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April 18-24, 2018

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420 ISSUE



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- . IT COSTS STATES MILLIONS TO FIGHT!*
- . ILLEGAL POT TRADE FUNDS GANGS!*
- . IT HAS MEDICAL VALUE!*
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SCHEDULE

April 18th

MEETING DR. SUN (2014)

Director: Yee Chin-yen
6:00 - 6:30 p.m. | Snacks
6:30 - 6:40 p.m. | Intro by Paul Bach Jr.
6:45 p.m. | Movie

April 19th



SMALL TALK (2017)

Director: Huang Hui-chen
A personal documentary on LGBTQ issues in Taiwan. Huang unravels the story of her estranged lesbian mother and other members in her family. Winner of the Teddy Award at the 2017 Berlin International Film Festival. Post-screening discussion with Huang (in attendance) & Tze-Lan Sang, Professor of Chinese.
6:00 - 6:30 p.m. | Light refreshments
6:30 - 6:40 p.m. | Intro by Paul Bach Jr.
6:45 p.m. | Movie

April 20th

MISSING JOHNNY (2017)

Director: Xi Huang
4:30 - 4:40 p.m. | Intro by Paul Bach Jr.
4:40 - 6:30 p.m. | Movie
6:30 - 7:00 p.m. | Pizza

THE GREAT BUDDHA +(2017)

Director: Huang Hsin-yao
7:00 - 7:10 p.m. | Intro by Paul Bach Jr.
7:10 p.m. | Movie

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- Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Resource Center
- Pottsville High School
- Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago (TECO)

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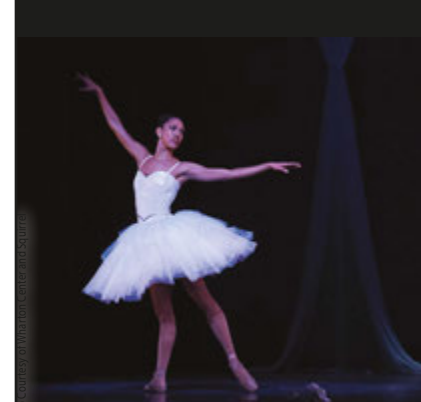
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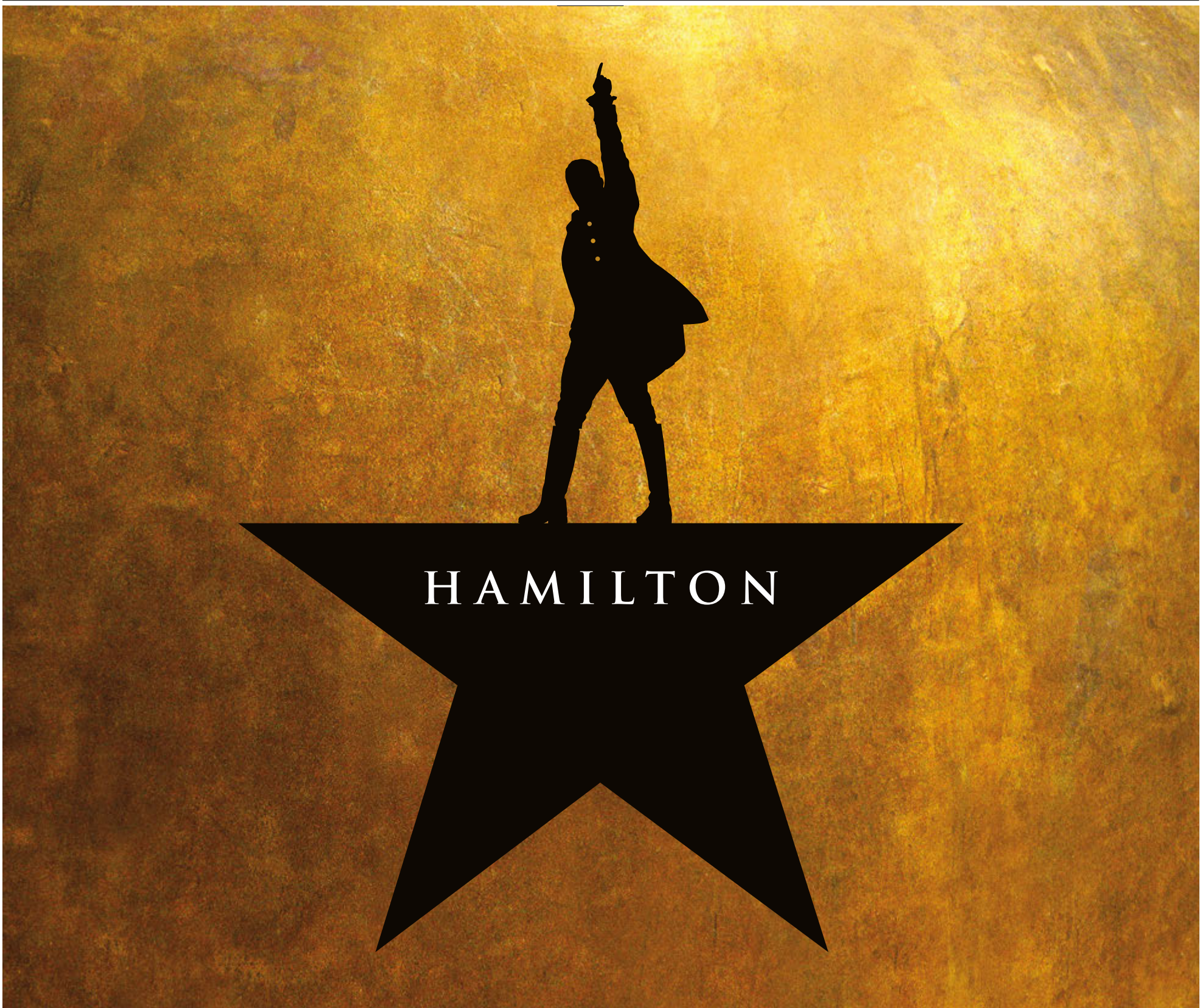
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Letter to the editor

Time to ask hard questions of BWL

Opposition to the Board of Water and Light's (BWL's) plans to build a new gas-fired power plant in Lansing appears to have fallen on deaf ears. The BWL Commission approved the bidding unanimously. The mayor doesn't have any problems with BWL's plans and the city council can't stop it. So, unless things change during the bidding process, Lansing will soon be the proud owner of a new \$500 million gas plant, expected to run for 30 years.

A baby born today will be grown with children of his or her own before we retire this plant. Do we really think that in 30 years, we're still going to be cracking open the earth for natural gas (fracking)... at prices we can afford? (Note that the \$500m is just for construction... that doesn't include the fuel costs.)

In other places around the country, plans for natural gas plants are coming to a screeching halt. Arizona, not a bastion of tree-huggers, just placed a 9-month moratorium on building gas plants. Last June, Los Angeles backed away. Colorado is shifting to renewables and actually lowering people's bills! DTE Energy, here in Michigan, is under intense scrutiny for proposing the same kind of gas plant.

Even the stolid New York Times just issued an opinion rather dreamily laying out the wonderful new possibilities of alternatives to fossil fuels. "In parts of the country, wind

and solar plants built from scratch now offer the cheapest power available, even counting old coal, which was long seen as unbeatable."

BWL should consider new energy technologies, while making use of some common cost-saving programs that avoid using power during peak times, help customers increase efficiency, and distribute energy generation across their service area to make the grid less vulnerable to outages.

Lansing residents should be concerned about this waste of money. Contact Lansing Mayor Schor and the City Council and ask them to appoint BWL Commissioners who are independent and willing to ask management the hard questions.

www.lansingenvironmentalactionteam.org for more.
REBECCA PAYNE, Lansing
(Rebecca Payne is a member of the Lansing Environmental Action Team.)

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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Famous bassist comes to MSU



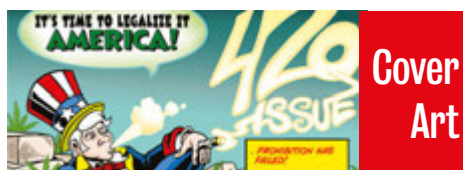
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A walking tour of Lansing's Baker neighborhood



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WKAR's Backstage Pass gives new music to the masses



Cover Art

By Keith Tucker

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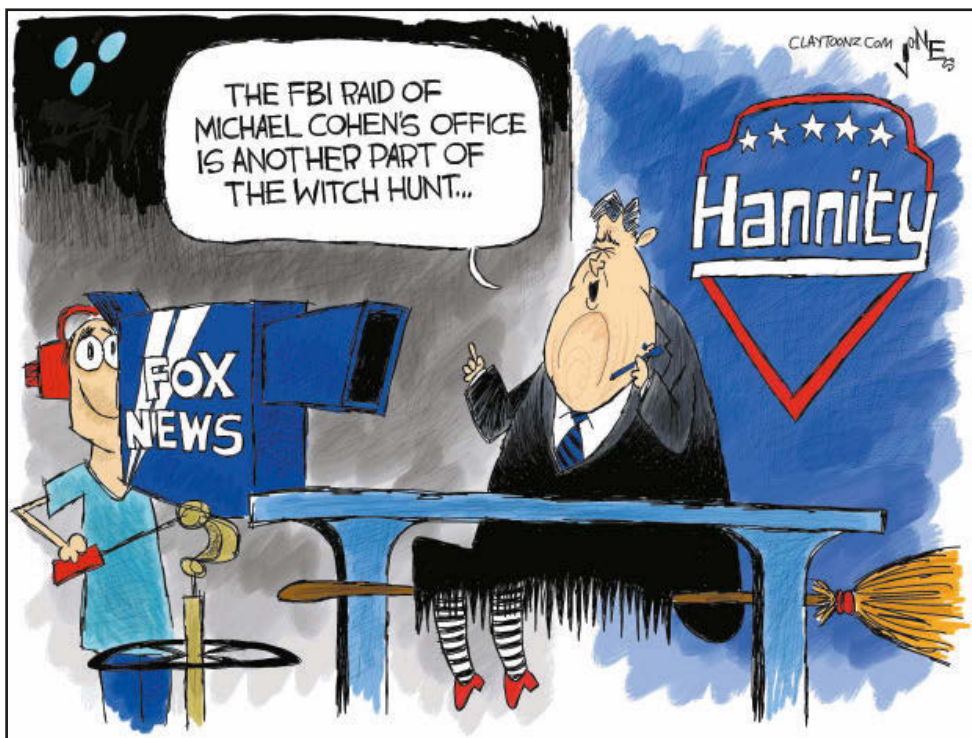
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Correction & Clarification

Because of an editing error, the telephone number of the Lansing Mayor's Office in last week's column by Mayor Andy Schor was printed incorrectly. The correct number is (517) 483-4141.

Also, Mayor Schor said he misspoke in an article last week on efforts to collect the city income tax. Schor said he should have said: "When I was in the legislature, we tried to run a bill that required business owners outside of the city to collect income taxes from residents. Detroit wanted it, and they said it would be able to capture millions of dollars, and that went nowhere fast because the Chamber opposed it, because they didn't want their members to have to collect that."



CITY PULSE **on the AIR** NOW AT 10:30 A.M. SATURDAYS on **WDBM IMPACT** 88.9FM

THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW

AN OFFHAND REMARK ON THE PRESIDENT'S FAVORITE TV SHOW. ROBERT MUELLER IS OUT OF CONTROL! THIS IS LIKE NAZI GERMANY--EXCEPT WORSE!

A FEW MINUTES LATER-- Have ordered NASA to put Mueller in a rocket (Space Ship) and shoot him into the Sun! Will launch tomorrow! MAGA!!

SARAH SANDERS DOES HER THING. TOP LAWYERS AGREE--UNDER INTERNATIONAL SPACE LAW, THE PRESIDENT OBVIOUSLY HAS THE AUTHORITY TO FIRE MUELLER INTO THE SUN! IT'S RIDICULOUS TO EVEN QUESTION IT!

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS DO THEIR. I SEE NO REASON TO INTERVENE AT THIS TIME! THE LAUNCH ISN'T EVEN SCHEDULED FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

AND SEAN HANNITY DOES HIS. FIRING THE SPECIAL COUNSEL INTO THE SUN IS JUST THE START! WE SHOULD BUILD A FLEET OF ROCKETS AND SEND HILLARY CLINTON AND THE REST OF THE DEEP STATE UP AS WELL!

AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER... By my authority as President (Leader), will order NASA to build fleet of Space Ships (Rockets) to shoot (launch) Crooked Hillary, Deep State, and Fake News Media into Sun (big burning Fireball) also!

AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT, LET'S GET RID OF THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA TOO!

NEXT TIME: SOMETHING INCOMPREHENSIBLY WORSE! TRUMP SHOULD NUKE CALIFORNIA! THAT WOULD SHOW THEM WHO'S BOSS!

Bolstered by faith DeWeese seeks political comeback

Paul DeWeese may be knocking on your door soon for support in his bid to return to the state legislature.

Meanwhile, though, the former House member from the Lansing area is knocking on other doors — to deliver packages for a commercial delivery service.

That's quite a change in circumstance for DeWeese, 62. Until three years ago, he was a medical doctor operating two private practices.

Now, he wears a red knit shirt bearing the delivery service's insignia. He drives a used white van delivering packages for Staples, Walmart and other companies. He gets \$1 per package. Some days he loads thousands of pounds.

DeWeese, who served in the House from 1998 to 2002, surrendered his medical license three years ago as part of settling a civil suit that alleged he had violated the federal Controlled Substances Act in his addiction practice.

DeWeese said he overprescribed opioids and other drugs because he was too "caring" of patients, who sold their medications on the street in order to obtain heroin.

"I probably wasn't the best suited to treat people with addiction," DeWeese said, "because on the scale of wariness vs. care, I was way over on the care side."

DeWeese faced bigger legal problems two years ago, when he pleaded guilty to health care fraud in a separate neuropathy practice. He was sentenced to three years' probation and 250 hours of community service.

About \$1 million is what the twin experiences have cost him, when you add up fines, restitution and legal fees, DeWeese estimates.

The delivery work fulfills a requirement of probation to have a job. He also receives a monthly Social Security payment.

DeWeese said the decline in income has been easier because he has "never really lived a lavish lifestyle."

Indeed, it's something of a return to his upbringing, which he described as "lower middle class," with clothes from the Salvation Army.

Raised in Grand Haven, DeWeese put himself through Hope College in Holland and medical school at Wayne State University, in both cases with considerable help from government scholarships and loans.

"As a physician, I was one of the people they'd say, 'You really pulled yourself up by

your own bootstraps.' That's nonsense. I had to study hard, but if it wasn't for private scholarships but especially the government providing loans and scholarship grants, I would never have been able to go to college or medical school.

DeWeese no longer buys into the quintessentially Republican philosophy of the self-made man overcoming obstacles by hard work alone.

He was raised a Republican — he said his police-officer father belonged to the



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

Paul DeWeese, a former physician and state legislator, at the warehouse in Lansing where he loads his van to deliver packages on a route in Brighton.

ultra-conservative John Birch Society. He was elected twice to the House as a Republican from the suburban Lansing 67th District. He was the unsuccessful Republican nominee for the state Senate in 2002, losing to future Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero.

But several years ago, DeWeese switched sides. Today, he is running for the Democratic nomination for the 68th state House seat, which Andy Schor gave up after he was elected Lansing's mayor last November. DeWeese lives in Lansing Township near Waverly Road.

DeWeese said his doubts about being a Republican were sown while in the House two decades ago. He recalled two issues that put him on the road to reshaping his political views.

One was prevailing wage, which he said Republicans wanted to repeal.

"I fought for prevailing wage," DeWeese said, even though the Michigan Chamber of

Commerce "was just livid with me and the governor as well," referring to John Engler, now the interim president of Michigan State University.

"I didn't even know what prevailing wage was," DeWeese recalled, when the House Republican caucus was debating it. But, he said, "I went and talked to union workers and came to the conclusion to be on the side of public policy that supports workers earning a living wage."

The other issue was an anti-bullying bill to protect gay students. "My caucus refused to support that, and I just remember being so disappointed and angry. I said, 'What we're doing here by not supporting this law is saying it's open season on gay students.

You've got to be kidding. I'm ashamed."

Another departure from his upbringing is his Catholicism.

"My family was very anti-Catholic," said DeWeese, but over time he found the social activism side of the religion appealed to him. He even went to India to work with Mother Teresa.

His faith has also helped him endure his fall from grace in the last few years.

"It has strengthened me," DeWeese said. "Humility is of great importance in Catholicism."

"By confronting our own personal wrongs, you're able to say, 'I'm a fallible person. I've made errors. I've made poor choices.'"

And in doing so, he added, you find "that's not all you're defined by. You're not defined by the worst thing you've ever done."

"We're a composite."

—BERL SCHWARTZ

Restricting gun rentals

Lawmaker takes action to close 'loophole' in Michigan laws

If State Sen. Rick Jones gets his way, if you don't have an authorization to purchase a handgun, a background check or a concealed pistol permit, you won't be renting a gun in Michigan.

Jones, R-Grand Ledge, who chairs the Judiciary Committee, has asked for legislation to regulate gun rentals in Michigan after a March 26 murder-suicide in Lansing Township was committed with a gun stolen from a gun store.

Lansing Township Police Chief Adam Kline confirmed that Timothy Olin, 30, stole the semiautomatic handgun after renting it from Total Firearms in Delhi Township. He took the weapon to JoAnn Fabrics and Crafts on Saginaw Highway. Once there he killed his estranged girlfriend, Rachel Duncan, 25, then turned the weapon on himself. Duncan had obtained a personal protection order from a local court against Olin. As a result, Duncan was not legally allowed to have a gun.

Since that happened, City Pulse has reported that the facility's rental controls were lax — something an attorney for the gun store has said will be addressed with upcoming security measures — and had previously rented a gun to a convicted felon who used his prison identification to complete the transaction.

"My first thoughts were: How could someone walk off a gun range with a rental gun so easily?" said Jones. "How can we stop bad people from renting guns?"

So last week he met with representatives of the Michigan State Police and the National Instant Background Check System to determine how legislation could address what State Rep. Jon Hoadley, D-Kalamazoo called a "loophole" in Michigan's gun laws.

Jones has requested draft language from the state's Legislative Services Bureau, which

See Guns, Page 9



Get behind the hot dog

Surprises liven up walking tour of Baker neighborhood

I started my walking tour of Lansing's plucky Baker neighborhood late Wednesday afternoon by flashlight, picking my way through the broken toilets and random debris of a cavernous 1925 school. I ended the tour just before sundown, crouching behind a giant hot dog to dodge possible gunfire.

There won't be another Walking Wednesday quite like last week's showcase of the troubled but plucky area centered on the South Cedar Street corridor south of I-496.

Lansing's periodic neighborhood strolls, organized by the city's neighborhoods department, are meant to showcase cool places, connect residents with a range of services and help the area's entrepreneurs and do-gooders network with each other. You can talk with a community police officer, find out about financial services, get information on health insurance and connect with other local organizations.

There was nothing ordinary about the star attraction of Wednesday's tour — the hulking Walter French Academy building at 1900 S. Cedar St., a junior high school built in 1925.

Vacant since 2008, the school's sheer size and craftsman-like beauty come as a shock, even to locals who have never been inside.

The school was donated to the nonprofit Capital Area Housing Partnership by its owners, the Louis J. Eyde and George F. Eyde families, after being placed on the National Historic Register in 2015.

Rawley van Fossen of the Capital Area Housing Partnership led us through the dark, debris-filled corridors, counting us off at every dark turn, so nobody would be left behind.

"Seven, eight, nine," he murmured as we entered the cavernous gymnasium.

The 200,000-square-foot school has indestructible terrazzo flooring, fancy masonry, lots of heavy wood trim and ornate sculptural touches like lion heads you just don't find in new builds.

The new owners plan to turn it into "workforce housing" for people and families at or below the area's median income, but Van Fossen is looking for ideas on what to do with the a snug, 500-seat auditorium and two huge gymnasiums, a beautiful 1925 original and an addition built in the 1950s.

About 30 people toured the building Wednesday. Van Fossen heard a lot of suggestions, including a restaurant/coffee shop with outdoor seating, a community theater, a jazz club, a culinary school and a skilled trades training site. Lansing City Futsal, a local franchise for an indoor version of soccer, is looking at the gyms and Peppermint Creek Theatre Co. is looking into using the auditorium, according to Van Fossen.

We ended up in Room 207, a typical classroom, now covered in cigarette butts and

Uno cards left by squatters. Classrooms like this will become one-bedroom apartments with sunlight, a fine view of Cedar Street and a chalkboard.

"Ready to rent, anybody?" Van Fossen asked.

Along Cedar Street in the Baker neighborhood, you can feel the century-old urban fabric stretching and morphing in slow motion.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Artist Helene Murray drizzles ink on a wine glass at the former Dicker and Deal.

A block north of Walter French, a former second-hand store at 1701 S. Cedar Street was showing off a new look. The building was a Kroger store in 1927 and Dicker and Deal from 1973, until it grew out of the space last year and moved to the old Coscarelli's Restaurant space to the south.

Mountains of carpet, old cabinets and counters and accumulated junk have been hauled from the first floor. The old gun showroom is now a gallery popping with whimsical art by Tod Parkhill of Okemos.

Stacy Potter, son of owner Gary Potter, said he hopes to convert the space into a gallery, with studios for artists above, "following the trend of REO Town," the resurgent Lansing neighborhood to the west.

Parkhill wants to be among the first studio renters. "It's the sort of project I've always wanted to run, but I'm a starving artist, so I'm hitching my wagon to this," he said.

A woman and a man walked in off the street and quietly cased the room. The man whispered two words to the woman: "Door jam."

"Yes!" the woman replied.

The two visitors were Emily Heidrich and Prince Solace of nearby Habitat for Humanity.

Heidrich told gallery manager Annie Signs about "Door Jam," a charity project where artists create projects from salvaged doors at

Habitat's ReStore and auction them off. They needed a place to show the art and hold the auction this November.

"This would be a pretty cool place," Heidrich told Signs.

They excitedly exchanged cards.

Nearby, a knot of onlookers watched as retired art teacher Helene Murray tipped a wine glass upside down to let vines of color drip downward.

She was demonstrating alcohol inks that can be used to color hard surfaces like tile and glass.

"Just push that brush around let it drizzle," she told a woman bent in concentration

trailer.

Starr had already gone through about 120 hot dogs by the time I strolled by.

As kids ran past her to reload at the wagon, Julie Durham, director of development for Habitat for Humanity, explained that Habitat has targeted the Baker neighborhood for two week-long revitalization programs in July and September. An army of 150 to 200 volunteers will do home repairs and painting, fix porches and windows, mow and edge lawns.

"We're working on this neighborhood because it needs it," Durham said. "The crime rate is higher, the poverty rate is higher, home ownership rates are lower, so there's a lot of reasons statistically this neighborhood needs some help."

She was interrupted by shouting on the corner of Linval and Isbell streets, two houses away from our impromptu pocket park.

Two men standing on the corner were arguing with a man (or men) in a van. Word spread that one or more of the yelling men were waving guns.

We crouched behind the hot dog wagon, putting six feet of wooden weiner between us and whatever was next.

"We're keeping it real here," Durham cracked. She hustled her husband away with her young daughter.

"You want to take her and head — somewhere?"

The minivan cruised past, with the window open, and continued west. We cautiously peeked over the hot dog and stood erect.

Within 15 minutes, half a dozen patrol cars lined the streets. Several officers were conferring calmly with the men on the corner. It was past 8 o'clock and time for Walking Wednesday to end, anyway.

Unperturbed, Starr gave out the remaining 40 hot dogs to the neighbors, but they hustled away before he was finished with them.

"Wait. Need some ketchup and mustard?"

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

CITY OF EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF ADOPTION ORDINANCE NO. 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

Please take notice that Ordinance No. 1422 was adopted by the East Lansing City Council at the regular meeting of the Council held on April 10, 2018, and will become effective immediately upon the publication of the following summary of ordinance.

SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE NO. 1422

THE CITY OF EAST LANSING ORDAINS:

Ordinance 1422 amends Sections 8-181 and 8-182 by eliminating the requirement that restaurants serving alcohol have at least 50% of their gross sales in food and also eliminates the associated reporting requirement.

A true copy of Ordinance No. 1422 can be inspected or obtained at the Office of the City Clerk at City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, Michigan during normal business hours.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#18-089

‘Cowboy up’ Local clerks say they’re ready for the Russians

The 2018 mid-term election showdowns are drawing closer, with Russians lurking behind every virtual tumbleweed.

Local election officials say they’re ready for high noon.

Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum said the 2018 elections will “absolutely” go forward, even if hackers take out the whole power grid. In the event of a cyberattack, she said, paper ballots will be counted by battery-powered tabulators — in candlelight, if necessary.

According to cybersecurity expert Joseph Lorenzo Hall, local officials like Byrum “are on notice that they are now on the front lines of cybersecurity.”

“We have to ‘cowboy up’ state and local election officials to better deal with nation-state threats,” Hall said last month in an interview for the Washington, D.C.-based Center for

Democracy and Technology, where Hall leads the Internet Architecture Project.

Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope sounded as if he were casually twirling a set of spurs emblazoned with the city seal. “I’m not terribly worried,” he said. “I think Michigan has a pretty good handle on it.”

Swope’s staff isn’t blithely opening emails, though.

“We got a communication from the state Feb. 16 that some clerks had gotten something that looked like a phishing attack,” Swope said. “It gave some hints on what can be a clue to a phishing scam.”

The ace in Michigan’s hand, Byrum said, is the state’s paper ballot system.

“When you vote in Michigan, there is always a paper that the voter takes and puts

into a tabulator,” Byrum said.

But she is still on guard against an ever-changing array of threats.

“I’m learning about new and improved cyberattacks and steps we can take to mitigate that risk,” she said. “It would be foolish to say we are completely secure and safe.”

Byrum said she is “absolutely not” satis-

officials and DHS.

“If you want clear channels of communication, that’s relying on phone and Internet to work, and that may not be the case,” Bryum said.

Byrum said her worst nightmare is “technology down.”

For the November 2016 election, she had



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope amid the city’s voting machines, stored at the South Washington Office Complex. Swope says he is “not worried” about Russian hacking of the 2018 election. “Michigan has a pretty good handle on it.”

fied that she has a clear channel to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

In late March, the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee released a set of recommendations on ways to fight the expected onslaught of Russian hacking, including “clear channels of communication” between local election

a two-way radio sitting on her desk, in case communications lines failed.

“In Ingham County, our phone, fax, email is all Internet based,” Byrum said. “If they took out our communication, we still know how to write, and post things on windows,

See Voting, Page 8

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS EAST LANSING HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearings to be held by the East Lansing Historic District Commission on **Thursday, May 10, 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 for the purpose of considering a request from Kristin Mahoney and Kaveh Askari, for the property at 1028 Chesterfield Parkway, to remove the vinyl siding and shutters and the aluminum covering the windows in order to restore the original siding and wood framed windows beneath. The applicant is also proposing to add wood shutters to resemble the original shutters.
2. A public hearing will be held for the purpose of considering a request from the Alumni Corp of Beta Zeta, for the property at 453 Abbot Road, to install an ADA ramp on the left side of the building that will be added to the existing patio deck.
3. A public hearing will be held for the purpose of considering a request from Carrie Cargill, for the property at 142 University, to raze the existing garage and construct a new 24’x24’ garage. Additionally the applicant is proposing to add an addition to the rear of the structure that will not be visible from a public right-of-way.

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.

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#18-092

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 **Wednesday, May 9, 2018** at 7:00 p.m., in the 54-B District Court, Courtroom 2, 101 Linden Street, East Lansing:

A public hearing will be held to consider a Site Plan and Special Use Permit application from Hagan Group, LLC, for the properties at 525 and 533 Albert Avenue, which are owned by GA Hurst, LLC. The applicant proposes to demolish the existing structures and construct a three-story town home structure containing 3 units with a full basement; each unit will have 7 bedrooms and be licensed for 7 or 8 unrelated individuals or a family.

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 1-800-649-377.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#18-090

CITY OF EAST LANSING

EAST LANSING CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING PUBLIC HEARING ON PRELIMINARY FY2019 BUDGET AND TAX RATE

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the proposed budget for the City of East Lansing is required by City Charter and the State Budget Law; and,

and, WHEREAS, a public hearing is required under the provisions of the Truth in Taxation Law;

and, WHEREAS, the general appropriations act must set forth the total number of mills to be levied and the purposes for the millage;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of East Lansing does hereby establish the date of Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at 7:00 p.m., in 54-B-Court Room 2, City Hall, 410 Abbot in East Lansing, Michigan, as the date, time, and place for the required public hearing; and be it further resolved that for the purposes of the hearing it shall be assumed that the total tax rate will be **22.1267 mills consisting of 17.5362 mills for operating purposes, 1.8250 mills for solid waste, 0.7715 mills for debt service, and 1.9940 mills for the Library pursuant to section 1 of 1877 PA164.**

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.

The budget is available for public inspection at the East Lansing Library and City Clerk and Finance Office at City Hall; along with the City’s website: cityofeastlansing.com under Finance.

Public comments, either oral or written, are welcome at the Public Hearing. The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at this meeting upon seven (7) calendar days’ notice to the City of East Lansing. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should write or call: Shelli Neumann, Human Resources Department, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 319-6893, TDD (517) 337-0767.

This notice is published by: Jennifer Shuster, City Clerk, City of East Lansing, Michigan, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 (517) 319-6881

CP#18-087

Voting

from page 7

but communicating to the area would have really been difficult.”

The day before the 2016 presidential election, the state’s Bureau of Elections asked every county clerk to check in, using the radio.

“It was like, ‘Dee-deet! Ingham County!’” Byrum said. “But that’s very limited. Michigan has 83 counties. Think of 83 county clerks on that little radio channel.”

About a month before the election, local

clerks like Swope test the ballot tabulation programming done by Byrum’s office.

“Then everything is locked up until Election Day,” Byrum said.

When the polls close, tabulators count the votes and store the ballots. Unofficial results are uploaded to Byrum’s election computer, which generates a report that is transferred to the Internet to report the results.

“As many controls as Ingham County could put on it, I have put on it,” Byrum said.

There are post-election safeguards as well. The day after the election, the Ingham County Board of Canvassers, two Democrats and two Republicans, compare the poll books — written records of how many peo-

ple came in to vote — to the reported results.

“If those numbers don’t match, they figure out, were there spoiled ballots? Did someone walk away with a ballot?” Byrum said.

In Ingham County and Lansing, the vulnerable points in the process, where data is transferred via computer, are either not hooked to the Internet, or they are handled via encrypted VPNs, or Virtual Private Networks.

“Our programming for our ballots is not on line,” Swope said. “The computer we use to put the result on thumb drives — the equipment has never been connected to the Internet.”

Meridian Township clerk Brett Dreyfus

said that makes Russian hacking “not possible.”

“The Russians cannot hack our system because election results do not go through the Internet,” he said. “They are all processed and transmitted through secure channels.”

Nevertheless, Byrum hopes the feds will follow through on the Intelligence Community’s recommendations.

“It would be nice to have a main contact with DHS or have them be able to contact us directly without having to use Google,” she said.

Cybersecurity expert Hall urged the feds

See Voting, Page 9

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS EAST LANSING CITY COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given of a public hearing to be held by the East Lansing City Council on **Tuesday, April 24, 2018** at 7:00 P.M., at East Lansing City Hall, Courtroom 2, for:

- Ordinance 1427, an ordinance to provide for a service charge in lieu of taxes for a multiple family dwelling project for persons of low income to be financed or assessed pursuant to the provisions of the State Housing Development Authority Act of 1966 (1966 PA 346), as amended, MCL 125.1401

This ordinance pertains to the proposed service charge in lieu of taxes for the proposed renovation and addition to the Bailey Community Center, which is located at 300 Bailey Street, East Lansing, Michigan. Please note that all interested persons will be provided an opportunity to be heard, and written communications will be received and considered.

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, please write or call the City Manager’s Office, 410 Abbott Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 (517/319-6920), TDD (1/800/649-3777).

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#18-086

ORDINANCE # 2603

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LANSING, MICHIGAN, PROVIDING FOR THE REZONING OF A PARCEL OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE CITY OF LANSING, MICHIGAN AND FOR THE REVISION OF THE DISTRICT MAPS ADOPTED BY SECTION 1246.02 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES.

The City of Lansing ordains:

Section 1. That the district maps adopted by and incorporated as Section 1246.02 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Lansing, Michigan be amended to provide as follows:

To change the zoning classification of the property described as follows:

Case Number: Z-1-2018

Legal Descriptions: Rezone the property bounded by E. Michigan Avenue to the north, Barnard Street to the south, S. Larch Street to the west and the railroad property to the east from “H” Light Industrial to “G-1” Business district, with the following exceptions (property not included in the rezoning): 628 E. Michigan Avenue, 629 Barnard Street and the adjacent parcel to its east, the parcel of land located at the southeast corner of E. Michigan Avenue and S. Larch Street (formerly addressed as 608 E. Michigan Avenue), 119 S. Larch Street, except the north 16.5 feet thereof and the 2 parcels located immediately south of 119 S. Larch Street.

Section 2. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with the provisions hereof are hereby repealed.

Section 3. This ordinance was duly adopted by the Lansing City Council on April 9, 2018, and a copy is available in the office of the Lansing City Clerk, 9th Floor, City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI 48933.

Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect upon the expiration of seven (7) days from the date this notice of adoption is published in a newspaper of general circulation.

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

CP#18-085

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, APRIL 3, 2018, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD:

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Hayes.

Minutes of the meeting held on March 20, 2018 approved.

Agenda approved.

Adopted Ordinance 31.169: Amendments to Chapter 85 “G” General Business Zone and “H” Industrial Zone.

Adopted Ordinance 31.170: Amendments to Chapter 84 – Parking and Loading Provisions.

Adopted Resolution 18-11: Designating new polling location for Precinct 2.

Scheduled public hearing and referred to Planning Commission for rezoning request PDR-18-4.

Claims approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor
Susan L. Aten, Clerk

CP#18-088

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 **Thursday, May 3, 2018** in the 54-B District Court, Courtroom 2, 101 Linden Street, East Lansing.

1. A public hearing will be held to consider Ordinance 1426: An ordinance to amend the Zoning Use District Map of Chapter 50 - Zoning - of the Code of the City of East Lansing to rezone four properties at 6290 Abbot Road, 6330 Abbot Road, 6350 Abbot Road, and vacant property on Abbot Road from RDD, Meridian Township-Multiple Family Low Density to RM-8, Planned Unit Development. The total area of the properties combined is 24.36 acres.

2. A public hearing will be held to consider Ordinance 1428: An ordinance to amend the Zoning Use District Map of Chapter 50 - Zoning - of the Code of the City of East Lansing to rezone two vacant parcels at the southwest corner of East Saginaw Street and White Pond Road from R-3, Single-Family and Two-Family Residential to B-1, General Office Business. The total area of the properties combined is 0.52 acres.

Call (517) 319-6930, the Department of Planning, Building and Development, City of East Lansing, 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#18-091

Voting

from page 8

to support local clerks.

“These guys are the lowest resourced people out there, regularly protecting against the greatest threats we face, which is nation states,” Hall said.

Byrum agreed that elections are “not properly funded in Michigan.”

Until the August 2017 primary, Ingham county was running elections on computers that were over 12 years old and ran on Windows XP, she said.

“That is not the case now, but it’s embarrassing that it was the case for so long,” Bryrum said.

She added that “cowboying up” means getting more cowboys as well as fresh saddles.

“It’s not just about embracing the new technology, it’s about being properly staffed, and that’s not the case in Michigan,” she said. “We need to respect the election offi-

cial and their duties and obligations and properly staff those offices.”

The next challenge for local officials, and for the American electoral process, is a growing tension between making elections more secure from hacking and making it easier to vote.

“There are people in Michigan and elsewhere that are skeptical of having a totally secure online registration system, or any type of online voting,” Dreyfus said.

But he still believes that in 20 or 30 years, voting will be done totally on line.

“You’ll just look at your watch and speak to it, who you’re voting for governor,” he said.

“I don’t see it,” Swope said. “I believe in the paper ballot.”

Dreyfus admitted that on line technology will open up “a world of problems.”

“Sooner or later, when the state is fully engaged in it, there will be a huge hack, a big meltdown,” he said. “It will require a whole new level of security mechanisms.”

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Guns

from page 5

reviews any legislative proposal before it is introduced, that will do a series of things to keep guns out of the hands of those who should not have them.

One bill would require those wishing to rent a gun to have background checks of some sort. A second bill would require federal firearm licensed dealers to call law enforcement if a potential buyer fails a background check. And finally, Jones wants to create a misdemeanor for anyone with a concealed pistol license who fails to surrender it to the county clerk if it has been suspended or revoked.

That’s an issue highlighted by Total Firearms, said Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum. In her role, she issues and retracts concealed pistol licenses in the county.

Under Michigan law, possession of a valid concealed pistol license allows a person to purchase a gun without a three-day waiting

period. However, a licensed person who is charged with a crime or subject to a personal protection order is required to surrender his or her license to the clerk because it is suspended. When a person is convicted of a crime, the license is revoked.

But that wasn’t happening in Ingham County. Byrum discovered when a license holder with a suspended license walked into Total Firearms this year and purchased a gun. The purchaser then took the weapon to the Ingham County Sheriff’s Department to register it. Law enforcement seized the gun, but Byrum was furious, she said.

“It’s important that those licenses be surrendered when suspended,” she said.

Working with Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wigglesworth, deputies are now knocking on the doors of people with CPLs have been revoked or suspended.

Jones called the reforms “common sense” and said he doesn’t expect pushback from gun rights advocates.

— TODD HEYWOOD

LEGAL NOTICE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING REZONING PENDING

Notice is hereby given that the Charter Township of Lansing Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, May 7, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lansing Township Administration Building, 3209 West Michigan Avenue, to recommend approval or denial of the request for rezoning for the property described as follows:

Case PDR-18-4: 3701 W. Saginaw, Lansing MI 48917 – Former Waverly Golf Course/Park. Parcel #33-21-01-18-101-001

To be rezoned from “A” Single Family Residential to “PD” Planned Development for a Mixed Use Development that could potentially include Retail, Office, Residential, Gas Station, Car Wash, and Restaurants.

Tentative text and other information may be examined at the office of the Clerk, 3209 W. Michigan Ave.

Susan L. Aten, Clerk
Charter Township of Lansing

CP#18-084

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Four people in the pot trade (almost)

If you're looking for something special to do on Friday, check out the website potguide.com for a list of events to mark 420. Or just stop what you're doing at 4:20 p.m. and smoke what you have handy. Or read the following sagas of adventures in the marijuana trade by your friends and neighbors.



Stories by **TODD HEYWOOD** and **MAXWELL EVANS**

Henry Meyer

From weed to 'crack' — chicken, that is

He could have been a master gardener, cashing in on what is expected to be Michigan's next big cash crop. That's if Henry Meyer hadn't been busted with so much pot the Drug Enforcement Agency officers who busted him were in awe, at least in his telling.

"The DEA wanted to interview me to find out how the fuck one person could grow this much marijuana in a house with no help," Meyer said.

In 2010, Meyer, now 33, pled guilty to manufacturing marijuana plants. U.S. District Court judge Robert Bell handed down a 30-month sentence, which he served in full.

The business skills required to run an illegal pot business have transferred seamlessly to his ownership of Eastside Fish Fry, home of "the best damn chicken in the city" (which will get no argument from this writer, other than to say that the catfish nuggets are even better).

His cooking talents even earned him a spot on national television with Guy Fieri's "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives" on the Food Network. The show highlighted his decision to only hire non-violent drug felons like himself to work alongside him in the chicken joint.

"I'm blessed and I'm thankful and I'm happy about what I've done for my friends at the fish fry — I do not call them my employees, I call them my friends," Meyer said.

But the best chicken in the world (and a co-sign from the most famous man alive who's still rocking frosted tips) won't rake in profits like medical marijuana.

Since pot shops dispense medicine, you're almost guaranteed return customers who have an actual need for your product. Not so in food service, even when your meals feature the addictive "crack chicken" seasoning.

Meyer is grateful for his successful transition out of prison, something he knows many felons don't even get a chance at.

But he also knows he's missed the boat on an incredibly lucrative industry, expected to reach nearly a billion dollars in annual revenues statewide, according to the state House Fiscal Agency.

"I'd never even worked in a restaurant in my



Courtesy photo

Meyer with "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives" host Guy Fieri in the kitchen at Eastside Fish Fry.

life. I'd never even fucking swept a floor at a Burger King," Meyer said. "And I run a business now that's gonna bring in \$2 million this year."

"Could you just imagine what I could do with the fucking Pro Bowl?" he said, in reference to the former bowling alley site where PG Manufacturing, LLC has applied for eight grower licenses.

If awarded them all, PG Manufacturing would be eligible to grow 12,000 plants. Taking conservative estimates of four ounces of smokable bud per plant and \$250 an ounce, that's 3,000 pounds and \$12 million in revenue — all for one operation.

But his arrest took away the ability to apply weed skills he'd been building for years. Under emergency rules released by the state's Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs last December, drug felons convicted within the last 10 years are banned from obtaining licenses.

Potential employees for marijuana facility license applicants are banned from working if they have drug felonies within 10 years as well. His only hope would be to receive a written exception from the state's Board of Medical Marijuana Regulation.

Meyer says he's well connected with Lansing's pot shop owners, who regret they couldn't help a

friend capitalize on what would have been a perfect culmination to years of practice with marijuana cultivation.

"I love them and they love me -- it ain't nothing about greed or jealousy," Meyer said. "I know for a fact that if this law ever changes, I could go there and I could make a quarter-million dollars a year just working for them. I know that."

"But they also know that if they were to give me a job and if they were to use my knowledge and wits, they could be risking their millions."

But more important to him than sitting on the sidelines while big pot interests with less experience than he does cash in -- and that's saying a lot, since the mere mention of "those yuppity fucks" sends him into tirades about their hypocrisy -- is the damage it's done to his relationship with his 10-year old son.

Two and a half years is a lot of time to spend away from your child, especially at the crucial preschool ages, which his son, whose name Meyer asked not be used, was going through while he was locked up.

His son has already found out about Meyer's drug-dealing past through his mother, something Meyer said he wanted to wait to tell him.

Meyer thinks his absence has had a major effect on his son. He has behavioral issues, and as a result Meyer has had to be more assertive than he would like to be when he gets to spend time with his son.

Case in point: Meyer had planned a weekend trip to Schaumburg, Illinois, for dinner and a trip to the 1300s at the Medieval Times restaurant. That week, his son was suspended from the school bus and kicked out of music class all within the span of three days.

The trip back in time never happened.

"It made me want to cry, man," Meyer said. "Not because I spent money, not because I took time off of work, but because he fucking deserves it, he deserves me to be who I am."

As Meyer continues to grapple with the personal fallout from his arrest and the barriers it poses to re-entering the industry that he learned so well as a young adult, he wishes he had the chance to legitimize his old business the way so many others will get the chance to this year.

"If the government would've come to me back then and said, Hey man, you can keep doing everything you're doing, you just gotta give us 30 percent of everything, I would've given them 35 percent. Happily."

Joshua Covert

Using the law, attorney is turning the tables in the war on drugs

Marijuana has always been present in the life of Joshua Covert. Growing up, his parents used the controversial plant and to him it was no big deal.

That's until the second grade, when a law enforcement officer came to his class to tell him how horrible drugs and people who use them are.

"They came in with this display case of roach clips, and bongs, and they were showing it to everyone in class and saying that people that use these things are losers, and dopers, and all these derogatory terms," said Covert, 41. "I knew that they were lying to me, because I knew my parents, my parents' friends and family members, other parents would come by. They weren't like that, so I knew at that point the police, law enforcement, was lying to me."

That sent Covert on a trajectory of "challenging" authority he said. He spent most of his childhood in Portage, a cozy, afflu-

ent, bedroom community in southwest Michigan.

"That kind of started, I would say, a healthy distrust of authority," he said with a laugh. "From that point on, I kind of knew I wasn't being told the whole story."

But it wasn't just arguing that motivated Covert to become a lawyer.

"I started thinking about my mom going to jail for using cannabis and that's kind of like what spurred the thought about going to law school," he said. "I decided to actually do that, to help keep people like my mom out of jail."

At 31, he made the decision to hit the law books rather than the slopes.

During an internship in Kalamazoo he got his taste of political organizing. He worked to help push an amendment to the Kalamazoo City Charter making marijuana possession "the lowest priority" for law enforcement action.

And he's been burning his name into the legal and administrative rule books since he graduated. Key among his victories? Getting "baby Bree," Brielle Green, returned to her family in 2013. She'd been removed from her home because both her parents Steve

and Maria grew medical marijuana, legally, in the home.

He also challenged a Michigan law which could have prevented medical marijuana patients from transporting their medication. That law required the marijuana be kept in a secure space not accessible from the passenger compartment of the vehicle. Covert took the case in Clinton County and fought to the State Court of Appeals, getting the law thrown out as it would have applied to medical marijuana patients.

His final achievement, and one he is particularly proud of, was preventing an immi-



Joshua Covert speaks to activists from Represent.us at Midtown Brewing Company Sunday about the importance of marijuana activism in Michigan.

grant from being deported for using marijuana. The man had come to the U.S. to receive medical treatment and "had made a life for himself" and his 12-year-old son in the U.S. Law enforcement conducted an illegal search of his home, a judge ruled, and found his medical pot. Because the search violated the Constitution, the evidence was suppressed and the man was freed. Had he been convicted, he would have been deported.

A large part of his work, he said, is going to be the battle to take a black market product shrouded in stigma and put it in a legitimate regulated market.

As an example, he shared the story of people who were denied state licenses because of "20-year-old" convictions.

"I think it just kind of goes to show," he said, "even though there's a law that you can get licenses," he said, "there are people out there that are going to try to do whatever they can to keep you from getting a license because there's still a stigma associated with it."

Gillian Dawson

From 'Just Say No' to advocate for cannabis

Her grandmother is a Fox News consumer, so Gillian Dawson was anxious about revealing her burgeoning marijuana activism.

Dawson's grandmother, 70, questioned her when she said she used pot.

"She was like, 'No, you don't,' Dawson said. 'I know you, you don't smoke weed. You're not someone who smokes.' And I'm like, 'Yes, I am, a lot.'"

That's when Dawson pulled out her cell phone and started sharing photographs of marijuana with her grandmother. She said the elder woman got up, got another cup of coffee and returned, "ready to understand."

Dawson, 23 and a Michigan State University graduate, was fighting what she called "indoctrination" against marijuana. Such indoctrination has led to a stigma about the drug, and one she struggled with as she started experimenting in her late teens.

"I kind of had to realize that it didn't make you a bad person or lazy or anything, because that was really what I was worried about. I was always an overachiever in high school," she said.

Adding to the reminders of the alleged negativity of pot, a DARE Officer for Saline lived on her block.

"It had a strong effect on me," she said. "Even into high school, my first boyfriend was smoking weed and I used to get in

fights with him about it all the time. I used to be one of those high on life people. I would get adamant about it and when my friends were smoking weed, I'm like, 'Are you sure you need that? You don't need that.'"

As a student at Saline High School in Washtenaw County, she received top grades and served as student government president. But that focus on achievement took a toll. She said she developed anxiety, which led her to try marijuana during a substance experimentation phase in her teen years.

"The alcohol actually became more like a gateway for the marijuana than the other way," she said, turning an opposition frame famously touted by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The frame? Marijuana is a gateway drug to other drug use, including heroin and cocaine. Dawson laughs at that, noting that the impact of marijuana was better than the prescription medications in addressing her anxiety and she saw no need, and had no desire to use other drugs as a result. "That was it."

She chairs the Michigan Democratic Party Cannabis Caucus, which Sunday scored a political coup when it helped secure the party's endorsement of civil rights attorney Dana Nessel over former U.S. Attorney Patrick Miles.

Her movement into the cannabis trade



Dawson

and movement is also informed by her educational experience. She graduated from MSU with two bachelor's degrees. One degree was in Spanish, the other in social work.

While she is not working as a traditional social worker, she sees her work in the cannabis industry as an extension of the philosophies of social work.

"I love being able to do something that not only makes me feel good, but do something that I know makes other people's lives better," she said.

That work is underpinned by a rejection

of corporate America, she said.

"Maybe I'm not benefiting everyone," she said, "I'm maybe not benefiting the corporations at the top that want to take this from us and exploit it and make Walmart weed. But I am helping people."

— TODD HEYWOOD



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Jarren Osmar

With history of working for GOP, an unlikely cannabis advocate

Jarren Osmar, as he had for weeks, stood on the podium and began to launch into a lecture assailing city officials for undermining democracy. As the legal liaison for Let Lansing Vote, he's led protests at City Council meetings.

April 9 was a change. President Carol Wood gaveled him down when he began to speak, noting that marijuana was not on the business agenda. Osmar, 35, kept talking.

Wood recessed the meeting. "Officer remove him, please," she commanded.

A Lansing Police officer physically pulled Osmar from the podium, escorting him into the lobby of Council chambers.

"When they told me I had to stop speaking, I was flabbergasted," Osmar said. "Because it was a democracy and transparency issue when they told me to stop speaking, I refused."

It was the culmination of the Grand Ledge native's evolution on marijuana. The self-described guy "who followed all the rules," and son of what he described as "hippies," pot had not been an issue for

him in early adult life.

Osmar attended Michigan State University's James Madison College, where he studied political theory. He said he completed his course work but didn't turn in his final paper and didn't receive his bachelor's degree.

He's a former legislative staffer who worked his way up the ladder into a cushy spot as assistant to the state chairman of the party traditionally against marijuana legislation, the GOP.

"After working for the Republican Party, I really began to distrust authority and the way things worked," Osmar said. "It's with that in mind that I started to be more open-minded about what my friends in the cannabis world were doing."

Osmar said he's been involved in voter activism throughout the Midwest since at least 2014.

When he was about 30, his outlook on cannabis changed. A friend, he said, was



Osmar was escorted out of a Lansing City Council meeting on April 9.

sick from stage IV cancer. The man had developed the gaunt, skeletal frame of a person on the edge of death and had faced "every medical procedure there was." In an act of desperation, the man started using a potent extract of marijuana called Rick Simpson's Oil, or RSO.

"He does 60 days of this treatment

and he goes in for the scan and the cancer's gone," Osmar said. "That convinced me that this has merit."

Osmar threw himself into cannabis activism. He is now employed in the industry, although he declined to explain in what position. He does not consume any marijuana products.

The self-proclaimed democracy advocate said he's excited to potentially see governmental checks and balances play out in his organization's favor — and in favor of turning pot regulation over to the

voters.

Since City Clerk Chris Swope made a mistake in throwing the petitions out, it would only be fitting for another elected official to right that wrong, he said.

"There are other powers that you can appeal to that don't have a stake, so it's very interesting to me to hopefully see the system working," Osmar said.

With a likely 2018 ballot measure to legalize recreational marijuana coming, the once black market drug would be coming out of the shadows. That means new regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

It's the little shops that provide a personal touch, sometimes even giving valuable products away to patients in dire need, Osmar said. That's what motivates him to keep firing stones at giants closing in from every angle.

"We see everything turning into Walmart and Amazon, and you have to resist that," Osmar said. "It's a shame to take this middle-class cottage industry and turn it over to big money people who don't know anything about it."

The loss of the community would hurt Lansing, he said.

"Your cashier doesn't know your name at Walmart, you're just a number," he said. "That's what we're losing when we only allow big institutions to do this."



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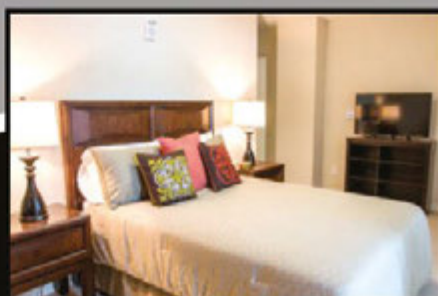


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Legendary bassist and bandmaker Ron Carter comes to MSU

‘Big Brother’ is here

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

When biologists single out “keystone species” that whole ecosystems depend on, they’re never sharks, bears, lions or other PBS glory hogs. Ecologists warn of the dire things that would happen if all the trees, or the insects, or the bacteria, in the world disappeared.

If there is a keystone organism alive in jazz right now, it’s surely bassist/composer

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Ron Carter. If Carter and his multifarious works vanished, life might go on. But would it be worth living?

Carter, 83, is arguably the most illustrious and influ-

ential in a long line of guest artists to do a residency with the MSU Jazz Studies program, and he’s still searching for something new, from intimate duo and trio dates to a big band gig in New York’s Blue Note last weekend.

“Every night, when I go to work, I’m looking for the second floor,” Carter said in a phone interview before the Blue Note gig, a tribute to pianist/composer Michel Legrand. “I’ve been on the first floor for a long time and I want to get off!”

On many of the great recordings in jazz history, from Miles Davis’ “Seven Steps to Heaven” to McCoy Tyner’s “Extensions,” Carter quietly controls the chemistry like a blacksmith, bending the music to his will as it curls, white hot, out of the creative furnace.

“I look for a set of notes, where they are on the bass — can I make the band go this way, make them better?” Carter said.

“It’s beyond finding the right notes,” MSU Jazz Studies director Rodney Whitaker said. “He is the bass player that will immediately make your band sound like a band. If he’s not on the bandstand, it’s a different record, a different gig.”

Saxophonist Joe Henderson called Carter “Big Brother” because of his apparent mind-reading ability, according to Whitaker.

“Wherever you think you’re going to go musically, he goes there before you go, or he’ll lead you to where you want to go,” Whitaker said.

Carter is aware of his authority in a group and isn’t shy about using it.

“That’s part of what the Creator’s given me, man,” Carter said. “I have to find the right set of notes, the right integrity, the right demeanor, the reputation of helping dates go where they can go — and that might be somewhere else, other than where they were intended to go, to be musically successful. I do that kind of stuff and I have a great time.”

Carter also deploys a dry sense of humor. To ask him the secret of his vitality is to court a brisk slap.

“I have hair, and a not all gray beard. I think there’s still milk on my bib so I’m OK.” Asked whether music is the best thing human beings do, he hesitated.

“I’m not old enough, man,” he said. “Six years from now I can figure out the answer. A great handshake or a serious hug — there’s no music in that but the feeling is great.”

After years of trying, Whitaker exploited a rare opening in Carter’s busy schedule of recordings, playing gigs and teaching.

Carter’s residency caps a week-long Jazz Spectacular that also includes a swing dance Wednesday night, a concert with student octets and percussionist Carlos Valdez Thursday, and the day-long Essentially Ellington high school band competition Saturday.

Whitaker, mentor to hundreds of musicians, is elated to finally get one of his own mentors in the house.

“He was my hero on a lot of levels, being from the same home town,” Whitaker said. Carter grew up in Ferndale and, like Whitaker, went to Cass Tech High School in Detroit.

Whitaker met Carter for the first time at MSU in 1985, when Whitaker was a 17 and a prospective student, taking auditions, and Carter was doing duets with guitarist Jim Hall.

“There are things I do in my playing that I forgot I took from him,” Whitaker said with a laugh. “The records he did with Miles are etched in all of our memories, but he’s beyond that.”

For five ground-breaking years, Carter anchored trumpeter Miles Davis’ second quintet, one of the greatest groups ever, with Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Tony Williams. Carter has played on 2,221 recordings as of September 2015, according to Guinness Records.

“Joe Henderson, Roberta Flack, the records he did on Blue Note — there’s so much,” Whitaker said. “He’s the most recorded bassist in history.”

Carter has seen jazz go through a lot of changes, from bebop to post-bop, funk, fusion and flings with hip hop and non-West-



Fortuna Sung

Carter with his bass.

ern music. His own foray into hip hop, on A Tribe Called Quest’s “Low End Theory,” brought his bedrock bass roll to an appreciative younger audience.

Through all the phases of jazz, Carter said, “two things always happen.”

“There’s always someone who wants to play better than the next guy,” he said. “And there’s always someone who thinks they’ve found a new way to play music.”

Those two things, he said, “trigger changes in music.” “Whether it’s Miles, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, Ornette Coleman, Trane — there’s certain people who are determined to do it,” Carter said. “And it’s not an ego thing, man. They just have that drive to get to the second floor.”

After a long career of playing in intimate formats such as quintets, quartets, trios and some exquisite duets, most notably with Jim Hall and saxman Houston Person,

Carter has taken up the expanded palette of a big band — but he doesn’t call it that.

“I tell these guys, ‘You’re part of a 16-piece quartet. Enjoy the ride,’” Carter said with a laugh.

Another jazz legend, pianist/composer Michel Legrand, was set to play the Blue Note gig last weekend with Carter, but Legrand fell ill at the last minute and Carter had to scramble. The arrangements were built around Legrand’s piano playing and had to be reworked. Carter took it all in stride.

“I call it a live get well card,” Carter said. “People will feel it’s truly a tribute and a reminder of Michel Legrand’s importance on the music competition scene.”

This week, Carter is bringing arrangements to MSU for the students to tackle.

“Yes, Mr. Whitaker’s already paid for them — that’s the rumor, anyway,” he joked.

CURTAIN CALL

Making punk rock personal

'Green Day's American Idiot' brings the album to life

By PAUL WOZNIAK

What's more punk rock than a Broadway musical? Right? On the surface, the fast-pounding, anarchist vibe of punk rock and the glitzy extravagance of Broadway musicals would seem incompatible.

But Green Day is not a typical "punk

rock" band and "American Idiot" is not a typical Broadway show.

Descended from a long line of rock musicals like the Who's "Tommy," "Rent" and "Hair," "American Idiot" is a raucous blend of righteous anger, passion and power chords. The Michigan State University Department of Theatre produc-



Courtesy photo

The cast of "Green Day's American Idiot."

tion directed by Brad Willcuts currently running at the Pasant Theatre is a timely, present day update of the rock opera album turned musical originally written during the George W. Bush administration.

Unlike some other rock music oriented musicals, "American Idiot" is not a jukebox musical made up of Green Day's greatest hits but rather a coming of age story of three friends moving beyond and then back to their suburban hometown. Johnny (Jacob Covert) heads to the big city to be a musician but becomes a drug addict, Tunny (Mel Vandenberg) joins the army and is wounded in combat, and Will (Evan Houdek) stays behind to live with his pregnant girlfriend (Shelby Antel). Along the way, Johnny falls in love with Whatsername (Janette Angelini) and gets heroin from a charismatic St. Jimmy (Max Sanders) while Tunny falls in love with her rehab nurse Extraordinary Girl (Molly Bennett). Everyone eventually ends up at home again but of course more grown up.

Covert is arguably the strongest individual voice. Lean, tall, and clad in super tight black jeans, Covert looks the part of a rock band lead singer. He also sounds like it with a voice that closely resembles Green Day's lead singer and songwriter Billie Joe Armstrong, a welcome detail especially for a university production. Covert's strongest number is the soul searching "Boulevard of Broken Dreams," but his vocal prowess and chemistry with the cast really strengthen the entire production.

As Johnny's roommate Tunny, Vandenberg does a capable job playing a role that was originally written for a male. Vandenberg often struggles to stay on pitch, but always commits to the emotion of the song.

As the friends left behind, Houdek and Antel share explosive chemistry especially on "Too Much Too Soon" when Antel as Heather walks out with their baby to leave her slacker, stoner husband to care for himself.

While the cast and ensemble are solid, the technical elements of "American Idiot" really make the show. Peter Verhaeghe's

scenic design of seedy industrial platforms puts the band on top with lots of room for the cast to run and roam. It also leaves plenty of space for Heather Brown's lighting design, Violet Jones' fun props like a push-cart bus, and two giant video walls for media design by Alison Dobbins. MSU incorporates media design in most shows staged

at the Pasant. But the video projections in this show are particularly strong, visually enhancing emotions and characters with kaleidoscopic colors or serving as instant set backdrops that prevent the need for cumbersome, roll-away set pieces. In addition, co-choreographers Brad Willcuts and Karen Vance designed some killer choreography for their tight ensemble that pops, locks, kicks and just rocks.

Musical director Dave Wendelberger keeps the band rocking without overpowering the singers. Pit drummers don't usually get mentioned in reviews, but Ethan Lucas is especially solid with his stamina to power the band for 90 solid minutes.

The biggest hurdle for the production, besides singers occasionally singing out of tune, opening night was the sound mix. Singers could be heard but not easily understood unless they were singing in unison and microphones frequently dipped in and out for singers, leaving the audience struggling to understand the emotionally driven lyrics.

What MSU occasionally misses in sound quality, they make up for in youthful vigor and sharp choreography. Besides, punk rock has never been known for its singers or sound quality. At its core, "American Idiot" is about the healing power of music, and the strength needed to survive the administration of an American idiot.

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Ever-growing Stoop Fest returns

East side event offers space for fans and artists

By SKYLER ASHLEY

One of Lansing's most promising music festivals isn't happening at a park or a concert hall. Instead, Stoop Fest's earliest tradition takes its

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audience on an adventure through the east side, where nearly 60 artists and a cast of comedians will perform at six different houses, while headlining acts

take over Mac's Bar and the Avenue.

"We didn't know what we were getting ourselves into," laughed co-founder Dom Korzecke as he recalled the original 2016 Stoop Fest. "We were going into uncharted territory."

Though the continued expansion of Stoop Fest seems to hint that it may one day stretch beyond its roots, what allowed it to initially grow was a tight collaboration between neighbors and a determined DIY attitude. As a unique and challenging gambit to book a music festival that relies solely on house shows, Stoop Fest needed the help.

"The first year, we were entirely houses," Korzecke said. "We had to grow enough cohesion to get all of these houses to coordinate their schedules and plan how everything would work."

"It was kind of this dream to showcase everything that is the Lansing east-side DIY community. We're really happy with what it's grown into," said fellow co-founder James Radick.

Korzecke drummed up the idea for Stoop Fest with more than a little inspiration from Grand Rapids' Lamp Light Festival, which books a series of primarily folk bands and puts them on a similar circuit of house shows. Korzecke had regularly attended the grassroots affair and decided it was time to bring it back home.

"I really liked the way that festival felt. You could go into these intimate spaces to see these artists," Korzecke said. "I brought the idea to our team and told them I wanted to do it bigger and right here in Lansing. Everyone was very on-board with it."

But the Stoop Fest team didn't create a carbon copy. What keeps Stoop Fest from being a mirror image of Lamp Light is its acts. While Lamp Light focuses almost entirely on folk-inspired music, Stoop Fest intentionally books a healthy blend of genres.

Stoop Fest also goes beyond music by dedicating space in one house to an art gallery and collaborating with the Allen Neighborhood Center to create a makeshift marketplace featuring crafts and popup restaurants.

Korzecke and Radick said the idea of Stoop Fest is to celebrate Lansing's independent music scene as a whole, not just a particular style or trend.

"We intentionally make it multi-genre. We want to include as many styles as possible," Korzecke said. "I feel each year we get more diverse. We don't have a theme sonically, but we really want the festival to reflect community and welcoming spaces with welcoming people."

After its successful 2016 inauguration, Stoop Fest expanded beyond the original six houses with help from the Avenue, and this year they've added Mac's Bar to the mix. The extra space allows the team to book larger touring acts. Given Korzecke and Radick's combined experience with booking shows for several years before their involvement with Stoop Fest, it wasn't difficult for them to cultivate a substantial lineup. This year, they've got their biggest acts yet in Speedy Ortiz and Suzi Analogue, artists being lauded by the likes of NPR and The New York Times.

"We're going even bigger — bringing in more national acts while still showcasing acts from our community," Korzecke said. "We sold out of tickets the first two years. People that came the first year came the second year and they're coming the third year. We have room to expand because people keep coming."

But Stoop Fest isn't leaving the stoop just yet. Its marquee pull is still the playful chaos of crowds jumping from house to house, trying not to miss the next set of musicians and comedians.

"We're always going to make sure our biggest draws are in the biggest venues, so we don't have to worry about safety," Radick said. "As we shift into bigger acts playing, the houses give us an opportunity to have alternative spaces for bands to reconfigure their live performance for a more intimate setting. It's very cool to see what they do to accommodate that."

So what is so special about seeing an artist in a house, anyway? For performers and fans, it's about a lack of barriers. The idea of a concert usually includes steep boundaries via a raised stage, or in the case of larger shows, hundreds of feet of distance — either way, there's a complete



Courtesy photo

Stoop Fest's planning committee. Left to right (back): Erica Marra, Tommy Plural, Joseph Steinhardt, Dom Korzecke, Zosha Korzecke, Claire Post. Left to right (front): James Radick, Cale Sauter, John Warmb.

separation between fan and artist.

"With no separation between the crowds and the bands, shows are much more personal and those are the ones that people remember," said Zack McCormick of the group Teething.

"For the bands, it's an opportunity to show everyone your creations without lighting, professional setups or any of the bells and whistles. It's the sum of the parts at their most honest, and that's where most acts shine."

John Warmb of Rent Strike believes events such as Stoop Fest, where he volunteers, offer a valuable opportunity to

foster more strength with the music community. Warmb equates performing at Stoop Fest as a chance not just to make fans but friends, as well as inspire others to pursue music.

"There's so much room for local friends and kiddos who have the music in their heart, but aren't necessarily looking to get booked on some great big thing," Warmb said. "Having the ability for these bands to play in somebody's living room is so important and encouraging for people to think, 'Hey maybe I can do this in my house. Maybe I can play my guitar and sing songs in front of people.'"



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Record Store Day: Christmas for vinyl collectors

The retail celebration that revived local shops

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Record Store Day, the unofficial holiday of all things vinyl, returns Saturday, and there are three places to celebrate. REO Town's Record Lounge, Old Town's Replay Entertainment Exchange and East Lansing's Flat, Black & Circular all have bands booked and are awaiting both stringent record collectors and casual newcomers.

The conception of Record Store Day in 2007 is argued to be a serious contributing factor to a massive resurgence in vinyl, which by the early 2000s was widely considered archaic and blasé. In an impressive turnaround, the Nielsen SoundScan has recorded an increase in vinyl sales for the past 12 years straight, with a 9 percent spike — which amounts to 1 million more LPs sold — from 2016

to 2017.

The same data recorded that vinyl accounted for 14 percent of all physical albums. The highest selling album through all of 2017? In the spirit of the format's vintage sensibilities, the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

"It's been a huge boon to us. The whole idea was that large labels were gonna help out small stores by having a day that brings huge amounts of attention and brings in people that normally wouldn't go in," said Flat, Black & Circular's Jon Howard. "It did have the unintended side effect of people who are in it to buy rare releases and flip them. But I don't personally think that has ruined it."

Record Store Day is not without critics that often cite the aforementioned vinyl scalpers and accuse record labels of releasing mediocre content that relies solely on gimmicks. But it hasn't really changed Howard's attitude.

"We still like it. It's still a huge sales day for us, even outside of Record Store Day exclusive releases. It's a party kind of thing, I'm positive about it," Howard said. "I understand the blowback, people say 'the releases aren't that good, it's taking advantage by making releases purposely limited,' but it's still kind of like our Christmas."

Replay Entertainment Exchange manager Clint Harkness shares much of Howard's optimistic sentiment.

"It always helps out with the business. We get a lot of business on those days, it's pretty rad," Harkness said. "It's a little pricey, but if you're a collector like I am it's nice to get stuff that you would never be able to get your hands on."



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

Record Lounge owner Heather Frarey said Record Store Day has been better than ever since her store moved to REO Town.



Courtesy photo

Flat, Black & Circular customers picking up limited releases at last year's event.

It isn't always just a one-day sales spike. Harkness said the event gives his shop a much needed pipeline to attract future dedicated customers.

"Oh man, the exposure. Every year I get a few people that say 'oh, I've never heard of your store before, but I saw that you were doing Record Store Day, so we came in' and now they're loyal customers and I see them once a week," Harkness said. "If nothing else, people just for one day go to independent stores and spend money. I think that's cool."

And to the critics?

"Everything's a gimmick. Everything you buy and you sell is a gimmick — no matter what it is. Some people hate on it, the big record companies have definitely come in on it as far as pressings go, but it still helps small businesses," Harkness said. "Everybody's got to have something to complain about."

Record Lounge owner Heather Frarey has certain reservations.

"When it first started it was a really good thing, it helped out independent shops like mine a whole lot. But as it grew, more of the bigger labels starting putting their spin on reissues and the prices kept going up and up and up," Frarey said. "It's gotten to be kind of a thing for the bigger labels. They make a lot of money off of it."

But even with some minor complaints, Frarey is equally grateful for an opportunity to get people in the door.

"There are kind of gimmicky things that can be kind of cool, so that's a good thing about it.

It helps out the shop," Frarey said. "I might moan about spending money for all the stuff I have to bring in, but in the end there's a profit. It's nice. Everyone's happy and has a great time. It's a good thing."

And for all the supposed gimmicks, the bubble of Record Store Day has shown no signs of bursting.

"Me and the owner have always talked about waiting for that year when the bubble pops," Howard said. "But it hasn't happened and we're amazed every year."

The Record Lounge

Featuring a performance by the Lemon Colliers, giveaways, raffles and snacks catered by the Crafted Bean Store opens at 10 a.m. 1132 S. Washington Ave., Lansing www.facebook.com/therecordlounge

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Featuring exclusive giveaways and performances by No Skull, Nicholas of Hat Madder and the Complainers Store opens at 10 a.m. 541 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing www.flatblackandcircular.com

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Getting the backstage treatment

Concert series provides platform for Michigan's unknowns

By CIARA PAGE

If you've ever wanted the exclusive backstage experience, WKAR is offering a taste of it. The public television station's annual

Luke Winslow King

Wednesday, April, 18 6:30 p.m.
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404 Wilson Road, East Lansing
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Zombie Jesus and the Chocolate Sunshine Band

Thursday, April 19, 6:30 p.m.
Register online for free seating
WKAR TV Studio A
404 Wilson Road, East Lansing
<http://wkar.org/programs/backstage-pass>

SIAS

Friday, April 20, 6:30 p.m.
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404 Wilson Road, East Lansing
<http://wkar.org/programs/backstage-pass>

stations throughout the country.

"We have a really good lineup of artists. I'm proud of all these bands and I'm super excited to have them featured on the show," BackStage Pass producer Nicole Zarembo said.

The list of bands announced for BackStage Pass includes Luke Winslow King, SIAS, Jack & the Bones, the Go Rounds, Joe Her-

ter & the Rainbow Seekers, and Zombie Jesus and the Chocolate Sunshine Band.

"They are really unrecognized musicians with a passion for music and I'm happy to put them on this platform. It's new and fresh, something we haven't seen before and I believe in them and stand behind them," Zarembo said.

But Zarembo has also managed to attract nationally recognized talent via reality star musicians. Amelia Hammer Harris from American Idol and Taylor John Williams from the Voice are slated to come onto the show as a duo.

Having reached the crest of the social media age, finding talented artist with a following was not hard for Zarembo. She says she used the underground social media scene to capture bands that were up and coming, or previously signed with no real notoriety.

"I look at their followings, like what do they know that I don't? And I look into that," she said. "I get these bands before they go big to showcase the talent. Some of these bands have been doing this for so long without real acknowledgement."

Ben Zito's band the Crane Wives participated in last season's edition of BackStage Pass. He believes the concert series provided a platform for his band to gain a stronger following.

"It provided us a platform to discuss our music and our music-making process. Given



Courtesy photo

Zombie Jesus and the Chocolate Sunshine Band play on "Backstage Pass" April 19.

the story-telling nature of our music, it was nice to be able talk in depth about the meaning of some songs," said Zito. "BackStage Pass as a platform adds to the awareness of Michigan's unique music scene and deepens the meaning of the arts in the already thriving community. It elevates the music community, assigning importance at a broadcast level, reaffirming that which so many already hold dear."

Michigan is notable for producing many heavyweights in the music industry, including the obvious standards from the Motown record label and in recent years, stars like Big Sean, Dej Loaf and Jack White. While many artists from Detroit sign with labels and become nationally known, others are only locally famous.

"It's only natural we do this show, because

Michigan has such a vibrant music history. We could be these bands' outlet and elevate them to the next level and that's really important," said Zarembo.

Recalling her first concert, the now legendary White Stripes show at the MSU Union, Zarembo enjoyed being able to grow with local artists and their careers. Her work isn't going unnoticed by musicians like Zito.

"It's profoundly rewarding to connect with concertgoers through music, if for only for an hour at a time. Seeing lyrics tattooed on people's bodies, kids singing or covering our songs, or artwork inspired by what we do, is proof that we're reaching people on a deeper level," Zito said. "Knowing that you're creating an effective positive difference for people is all the reason I need to get up and get to work."

Pop punk up-and-comers: A Q&A with Hot Mulligan

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Lansing band Hot Mulligan has bumped itself up on the national independent music scene's radar. The band has garnered serious attention after signing with the California-based imprint No Sleep Records, the home for several popular alternative acts such as The Wonder Years and Balance and Composure. Hot Mulligan is fresh off the release of its debut for No Sleep, "Pilot," and a national tour with Knuckle Puck and Boston Manor. We managed to get a few words in with the group's guitarist/vocalist Chris Freeman.

Your new album "Pilot" has a comfortably pop punk sound, how is that genre evolving?

I don't know. I think it was pretty stale for a while, but I think more people are catching on to that. I'm looking forward to seeing what else comes of it.

What are your songwriting influences? Are they more contemporary or classic?

We're into all sorts of Emo — some of the more early 2000s pop stuff and that 2010 Emo revival period as well. I'm also pretty stoked on early 2000s pop hits as well, but



Courtesy photo

Hot Mulligan (left to right) Garrett Willig, Tades Sandville, Chris Freeman, Brandon Blakeley.

we all take influences from other genres too.

Can you explain your songwriting process and each member's role?

We don't necessarily have a solidified songwriting process. Sometimes I will write out the chords and lyrics and just bring it to the band later. Other times I just have one riff, the band builds on it from there, and all of the vocals and lyrics are added later.

You recently got back from a tour with Knuckle Puck and Boston Manor. How did that go? Favorite memories? Stories?

That tour was easily our favorite we've gotten to be a part of. Every show was a blast for us. On the last night in Indianapolis, all of the support came onstage for Knuckle Puck's encore and made a human pyramid while some of us blew vape clouds at their feet kind of like fog machines.

Do you have more major tours planned for the future? Or is that a secret?

We're keeping that on lock. You'll know soon enough.

Tell us about the path to getting involved with California's No Sleep Records. Who helped you out? Is the label treating you

well?

Nick Diener, our producer and formerly of the Swellers, helped us out with that! No Sleep followed us on Twitter. We were hoping maybe they'd extend an offer — and they did — and it's been good so far.

How does being signed to a label change your band's dynamic?

It really hasn't changed anything. We still run the same way, but we have some more support now and are less stressed out.

With so many bands in the vein of Hot Mulligan coming from the coasts or Europe, what's it like to come out of the Midwest?

I think the Midwest is actually great. There are a lot of good markets to play within just a few hours of each other, but the coasts treat us well too. I think a lot of great bands came out of the Midwest like Fall Out Boy, Knuckle Puck, Real Friends, the Swellers, Citizen, Fireworks, La Dispute and a bunch more. It's a good place to be.

What bands do you hope to play with one day?

Taking Back Sunday and The Wonder Years would be a good time, I think.

Uncovering the massacre of South African miners at Small Koppie

Greg Marinovich's new book reveals sordid details

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Much has changed in South Africa since apartheid's 1994 abolishment, but a new book about a horrific massacre in 2012 reveals what awful things have stayed the same. It also reveals that many Westerners are oblivious to modern South African atrocities.

"Murder at Small Koppie: the Real Story of South Africa's Marikana Massacre" by Greg Marinovich relates his investigation into the massacre of 34 platinum miners and the wounding of 78 others.

Marinovich, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, pulls no punches in telling what led up to the massacre and details of the trag-

edy itself. The story is not only about the greed of the mine's owners, but also about social justice for the platinum miners.

During the days leading up to the massacre, strikers allowed Marinovich, a white South African, total access to the scene. Although Marinovich does not see the actual killings, he is one of the first journalists on the site the day after.

Marinovich examines forensic evidence and discovers a state cover-up about whether the killings were planned. When he writes about the hill Small Koppie, where the miners choose to make a stand, it is presented as more than just high ground, but rather a holy place for the miners who work underground.

Marinovich writes, "When the setting sun caused the rock to turn blood red it indeed seemed to be a site of enchanted potency." This is contrasted to where the men work, deep below ground in a hell-like atmosphere for a pittance to supply the world's platinum.

The author is at his best when he takes the reader below ground with the miners,



Marinovich

as they descend into a living hell of mud, slime and noise. Interestingly, the miners are given two sets of pure white overalls to wear underground. But since the overalls are expected to glitter when they start work the next day, they immediately strip them off when they are underground. At night they return to a shanty-like existence.

Marinovich describes the workers as powerless and disposable, and when that happens the workers have nothing left to lose.

Marinovich tells a straightforward, but nevertheless dramatic tale. He separates fact from fiction, such as when he dispels the notion that the miner's leader was alive after the massacre and then killed by the police while in custody, effectively making him a martyr for the cause. Good story, but not true.

The author, a college dropout, considers himself a documentary photographer and is now teaching visual journalism at both Harvard and Boston College.

"I dropped out because I got caught up in politics," Marinovich said. Referring to himself as an ethno-graphic, anthropology storyteller, Marinovich got his start in journalism by traveling to the all-black areas of South Africa.

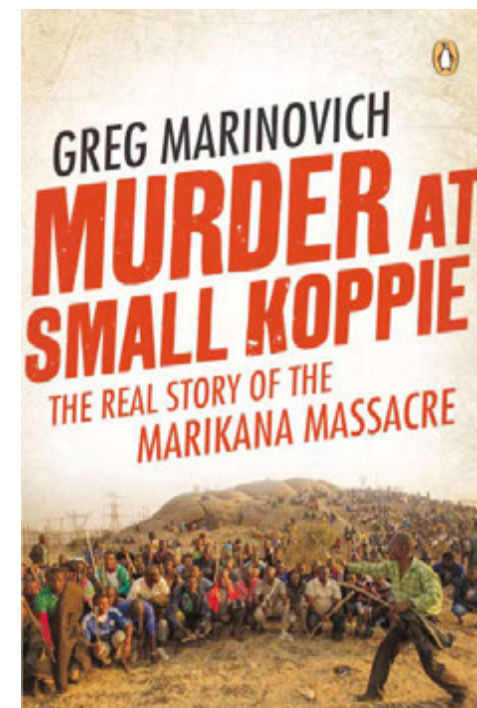
"People quiz you and either they trust you or they don't. They can see what color your spirit is," Marinovich said.

The day of the massacre, Marinovich had left the site when he got word that the police were shooting live rounds.

"It was too late to go back," he said.

Returning the next day, he found the police using Styrofoam coffee cups to mark the site of the killings and the trajectory of the bullets. Estimates of 700 rounds being fired were made during a 300-day inquiry into the killings from which no police were found guilty of misdeeds.

While on the site his first goal was to find eye witnesses to the shootings, but initially none were coming forward. He later found out all the witnesses had been rounded up and arrested on murder charges.



Marinovich persisted and finally found an eyewitness who countered the duplicity of the police, the politicians and the mining company.

From the start, press conferences were held depicting one location for the shootings, but Marinovich discovered that less than a 15-minute walk away was another site where 17 of the miners were killed in cold blood.

"It was obvious a lot of blood had been spilled at the site. Cops were hunting the miners down and killing them in their hiding places," he said.

Marinovich reported the second narrative on how the police reacted at the online site Daily Maverick. He is highly critical of mainstream press for not reporting what actually happened at the massacre.

"It is not simple stuff and very few have the resources to dig deep," he said. He also cites pack journalism as a fault of coverage and how the web has become a "great boon to democracy of people's voices."

However, Marinovich believes we are living in the golden age of documentary and that we are uncensored in story-telling.

"Just don't expect to make a living doing it," he said.

Tom Wolfe, Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill led the New Journalism movement in New York in the 1960s and '70s. Their counterpart, Joan Didion, set the standard on the West Coast with her slim 1968 volume, "Slouching Towards Bethlehem." Members of the City Pulse Book Club, which is open to all, will tackle it at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 3, at Schuler Books & Music in the Meridian Mall. The club, which meets monthly, is spending the entire year reading books about 1968 or published that year. This book is available at Schuler.

SCHULER BOOKS & MUSIC

Bestselling fantasy author TOBIAS BUCKELL presents *The Tangled Lands*

Thursday, April 19 @ 7pm

Meet Tobias Buckell, bestselling sci-fi author of Halo: The Cole Protocol and the Xenoworld series, as he talks about his newest fantasy novel, *The Tangled Lands*, co-written with Hugo Award-winning author Paolo Bacigalupi!

Independent Bookstore Day

Saturday, April 28

Join us in celebration of everything that makes us great with treats and surprises throughout the day, a story time at 11am, giveaways, and exclusive Independent Bookstore Day books and literary items that you can only get on that day! Long Live the Indie!

An Evening with Comedian and Voice Actor H. Jon Benjamin @ Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor

Friday, May 4 @ 8pm

Join our sister store Nicola's Books at the Michigan Theater to meet actor and comedian H. Jon Benjamin the voice behind the animated hit TV shows Archer and Bob's Burgers! Visit Nicolasbooks.com for ticketing information.

Located in the Meridian Mall
1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos
www.SchulerBooks.com

Marinovich Author Appearances

Wednesday, April 18
Mosaic: Multicultural Unity Center
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
49 Abbot Road, East Lansing
Free
Open to public

Thursday, April 19
MSU International Center
12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
427 N. Shaw Lane, East Lansing
Free
Open to public

Marinovich writes, "When the setting sun caused the rock to turn blood red it indeed seemed to be a site of enchanted potency." This is contrasted to where the men work, deep below ground in a hell-like atmosphere for a pittance to supply the world's platinum.

The author is at his best when he takes the reader below ground with the miners,

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In praise of 'evolution' and changing positions

On May 9, 2012, news broke with a quote from President Barack Obama on his stand towards marriage equality. For many years, although he supported civil rights for the LGBTQ community, he held the view that marriage for same-sex couples was against his personal beliefs. "I believe marriage is between a man and a woman. I am not in favor of gay marriage," he said in 2008.



White

And then, in 2012, he stated, "I've been going through an evolution on this issue." During an interview with ABC News he said, "I've just concluded, that for me personally, it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married."

Uh-oh. He flipped. He's inconsistent. We can prove it. "Evolution?" Isn't that just a euphemism for a lack of conviction? Doesn't that make you weak and shifty? Where's your backbone?

We've all heard this school of thought: Public leaders must maintain consistent positions. To change is to be suspicious and untrustworthy. Real leaders, the thought goes, have had the same positions on any given issue since they first went public. To some, it's even important to know what positions they held as students in college. A philosophy that praises long-standing views and criticizes change is most often associated with conservatism. But people across the political spectrum, including liberals and progressives, can also be resistant to "evolution" among public figures, even when they change to take up a position we want them to hold.

I'm sure you've heard the critiques of public figures who are less liberal than we'd prefer. They announce a more liberal position, change their talking points, or respond to criticism by "clarifying" their stand. Quite often they are met with charges of being disingenuous, criticized for taking too long, reminded of their previous positions, and told they haven't done enough.

While it's healthy to be a critical thinker and to distinguish between empty talk and real action, it's self-defeating to greet newcomers with hostility. Instead, we need to acknowledge the difficulty of their journey. At some level they had to be willing to listen to people with whom they disagree, take in new information, consider different points of view, and challenge their own basic assumptions in life. When someone finally comes around to publicly supporting gay and trans rights, it's nearly certain that they have also had to break ranks with important people in their life – a religious leader, a mentor, a respected community leader, or even their own family. Rather than showing weakness, "evolution" takes courage.

Let's celebrate those who shift, no matter what their journey looks like: small steps, big steps, coming late in life, or after working against us for many years. After all, when they shift towards us, we are winning.

To all the Flip-Floppers, Johnny-Come-Latelies, and Evolvers on LGBTQ rights: I want to sing your praises. I don't care how long it has taken you to arrive or how you got here. Welcome.

(Stephanie White is the executive director of Michigan Equality. Her column appears 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, April 18

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

BACH FLOWER STRESS RELIEF. From 6 to 8 p.m. Free or donation. Willow Stick Ceremonies & Healing Arts, 335 Seymour Ave, Suite D Lansing. 517-402-6727.

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

MSU CREATIVE WRITING CENTER GROUP. From 7 to 8 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

OPEN STUDIO LIFE DRAWING. From 7 to 9:30 p.m. Model fee: \$2 students (LCC, MSU, High School), \$5 all others. Room 208, Kresge Art Center, 600 Auditorium East Lansing.

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

ROBO EXPLORERS. From 6 to 7:30 p.m. Cost: tinkrLAB Members - \$20.00 Not Yet Members - \$30.00. tinkrLAB, Meridian Mall, 1982 W Grand River Okemos. 517-233-1524.

STARTING A BUSINESS. From 9 to 11 a.m. Free - to register call (517) 483-1921. Small Business Development Center, LCC, 309 N. Washington Sq. Suite 110 Lansing.

EVENTS*

WELCOMING NEIGHBORS STORYTIME (Ages 3-6). From 9:15 to 9:45 a.m. FREE. CADL Foster Library, 200 N. Foster Ave. Lansing. (517) 485-5185.

BEAT THE BREWER - Featuring Founder's KBS. From 6 to 9 p.m. Free to attend. 21+ only. The Grid Arcade & Bar, 226 E Grand River Ave Lansing. 517-885-3010.

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.

HOMETOWN HABITAT, STORIES OF BRINGING NATURE HOME. From 7 to 9 p.m. FREE. Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing, 5509 S. Pennsylvania Ave Lansing. 517-351-4081.

MEET "INTO THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH" AUTHOR LUIS ALBERTO URREA . From 7 to 8:30 p.m. Robin Theater, 1105 S Washington Ave, Lansing, MI 48910 Lansing. 989-878-1810.

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

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

THE DANCING BRAIN. From 7 to 8:30 p.m. Free. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, MSU Campus East Lansing.

Thursday, April 19

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

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

ANIMATION LAB (4 WEEK CLASS). From 6 to 7:30 p.m. Cost: tinkrLAB Members - \$99.00 Not Yet Members - \$125.00. tinkrLAB, Meridian Mall, 1982 W Grand River Okemos. 517-233-1524.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF WAR AND MILITARISM . From 7 to 9 p.m. Free. Edgewood United Church, 469 N. Hagadorn Road East Lansing.

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

START YOUR CREATIVE BUSINESS WITH ETSY. From 10 to 11:30 a.m. Free - to register call (517) 483-1921. Small Business Development Center, LCC, 309 N. Washington Sq. Suite 110 Lansing.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

CHIPMUNK STORY TIME. From 10 to 11 a.m. \$3/child. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road Meridian Township. (517) 349-3866.

MACDONALD MIDDLE SCHOOL BOOK GROUP. From 3 to 4 p.m. FREE. MacDonald Middle School, 1601 Burcham Dr. East Lansing. (517) 333-7600.

EVENTS*

PIZZA & BOARD GAMES (AGES 6-12). From 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. FREE. CADL Mason Library, 145 W. Ash St. Mason. (517) 676-9088.

DROP-IN LEGO CLUB (Age 4 & up). From 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. FREE. CADL Webberville Library, 115 S. Main St. Webberville. (517) 521-3643.

IMPRESSION 5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: SLIME! From 5 to 7 p.m. Free. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Drive Lansing. (517) 485-8116.

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.

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

ARTS

BALLROOM LESSONS (FOX TROT). From 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. \$42 per couple \$21 individual. Jackson School of the Arts, 634 N. Mechanic St. Jackson. (517) 784-2389.

Friday, April 20

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

ELEMENTARY NEUROSCIENCE. From 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

TRY CURLING. From 10:30 to 11:59 p.m. \$25, all equipment provided. Suburban Ice, 2810 Hannah Blvd. East Lansing.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

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

THEATER

AUDITIONS: VICTORIA MARTIN: MATH TEAM QUEEN. From 6 to 9 p.m. LCC Gannon Building, 422 N. Washington Sq. Lansing.

AUDITIONS: VICTORIA MARTIN: MATH TEAM QUEEN. From 6 to 9 p.m. free. LCC Gannon Building, 422 N. Washington Sq. Lansing.

EVENTS

EARTH DAY STORYTIME (Ages 2-6). From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. FREE. CADL Mason Library, 145 W. Ash St. Mason. (517) 676-9088.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION (Ages 5-15). From 4 to 5 p.m. FREE. CADL Holt-Delhi Library, 2078 Aurelius Road Holt. (517) 694-9351.

FRIENDS OF THE HASLETT LIBRARY USED-BOOK SALE. From 5 to 7 p.m. Free. Haslett Library Building, 1590 Franklin Street Haslett.

MSU Song Cycle Conference



April 20-22

By JINGJING NIE

Michigan State University's College of Music is hosting its brand-new Song Cycles Conference this weekend. The conference is titled "20th and 21st Century Song Cycles for Voice and Piano," and will explore 15 complex compositions.

Scholars and performers will come together to explore these 15 pieces. The three day conference will consist of five sessions hosted by two MSU associate professors of music theory, Gordon Sly and Michael Callahan.

MSU Song Cycle Conference

April 20-22, 2.p.m.
Cook Recital Hall
333 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing
www.music.msu.edu/song-cycles-conference

"The conference is designed to bring together both professional musicologists and theorists, as well as performers. It's an extremely unusual conference," said Sly.

The presentation cycle includes a 30-minute lecture on a piece, immediately followed by a performance of that same composition. After the performance, the audience can participate in a 15-minute follow-up discussion.

According to Sly, Song Cycles is one of a kind. He said it blends the academic nature of a collegiate conference with the energy of a live music concert.

"The idea for the conference emerged in a conversation we had about 18 months ago. We were talking about music genres

that are so closely associated with an earlier century that we tend to overlook their contribution to the 20th century," Sly said, "What we really decided was that so few people would've heard of most of them that it would be wonderful if we can put a conference together with scholarly presentations and have the pieces performed live."

Sly and Callahan put out a call for proposals and the response was overwhelming. "We've got many, many people who are interested in giving presentations at the conference," Sly said. "We had many more proposals than we accepted, we were only able to take 15 song cycles."

The presentations are being delivered by music professors from around the country. Sly said since the presenters are aware that the audience will not be limited to scholars and musicians, but will include people who simply interested into music, the presentations will be accessible to a broad audience.

Presenters and performers are coming from all over the place Sly said. "We've got a music theorist from McGill University in Montreal coming and we've got performers from all around the United States."

Sly said it's possible to host future conferences like this one as well. "It seems there is enough interest to do another one of these and maybe we will in a couple of years," Sly said. "We want to see if we can make this one the best we can."

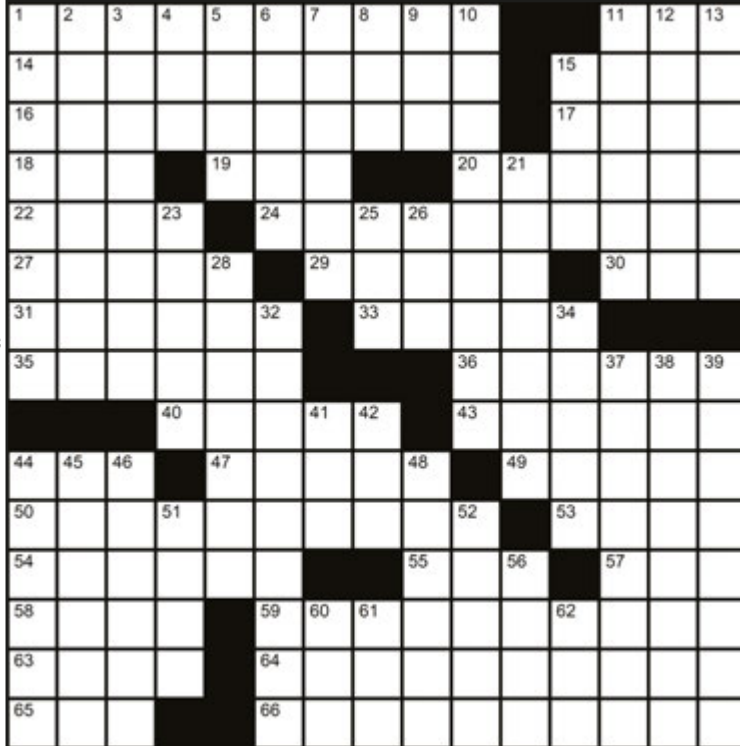
Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Duty: Free"--here comes the freestyle puzzle.

Across

- 1 Cart food served in a soft corn tortilla
- 11 Former U.N. Secretary General Hammarskjöld
- 14 Phone-based games where quizzers often play for cash prizes
- 15 Oscar ____ Hoya
- 16 Like some geometric curves
- 17 Nasty
- 18 St. Tropez summer
- 19 Inventor Whitney
- 20 Obtrude
- 22 Solitary
- 24 "I'd like to speak to your supervisor," e.g.
- 27 "Dallas" family name
- 29 Flip option
- 30 Recombinant stuff
- 31 They're silent and deadly
- 33 "I Need a Dollar" singer Aloe ____
- 35 Namibia's neighbor
- 36 Calculus for dentists
- 40 Country east of Eritrea
- 43 Beethoven's Third Symphony
- 44 Double-decker, e.g.
- 47 Cave ____ ("Beware of dog," to Caesar)
- 49 Fur trader John Jacob
- 50 Customary to the present
- 53 Pivot on an axis
- 54 Make further corrections
- 55 "Oh yeah? ____ who?"
- 57 "And many more"
- 58 "Caprica" actor Morales
- 59 Popular request at a bar mitzvah
- 63 "Okay"
- 64 Complete opposites



65 Rolls over a house?

66 Short religious segment on old TV broadcasts

Down

- 1 Island where Napoleon died
- 2 Be active in a game, e.g.
- 3 Going from green to yellow, maybe
- 4 The day before the big day
- 5 Cork's country, in Gaelic
- 6 Word after coffee or time
- 7 Follower of Lao-tzu
- 8 ____de.ap (Black Eyed Peas member)
- 9 Cost-of-living stat
- 10 Swing to and fro
- 11 Lacking, with "of"
- 12 Novelist Lurie

13 Lead ore

15 Branch of govt.

21 Makeup with an applicator

23 "Hope you like it!"

25 Truck compartment

26 Feel unwell

28 Actor Johnny of "The Big Bang Theory" and "Roseanne"

32 TV host Bee and blues singer Fish, for two

34 Traverse

37 Golf club brand

38 Connection to a power supply

39 Uncommon example

41 Brian once of Roxy Music

42 Not quite improved?

44 Minimalist to the max

45 Depletes

46 Takes an oath

48 Be way off the mark

51 New Bohemians lead singer Brickell

52 Almost on the hour

56 Investigation

Discovery host Paula

60 Hydrocarbon suffix

61 Open-reel tape precursor to VCRs (and similar, except for the letter for "tape")

62 "I hadn't thought of that"

©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

April 18 - 24, 2018

Aries (March 21-April 19) In the early history of the automobile, electric engines were more popular and common than gasoline-powered engines. They were less noisy, dirty, smelly, and difficult to operate. It's too bad that thereafter the technology for gasoline cars developed at a faster rate than the technology for electric cars. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the petroleum-suckers were in ascendance. They have remained so ever since, playing a significant role in our world's ongoing environmental degradation. Moral of the story: Sometimes the original idea or the early model or the first try is better. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you should consider applying this hypothesis to your current state of affairs.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) The Chesapeake Bay is a fertile estuary that teems with life. It's 200 miles long and holds 18 trillion gallons of water. More than 150 streams and rivers course into its drainage basin. And yet it's relatively shallow. If you're six feet tall, you could wade through over a thousand square miles of its mix of fresh and salt water without getting your hat wet. I see this place as an apt metaphor for your life in the coming weeks: an expanse of flowing fecundity that is vast but not so deep that you'll get overwhelmed.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) You'll soon arrive at a pressure-packed turning point. You'll stand poised at a pivotal twist of fate where you must trust your intuition to reveal the differences between smart risks and careless gambles. Are you willing to let your half-naked emotions show? Will you have the courage to be brazenly loyal to your deepest values? I won't wish you luck, because how the story evolves will be fueled solely by your determination, not by accident or happenstance. You will know you're in a good position to solve the Big Riddles if they feel both scary and fun.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) Strong softness is one of your specialties. So are empathetic rigor, creative responsiveness, and daring acts of nurturing. Now is a perfect time to summon and express all of these qualities with extra flair. If you do, your influence will exceed its normal quotas. Your ability to heal and inspire your favorite people will be at a peak. So I hereby invite you to explore the frontiers of aggressive receptivity. Wield your courage and power with a fierce vulnerability. Be tenderly sensitive as an antidote to any headstrong lovelessness you encounter.

Leo (July 23-August 22) In 1973, Pink Floyd released the album *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Since then, it has been on various Billboard charts for over 1,700 weeks, and has sold more than 45 million copies. Judging from the astrological aspects coming to bear on you, Leo, I suspect you could create or produce a beautiful thing with a similar staying power in the next five months. What vitalizing influence would you like to have in your life for at least the next 30 years?

Virgo (August 23-September 22) I beg you to take a break sometime soon. Give yourself permission to indulge in a vacation or recess or sabbatical. Wander away on a leave of absence. Explore the mysteries of a siesta blended with a fiesta. If you don't grant yourself this favor, I may be forced to bark "Chill out, dammit!" at you until you do. Please don't misunderstand my intention here. The rest of us appreciate the way you've been attending to the complicated details that are too exacting for us. But we can also see that if you don't ease up, there will soon be diminishing returns. It's time to return to your studies of relaxing freedom. **Libra (September 23-October 22)** Singer-songwriter Roy Orbison achieved great success in the 1960s, charting 22 songs on the Billboard Top 40. But his career declined after that. Years later, in 1986, filmmaker David Lynch asked him for the right to use his tune "In Dreams" for the movie *Blue Velvet*. Orbison denied the request, but Lynch incorporated

the tune anyway. Surprise! *Blue Velvet* was nominated for an Academy Award and played a big role in reviving Orbison's fame. Later the singer came to appreciate not only the career boost, but also Lynch's unusual aesthetic, testifying that the film gave his song an "otherworldly quality that added a whole new dimension." Now let's meditate on how this story might serve as a parable for your life. Was there an opportunity that you once turned down but will benefit from anyway? Or is there a current opportunity that maybe you shouldn't turn down, even if it seems odd?

Scorpio (October 23-November 21) You've been to the Land of No Return and back more than anyone. But soon you'll be visiting a remote enclave in this realm that you're not very familiar with. I call it the Mother Lode of Sexy Truth. It's where tender explorers go when they must transform outworn aspects of their approach to partnership and togetherness. On the eve of your quest, shall we conduct an inventory of your capacity to outgrow your habitual assumptions about relationships? No, let's not. That sounds too stiff and formal. Instead, I'll simply ask you to strip away any falseness that interferes with vivacious and catalytic intimacy.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) In 1824, two British explorers climbed a mountain in southwestern Australia. They were hoping to get a sweeping view of Port Phillip Bay, on which the present-day city of Melbourne is located. But when they reached the top, their view was largely obstructed by trees. Out of perverse spite, they decided to call the peak Mount Disappointment, a name it retains to this day. I suspect you may soon have your own personal version of an adventure that falls short of your expectations. I hope -- and also predict -- that your experience won't demoralize you, but will rather mobilize you to attempt a new experiment that ultimately surpasses your original expectations.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19) Capricorn rock musician Lemmy Kilmister bragged that he swigged a bottle of Jack Daniel's whiskey every day from 1975 to 2013. While I admire his dedication to inducing altered states of consciousness, I can't recommend such a strategy for you. But I will love it if you undertake a more disciplined crusade to escape numbing routines and irrelevant habits in the next four weeks. According to my reading of the astrological omens, you will have a special knack for this practical art.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18) Germany was one of the big losers of World War I, which ended in 1919. By accepting the terms of the Versailles Treaty, it agreed to pay reparations equivalent to 96,000 tons of gold. Not until 2010, decades after the war, did Germany finally settle its bill and fulfill its obligation. I'm sure your own big, long-running debt is nowhere near as big or as long-running as that one, Aquarius. But you will nonetheless have reason to be ecstatic when you finally discharge it. And according to my reading of the astrological omens, that could and should happen sometime soon. (P.S. The "debt" could be emotional or spiritual rather than financial.)

Pisces (February 19-March 20) "I would rather have a drop of luck than a barrel of brains," said the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes. Fortunately, that's not a choice you will have to face in the coming weeks, Pisces. According to my reading of the cosmic signs, your brain will be working with even greater efficiency and ingenuity than it usually does. Meanwhile, a stronger-than-expected flow of luck will be swirling around in your vicinity. One of your main tasks will be to harness your enhanced intelligence to take shrewd advantage of the good fortune.

SUDOKU

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TO PLAY

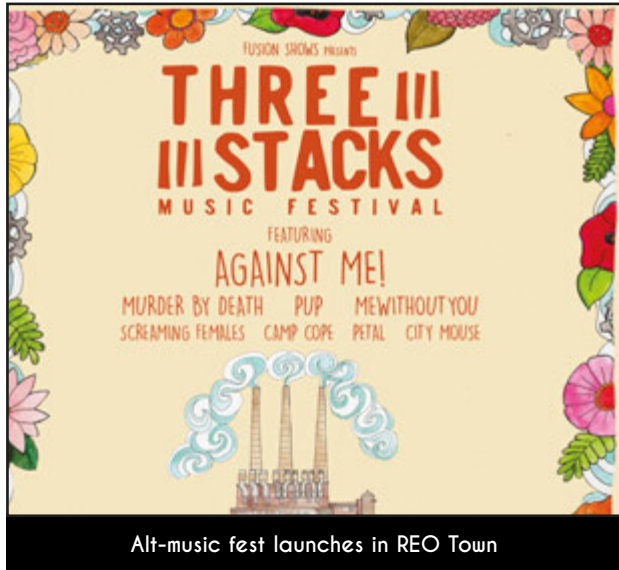
Fill in the grid so that every row, column, and outlined 3-by-3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 exactly once. No guessing is required. The solution is unique.

Answers on page 24

TURN IT DOWN A SURVEY OF LANSING'S MUSICAL LANDSCAPE

BY RICH TUPICA

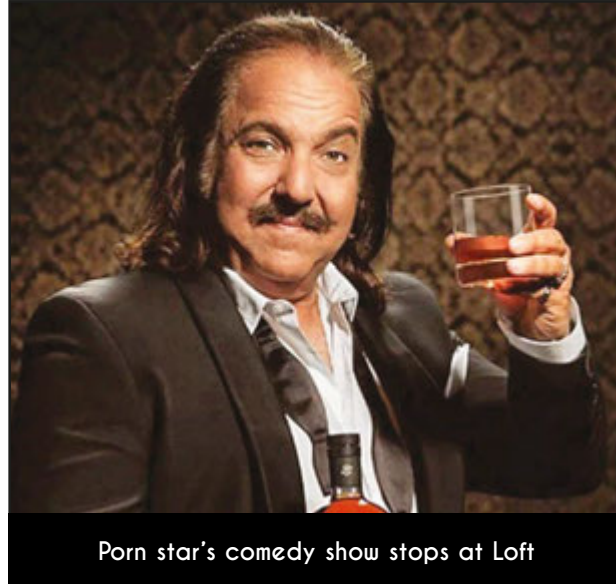
Sat. June 23 **THREE STACKS MUSIC FESTIVAL**



Saturday, June 23, @ 1100 block of S. Washington, REO Town Lansing. All ages, \$35, \$30 adv., 2 p.m.

Against Me!, Screaming Females and Murder By Death are just three of the bands slated for the inaugural Three Stacks Music Festival. Founded by Lansing-based concert promoter Fusion Shows, the outdoor summer concert features a “diverse set of acts within the alternative realm,” according to its organizers. Sharing the bill are PUP, mewithoutYou, Camp Cope, Petal and City Mouse—more acts will be announced. Fusion Shows, which hopes for over 2,000 attendees its first year, describes this first-ever event as an “outdoor street fair” that “pays homage to the iconic smokestacks of the Eckert Power Plant.” The music happens on the 1100 block of S. Washington Avenue, with one main outdoor stage and various other pop-up sets. Local artists and food vendors will also be on hand, along with plenty of Michigan craft beer options. Tickets are on sale at threestacksfest.com.

Thur. April 26 **RON JEREMY & FRIENDS COMEDY SHOW**



Thursday, April 26, @ The Loft, 414 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 18+, \$15, 8 p.m.

Adult film legend Ron Jeremy has been a mustachioed iconic figure in the pornography industry since his debut in 1979. This year, he—and a number of other comedians—embark on the Ron Jeremy and Friends Comedy Show tour. The show, which stops Thursday at The Loft, also features a Q&A session and meet-and-greet after the show. The hairy New York native, now 65 years old, has branched out into other more mainstream ventures since the '90s, including small film parts in “Detroit Rock City,” “The Boondock Saints” and “Killing Zoe,” to only name a few. In 2004, he was prominently featured on the second season of VH1’s “The Surreal Life” celeb-reality show. He’s also made plenty of cameos in music videos, including spots for Guns n’ Roses, Insane Clown Posse, Flight of the Conchords, and more.

Fri. April 20 **THE ALT**



Friday, April 20, @ MSU Community Music School, 4930 Hagadorn Road, East Lansing. All ages, \$20, \$18 members, \$5 students. 7:30 p.m

The Alt, a group comprising John Doyle, Eamon O’Leary and Cathy Jordan, perform a Ten Pound Fiddle show Friday at the MSU Community Music School. Each member of the trio is a master of Irish music and specializes in new, old and rediscovered ballads that embrace the heritage of Irish immigrants who settled in Appalachia—where Irish songs helped create old-time country and bluegrass music. The Alt even recorded its self-titled debut LP at a cabin in North Carolina’s Appalachian Mountains. Doyle, the trio’s vocalist who also plays guitar and bouzouki, has worked with many Irish music fixtures, including Solas, Liz Carroll and Eileen Ivers. “Doyle on guitar has risen to a level occupied by him alone,” said Earle Hitchener of The Wall Street Journal. “No one in Irish traditional music is a better guitarist than him right now.”

LIVE AND LOCAL

UPCOMING SHOW? CONTACT ELLA@LANSINGCITYPULSE.COM

DESTINATION	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
The Avenue Café , 2021 E. Michigan Ave.	Service Industry Night			
Crunchy's , 254 W. Grand River Ave.		Karaoke, 9 p.m.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.	Karaoke, 9 p.m.
Coach's , 6201 Bishop Road	DJ Trivia		Capitol Sun Dogs	DJ Muzik
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.	Avon Bomb	Avon Bomb
Green Door , 2005 E. Michigan Ave.	Johnny D Blues Night	Karaoke	Medusa	Roux
Lansing Brewing Co. , 518 E. Shiawassee St.			Delilah DeWylde & The Lost Boys, 8pm	Lockwood, 8pm
The Loft , 414 E. Michigan Ave.		Broccoli Samurai, 9pm	The Plastic Bears, 9pm	Codes, 9pm
Reno's East , 1310 Abbot Rd. East Lansing			The New Rule, 7pm	The New Rule, 7pm
The Unicorn , 327 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.	Open Mic Stand Up, 8pm	Music Bingo, 8pm	John Patrick Peter's Band, 9pm	Underground EDM Night, 9pm
UrbanBeat , 1213 Turner St.				
Watershed Tavern and Grill , 5965 Marsh Rd.			Capital City DJ's	Capital City DJ's

MSU OBSERVATORY: HOW WE OBSERVE OUR UNIVERSE. From 7 to 11 p.m. Free. MSU Observatory, located at the corner of Forest and College Roads MSU Campus, East Lansing.

MSU SCIENCE FESTIVAL STATEWIDE ASTRONOMY NIGHT. From 7 p.m. to 12 a.m. Free. Abrams Planetarium, 755 Science Road East Lansing. (517) 355-4672.

Saturday, April 21

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

SONGBIRD NEST BOX WORKSHOP. From 2 to 3:30 p.m. Free event. Fees for nest boxes to take home. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road Meridian Township. (517) 349-3866.

THE INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT). From 11 to 1 p.m. Cost: tinkrLAB Member - \$20.00 Not Yet Member - \$30.00. tinkrLAB, Meridian Mall, 1982 W Grand River Okemos. 517-233-1524.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

BOOKS AND BAGELS. From 2 to 3 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL JUSTICE READING GROUP. From 10:30 a.m. to noon FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

EVENTS

2018 FUR BALL GALA. From 6 to 11 p.m. \$100 per person; \$75 per dog; table sponsorships available. Eagle Eye Golf Club, 15500 Chandler Road East Lansing. (517) 641-4570.

BIG GREEN GIG. From 3 to 6 p.m. free. Valley Court Park, 400 Hillside Ct. East Lansing. Dinner Dance. From 5:30 to 11 p.m. Cost of dinner is \$10.00 (\$4.00 for children 11 and younger). Cost of dance is \$6.00 (free for children 11 and younger). Lansing Liederkranz Club, 5828 S. Pennsylvania Ave. Lansing.

DOME ROAM 5K FUN RUN WALK ROLL. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$25, all students \$20 pre-registered. Onsite day of registration at 11AM (\$5 more) <https://www.sgpbiodome.com/dome-roam-5k>. Auditorium Field, 542 Auditorium Rd East Lansing. 517-927-2447.

DRAW OR BE DRAWN. From 7 to 9:30 p.m. free. Blue Owl Coffee Co., 1149 S Washington Ave Lansing. (517) 575-6836.

EARTH DAY EXTRAVAGANZA. From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. FREE. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave. Lansing. (517) 483-4224.

FAMILY FREE EVENT! SPRING CARNIVAL & OPEN HOUSE. From 10 a.m. to noon Free. Gilden Woods Early Care and Preschool of Grand Ledge, 11920 Nixon Rd. Grand Ledge. 269-430-3156.

FAMILY TREE TALK (ADULTS). From 2 to 3 p.m. FREE.

CADL South Lansing Library, 3500 S. Cedar St. Lansing. (517) 272-9840.

MERIDIAN RECYCLING EVENT. From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. FREE - suggested donations for some items.. Chippeaw Middle School, 4000 N. Okemos Road Okemos.

MOM2MOM SALE. From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Admission is free for shoppers. Resale tables are \$25 each.. Lansing Christian School, 3405 Belle Chase Way Lansing. (517) 882-5779.

OKEMOS MASONIC CHICKEN DINNER. From 3 to 6 p.m. Adults \$10, Children \$5, Children under 4 are free. Okemos Masonic Center, 2175 Hamilton Road Okemos.

PRESERVING FAMILY HISTORY (ADULTS). From 2 to 3 p.m. FREE. CADL Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave. Lansing. (517) 367-6300.

SPRING OPEN HOUSE PARTY. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. FREE. Rassel-Daigneault Family Chiropractic, 537 N. Clippert St. Lansing.

STEWARDSHIP MORNING. From 9 to 11 a.m. Free. Harris

Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road Meridian Township. (517) 349-3866.

THE GRID 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY. From noon to 1 a.m. This a free event. 21+ only. The Grid Arcade & Bar, 226 E Grand River Ave Lansing. 517-885-3010.

THE LIGHT HOUSE CHAPEL SPAGHETTI DINNER. From 4 to 7 p.m. Spaghetti Dinner/Fundraiser : \$12 at door ~ \$10 in advance ~ \$5 Children under 12. The Light House Chapel, 1501 Windsor St. Lansing.

UKULELE STRUM-N-SING (ADULTS & TEENS). From 10 a.m. to noon FREE. CADL Okemos Library, 4321 Okemos Road Okemos. (517) 347-2021.

ARTS

CHARM BANGLE. From 6 to 8 p.m. \$45 Each. Delphi Glass, 3380 E Jolly Rd. Lansing. 1-800-248-2048.

Sunday, April 22

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18 >> MICHIGAN ARTS ADVOCACY DAY


Michigan Arts Advocacy Day is coming back to Lansing after a decade long hiatus for a full program of creative conversation and performances starting at 9 a.m. The rally will be hosted by Creative Many Michigan, an organization dedicated toward advancing the creative industries. Arts Advocacy Day hopes to bring together over 100 people from across the state to make the case for preserving funding for the creative sector. Before heading to meet with their lawmakers, attendees will hear from speakers representing nonprofit arts and culture organizations, arts educators, creative practitioners, and the design sector.

Lansing Capitol, 10 a.m. Free, 100 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing
<http://www.creativemany.org/>

FRIDAY, APRIL 20 >> MACEO PARKER: "TO RAY WITH LOVE"

Maceo Parker's thunderous tribute performance in honor of Ray Charles is coming to the Wharton Center Friday. Maceo Parker is a world renowned saxophonist, who has performed both with James Brown and Parliament-Funkadelic. Parker's performance debuted at the Hollywood Bowl in 2016 and was followed up by a show at the Monterey Jazz Festival, where it was lauded by music critics.

8 p.m., \$20, Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing, www.whartoncenter.com



The Art Work
of
**JULIAN
VAN DYKE**

Storyed Images is the title of artist Julian Van Dyke's latest art show opening April 19th-29th at the Keys to Creativity Event Center located at the Lansing Mall. Some of the art work that will be exhibited is a reflection of storied images of Riverwalk Theatre's upcoming production of "Bud, Not Buddy" in which is a part of the cast.

For more information: 517-657-2770 • keysart.org or vandykeart.com



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SUDOKU SOLUTION
From Pg. 22

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION
From Pg. 22

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

MUSIC

HAMILTUNES. From 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. FREE. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road East Lansing. (517) 351-2420.

EVENTS

CADL AT GREATER LANSING BABY FAIR. From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing.

CIRQUE DU SCI. From 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Free. Zoobie's Old Town Tavern, 611 E. Grand River Ave. Lansing.

EXPERIENCE CAMEROONIAN FOOD (All ages). From 2 to 3 p.m. FREE. CADL Downtown Lansing Library, 401 S. Capitol Ave. Lansing. (517) 367-6300.

SPRING TEA PARTY. From 1 to 3:30 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased on Eventbrite. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-tea-party-tickets-44041569520>. Charlar Place, 4230 Charlar Drive Holt.

ARTS

OPENING RECEPTION STORIED IMAGES BY JULIAN VANDYKE. From 5 to 7 p.m. No charge for this event. Keys to Creativity, 5746 W. Saginaw Highway Lansing.

Monday, April 23

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

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

LIGHT UP PAPER FLOWERS. From 6 to 7 p.m. Cost: tinkrLAB Members - \$20.00. Not Yet Members - \$30.00. tinkrLAB, Meridian Mall, 1982 W Grand River Okemos. 517-233-1524.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

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

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

EVENTS

MAKER MONDAY (ALL AGES). From 3:30 to 5 p.m. FREE. CADL Williamston Library, 201 School St. Williamston. (517) 655-1191.

MERIDIAN SENIORS BOOKLOVERS GROUP. From 11 a.m. to noon FREE. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road

Okemos.

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

SPEAK UP ABOUT ORAL CANCER PRESENTED BY THE DELTA DENTAL FOUNDATION. From 1 to 2 p.m. Lansing Community College, Gannon Building, 422 N. Washington Square Lansing.

ARTS

SILHOUETTE MOSAICS. From 6 to 8 p.m. \$45 Each. Delphi Glass, 3380 E Jolly Rd. Lansing. 1-800-248-2048.

Tuesday, April 24

CLASSES-AND-SEMINARS

FACIAL REJUVENATION. From 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. Free. Dawe Auditorium, 2720 S. Washington Ave. Lansing.

MAKE YOUR BUSINESS LEGAL. From 6 to 8 p.m. Free - to register call (517) 483-1921. Small Business Development Center, LCC, 309 N. Washington Sq. Suite 110 Lansing.

TUESDAY CRAFTERNOONS. From 12 to 2 p.m. No charge.. Keys to Creativity, 5746 W. Saginaw Highway Lansing.

LITERATURE-AND-POETRY

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

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.

THE SCRATCH PILOTS PRESENT: TURNTABLE TUESDAYS. From 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. FREE. The Green Door, 2005 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing. (517) 482-6376.

TUESDAY IS BLUES-DAY AT URBANBEAT. From 7 to 10 p.m. UrbanBeat Event Center, 1213 Turner St. Lansing.

EVENTS

STOP MOTION ANIMATION (AGES 7-17). From 4 to 5 p.m. FREE. CADL Holt-Delhi Library, 2078 Aurelius Road Holt. (517) 694-9351.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP (ADULTS). From 7 to 8 p.m. FREE. CADL Webberville Library, 115 S. Main St. Webberville. (517) 521-3643.

DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT IMMIGRATION AND

NATURALIZATION (ADULTS). From 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. FREE. CADL South Lansing Library, 3500 S. Cedar St. Lansing. (517) 272-9840.

EARLY LITERACY PLAYTIME (Ages up to 5). From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. FREE. CADL Williamston Library, 201 School St. Williamston. (517) 655-1191.

SPRING MIGRATION BIRD WALK. From 8 to 10 a.m. Free.

Woldumar Nature Center, 5739 Old Lansing Road Lansing. Tuesday Games. From 1 to 4 p.m. Euchre, Free Bridge, \$1 - \$2 per person. Meridian Senior Center, 4406 Okemos Road Okemos.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18-> MSU TAIWAN FILM FESTIVAL

Four contemporary Taiwanese films, "Meeting Dr. Sun," "Small Talk," "Missing Johnny," and "The Great Buddha" will be shown by MSU's Asian Studies Center. Each film will be supplemented with an informal lecture by Paul Bach Jr. The showing of "Small Talk," a personal documentary on LGBTQ issues in Taiwan, will feature an appearance by the film's director Huang Hui-Chen. Her film won the coveted Teddy Award at the 2017 Berlin International Film Festival.

Wells Hall, MSU, 619 Red Cedar Road, East Lansing, www.facebook.com/MSUTSA, Free, Wednesday, April 18, 6 p.m., Thursday, April 19, 6 p.m. to Friday, April 20, 4:30 p.m.



Hui-Chen



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THUR-SAT: 11AM-11PM
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FRIDAY, APRIL 20 >> AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS VISITS RIVERWALK THEATRE

Noted author Christopher Paul Curtis will visit Lansing to attend a reception prior to Friday's performance of "Bud, Not Buddy" at Riverwalk Theatre. The book was adapted for the stage by playwright Reginald Andre Jackson. The event is a special fundraising benefit for the organization Lansing Reading is Fundamental. An audience talk-back with Curtis will follow the performance.

8 p.m., \$22, Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Drive, Lansing www.riverwalktheatre.com



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HE ATE

SHE ATE



Cheddar's

By **MARK NIXON**

There has to be a secret society out there whose members are current and former restaurant critics. Call it “Critics Anonymous.”

They gather, and one by one, they confess their sins. “Hi. My name is Mark. I’m a restaurant critic, but honestly, what the hell do I know?”

This came to mind as I was walking out of Cheddar’s recently. We had entered about an hour earlier, just after 5 p.m., and there was a sizable group of folks in the lobby, waiting for a table. When we left just after 6 p.m., there was a sizable line standing outside in the chill of the evening. Waiting to get in. For what? Meh food? Spotty service?

Yet, there they were. So the critic must ask himself, “What the hell do I know?”

I know Cheddar’s food gets an “A” for Average, and an “E” for Excellent, as in excellent location, perched on a busy corner across from the Lansing Mall. Hundreds of cars stream past on Saginaw Highway every hour. Cheddar’s is certain to draw plenty of incidental customers, as opposed to destination diners. Yet on one visit, we sat at the bar next to a friendly couple, and they like this place. They are regulars. They must know something I don’t.

The best things I tasted over the course of two visits were the six-ounce sirloin topped with crab sauce (\$9.99) and tempura-battered onion rings (\$5.59). Judy ordered the steak rare, and I snagged a taste. It was perfectly broiled. And while I don’t usually muck up a good steak with sauces, I thought the creamy crab sauce added texture and contrast to this entree.

We both agreed that a light, tempura batter on onion rings and, really, most vegetables, is the way to go. Sadly, the rings were cool to the touch and had to be sent back.

In descending order of goodness, here are some other tastes we sampled at Cheddar’s. The barbecued ribs were tender and smoky. Far from the best in town, but still fine. I paired up the ribs with barbecued chicken (\$14.49). The chicken was crispy on the outside, but the inside was as dry as an insurance policy.

The chicken tortilla soup (\$3.49 per cup) has a tomato-based broth. The best part of this side is that the kitchen added tortilla strips just before serving, so that the strips were still crunchy when they met my mouth.

The chicken potpie (\$7.99) had a tender, flaky crust. Inside, however, lurked a run-

ny gravy. Swimming in the gravy were tender but relatively tasteless hunks of white chicken meat. There was a scant showing of vegetables as well.

The cornmeal-battered whitefish (\$8.79) was a hot — make that lukewarm — mess. Whitefish is so mild tasting that it’s hard to compete with corn meal. I don’t know how to rescue this dish. I’ve had excellent pecan-crusted whitefish at the Common Grill in Chelsea, and somehow, the fish didn’t play second fiddle to the pecans.

A side of Mac and cheese accompanying my entree gets failing marks on two counts. I couldn’t taste any cheese, and I had to send it back because it was slouching toward Cold Country. Similarly, Judy’s side of broccoli casserole and cheese for Most Boring Item on the Menu.

The service was friendly if not always punctual. I fully understand that when a restaurant is slammed, prompt service is a likely casualty. What I didn’t understand is how long people had to wait in the lobby for a host to acknowledge them, get their names and, finally, seat them. That’s why, on our second visit, I gave up trying to get on the waiting list. We ate at the bar.

So now I’ve come full circle, still pondering what makes this restaurant so popular. One answer sits beside me as I write this. The bill. We shared two entrees, had four alcoholic drinks and one side of onion rings. The tally was less than \$54 which, by today’s standards, is a decent bargain. Just one comparison: A Texas Margarita at Cheddar’s is \$4.79. A tequila-based Drunken Donkey at The Cosmos/Zoobie’s (my favorite local restaurant) is \$9.00.

Some day, I’ll be on Lansing’s west side again, passing Cheddar’s with its jammed parking lot and folks waiting outside. I’ll just keep driving. Wouldn’t want to be late for my Critics Anonymous meeting.

By **GABRIELLE LAWRENCE**

Depending upon your generation and how long you’ve lived in Lansing, you might remember eating at places like Jim’s Tiffany, The Parthenon, Mediterranean Mountain Jack’s. For me, the restaurant that brings me the most feelings of nostalgia is Cheddar’s. When I was a Big Red, on the last day of every school year, a large group of us went to Cheddar’s for lunch. We ate chicken fingers, spasagna, burgers and fries, and we always ended the meal with the most delicious thing I had ever eaten — the Cookie Monster.

It was with nostalgia flowing through my veins that we went to Cheddar’s for a recent dinner. We waited for a table for about 20 minutes while Baby She Ate mercifully slept in his car seat. We quickly ordered an appetizer of cheese bites, which upon first glance resembled my guilty pleasure IPA cheese bombs at Lansing Brewing Co. I’ve heard that LBC has removed these from the menu, and I was hoping that I’d found an acceptable alternative.

Alas that was not the case, and what should have been a bite of flavorful, hot, gooey mozzarella was more like a tasteless gluey raw oyster, but hot. I optimistically soldiered on and ordered the lemon pepper chicken with a baked sweet potato and steamed broccoli. The broccoli was steamed to death. The sweet potato was fine, but put a big dollop of cinnamon butter on a piece of Bubble Wrap and I’ll consider eating it. The chicken was forgettable.

Mr. She Ate, on the other hand, decided to take full advantage of his experience and ordered a full rack of ribs with fries, baked beans, and something called a Texas sweet tea. His drink was heaved onto the table by our petite server and the alcohol positively rolled off it. His ribs were surprisingly flavorful and well-prepared, he noticed, as he effortlessly pulled the meat off the bone.

The fries were totally unseasoned, but the black beans had some heat to them and retained their structure, unlike all of the other components of the vegetable plate that I tried on a subsequent visit. I understand that not many people care about the integrity of the broccoli, corn, and green beans at a place that is known for burgers and ribs, but I do, and when those things are steamed to the point that I could feed them to my toothless baby, it shows a lack of attention to even the most mundane detail.

We still ordered a Cookie Monster, because I’m nothing if not a creature of habit. It is the quintessential Cheddar’s dessert and one that I’ve recreated at home several times in the past 15 years. A piping hot skillet is brought to your table, filled with an oversized chocolate chip cookie that is topped with vanilla ice cream, a heavy drizzle of hot fudge, whipped cream, chopped peanuts and a cherry. I remembered it as being absolutely decadent and absolutely worth the zillion calories that each skillet contains.

Upon further inspection, and much like many other bygone aspects of high school — my metabolism, being able to spend my entire paycheck on clothes and CDs if I wanted to — the Cookie Monster doesn’t stand the test of time.

In 2016, I read an article written by Andrew Knowlton for Bon Appetit magazine. It was an ode to Hillstone Restaurant, a chain operation similar to Cheddar’s. He painted such an exquisite picture of a thoughtfully curated and well executed restaurant that I became obsessed with the idea of going there. On a trip to Phoenix last fall, we made it happen.

The service was absolutely second to none, and our server fell over himself apologizing because the kitchen had run out of some menu items by 10:30 p.m. on a Saturday, which was totally acceptable to me.

The biggest takeaway from the article, and from my subsequent dining experience, is simple — it is possible to operate a chain restaurant that isn’t full of mass-produced, mediocre food.

It’s easy to take broccoli out of the steamer two minutes earlier, or to season your french fries, or to whip heavy cream instead of squirt it out of a can.

As more and more diners pay closer attention to where they spend their dining budget and demand a higher quality experience, I hope that our major restaurant chains listen to what the people want and do things a bit more thoughtfully.



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