H.S. juniors
 - 13 Banks who hosts "America's Next Top Model"

- 19 Justin Timberlake's former group
- 21 Dave of "Fuller House"
- 25 Rodeo horse, briefly
- 26 Sudoku solving skill
- 27 Costar of Rue, Betty, and Estelle
- 28 Do really well
- 29 Hardy wheat in health-food products
- 30 April ___ ("Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" reporter)
- 31 Contrary to
- 32 "Inferno" poet
- 33 Black-and-white ocean predators
- 35 Actor Elba
- 36 Become used (to)
- 40 Calendar spans, for short
- 42 Unexpected plot turn
- 43 Bin contents, until emptied
- 47 Private reserve

- 48 Implied but not stated
- 49 "Life In ___" (Matt Groening comic strip)
- 50 "That's ___!" ("Not so!")
- 51 Alpha successor
- 52 Carrier's lithography partner
- 53 Herr's wife
- 55 Otherwise
- 56 Princess from Alderaan
- 57 Goneril's father
- 59 Prefix with laryngology
- 60 Palindromic, growly-sounding compressed file format

©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 24**

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsy

March 21 - 27, 2018

Aries (March 21-April 19) The "School of Hard Knocks" is an old-fashioned idiom referring to the unofficial and accidental course of study available via life's tough experiences. The wisdom one gains through this alternate approach to education may be equal or even superior to the knowledge that comes from a formal university or training program. I mention this, Aries, because in accordance with astrological omens, I want to confer upon you a diploma for your new advanced degree from the School of Hard Knocks. (P.S.: When PhD students get their degrees from Finland's University of Helsinki, they are given top hats and swords as well as diplomas. I suggest you reward yourself with exotic props, too.)

Taurus (April 20-May 20) Europeans used to think that all swans were white. It was a reasonable certainty given the fact that all swans in Europe were that color. But in 1697, Dutch explorer Willem de Vlamingh and his sailors made a pioneering foray to the southwestern coast of the land we now call Australia. As they sailed up a river the indigenous tribe called Derbarl Yerrigan, they spied black swans. They were shocked. The anomalous creatures invalidated an assumption based on centuries of observations. Today, a "black swan" is a metaphor referring to an unexpected event that contravenes prevailing theories about the way the world works. I suspect you'll soon experience such an incongruity yourself. It might be a good thing! Especially if you welcome it instead of resisting it.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) Crayola is one of the world's foremost crayon manufacturers. The geniuses in charge of naming its crayon colors are playful and imaginative. Among the company's standard offerings, for example, are Pink Sherbet, Carnation Pink, Tickle Me Pink, Piggy Pink, Pink Flamingo, and Shocking Pink. Oddly, however, there is no color that's simply called "Pink." I find that a bit disturbing. As much as I love extravagant creativity and poetic whimsy, I think it's also important to cherish and nurture the basics. In accordance with the astrological omens, that's my advice for you in the coming weeks. Experiment with fanciful fun, but not at the expense of the fundamentals.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) According to Vice magazine, Russian scientist Anatoli Brouchkov is pleased with the experiment he tried. He injected himself with 3.5-million-year-old bacteria that his colleagues had dug out of the permafrost in Siberia. The infusion of this ancient life form, he says, enhanced his energy and strengthened his immune system. I can't vouch for the veracity of his claim, but I do know this: It's an apt metaphor for possibilities you could take advantage of in the near future: drawing on an old resource to boost your power, for example, or calling on a well-preserved part of the past to supercharge the present.

Leo (July 23-August 22) Booze has played a crucial role in the development of civilization, says biomolecular archaeologist Patrick McGovern. The process of creating this mind-altering staple was independently discovered by many different cultures, usually before they invented writing. The buzz it provides has "fired our creativity and fostered the development of language, the arts, and religion." On the downside, excessive consumption of alcohol has led to millions of bad decisions and has wrecked countless lives. Everything I just said is a preface to my main message, Leo: The coming weeks will be a favorable time to transform your habitual perspective, but only if you do so safely and constructively. Whether you choose to try intoxicants, wild adventures, exhilarating travel, or edgy experiments, know your limits.

Virgo (August 23-September 22) The astrological omens suggest that the coming weeks will be favorable for making agreements, pondering mergers, and strengthening bonds. You'll be wise to deepen at least one of your commitments. You'll stir up interesting challenges if you consider the possibility of entering

into more disciplined and dynamic unions with worthy partners. Do you trust your own perceptions and insights to guide you toward ever-healthier alliances? Do what you must to muster that trust.

Libra (September 23-October 22) If you want people to know who you really are and savor you for your unique beauty, you must be honest with those people. You must also develop enough skill to express your core truths with accuracy. There's a similar principle at work if you want to know who you really are and savor yourself for your unique beauty: You must be honest with yourself. You must also develop enough skill to express your core truths with accuracy. The coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to practice these high arts.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21) Your journey in the coming weeks may be as weird as an R-rated telenovela, but with more class. Outlandish, unpredictable, and even surreal events could occur, but in such a way as to uplift and educate your soul. Labyrinthine plot twists will be medicinal as well as entertaining. As the drama gets curiously and curiously, my dear Scorpio, I expect you will learn how to capitalize on the odd opportunities it brings. In the end, you will be grateful for this ennobling respite from mundane reality!

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) "Love is the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence," wrote philosopher Erich Fromm. I would add a corollary for your rigorous use during the last nine months of 2018: "Love is the only effective and practical way to graduate from your ragged, long-running dilemmas and start gathering a new crop of fresh, rousing challenges." By the way, Fromm said love is more than a warm and fuzzy feeling in our hearts. It's a creative force that fuels our willpower and unlocks hidden resources.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19) My goal here is to convince you to embark on an orgy of self-care -- to be as sweet and tender and nurturing to yourself as you dare to be. If that influences you to go too far in providing yourself with luxurious necessities, I'm OK with it. And if your solicitous efforts to focus on your own health and well-being make you appear a bit self-indulgent or narcissistic, I think it's an acceptable price to pay. Here are more key themes for you in the coming weeks: basking in the glow of self-love; exulting in the perks of your sanctuary; honoring the vulnerabilities that make you interesting.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18) One day, Beatles' guitarist George Harrison decided to compose his next song's lyrics "based on the first thing I saw upon opening any book." He viewed this as a divinatory experiment, as a quest to incorporate the flow of coincidence into his creative process. The words he found in the first book were "gently weeps." They became the seed for his tune "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." Rolling Stone magazine ultimately named it one of "The Greatest Songs of All Time" and the tenth best Beatle song. In accordance with the astrological omens, I recommend you try some divinatory experiments of your own in the coming weeks. Use life's fun little synchronicities to generate playful clues and unexpected guidance.

Pisces (February 19-March 20) Millions of you Pisceans live in a fairy tale world. But I suspect that very few of you will be able to read this horoscope and remain completely ensconced in your fairy tale world. That's because I have embedded subliminal codes in these words that will at least temporarily transform even the dreamiest among you into passionate pragmatists in service to your feistiest ideals. If you've read this far, you are already feeling more disciplined and organized. Soon you'll be coming up with new schemes about how to actually materialize a favorite fairy tale in the form of real-life experiences.

SUDOKU

INTERMEDIATE

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TO PLAY

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

Answers on page 24

TURN IT DOWN A SURVEY OF LANSING'S MUSICAL LANDSCAPE BY RICH TUPICA

Sun. March 25

COLLECTABLE SHOW



The Lansing Collectable Toy, Comic and Record Show

Sunday, March 25, @ Royal Scot Golf & Bowl, 4722 W. Grand River Ave., Lansing. All ages, FREE, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

The first-ever Lansing Collectable Toy, Comic and Record Show happens Sunday at Royal Scot Golf & Bowl. The free event features 40 tables of rarities from approximately 30 different vendors. The show, which runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, is stocked with vintage toys, comics, vinyl records, posters and other pop culture gems — including plenty of '80s and Star Wars memorabilia. Vendor and organizer Tesco Vee — the frontman of the Meatmen — will be on hand selling collectables and also spinning choice records. "I've always longed for a proper toy show in Lansing," Vee said. "I finally pulled the trigger and am making this a biannual event. I've been collecting stuff since my teens—starting with records. I started collecting toys in 1988. Not sure where I got the collecting bug, but it bit me bad."

Sat. March 24

WEEDEATER



Weedeater at Mac's Bar

Saturday, March 24, @ Mac's Bar, 2027 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. All ages \$22, \$20, 7:30 p.m.

Stoner-metal band Weedeater headlines an all-ages show Saturday at Mac's Bar. Openers are Hyborian and Bask. Weedeater, which formed in North Carolina in 1998, is on tour performing its third sludgy album, 2007's "God Luck and Good Speed," in its entirety. The LP, recorded by Nirvana producer Steve Albini, was praised by AllMusic, which called the long-player "coarse, crusty, stoner sludgcore of the highest-market value." The trio, which debuted in 2001 with "... And Justice for Y'all," comprises Dave "Dixie" Collins (vocals/bassist), Dave "Shep" Shepherd (guitar) and drummer Travis Owen. Over the years, the band has toured, playing many dates with the likes of C.O.C. and Alabama Thunderpussy. Collins—who's also performed with Bongzilla—formed Weedeater after the disbandment of his previous sludge band, Buzzov*en. Weedeater's latest effort, "Goliathan," was released in May 2015 via Season of Mist Records.

Fri. March 23

TIM ERIKSEN



Tim Eriksen at the Ten Pound Fiddle

Friday, March 23, MSU Community Music School, 4930 S. Hagadorn, East Lansing. All ages, \$18, \$15 members, \$5 students, 7:30 p.m.

Multi instrumentalist Tim Eriksen, an Amherst, Massachusetts, native, headlines Friday at the Ten Pound Fiddle. Eriksen's brand of folk combines powerful vocals with imaginative accompaniment on banjo, fiddle, guitar and bajo sexto — a 12-string Mexican acoustic bass. That distinct sound has earned him praise from the likes of BBC Radio, who said Eriksen is "widely regarded as the best ballad singer of his generation." His repertoire, which spans many sub-genres of Americana from New England and Southern Appalachia, includes poignant interpretations of old ballads, love songs, gospel and dance tunes. His latest LP, 2012's "Josh Billings Voyage or, Cosmopolite on the Cotton Road" offers up 13 moody tracks about imaginary town. An interesting side note: Eriksen's former grunge-rock band, Cordelia's Dad, opened for Nirvana during the '80s — making him the only performer to share a stage with both Doc Watson and Kurt Cobain.

LIVE AND LOCAL

UPCOMING SHOW? CONTACT
ELLA@LANSINGCITYPULSE.COM

DESTINATION	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
The Avenue Café, 2021 E. Michigan Ave.	Service Industry Night	Millenium Karaoke	COFF Brew and View	Starving Arts
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 Muzik, 8 p.m.			
Esquire, 1250 Turner St.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.			
The Exchange, 314 E. Michigan Ave.	The Good Cookies, 8 p.m.	Mike Skory & Friends Open Mic, 8:30 p.m.	The New Rule	The New Rule
Green Door, 2005 E. Michigan Ave.	Johnny D Blues Night	Karaoke	Star Farm	Star Farm
Lansing Brewing Co., 518 E Shiawassee St.				
The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave.	The Dead Flames, 7pm	Tetranauts, 9pm	Fool House 90's Dance Party, 9pm	DJ vs the Drummer, 10p
Tequila Cowboy, 5660 W. Saginaw Hwy.			Scott Dubose, 8pm	Scott Dubose, 8pm
The Unicorn, 327 Cesar E Chavez Ave.				
UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St.		Absolute Music Series, 7 p.m.	SoulPlay, 8pm	Mighty Uke Day, 7pm
Watershed Tavern and Grill, 5965 Marsh Rd.			Capital City DJ's	Capital City DJ's

Out on the town

from page 20

LEAN IN LANSING. From 9 to 11 a.m. FREE. Grand Traverse Pie, 1403 E. Grand River Ave. East Lansing. (517) 203-3304.

TINKRLAB: BUILD AN INVENTION WITH LITTLEBITS. From 5 to 6 p.m. Members: \$10/Non-Members: \$20. tinkrLAB, Meridian Mall, 1982 W Grand River Okemos. 517-233-1524.

MUSIC

MIGHTY UKE DAY FUNDRAISER. From 7 to 10 p.m. \$10+ donation at the door. Urban Beat Events Center, 1213 Turner Street Lansing.

EVENTS*

EASTER PARTY (ALL AGES). From 2 to 3 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Mason Branch, 145 W. Ash St. Mason. 517-676-9088.

BLAZE PIZZA FUNDRAISER - DELTA LAMBDA PHI. From 6 to 10 p.m. Blaze Pizza - East Lansing, 437 E. Grand River Ave. East Lansing.

ELEPHANT & PIGGIE PARTY (AGE 3 & UP). From 2 to 3 p.m. FREE. Capital Area District Libraries Haslett Branch, 1590 Franklin St. Haslett. 517-339-2324.

HELPING WOMEN PERIOD 4TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST. From 9:30 a.m. to noon Tickets are \$35.00 (\$20.00 for students) . University Club MSU, 3435 Forest Road Lansing. Moving Forward: MSU/EL Community Healing Conversation. From 4 to 5:30 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East

Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH. From 1 to 3 p.m. FREE. Suggested Donation: \$3/person. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave. Lansing. (517) 483-4224.

ARTS

RED BARN POTTERY OPEN HOUSE. From 12 to 4 p.m. Free. Williamston Aerie, 835 High Street Williamston.

Sunday, March 25

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

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

TINKRLAB: SPHERO OLYMPICS. From 1 to 2 p.m. Member: \$10/Non-Members: \$20. tinkrLAB, Meridian Mall, 1982 W Grand River Okemos. 517-233-1524.

EVENTSFAMILY ACTIVITY DAY. From 2 to 4 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

Monday, March 26

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

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

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

BABYTIME. From 10:30 to 11 a.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27 >> READINGS FROM "SWEAT"

"Sweat" is written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage. It tells the story of a group of blue collar factory workers based in Pennsylvania. They were forced to make a choice, whether to take the big salary cuts or lose their jobs. "Sweat" has been praised as increasingly politically relevant for its portrayal of labor and race tensions. Some critics have argued that it "explains" the election of Donald Trump. Professional actors will read selected scenes from the play, followed by panel discussion about its deeper political implications.

7 p.m., Free entry, UAW Hall Local 652, 426 Clare St., Lansing, www.hrlr.msu.edu



Courtesy Photo

Lynn Nottage herself will appear at the Wharton Center April 2, to deliver a lecture. Nottage is the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice.

SUNDAY, MARCH 25 >> INGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL PRESENTS: 'GLORIA' BY ANTONIO VIVALDI

Ingham Festival Chorale is a seasonal chorale based on European choirs who practiced after the holidays, and performed before the planting time. 35 members will share four parts: soprano, alto, tenor and bass. "Gloria" is an ancient hymn, but this performance will be of the 18th century composer Antonio Vivaldi's interpretation.

4:00 p.m., Free with donation, St. James Catholic Church, 1010 S. Lansing St, Mason, https://www.facebook.com/inghamfestivalchoralemi/

WHERE THE WILD THINGS BLOOM



Allan I. Ross/City Pulse

Brittany Simmons is the owner/proprietor of Where the Wild Things Bloom, a flower shop and specialty boutique in Lansing's Old Town neighborhood.

By ALLAN I. ROSS

The vernal equinox marked the beginning of spring Tuesday, but things have been blossoming in Old Town already for the last 10 weeks. In January, Brittany Simmons and her mother, Lisa Demankowski, opened **Where the Wild Things Bloom**, a full-service specialty flower shop/artisan goods store that carries locally grown plants, flowers and home décor items.

"We've really been looking forward to the arrival of spring and the potential it brings," Simmons said. "As of right now we're just enjoying our days and feeling thankful for the wonderful community we're a part of."

The 700-square-foot space is teeming with exotic flowers and succulents, but with gardening season almost here, the store's inventory of heirloom seeds, soil mixes, gardening tools and pots has started to expand. There's also a selection of handmade items fashioned from natural materials, including wool mittens, porcupine quill jewelry and beeswax candles.

"Everything we carry in the store is made by me, my husband, my mother or local creators," Simmons said. "We're lucky to have so many talented friends and gifted artistic people in the community."

Simmons was introduced to floral design 13 years ago when she was in college. She'd been focusing on art and trying to find the medium that was the best fit for her when she discovered the field.

"Floral design proved to be a really enjoyable job and I quickly fell into it full time," she said. "I've learned so much over the years working with other people. And then being exposed to a variety of good floral design mechanics and different elements over the years helped me develop a passion for contemporary styles."

Simmons and her husband have a small farm in Bancroft where they maintain vegetable gardens and the greenhouse where she grows some of her plants. They also raise free-range chickens and honeybees; later this year, Simmons said she plans to add honey and beeswax to the store's selection.

Where the Wild Things Bloom also offers adult workshops every Friday from 6-8 p.m., with costs varying between \$30-\$40 per person based on the project.

"These are wine- and beer-friendly gatherings and everyone takes their completed project home when they're finished," Simmons said. "Current projects are floral designs, hanging wall planters and terrarium building, but we'll be adding more as time goes on."

Free or low-cost children's gatherings are also held every Saturday from 2-3 p.m. These events are designed to encourage mindfulness and familiarity with plants and flowers. The store specializes in wedding and special event designs, but can accommodate a wide range of arrangements pulling from Simmons' base stock of orchids, bromeliads and succulents. Demankowski, an architect and "creative soul," helps her daughter by curating projects and developing inventory.

"My relationship with my mother is amazing," Simmons said. "I'm a lucky gal to have been raised by her. We've always enjoyed creating together. She's the one who pushed me to take the risk and open the flower shop, which has allowed us to spend more time together and given us creative freedom with our workdays."

Where the Wild Things Bloom
523 E. Grand River Ave. (Cesar E. Chavez Ave.), Lansing
9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday; Sunday by appointment only
(517) 253-8519, wildthingsbloom.com

Out on the town

from page 23

OUT OF THIS WORLD BOOK CLUB. At 7 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

THEATER

MONDAY MOVIE MATINEE. At 1 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

EVENTS

SANDS OF SILENCE: Waves of Courage. From 7 to 9 p.m. free. MSU Library, 366 W. Circle Drive East Lansing. (517) 353-8700.

Tuesday, March 27

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS. From 7 to 9 p.m. \$15/person. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road Meridian Township. (517) 349-3866.

HOMEWORK HELP. From 5 to 7 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

THE POETRY ROOM OPEN MIC: #MYINSPIRATION. From 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. free. The Robin Theatre, 1105 S. Washington Lansing.

TODDLERTIME. From 10:30 to 11 a.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

MUSIC

JAZZ TUESDAYS AT MORIARTY'S. From 7 to 10 p.m. FREE. Moriarty's Pub, 802 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing. (517) 485-5287.

EVENTS

TUESDAY GAMES. From 1 to 4 p.m. Euchre, Free Bridge, \$1 - \$2 per person. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos.

Wednesday, March 28

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

OPEN STUDIO LIFE DRAWING. From 7 to 9:30 p.m. Model fee: \$2 students (LCC, MSU, High School), \$5 all others.. Kresge Art Center, 600 Auditorium East Lansing.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

THE POETRY ROOM PRESENTS: WORKSHOP SERIES ROUND 2. From 7 to 9 p.m. Strange Matter Coffee, 337 S Washington Square, Lansing, MI 48933 Lansing.

SATURDAY, MARCH 24 >> THE STARVING ARTS "HEROES VS. VILLAINS"

The Starving Arts team decided to switch it up this year and give back to the local art community. Musicians Kevin Amon and Andy Fox teamed up to present this year's theme, "Heroes vs. Villains." Heroic or villainous figures can include anybody, fictional or not, from any time period. Contestants will get a chance to compete in a live body painting competition, for a grand prize of \$300. Half of all proceeds and donations will go toward REACH Studios, a community art center for children. The Starving Arts is a small art and music festival setting with live music, performance art, live painting, vendors/crafters, tons of "tripped out" lighting effects and massive stage and venue art installations
8 p.m. — 2 a.m., Tickets start at \$12, The Avenue Café, 2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing www.avenuecafelansing.com

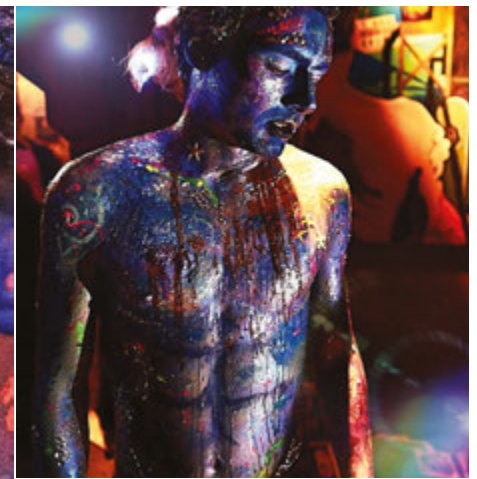


Photo by Kendall D. Latrigue

Starving Arts 2017. Geoph Espen painted by Ella Kramer.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27 >> BIOLOGY ON TAP

The Loft will host its monthly Biology on Tap event, where scientists deliver lectures while the audience enjoys brews. Dr. Kathleen Quigley will talk about how stressful conditions can trigger a process that turns plants into glass. After that, Dr. Emily Puckett will discuss how brown rats managed to migrate across the entire world.

7:30 p.m., Free entry, The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, www.theloftlansing.com

MONDAY, MARCH 26 >> OBERAMA AT THE RIV

Kalamazoo's Bell's Brewery's nationally renowned beer, Oberon, returns for the season. The Riv will be celebrating the popular beer's arrival with an all day event. Oberon pitchers will be available for only \$7. Representatives from Bell's Brewery will also be at the Riv giving out free Oberon merchandise.

11 a.m. — 8 p.m., Free entry, The Riv, 231 MAC Ave., East Lansing, www.therivel.com

SATURDAY, MARCH 24>> FATE OF THE EARTH SYMPOSIUM

MSU's Environmental Science and Policy Program has launched a symposium series to discuss the challenges and opportunities that come with protecting the environment. This symposium brings distinguished thinkers from around the globe to explore what is known, what needs to be known and what must be done in a time of unprecedented environmental change, technological advancement and population growth.

8 a.m. — 6 p.m., Free, Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, 219 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing, www.espp.msu.edu/events/fateoftheearth/2018

MONDAY MARCH 26 >> AMY GOLDSTEIN AT R.E. OLDS TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Amy Goldstein, Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington Post staff writer, will speak about her new book "Janesville: An American Story." The book tells the story of what happened to Janesville, Wisconsin's autoworkers upon the closure of the nation's oldest operating General Motors assembly plant. "Janesville" answers many tough economic questions and proves the hardship faced by many in the face of a shifting manufacturing market. It was picked by Barack Obama as one of his top 10 books of 2017. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and Goldstein will be accessible for her signature to grace the cover.

7 p.m., Free entry, R.E.Olds Transportation Museum, 240 Museum Drive, Lansing., www.reoldsmuseum.org

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 21

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SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 21

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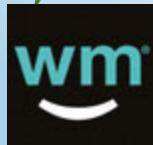
Physical medical
marijuana card
& ID is required

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Begins at 11 - ends Whenever!

(Come enjoy on us)

- The Original Medicated Chicken Wings!
- GRANDDEALS
- Vendors
- Music and Lots FUN!
- Give Aways, and Prizes



Check us out in Weedmaps & Leafly





HE ATE

SHE ATE



DeLuca's

Feeling at home with comforting Italian food

By **MARK NIXON**

They strolled in singly, in pairs, bunches. Hugs all-around. When they assembled there were 20 or more seated, waiting for the person of honor. It was a birthday. It was family.

I have witnessed such scenes countless times at DeLuca's, and participated in similar family gatherings here for at least a decade. DeLuca's is a family place in the best possible sense of the word.

If there is a restaurant in town that I can call a second home, DeLuca's is the place. It's been in the same location on Willow Street since 1960, when it was known as the Willow Bar. I've been a semi-regular since the 1980s. I've watched anniversaries celebrated, birthdays and, sadly, one death.

By now, I'm sure you are stuffed with my heaping bowl of nostalgia and want to know about the food. Here we go. This is not the best Italian restaurant I've visited. There are better ones in Boston or, closer to home, Windsor. There's a pretty decent one in Detroit's Eastern Market.

But I lean on Anthony Bourdain's keen observation that the best cuisine is borne of poverty, necessity. DeLuca's crafts what I call peasant food into filling, people-pleasing works of art.

My go-to dish is a half-order of spaghetti with tomato-meat sauce (\$9.25). I always order this with meatballs, sausage and mushrooms. The six bucks extra is well worth it.

First off, you have to remember that DeLuca's portions are huge. I always take half of my half-order home. The pasta is cooked to perfection, tender but not mushy. The meatballs are expertly blended with spices and bread crumbs. The sausage has that glorious fennel aroma and taste. I would change nothing about this dish.

During several visits we ordered or tasted a half-dozen entrees, the house salad and a homemade soup. Here's a partial rundown:

- The combination plate (\$14) of manicotti, cannelloni and meat ravioli created a hearty trio of tastes. The cannelloni was like a crepe bursting with parmesan. This combo dish is ready-made for pastavores (is that a word?).

- The eggplant parmesan (\$12.50) exceeded my expectations. Other than in certain Greek dishes, I find eggplant ranges from dull to awful. DeLuca's take on eggplant excels, no doubt due to zesty

tomato sauce and the redolent bite of aged parmesan.

- The meatball soup (\$2.90 for a cup) had the same meatballs as my spaghetti dish, burbling about in rich broth. The chunks of zucchini were useless in this soup, but I consider zucchini to be one of nature's mistakes, so there you go.

- The house salad, which comes with entrees, is somewhat commonplace save for one thing — an excellent homemade Italian dressing. It has the right balance of tang, salt and oil.

DeLuca's is known for its pizzas. I counted 34 pizza topping options on the menu. The pizzas are thick, laden with cheese and toppings, and an economical way to feed a hungry family. Personally, my pizza tastes have changed. I prefer the thin-crust gourmet pizzas, such as those served at the Cosmos.

Nonetheless, I felt obliged to try a DeLuca's pizza — its culinary calling card. Normally, I would opt for the meat lover's pizza, which I've tried and liked. I went for something different. The deep-dish potato pizza. This \$13.60 item is a disaster in a pan. In theory, it had olive oil, bacon, potatoes, broccoli, chicken and onions embedded in thick dough and swaddled in mozzarella cheese. I tasted a bit of bacon and a lot of broccoli. This pizza needs to be rethought or shown the door. To be fair, my wife thought it was good.

There is nothing particularly dazzling about DeLuca's low-slung exterior, other than its name written in gold script. What dazzles me is what goes on inside. DeLuca's is the most democratic of places, where young and old, rich and not-so-rich, mingle in a crowded bar then proceed to tables and booths for food, wine and family. A bit like home.

By **GABRIELLE LAWRENCE**

Quick, name an independent, locally-owned restaurant where you can walk-in on any given evening and find the place absolutely heaving with people who are waiting to be seated. Golden Harvest doesn't count — they aren't open for dinner.

DeLuca's pizza is the stuff of legend in Lansing, and from what I saw that reputation isn't in danger of dying out anytime soon.

On our first visit, we met a group of friends for dinner. We started with an assortment

of appetizers: meatballs and cheese, bruschetta and mozzarella sticks. Although it's been a good 15 years since I've had a mozzarella stick, I remembered what to expect, and was anticipating a bland cheese product encased in breading.

Along with two big ol' mozzarella sticks, I ate my words.

These things were so much better than they had any right being. The cheese tasted like fresh mozzarella, and the breading wasn't overwhelming.

If those were good, the meatballs were divine. They were enormous, with only three to an order, and that appetizer could have easily served as my meal. They were tender and moist and swam in a pool of melted cheese and tomato sauce, which I considered funneling into my baby's bottle so he can develop an early appreciation of a properly-salted sauce. I didn't because he's only three months old, and I didn't want anyone reporting me.

I had lasagna for my entrée, and what I'm about to say might be controversial. This lasagna had too much cheese. I didn't grow up in a house where we ate lasagna, and my experience with the dish has all come during the last handful of years. What I've learned is that I like a composed dish. I like my layers of meat, noodle, cheese, and sauce to be distinct pieces of the same whole.

The lasagna at DeLuca's is a molten hot

DeLuca's Restaurant

2006 W Willow St, Lansing, MI 48917

(517) 487-6087

11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Monday - Thursday

11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Friday & Saturday

Closed Sunday

www.delucaspizza.com

saucer filled with those same elements, but without a composition to them. The copious amount of cheese and sauce turns the dish into, essentially, a lasagna soup.

Mr. She Ate had a nine-inch meat special pizza. I won't spend precious column inches debating the merits of DeLuca's pizza, because you either like it or you don't. For me, it isn't pizza, it's casserole. I find the toppings to be overwhelming and the pie to be too thick. On the other hand, Mr. She Ate lusts after it, talks about it like he's talking about a unicorn, and couldn't have been happier to do battle with a pizza that included pepperoni, ham, sausage, ground beef and entire slices of bacon.

On a return visit, I ordered the Fettuccine DeLuca. I added chicken to the dish, which was loaded with mushrooms, mozzarella, and a liberal dose of melted butter. It was unique and an interesting juxtaposition from all the tomato-based dishes, but it would have been better with one less minute under the broiler and fresh mushrooms.

Mr. She Ate had a meatball sub, which is one of his perpetual favorite dishes and one he doesn't frequently eat, since the recipe that I use for them is an all-day affair. He liked that the sub bun was substantial enough to avoid melting under the pressure of the filling. The meatballs were just as delicious in the sandwich as they were on their own.

To be honest, when I have my way I don't prefer to order Italian food at a restaurant. From my perspective, I can boil water, so I can make pasta at home. Mr. She Ate has perfected the art of chicken Alfredo, and I'd rather choose something that I can't or won't make at home when I go to a restaurant. I wouldn't drive across town for the fettuccini at DeLuca's, but the meatballs and mozzarella sticks are a different story. Judging by the vast quantity of pizza boxes that were being cradled by people picking up their orders, the lure of the House Special pizza is enough to keep the tables at DeLuca's overflowing for years to come.



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