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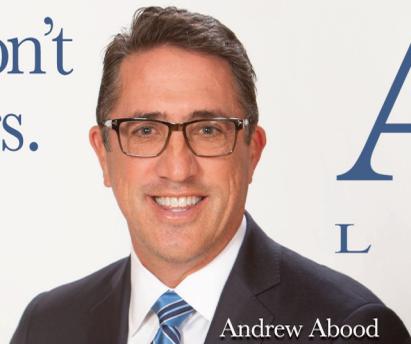
A newspaper for the rest of us

## Striving for survival: How Lansing's artists and galleries are coping with the coronavirus pandemic

SEE PAGE 18



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Andrew Abood

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**AFTER USPS BOXES ARE REMOVED, OTHER EQUIPMENT BEGINS TO VANISH.**

**Freaked Out American**  
@WTFisHappening

Why are the traffic lights and signs being taken away?

**THE PRESIDENT EXPLAINS.**

IT TURNS OUT PEOPLE USE TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO DRIVE PLACES TO VOTE. **BAD!**

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**THE FACT IS, THOSE STREETS WEREN'T PROFITABLE.**

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# THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

## FURTHER DONALD TRUMP CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

### 1. CONTINUE TO QUESTION OPPONENT'S MENTAL ACUITY

HA HA! I BET SLEEPY JOE DOESN'T EVEN REALIZE THAT THE FAMOUS 1917 PANDEMIC PROBABLY ENDED WORLD WAR TWO, BECAUSE THE SOLDIERS WERE SICK!

**MUST...KEEP... SMILING...**

### 2. PORTRAY LIFELONG CENTRIST AS A LEFT-WING RADICAL

JOE BIDEN **HATES** AMERICA! AND **GOD!** UNLIKE YOUR FAVORITE PRESIDENT, WHO IS **DEVOTED** TO GOD AND ALL THAT RELIGIOUS STUFF!

BIDEN LOVES ANTIFA SO MUCH HE WANTS TO **MARRY** IT! THESE ARE VERY PLAUSIBLE THINGS I THOUGHT OF, WITH MY VERY GOOD BRAIN!

### 3. THROW EVERYTHING AT OPPONENT'S RUNNING MATE AND SEE WHAT STICKS

SHE'S TOO **AMBITIOUS!** AND **NASTY!** SHE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE A REAL **CITIZEN!**

SHE'S TOO FAR **LEFT!** OR MAYBE TOO FAR **RIGHT!**

SHE'S **WHATEVER** YOU DON'T WANT TO VOTE FOR!

### 4. CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SABOTAGE THE POST OFFICE

THEY CAN'T **AFFORD** TO DELIVER ALL THOSE BALLOTS--BECAUSE I'M BLOCKING THEIR **FUNDING!** THAT'S WHAT I CALL **VERY GOOD BRAIN THINKING!**

**I ACED** THAT COGNITIVE TEST, YOU KNOW! I **TOTALLY** KNEW WHAT AN ELEPHANT LOOKS LIKE!

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I HAVE A TREMENDOUS PLAN TO FIX **EVERYTHING!** I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT IN THE NEXT PERIOD OF TIME! MAYBE IN TWO WEEKS, SOME PEOPLE ARE SAYING IT MIGHT BE FIVE, OR MAYBE THREE!

**MUST...KEEP... SMILING...**

### 6. REMAIN FOCUSED ON THE ISSUES AMERICANS REALLY CARE ABOUT

These new Showerheads are **BAD!** I can't get my perfect hair Clean! Your favorite president needs a **WAP** (wet all-over pelt)!

**HEH HEH!** NOW TO RETWEET SOME Q-ANON ACCOUNTS!

**TAP TAP TAP**

TOM TOMORROW © 2020

# CityPULSE

**VOL. 20**  
**ISSUE 2**

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Lansing's postal woes are better than other Michigan cities



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Sunny Wilkinson brings us light



**PAGE 34**

East Lansing's bar scene braces for less game day revenue



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Art by Mina Greco Hall

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# Betz, boomers & BWL

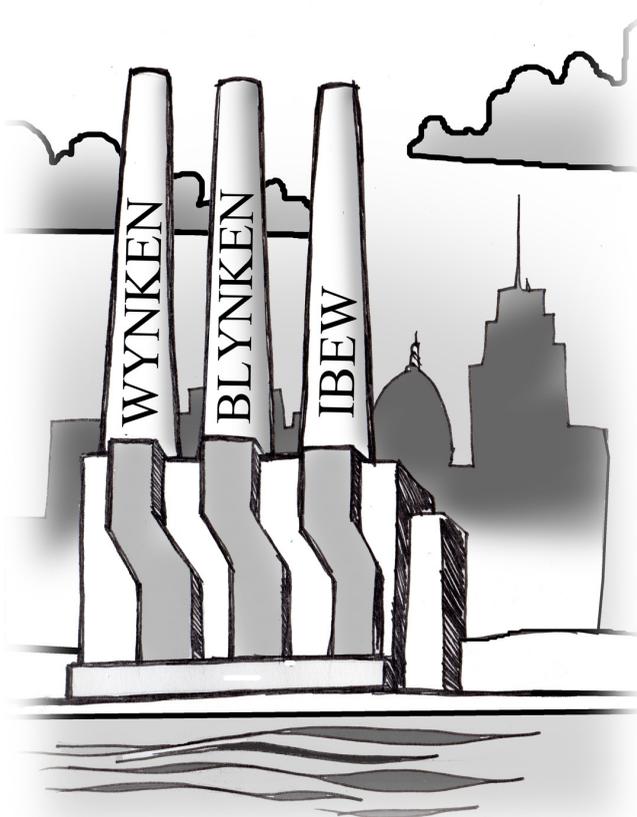
The question landed with a thud, then sparked a kerfuffle.

At last week's regular meeting of the Lansing City Council, First Ward Councilman Brandon Betz asked a prospective mayoral appointee to the Lansing Board of Water & Light to disclose her age. That's a no-no under state and federal anti-discrimination laws. It was a rookie mistake by a first-time elected official, but we're confident Betz will learn from it. With a little more seasoning — and a little less "ok boomer" ageism — we think he'll continue to serve the city and his constituents well.

Betz' ill-advised question was directed to Sandy Zerkle, a BWL commissioner who has served in the position for 14 years, and whose reappointment to yet another four-year term was recommended by Mayor Andy Schor and approved, 5-3, by the Council. Keeping Zerkle in place is a nod to the utility's employee union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which has considerable influence over appointments to the BWL commission. Although there are no designated seats on the BWL board (except for non-voting members who represent East Lansing, Delta Township and Meridian Township), it is widely understood but generally unspoken that Zerkle, who worked for the AFL-CIO for more than a decade, represents organized labor on the panel. Not surprisingly, politicians frequently bend to the wishes of powerful interest groups like labor unions in the hopes that their allegiance will be rewarded with endorsements and campaign cash.

Predictably, the blowback over Betz's inappropriate question overshadowed the larger point he was trying to make, which relates to the qualifications of appointees who serve on various city boards and commissions — or the lack thereof. Although an appointee's age should never be a factor, we share his broader concerns, as do Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar and Councilman Brian Jackson, who joined him in unsuccessfully opposing her reappointment and also that of another longtime commissioner, Tracy Thomas. Those concerns are also ably expressed in Randy Dykhuis' letter to the editor in today's edition of City Pulse.

Perhaps nowhere are qualifications more



## The CP Edit

### Opinion

important than in selecting commissioners for the Lansing Board of Water & Light. Although it is a wholly owned subsidiary of the city, the BWL is an independently managed corporation with a \$266 million annual budget and more than 700 employees. As the principal provider of water and electricity to the region — and a major source of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change — the decisions made by the BWL's management and board profoundly influence our local

economy, public health and the environment.

On its face, longevity on the BWL commission isn't necessarily a bad thing. It brings continuity and institutional knowledge that can add considerable value to the enterprise. But there is also something to be said for fresh faces that add diverse perspectives, and that bring the kinds of expertise needed to understand the intricacies of energy production and distribution, and to evaluate the long-term impacts of the utility's activities on public health and the environment. Although her colleagues say Zerkle is an engaged and productive member of the commission, her reappointment is a missed opportunity to breathe new life into the board and bring greater knowledge to the table.

Barring any resignations between now and then, the next opportunity to appoint members to the BWL commission comes next year, when the terms of at-large commissioner Anthony Mullen and First Ward commissioner David Lenz are set to expire. Lenz is an architect who was appointed to the board by Mayor Schor in 2018. Mullen, who works in the private sector, was appointed in 2012 by former Mayor Virg Bernero. Other members of the board include a real estate appraiser, an attorney and former state agency director, a retired association executive, an educator and a plumber who serves on the executive board of his union.

When the time comes, we encourage Mayor Schor to consider appointing one or more commissioners with specific areas of expertise that would imbue the BWL board with a deeper well of knowledge relative to the economics of energy production, its impact on public health and the complexities of climate change. While it is also important to have everyday citizens on the board who can speak for ratepayers, subject matter experts who can engage BWL management at a higher level would enrich the dialogue and help guide the utility toward a greener future. We're generally satisfied with the utility's direction and performance, but as Dyhuis wrote, "We need commissioners who are well-educated and data-driven, who have strong science, public health, or environmental backgrounds, and who are unafraid to challenge the status quo."

We concur.

Send letters to the editor on this editorial or any other topic to [letters@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:letters@lansingcitypulse.com).

Please limit them to 250 words

# Remembering James Butler

By **RENEE MORGAN FREEMAN**

*The writer is a city of Lansing employee and a member of the Lansing Chapter of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs)*

When the news broke last week that James Butler was called home to Glory, my eyes filled with tears at the thought of losing such a loving, kind, generous,



Butler

respected and supportive friend. Affectionately known as JB, James was one of the first people I met when I came to Lansing 20 years ago to work for then-state representative Virg Bernero. Through the years, the friendship and connection between James and me grew deep and strong. Laughter abounded whenever our paths crossed. When you had James as a friend, you had someone who would always be in your corner - and you could take that to the bank!

Family man, friend, mentor, community leader and philanthropist. James W. Butler III was all of these and so much more. A man of great character, integrity, and purpose, James had a way of interacting with people that made them feel special, whether they were old friends or new acquaintances.

James truly made a difference in the community he loved and contributed tirelessly to its progress with a special focus on uplifting African Americans. An accomplished executive in the public and private sectors and a decorated Vietnam War veteran, James was a true man of the people. He lived by the Golden Rule, doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. James treated everyone with dignity, respect, fairness and honesty. His smile was infectious, and his laughter was positively outrageous.

He served with distinction on practically every board of any consequence, including the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority, Lansing Economic Area Partnership,

Sparrow Health System, Physicians Health Plan and Western Michigan University Cooley Law School. Any fellow board member could tell you that James did not give lip service or write a check that his behind couldn't cash. His word was his bond.

James was first and foremost a family man and Christian. He loved and provided for his amazing children, grandchildren and loving wife, Rishan, of 52 years. A dedicated and faithful servant of Christ, James served as deacon at Friendship House of Prayer (FHOP) and was instrumental in its ministries. Betty Barry, a trustee, said that James would often challenge a frat brother or friend to match his financial giving for the special needs of the church. As in all things, James made it his mission to make a positive difference.

He was also a proud member of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. As a veteran member, James befriended the younger brothers and freely shared his knowledge and wisdom. His brothers became his extended family, creating unforgettable memories and laughter during their times together. James not only mentored his brothers, but countless others across the community, providing references or resources to help them secure gainful employment or start a new business. He sowed seeds in people's lives that affected their future in meaningful ways.

As the adage goes, you can't beat God's giving, no matter how hard you try. But you can believe that James sure tried. His heart was a generous spirit, which was a gift from God. But he wasn't just a giver in the financial sense; James was a true humanitarian who gave generously of his time and talents. If you asked and he had it, it was yours, regardless of what it was. If he did not have it, he did not hesitate to make something happen in one way or another to your favor.

James W. Butler III never gave up on Lansing. We are all the richer because of his unwavering love, caring and extraordinary service to the community. James fought the good fight. He stayed the course. He finished the race and kept the faith. He was deeply loved and will forever remain in our hearts.

# LETTERS to the editor

## Zerkle reappointment a mistake

It is unfortunate that Brandon Betz's ill-chosen question about her age is overshadowing the substance of Commissioner Sandy Zerkle's appearance before city council on Monday. During her rambling remarks to city council, Zerkle showed little evidence, despite her 14-year tenure, that she grasps the role of the board. She constantly referred to comments and actions of general manager Dick Pefley as if they should be proxies for the work of the board. She gave the impression that she has no independent thoughts about BWL, its goals, its future, or its role in protecting public health. This precisely encapsulates the problem with the BWL board and why it is crying out for change. For many months, the Lansing Environmental Action Team (LEAT) has been urging appointment of new commissioners. Given the pace of change in the utility industry and unwillingness of the majority of BWL board members to comprehensively address those changes, it is long past time for us Lansing residents, the owners of BWL, to be competently represented. We need commissioners who are well-educated and data-driven, who have strong science, public health, or environmental backgrounds, and who are unafraid to challenge the status quo. Individuals with these qualifications were in the pool. It's a shame city council did not ask for someone with qualifications and leadership capacity suited to this moment.

**Randy Dykhuis**  
Lansing

## 'A hard rain is gonna fall'

I enjoyed Castanier's reminiscing about the festival. The same thing happened at MSU Old College Field several months earlier. Entertainers were Jefferson Airplane, Chicago, Faces, and Sebastian. And, it rained.

**Ronan Patterson**  
East Lansing

**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.)

## Sticking with the governor

Yesterday (8/14/2020) on the Capitol lawn I was asked to sign a petition aimed at taking emergency powers away from the Governor and giving them to the legislators.

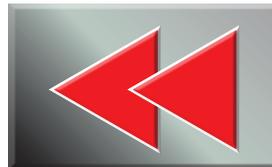
When I returned to Lansing in 2011 I first heard of Gretchen Whitmer when she was in that legislature, when it was trying to pass an anti-bullying law that would not apply to bullying for religious reasons. Whitmer was the only one in that entire body to point out that a religious exception in an anti-bullying law was a blueprint for how to get away with bullying.

So I told the petition gatherers "no thank-you" For emergency powers, I'll stick with Whitmer.

**Diane Petryk**  
Lansing

# REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI



## Lansing Police probing maskless officers

Lansing Police Chief Daryl Green has vowed to investigate and possibly discipline several maskless police officers who mistakenly detained a City Pulse reporter downtown last Thursday. Policy dictates that local cops should wear face coverings during all encounters with the public, but those rules were ignored. Officials said the investigation could take up to three months to complete.

## Ingham County launches Racial Equity Taskforce

The Ingham County Board of Commissioners is accepting applications for a new, 12-member Racial Equity Taskforce to work toward achieving equitable outcomes in wealth accumulation, income, education, safety, health and more. With input from residents, the taskforce will identify and track data in areas like criminal justice, social capital, voter suppression, education and transportation to “achieve community-centered solutions to address racial injustices faced by Black communities.” Applications are available online at [ingham.org](http://ingham.org) and must be received by Aug. 30.



## Outdoor gatherings limited to 25 people in East Lansing

No more than 25 people may gather outdoors in parts of East Lansing (including downtown) following an emergency order issued this week by the Ingham County Health Department. The order took effect immediately and will remain in place indefinitely, officials said.

The order arrives as Michigan surpasses 100,000 COVID-19 cases, including nearly 2,400 across Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties. Large gath-

erings can also easily become “super-spreading events and fuel the coronavirus pandemic,” the order states.

Health officials said they didn’t give advanced notice of the order because the looming deadline would’ve only increased the likelihood of college students’ throwing last-minute parties.

The restricted area stretches from the northern edge of MSU’s campus to Burcham Drive and is bounded by Harrison and Hagadorn roads, including properties adjacent to those streets. The area was identified based on a frequency of noise ordinance violations and large house parties.

Outside that zone, outdoor gatherings are restricted to 100 or less. Those who disregard the new order could face a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail and a \$200 fine.



## At least 13 businesses ordered close amid pandemic

Local prosecutors and health officials have issued at least 13 cease-and-desist letters to businesses they determined had opened in violation of executive orders issued during the pandemic, reports the Lansing State Journal. Almost all were in Ingham County, including one cease-and-desist notice sent recently to High-Caliber Karting and Entertainment at the Meridian Mall. One order was sent to Champion Fitness and Boxing in Delta Township in Eaton County. None were in Clinton County.



## One tough week for Andy Schor

A lawsuit against Lansing Mayor Andy Schor and the city was filed last week by seven current and former Black city employees. Leaked audio of Schor recognizing the existence of — and apologizing for — widespread racial issues at the Fire Department surfaced over the weekend. And Fire Chief Mike Mackey, after only 16 months of the job, confirmed his resignation Monday. (Story, page 12.)

City Pulse for a year and a half has reported on allegations of racial discrimination within the Fire Department and the Mayor’s Office. And with a lawsuit filed last week, those issues are reaching a boiling point as calls for Schor’s resignation reverberate, largely within the Black community, and Schor raises funds for what is quickly shaping into a contentious bid for reelection in 2021.



## First Presbyterian Church, 510 W. Ottawa Street, Lansing

The First Presbyterian Church in downtown Lansing is this month’s Eye Candy. The church, which inhabits the entire 500 block of Ottawa Street between Chestnut and Pine streets, is a stunning mix of classical architecture and unexpected modernity. The traditional-looking portion of the church sports four Ionic columns, eye-catching symmetry, and a tall spire — all typical of a building dedicated to a relationship with a higher power. On its west side, however, the church connects to a rounded annex by a multi-story glass vestibule. According to the historical marker on the property, the church was first established in Lansing in 1847. A century later, ground was broken at the current location. Its construction was completed in 1953; in 1984, the modern-looking Molly Grove Chapel was added. Some historic structures have modern additions distinct from the original building, but this is typically a response to preservation requirements, which would not likely have been the case with the First Presbyterian Church. There are some faint resemblances, particularly the rounded shape, between the Molly Grove addition and the Basilica de Guadalupe, a Catholic shrine designed by Pedro Ramirez Vasquez in Mexico City, between 1974 and 1976 (a decade before our building).

— CARRIE SAMPSON

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

# Behind and beyond Mark Meadows' resignation

Mark Meadows can cite many reasons a sane person would quit the East Lansing City Council.

"It's a lot of work, and not just every Tuesday night from 7 to 10. There are things going on constantly that Council members must respond to. It's getting calls from people with problems and trying to get them fixed, genuine issues like the sewer's backed up.

"We'd joke, 'Well, we make about 10 cents an hour.'"

But none of that is why Meadows quit the Council last month.

Rather, he said, it was a protest.

"By leaving maybe I could bring more of a light on how this should have been done, but it clearly was not done in the way that I think as professionals we should approach issues."

The issue was the dismissal of Tom Yeadon as city attorney. Meadows and Ruth Beier resigned after the other three Council members voted to terminate Yeadon's contract on July 14.

While his resignation was unexpected, it was not, he said, a snap decision.

"The direction of the Council seemed very disorganized" since last fall, he said. Admittedly, he said, COVID-19 disrupted personal relationships and interactions. But he found the way the Council handled the Yeadon decision "very poorly done," both in terms of fairness to Yeadon, whom, he said, should have been given an opportunity to fix any perceived problems, and the inner workings of the Council.

Meadows' criticism of the Council is muted compared to Beier's exit blast: "I'm going to leave this circus to the fools that are left," she declared. "I do not think it's a good omen for East Lansing."

So, where does that leave Meadows at age 73?

"I don't know that the day will come when either one of us will say, 'I don't want to do this any more,'" Meadows told me in a Zoom interview that you can see on our website. (At 73 as well, I say: speak for yourself.) Meadows' "this" is politics: "How it all interacts, what the right decision is, how that decision is reached and how you bring people together to get the support for the ideas you might have."

Meadows traces his interest in politics to his parents, who discussed it at home, and to coming of age in the 1960s, when he got involved in the antiwar movement and volunteered



Former East Lansing City Councilman Mark Meadows talks about his resignation and his life before and after it in a Zoom interview with editor and publisher Berl Schwartz at [www.lansingcitypulse.com/radio-tv](http://www.lansingcitypulse.com/radio-tv).

for the presidential campaign of Robert F. Kennedy.

"I got involved and stay involved when I graduated from law school. I went to work for Frank Kelley, the greatest attorney general ever — although Dana is every bit as exciting," a reference to the current AG, Dana Nessel. "Frank encouraged his assistants to be involved locally," which Meadows said he did by volunteering to serve on a government commission on the environment. He felt the commission needed an advocate on the Council, so he ran. He lost the first time, but was elected in 1995 and served through 2010.

In 2015, feeling there were "significant issues that weren't being addressed," he returned to the Council, which named him mayor, a post he held until last year.

"In the last four years," he said, "we were able to put the city on a sound financial footing. There were people who were unhappy about how we did it. They don't like tall buildings, or they don't like the income tax or the franchise tax with the Board of Water & Light. Everybody had an issue of some sort, and you saw that play out. People wanted a different direction, and now they're going to see how that functions."

Meadows clearly likes the new skyline emerging downtown, although it has yet to achieve his vision for it. He hopes and expects even more housing

and even more diversity in age groups living downtown. He also expects more office space. "If you don't have those people there and you don't have office workers there, then you don't have a diverse demand for retail and small businesses in the downtown, and I expect we'll start to see that over the next few years."

More important than development this year, Meadows said, is racial justice. "We need to continue to work on that as the number one priority for the City Council."

Both Meadows and Beier were replaced by African Americans, who are the first on the Council since the only other Black member served by appointment back in the 1970s.

Meadows' thoughts on it remind me of old joke about the guy who prayed to God to let him win the lottery. When he loses, he complains that God has forsaken him and asks again to win.

Comes a blinding flash of light and then: "Meet me halfway: buy a ticket!"

Said Meadows, "I don't recall an African American running for Council" before 2019. "If an African American ran for Council, ran a campaign, in other words knocked on doors and they had been involved in the community, probably they would have been elected."

His answer reflects his love and respect for his chosen community (he was born in Grosse Pointe Farms). Of

East Lansing, he says, "I can't even imagine why anyone lives anywhere else." And when told perhaps it's because the rest of us can't afford it, he says, "Well, there's affordable housing in East Lansing, and we're trying to build more." In fact, Meadows serves on the board of the Capital Area Housing Partnership, which builds, sells and manages low- to moderate-income housing, such as Deerpath Apartments in East Lansing.

His retirement from the Council is giving him more time to work with his spouse, Sue, fixing up a new home. And they have four children and seven grandchildren to keep up with. Beyond that, Meadows is a passionate hiker. "I'm not a very religious person, but it really brings you closer to the natural world. You only have the things that you need on your back. There's a tremendous freedom associated with it. It's very spiritual."

His love for East Lansing, he says, is "something that I hope everybody feels, that this is the place to be, and even though I won't be on City Council, I've volunteered to serve on a couple of commissions. I don't want to disappear into the woodwork, but I also think there's a different role for me now. A role as one of the regular citizens of the city of East Lansing, who make a comment now and then but isn't going to have a vote at the City Council table."

— BERL SCHWARTZ

# Postal union leader sees few problems in Greater Lansing

Statewide, though, it's a different picture

As nationwide concerns set in over delays in the U.S. Postal Service ahead of an expected record-breaking number of mail-in ballots for this year's General Election, a postal union official sees little problem locally.

"There just hasn't been much of an impact on our people," said Lisa Jackson, president of Central Michigan American Postal Workers Union Local No. 300. "I know people are concerned, but if ballots are mailed early, we really shouldn't see delays or problems in delivery services."

And that's a sharp contrast to a narrative developing nationally and being circulated by U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin, among others, who claimed this week that postal delays are the "number one issue" being raised by residents in her district, which includes Ingham County.

"USPS leadership should have to publicly explain their recent staffing and operational changes that have led to mail slow-downs, and directly respond to American's urgent questions about getting mailed prescriptions, carrying out normal business and making sure absentee votes are counted in November, Slotkin, D-Holly said.

Some 94 mid-Michigan constituents and a total of 300 across the district have contacted Slotkin's office with postal concerns in the last two weeks, which represents about a third of constituent contacts, Slotkin's spokeswoman, Hannah Lindow, said Tuesday. But Lindow could not say how many were specifically about delivery delays.

Sen. Gary Peters' office also cited some 7,000 mail complaints recently received in Michigan.

A New York Times story declared that the country was in the midst of a "postal crisis" following the appointment of Republican mega-donor Louis DeJoy to postmaster general. Nationally, mail-sorting machines and drop boxes have been removed, overtime hours have been cut and delays have reportedly become increasingly commonplace.

Those delay-inducing budget cuts from DeJoy are designed to mitigate billion-dollar losses, but they're also raising concerns (particularly among Democrats) about a delay-driven crisis that could disenfranchise a record number of citizens who will vote by mail in the November election.

(DeJoy said today he has postponed

planned changes to the operation of the Post Office until after the election.) Meanwhile, 20 state attorneys general, including Dana Nessel of Michigan, are working together on litigation to try to stop proposed changes in the Post Office.

In Michigan, more than 6,400 of 10,600 rejected absentee ballots were turned away this month because they arrived after Election Day, The Detroit News reported. Residents and politicians are becoming increasingly concerned that the pattern could repeat on a larger scale in November.

Officials at the Michigan Postal Workers Union and Slotkin share similar concerns: Cuts to overtime and the removal of sorting machines have led to a backlog of mail in processing facilities across the state.

Agency officials, accordingly, have warned states — including Michigan — that it may not be able to meet their deadlines for delivering last-minute ballots. And with DeJoy's appointment and continued national opposition to mail-in voting, ballot concerns are still brewing statewide.

Slotkin's office claims that dozens of her local constituents have reportedly been impacted with delayed Social Security checks for older residents and a slowdown in prescription drug delivery. Absentee ballots are naturally another large area of concern, which is why Slotkin supported efforts to have DeJoy testify and explain the delays before a Senate committee on Friday.

"Enough is enough," Slotkin said. "The House Oversight Committee, which oversees the U.S. Postal Service, should come back to Washington as soon as possible to hold a public hearing." Meanwhile, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has called back the House from a recess for a Saturday session to vote on legislation to block Post Office reforms.

Republicans, in turn, have accused Democrats of needlessly politicizing a federal cost savings.

But as long as Lansing-area residents send off ballots early, there shouldn't be problems with their votes being properly received and counted in time for the upcoming election, Jackson said.

"We still have people working overtime," Jackson added. "My only concern would be people waiting until the very last minute, but we're still working to keep things moving as normal."

Mail from Lansing, even if sent within city limits, must first head to a



Berl Schwartz/City Pulse

A mail truck parked in Lansing, where a postal union official said she sees little problem making timely deliveries in central Michigan. But mail ballots early, she advises.

sorting facility in Grand Rapids before being rerouted to the capital city, Jackson said. The removal of an automated sorting machine in Lansing also reduces daily sorting capacities, but the USPS has dealt with a historically smaller number of deliveries in recent years, especially during a global pandemic. One local carrier today said that before the pandemic he was delivering about 2,000 pieces a day. He said it's closer to 300 now.

Employees in Lansing will continue to work overtime to ensure mail (including ballots) is delivered in a timely fashion, Jackson said. Alternatively, residents are encouraged to deliver their ballots directly to their local clerk's office to ensure a speedier trip to their end destination.

Still, she said, if Lansing postal carriers can handle the usual annual rush of Christmas and Mother's Day cards, they can also handle a sharp increase in mail-in ballots for this November.

Lansing, however, appears to be an outlier compared to the rest of the state. Officials at the Michigan Postal Workers Union said that some of the busier USPS facilities in Grand Rapids, Detroit and Port Huron are starting to look more like warehouses than processing centers. And since mail from Lansing always gets stuck in Grand Rapids, that could make an impact locally.

"Nowadays, it's like being set up for failure," said Roscoe Woods, legislative director for the Michigan Postal Workers Union. "This is what I fear: An

overt mission to degrade public confidence in this agency, really turning it into a tool for political ends and voter suppression."

Woods said processing centers statewide are struggling to handle a "tremendous volume" of mail under new federal policies that have slashed overtime hours and forced delivery vehicles to leave warehouses at set times every morning, regardless of whether all mail has been loaded.

The removal of at least four large sorting machines in recent months has also reduced the Postal Service's ability to process thousands of envelopes an hour, leading to obvious delays. Woods said packages set to arrive on Saturday were still sitting in his warehouse on Monday.

A number of employees with underlying health conditions have also left the agency amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Woods added. And the elimination of sorting machines and reduction in overtime hours have only further reduced the agency's ability to keep up its usual pace, he said.

Still, like officials in Lansing, Wood remains confident that postal workers will overcome hurdles.

"We will deliver. We have and will continue to prepare for this. Yes, I have my concerns, but I'd also tell every American not to worry because we can and will expedite these ballots," Woods said. "The people working for this agency who are on the ground are going to make it all work."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

### Public Notice

The Ingham County Land Bank is accepting Proposals for **Appraisal Services for Residential Properties and/or Vacant Residential Properties**. The Request for Proposal Packet is available after August 19, 2020 at the Ingham County Land Bank, 3024 Turner Street, Lansing, Michigan, 48906, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday or at [www.inghamlandbank.org](http://www.inghamlandbank.org). Responses are due at the Land Bank offices by 10:30am on September 2, 2020 and will be opened at 10:30am September 2, 2020. The Ingham County Land Bank is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply. RFP#: Appraisals 08-2020

#20-193

### CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED MINUTES

#### A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING WAS HELD VIA A ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING UNDER THE GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 2020-129 ON TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

#### ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD:

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Hayes.  
Approved minutes of the regular meeting held on July 7, 2020 and the special meeting on July 14, 2020.  
Agenda approved with amendment.  
Adopted Ordinance No. 75.2: Amendments to Chapter 71B ("Marihuana Facilities") to Title VI ("Licensing")  
Adopted Ordinance No. 31.171: Amendments to Chapter 85-"G" General Business Zone and "H" Industrial Zone.  
Approved special use permit, SP-20-02.  
Approved site plan review, SPR-20-01.  
Approved requirement for sidewalk contract.  
Adopted Resolution 20-10.  
Agenda approved with second amendment.  
Approved payment structure for bond financing for Drainage district.  
Approved Claims.  
Executive Session held to discuss attorney-client privileged communication.  
Board returned to regular session.  
Approved short term loan from General Fund to DDA.  
Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor  
Susan L. Aten, Clerk

#20-188

### 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, September 10, 2020** 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 John Waller, for the property located at 831 Huntington Road, to replace 17 windows with vinyl equivalents.
2. A public hearing will be held for the purpose of considering a request from Brent Ross, for the property located at 220 Kensington Road, to replace windows with new replacement windows.
3. A public hearing will be held for the purpose of considering a request from Sameerah Shareef, for the property located at 110 Kensington Road, to replace windows with new replacement windows.

Owners of structures containing more than 4 dwelling units or other distinct spatial areas owned or leased by different persons are requested to post this notice at the primary entrance to the structure.

**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.

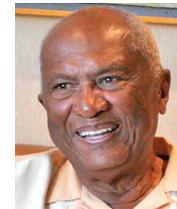
Note: This hearing is currently scheduled to occur as a regular public hearing at the meeting. If, at the time of this hearing meetings are still not permitted under an Executive Order of the Governor and an Executive Order permitting meetings electronically allows for an electronic meeting, this hearing will occur electronically and a notice of the means of participation in that hearing will be published in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and any relevant Executive Orders.

Jennifer Shuster  
City Clerk

#20-191

# Ferguson era at MSU appears over as Dems look to other candidates

Michigan Democrats will vote virtually next week on two nominees for Michigan State University Board of Trustees, and it's doubtful that the name of Joel Ferguson will be among the choices.



Ferguson

The 81-year-old, four-time incumbent and former MSU board chairman is quietly exiting the scene after organized labor and the Democratic Black Caucus declined to endorse a bid for reelection, multiple sources tell City Pulse.

Ferguson has retained a campaign manager, so it's possible the successful Lansing real estate developer could change his mind and give it a go. But with the traditional Democratic apparatus consolidating behind two other candidates, Ferguson would be facing a quixotic campaign.

Barring any last-minute changes, incumbent MSU Trustee Brian Mosallam and Detroit-area educator Reynolds "Rema" Vassar will be the Democratic Party's nominees. No other name has surfaced as a possibility. Nobody else has filed a campaign committee with the state and nobody else has actively campaigned for the nominations.

Mosallam and Vassar have been appearing together for Democratic events as a tandem.

Potential candidates have until the end of the day today to file their paperwork and pay the \$2,500 filing fee to run.

From that point, candidates have between Aug. 24-26 to virtually gather at least 443 signatures from registered Democrats to appear on the Aug. 29 convention ballot.

Asked about his intentions, Ferguson politely told City Pulse he'd talk about his State Fairground property development but not about seeking reelection to the MSU Board.

Ferguson, the wealthy development, philanthropist and significant Democratic contributors, has been the predominant power broker at MSU, both visibly and behind the scenes. His connections with Jesse Jackson, Hillary Clinton and other prominent Democrats have made him a powerful figure within Democratic circles for decades.

But Ferguson's perceived public callousness toward the sexual assault victims of Larry Nassar and his behind-the-scenes maneuvering to bring in former Republican Gov. John Engler to

lead MSU on an interim basis turned off education unions, the UAW, progressive groups and even the Black caucus.

Mosallam avoided the anti-incumbent backlash at MSU by embracing survivors who felt Engler was only interested in paying them off

as opposed to improving the campus culture. He spoke out publicly against Engler, whom he did vote to bring on initially, and in support of the survivors, ultimately earning him the endorsement of a Nassar survivor parent group, Parents of Sister Survivors Engage (POSSE).

In taking this route, Mosallam, president of Spartan Wealth Management, separated himself from the rest of the board, sources tell MIRS. He essentially became an island as he sought support within the party to win the support of labor and other traditional Deamocratic interest groups.

The former Michigan State University football player appears to have saved his position with this move, although some question whether his actions were self-serving. From a Democratic Party perspective, having a practicing Muslim on the statewide ticket adds to the party's diversity.

Meanwhile, Vassar is getting strong support as a "genuine" person whose daughter experienced racial incidents on MSU's campus. MSU Trustee Brianna Scott said Vassar shares his vision of equality and inclusion and she's hopeful the two can bring positive change to Michigan State University.

"She's doing it for right reason," Scott said. "It's time for a new voice."

Vassar is a former K-12 public school teacher, counselor, administrator and parent organizer. She's received the backing of the UAW, the American Federation of Teachers and the Michigan Education Association's Democratic Educators Caucus.

She graduated from Western Michigan University and received her doctorate in education from UCLA in California. She's an assistant professor at Eastern Michigan University and is the principal at Every Student Learning.

While she didn't attend MSU, her husband did and daughter is a MSU student.

— **KYLE MELINN**  
(*Kyle Melinn of the Capitol news service MIRS is at [melinnky@gmail.com](mailto:melinnky@gmail.com).*)

**REHBEL**

# Suit, new resignation and his own words add to Schor's woes

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor is on the defensive amid a racial discrimination lawsuit from several current and former employees and leaked audio in which Schor recognized “racial issues” and apologized to one of the plaintiffs — hardly something a defense attorney ever wants to hear.

Last week also saw Schor under attack by Black Lives Matter and other activists over a campaign letter in which the mayor pushed forward with early fundraising efforts and said those challenging him in 2021 are “using George Floyd’s death” to “tear down Lansing’s progress.”

And this week also brought the news of Fire Chief Mike Mackey’s resignation after just 16 months — and just one day after the discrimination lawsuit was filed against the city.

Mackey said the timing is coincidence. But when a captain jumps from a ship that’s already taking on water, it hardly helps with optics for a shipbuilder already facing widespread criticism.

City Pulse has reported for a year and a half on allegations of racial discrimination within the Fire Department and the Mayor’s Office. And with last week’s lawsuit, those issues are reaching a boiling point as calls for Schor’s resignation reverberate, largely within the Black community.

Here’s the rundown:

## Schor accused of bias — again

At least seven Black current and former city of Lansing employees sued the city, the mayor, the firefighters’ union and others last week for racial discrimination and race-based retaliation.

Plaintiffs include former Chief Randy Talifarro, Battalion Chief Terry Israel, Administrative Chief David Odom, Staff Officer Bruce Odom and Fire Logistics Chief Jwan Vanez Randle. They claimed to have faced racist behavior that “substantially interfered with their employment.”

(Two other firefighters, brothers Michael and Wesley Demps, were initially included but apparently either withdrew or never authorized their inclusion.)

Fired mayoral scheduler Natasha Atkinson and former Information Technology Director Collin Boyce are also suing. All seven named the city, Schor, Deputy Mayor

## The Plaintiffs



Bruce Odom      Talifarro      David Odom

Randle      Boyce

Atkinson



## The Defendants



Smiertka

Samantha Harkins, the International Association of Firefighters Local 421 and former Union President Eric Weber.

The complaint also alleges they were “subjected to repeated and continuous discriminatory treatment, hostile working environments and adverse employment actions” including suspensions, terminations and being “forced out of their positions” due to their race.

Plaintiffs also contend to have faced retaliation after they complained to upper management.

City Attorney Jim Smiertka said the lawsuit — simply given the sheer number of plaintiffs and defendants — is a “defense attorney’s dream” and could require up to 45 days of depositions. Accordingly, if it moves forward, the city can expect a lengthy and expensive legal battle.

However, he’s confident the city will

prevail. Smiertka labeled the complaint as “without merit.”

“I’ve been practicing law for over 40 years and I haven’t seen anything like this. There’s a lot of inflammatory rhetoric, conclusions.

It really appears as though this was written not for the court, but for public consumption. It reads like a he-said-she-said type of a fictional novel,” he said.

Smiertka also labeled the lawsuit as “political” in nature, rather than an actual pursuit of justice.

Detroit Attorney Scott Batey, who filed the suit, disagreed: “There’s no politics involved. You can’t target a

race of people and systematically get rid of them using the same playbook.”

Batey said the “end goal” of the lawsuit is to allow city employees to go to work without being targeted based on skin color. It isn’t entirely about money, he said, but he expects a jury to award damages that are appropriate for some of the harm that simply cannot be undone.

The lawsuit is also the second racial discrimination action filed against the city since Schor took office. Firefighter Michael Lynn Jr. also sued the city for an incident involving a banana that was allegedly left on the windshield of his assigned vehicle in 2018. That case remains unresolved.

Here’s a look at the plaintiffs and their specific allegations:

### Natasha Atkinson

Atkinson was fired as an events coordinator in Schor’s office in February. She claims that her ideas for diversity were dismissed, white staffers had ignored her and that her desk had been repeatedly ransacked.

In the complaint, she alleges that Harkins, who was chief of staff at the time, told Atkinson that “we need a young black woman in the department” to eventually replace Marilyn Plummer as community outreach coordinator.

It also details a visit to the Schor’s office from Black Lives Matter activists after a Black teenager was repeatedly punched by a Lansing Police Department officer. Schor allegedly dismissed Atkinson’s suggestions to prepare a statement before meeting with protesters. Atkinson also claims Citizen Advocate Mark Lawrence referred to those activists as a “dog without a bone.”

Later, Atkinson contended to have



Batey



Lynn

# Suit

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“experienced intimidation and harassment” for attempts to promote diversity in Schor’s administration and that it became a recurring theme in the office.

The complaint also claims that Harkins told Atkinson that her “ovaries scream” when she sees Chief Administrative Officer Nicholas Tate, a Black man, and that she “LOVES black men.” Harkins couldn’t be reached for comment.

The lawsuit also describes a “loud discussion” between Harkins and Joan Jackson Johnson, a Black woman and former human relations and community relations director who was suspended in January after she was accused of financial improprieties and then retired. She has denied those claims, and the court-appointed receiver for a charity she headed said he found no improprieties. State and federal authorities are supposedly investigating, but more than seven months after her suspension, they still have not said anything, at least publicly.

Harkins reportedly yelled at Jackson Johnson, who said, “I’m not scared of you. Harkins responded: “I’m not scared of you.”

After that incident, Atkinson said Harkins told her that “professional black women have a bad attitude” and “chip on their shoulder, maybe rightfully so, but they have to learn how to take direction,” according to the complaint. Racism, Atkinson contended, was abundant at City Hall. Jackson Johnson corroborated the account to City Pulse.

The suit also alleges that Harkins told Atkinson that mayoral staffer Valerie Marchand had “a problem with black people” and that Atkinson “intimidated” her. Harkins also said

Marchand “did not associate with black people,” so she was scared of Atkinson in the office.

The complaint also describes attempts by Atkinson to add some more diverse music to the city’s downtown playlist. Marchand — who is also the city’s DJ — allegedly complained about Atkinson to Harkins and “went home crying,” according to the complaint. Marchand didn’t respond to questions. Smiertka said he has advised the defendants not to comment.

By last November, Atkinson also claimed, she was “shunned” and ignored by white staffers in the Mayor’s Office, only to find her desk overturned after she tried to report city officials for the needlessly expensive lunches and afternoon drinks purchased on city-issued credit cards.

In response to Atkinson’s complaints, the City Council briefly considered launching an investigation into Schor’s office, only to have the idea shot down by Smiertka. Council has no legal authority to investigate the Mayor’s Office, he explained to Council members last month.

A subsequent records request — which was sent by City Pulse weeks ago — also revealed that Schor actually had no documented reason for dismissing Atkinson. No complaints were filed. City officials couldn’t locate a single incident that would have led to Atkinson’s firing.

### Randy Talifarro

Talifarro, an East Lansing resident, served as fire chief for both the Lansing and East Lansing Fire departments from January 2012 until he quit the dual role in July 2018, opting to only serve as chief of the East Lansing Fire Department. He had told City Pulse that he left because the workplace became “extremely uncomfortable” after Schor took office in January.

In the suit, Talifarro alleges that he experienced “demeaning and discriminatory” treatment by many officials in the city but especially Schor. Talifarro also contends that the mayor, even before his term began in 2018, had conspired to fire him based largely on racist rumors that were spread at the time by the firefighters’ union’s Weber.



Marchand



Tate



Jackson Johnson

Talifarro also claimed he and Bruce Odom were wrongly blamed in 2018 for an apartment fire at LaRoy Froh Townhouses, a large complex owned and maintained by the Lansing Housing Commission. He said Schor also wrongly blamed former LHC Director Martell Armstrong, also a Black man.

The complaint also alleges that Weber had a pattern of defending white firefighters while often demanding that Black firefighters be severely reprimanded or fired for comparably minor offenses, creating

a “hostile work environment marked by unequal treatment” for Black staff. Talifarro said his authority as chief was “routinely circumvented” by the city, alleging officials had conspired to “harshly punish” Black staff while largely ignoring misconduct of white employees.

Schor and Harkins also never consulted Talifarro on any matter concerning fire operations, code enforcement, staffing practices or management during his seven months as fire

See Suit, Page 14

### CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED MINUTES

**A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING WAS HELD VIA A ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING UNDER THE GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 2020-129 ON TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2020 AT 2:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Hayes, Clerk Aten, Treasurer Rodgers  
Trustees: Broughton, Harris, McKenzie, Bankson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Gresens, Attorney

ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD:  
Meeting called to order by Supervisor Hayes.  
Approved submission for First Responders Hazard Pay Premium Program and Public Safety and Public Health Payroll Reimbursement Program, Resolution 20-09.  
Meeting adjourned.

Diontrae Hayes, Supervisor  
Susan L. Aten, Clerk

#20-187

CAROL

# Koenig

FOR CIRCUIT COURT

★ ★ ★

Working For Justice

★ ★ ★ **VOTE** ★ ★ ★

# NOVEMBER 3

Paid for by Carol Koenig for Justice, 690 N. Hagadorn Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823

# Suit

from page 13

chief, he said.

“Schor would disregard any idea or concern expressed by Talifarro no matter his experience on the matter, until a Caucasian voiced support for it,” the complaint reads, alleging that Schor also delayed the promotion of Bruce Odom, another Black employee at the Lansing Fire Department.

Talifarro and Schor were also entangled in a public, and widely reported, dispute last year when Talifarro bashed Schor over an almost entirely white and male class of firefighters hired in 2018.

## Collin Boyce

Boyce, who moved to Tucson, Arizona, resigned last year after he and other black employees who dared to challenge Schor’s authority were pushed aside or fired, he told City Pulse earlier this year. Boyce said he only left after Schor refused to value his work and “forced” him to leave.

“This isn’t Ku Klux Klan racism, you know with white sheets and burning crosses. It’s ‘Negro: You have to stay in your place,’” Boyce explained in a City Pulse interview. “And if you don’t leave when they want you to leave, then they’re going to find a way to nudge you out the door.”

The complaint states that Boyce inherited a “hodgepodge” of old software and an inept security system, but he was able to modernize the department under former Mayor Virg Bernero. After Schor was sworn in, Boyce said it felt like the administration was trying to “force” him out.

Schor and Harkins reportedly created such a racially hostile work envi-

ronment toward Boyce that other city officials began to take notice, the complaint states. At one point, a city official reportedly told Harkins and Schor: “If you’re going to force him out, you better have a plan.”

Boyce said he made numerous complaints about racism to Schor, noting the mayor rarely met with Black department heads “unless he needed a scapegoat.” The complaint also alleges Boyce and Talifarro were “falsely accused” of stealing computer software because of their race.

“Boyce continued to work 12-18 hour days despite feeling like trash due to the racist conduct from Mayor Schor and others in the mayor’s office,” the complaint states, noting Boyce was accused of inappropriate sexual relationships and unfairly punished for bringing his kids to work.

Boyce resigned after he “could no longer accept the constant racial discrimination” in Schor’s office, he said. Schor, however, didn’t mention racial tensions when discussing Boyce last year.

In a statement sent to City Pulse earlier this year, he also declined to answer questions on “personnel” issues and flatly refused to acknowledge any racially based problem within his office.

“I treasure the diverse voices of my staff and cabinet,” he said. “They are hardworking and dedicated people focused on serving the residents of Lansing, and I learn from them every day. I seek feedback and advice from all of them, without micromanaging so they can do their jobs.”

As for the several people of color that have suggested otherwise? “My team and I take the policies and ethical standards of the city very seriously, and we follow them,” Schor added.

## Terry Israel

Israel, a Lansing resident, has worked at the Fire Department since 1996 and served as battalion chief since last December. After his promotion, according to the complaint, he became the target of “harassment and discrimination,” namely from Assistant Chief Michael Tobin.

As the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March, Israel began working remotely for portions of the day. Tobin subsequently began investigating him and may have had him secretly surveilled, the complaint states, but he didn’t conduct a similar investigation on any white battalion chiefs.

Eventually, officials tried to demote Israel to a captain in an alleged violation of a collective bargaining agreement that would’ve prevented the move. Instead, Israel was eventually suspended for two days while white employees continued remote work without punishment.

“No similarly situated Caucasian battalion chiefs were disciplined,” according to the complaint.

## Bruce Odom

Bruce Odom, a Lansing resident, reportedly underwent an extensive interview process in 2017 to become an assistant fire chief, but he was unfairly denied the promotion due to his race despite having the “highest blended score” on a promotional assessment, the complaint states.

The complaint also states that Talifarro was asked by outgoing mayor Virg Bernero — at Schor’s request — to “hold off” on promoting Odom. Bernero reportedly told Talifarro that Schor had “issues” with those who were invited to apply for the job and suspended Odom’s application.

Bernero couldn’t be reached. The former mayor, who is considering a run against Schor next year, has also been publicly critical of how his suc-

cessor has dealt with Black former officials.

Weber, who also served on Schor’s transition team in addition to his role as union president, allegedly didn’t want Odom promoted to assistant chief and was actively interfering with the process. Still, Odom was eventually promoted to assistant chief in February 2018 but was reportedly paid much less than other assistant chiefs at the department, the complaint states.

Schor and Harkins also reportedly demanded that Odom discipline Black officers in cases where discipline had already been deemed inappropriate while withdrawing disciplinary action against several white firefighters who had been “investigated for several crimes,” the complaint states.

Odom also said he was falsely accused of gender discrimination and forced to go through “cultural sensitivity training” for denying a female firefighter’s request to attend a conference. In reality, Odom “was a champion of women’s rights and advancement,” according to the lawsuit.

Additionally, when Talifarro resigned, Odom was reportedly asked not to attend the mayor’s cabinet meetings and, despite serving as the highest-ranking employee at the time, was never considered for the job of interim fire chief before Purchase was later appointed to the role.

Odom said that after Talifarro was “forced to resign,” he became “increasingly marginalized” at the department and was relegated to minor tasks. The continued “racial hostility” eventually forced him to retire in July 2018 after he was made to feel like a “second-class” employee.

See Suit, Page 15

# LINDEMANN

## For DRAIN COMMISSIONER

## To protect our natural resources ...



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# Suit

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## David Odom

David Odom, a Lansing resident, is Bruce Odom's cousin. After Lynn filed a discrimination suit against the city, Purchase reportedly told Odom that Lynn "could not be trusted" and that Odom needed to "distance himself from race issues" if he ever hoped to earn a promotion in the city.

Purchase also allegedly told Odom that he was "tired of this black stuff" at the department. Odom also complained that he was subjected to a hostile work environment and threats whenever he discussed concerns with his supervisors. Schor reportedly promoted those supervisors in an alleged "patent effort to silence" Odom's concerns on racial discrimination.

## Jwan Vanez Randle

Randle, who lives in Mason, has worked at the Fire Department since 2000 and served as chief of logistics — formerly chief of maintenance — since March 2016. Randle reportedly tried to defend Boyce and Talifarro from accusations that they had stolen a city computer program, but he was in turn threatened by Purchase to stop discussing any accusations made against Boyce.

Purchase later accused Randle of stealing a push mower, gas cans and axes from a job. The allegations, according to the complaint, were only part of a "pattern" of discriminatory treatment.

The complaint also says union officials attempted to demote Randle and eliminate his division.

Purchase also reportedly told Randle to "watch out" because Lynn was a "troublemaker" and repeatedly insinuated that Randle was involved in a scheme to steal equipment with Talifarro.

"Purchase intentionally set up Randle to fail due to his race by refusing to provide a full staff for Randle's division and then accused Randle of underperforming," according to the complaint.

## Schor apologizes in leaked audio

Leaked audio from last year surfaced over the weekend of Schor apparently recognizing and apologizing for "racial issues" that have allegedly long plagued the Fire Department. The recording appears

to be a May 2019 meeting between Schor and plaintiff David Odom.

"If I said that there are no racial issues within the Fire Department, it may have been something that I said earlier on because there are. I know there are. I've had folks talk to me," Schor can be heard telling Odom. "There definitely are. I know there have been in the past."

"I'm the one who's responsible for the city, and for me, I believe that I believe you," Schor said. "I believe this is what you faced and I will apologize on behalf of the city to you. I don't want to see any employee face that. I really don't. And if you have gone through those things, I believe you and I would like to find a way forward. I'd like to figure out — moving forward — how you help how we work together moving forward. My job is making sure things go well within the city."

And though city officials have labeled the recent lawsuit as "very political" and "inflammatory," Schor's own statements in the tape also suggested that they're about more than just politics.

Lynn's federal discrimination suit against the city alleges a pattern of racial discrimination and retaliation after a banana was found on the windshield of his assigned fire truck. Lynn contended the 2016 incident was an act of deliberate discrimination against him and others.

City Pulse published a series of stories on that lawsuit and various claims of racism within the Fire Department. The city, in response, launched a marketing campaign to highlight diversity. Schor also dismissed the notion of discriminatory treatment in an interview with City Pulse.

"We have not heard any other specific complaints. There was one individual who has not been happy," Schor told City Pulse last year. "I don't want to minimize any concerns here, but we've addressed that situation quickly and we've moved forward."

He phrased it differently to Odom a few months later in the newly surfaced audio.

"I would retract that in a heartbeat," Schor told Odom. "I know there have been in the past. I know the incident that led to the lawsuit, I mean, I know that all happened and we'll address it."

In another recently surfaced clip, Schor can be heard explaining to the firefighters union before his election how he had "not heard good things"

about sharing a fire chief with the city of East Lansing, noting that he hadn't talked to Talifarro but would prefer to end the dual-chief position.

"I have not heard good things, to be honest with you," Schor said of Talifarro's role as fire chief. "I have not had a chance to sit down with the chief and chat with him. I want to hear how it's going. I want to hear about the people who are being affected and hear how it's going."

"I like having a chief here in Lansing who will devote his or her full attention to the city. I won't give you a guarantee one way or the other until I have all of the information. That's how I operate. But from what I've heard, I'm not a huge fan of the system. We'll see what happens."

Talifarro resigned five months after Schor took office.

## Fire chief resigns

Fire Chief Mackey confirmed his resignation on Monday after about 16 months on the job and just days after the racial discrimination lawsuit was filed. Mackey contended that he's only leaving for "personal reasons" and not at all because of the recent litigation.

Plaintiff David Odom has repeatedly emphasized in recent weeks that Mackey has not contributed to the racial discrimination issues at the Fire Department.



Mackey

Mackey — who billed himself as the "blue-collar chief" — was hired to replace former Lansing Fire Chief Randy Talifarro last April. His hire followed two interim chiefs appointed by Schor after Talifarro resigned in 2018.

Before Mackey started in Lansing at \$124,471 annually, he oversaw a larger department that covered nearly 1.5 million residents over 1,800 square miles in Palm Beach County, Florida. The Lansing Fire Department only covers about 116,000 residents over 37 square miles.

"It was a nice job. It's just time for me to go back," to his family in Florida, Mackey told City Pulse Monday.

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## We Can Help You Get Your GED

By Barbara Schmidt

If you or a friend or family member is interested in obtaining a GED, we would love to help you make that dream come true! Here at Capital Area Literacy Coalition, or The Reading People, we offer a non-classroom GED alternative program. You can call us at **(517) 485-4949** to schedule an appointment to get signed up.



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a cap and gown and can have your friends and family attend as well.

As is our policy, all our materials and testing is free of cost to our students. Most people finish the program, steadily working and studying in one to two months. In addition, we have tutors available for each of the subjects who can work one-on-one with you if you need extra help. Our goal is to help you complete your GED!

Due to COVID issues, we require masks at all times in our building for everyone's safety. We are also only taking appointments — no walk in help will be available. We are now taking appointments for September 1 and beyond! We hope to see you soon!



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# How Greater Lansing artists are surviving the coronavirus pandemic

## Shifting to digital, exploring new mediums: What it takes to keep hanging on

By SKYLER ASHLEY

While many artists are being tripped up by postponed exhibitions and canceled festivals, the resourceful Julian Van Dyke is creating a project unlike anything he has ever done before.

Artists, especially those who primarily work in traditional, physical mediums, are no exception. While shutdown galleries lead to postponed exhibitions and canceled festivals eliminate physical marketplaces, Greater Lansing artists are forced to either find a way to pivot their craft to a digital realm or put everything on pause altogether.

Julian Van Dyke has resorted to creating a project unlike anything he has ever done before. Always keeping busy, Van Dyke, who had an April show in New York City canceled, has quietly spent the past few months developing a YouTube show with his son, Paul, that will bring his series of children's books to life with puppets — not too far off from the format of shows like the timelessly charming "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." Right now, Van Dyke's living room is taken over by the set of this future online show. The first of his books scheduled for the program to feature is the educational "Does This Make You a Bully?"

"I decided, 'Let's just start writing a script.' I went and bought all of the studio lights and clip-on microphones," Van Dyke said. "First, we started recording in the garage — not getting the right lighting and picking up too much noise — so we pushed the puppet front into my living room and pushed all the furniture to the side."

The gamut of new technology Van Dyke has learned while isolated at home is a recurring theme for many artists who have turned to the Internet to show off their work.

"I think corona pushed us in a new direction in terms of showing off one's work. As you know, whether it's musicians, entertainers or late-night hosts, they're all working with the same format. They're recording from their living room. The playing field has been evened out," Van Dyke said. "You're on the same playing ground as galleries. The coronavirus pushed everyone in a new direction; this is the best time to be pushing up your content to be released."

To make use of other clever alternatives to regular gallery shows, Van Dyke was also the subject of window displays at area libraries back in June. The downtown library branch used its front window space to show an array of original images from Van Dyke's children's book "Juneteenth: Celebrating Freedom." Passersby were able to check out Van Dyke's work without going inside the actual library.

As a whole, Van Dyke has managed to stay optimistic and keep his sense of inspiration afloat. "I tell people, a true artist will never get bored. I'm not bored. We can't do anything. MSU's not playing football, so how are we going to do anything, as far as entertaining audiences? If there's nothing figured out as far as getting something done about COVID, we'll just have to wait. I hope it's soon."

Dennis Preston has also been frustrated with trying to shift his artwork to being palatable virtually.

"Part of the work I do is drawing caricatures at events. People hire me per hour to draw them and the caricatures are free to those attending," Preston said. "They started canceling on me in March. There isn't a way around it, and I'm not going on Zoom to draw caricatures at a virtual party."

Preston also works heavily on freelance design and illustration. If the piece commissioned was tied into an event or a business that had to be canceled or closed because of the coronavirus, that gig essentially disappeared. The projects Preston has



Courtesy  
Julian Van Dyke working on his "Juneteenth: Celebrating Freedom" display at the downtown branch of Capital Area District Libraries.

been able to actually complete and get paid for are drawing on music instruments for Vintage Sound in Williamston, producing artwork for media outlets such as City Pulse and designing CD covers for musicians. He also produces artwork for websites that print knick-knacks such as T-shirts and mugs. "Even though I'm doing this, I really don't make that much per item being sold, just a small percentage. But I'm making those companies rich. They must like me for

how much money I'm bringing in for them," Preston said.

In terms of getting his work out there, Preston has been primarily relying on his Facebook page. Any old stuff he has in his archives he's sharing it with people there. Preston said, despite the grim prospects faced by the world right now, he's still managed to

# Artists

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find inspiration. “My brain is always on. I can’t turn it off. During this time, I have not been bored. I’ve been drawing a whole lot,” he said.

Visual artist Steph Joy Hogan has also had to move her work online — a major change as she primarily displayed and sold her artwork through recurring community live events, like Arts Nights Out.

“Since March, I have worked hard to adapt my art business to an e-commerce model,” Hogan said. “I have invested heavily in developing a beautiful website to showcase my artwork and deliver it to a wider audience. Additionally, I’ve sought out tools to streamline and improve my social

media presence, develop an email newsletter and I completed an intensive business course geared toward artists.”

Her husband, Daniel Hogan, has suffered a similar impact. He was scheduled to appear at the East Lansing Art Festival, which was canceled this year. Instead, he carried on as a virtual showcase on Facebook.

“Missing out on East Lansing Art Festival was a huge blow,” Daniel Hogan said. “The other twist of the knife was I invested in a new vehicle and professional festival tent for this year, and I have yet to use them for an art festival.”

He has since created an online shop on his personal website, in addition to his Etsy page. He was also able to display some of his framed paintings at Blue Owl Coffee, which he said led to some big sales.

Tamara Brown, who is best known for her murals produced under the

name Tea Time Art, had her artistic career shaken up not only by the pandemic but also by pregnancy and the difficulties that often arise in the life of a single parent.

“The coronavirus definitely took a toll. Being high risk, as I was pregnant from March all the way until June, I

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## ARTIST’S CORNER

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### It’s Tea Time! Artist Tamara Brown, aka Tea Murduh

Tamara Brown, the artist known as “Tea Murduh” is a local artist, born and raised in Lansing, MI. In 2017, she started her own small business, Tea Time LLC. She has done murals and participated in many art shows throughout Michigan.

In 2017 she painted an amazing and brilliantly colored 1200 sq. ft mural, with interactive glowing windows incorporated on the side of an abandoned warehouse entitled “Be the Light” for Artprize in Grand Rapids. At that time, she had just recently lost her beloved grandmother, father and childhood friend all within 6 months of each other.

In 2018 she was the first Muralist chosen for Lansing’s ArtPath along the Riverwalk. Her mural under the Shiawassee St. Bridge is entitled “Break Free” and she won the People’s Choice Award for it.

In 2019 she was chosen to develop and run the project in St. Johns that she called “The LAP Project” under the bridge of Business

27, along the Fred Meijer CIS Trail. “I called it the Legendary Artist Passage, the idea was to have a walk into Art history, that not only taught the people involved but those who see it when they pass through it, about art.”

After that project was finished, Tea decided to pursue her love for music and earn her B.S. degree in Audio Engineering. Shortly after starting, she became pregnant with her second son, so her art career has taken a backseat currently, but she does have many originals and prints available for purchase! Tea’s art is now carried at Studio Retreat in St. Johns. Support local art and get yours today!

**FIND TEAMURDUH:**

teamurduh.com  
Instagram @tea\_murduh  
tea.time.art4u@gmail.com



An acoustic guitar adorned with an original painting of a dragon by Dennis Preston.

Dennis Preston.

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### Mark Chatterley

Human Collective

New ceramic sculptures made during the pandemic

Michigan State University Union Gallery. August 4 - October 2 2020

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## ARTIST’S CORNER

# Artists

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couldn't go around people or do anything," Brown said. "All of my sales had to be done online, which was difficult because I was also going to school full time."

As newborn children are high risk, Brown had to take extraneous precautions with daycare and babysitting. This caused Brown to have to put all mural work on hold.

"I can't leave him with just anybody. People that go to work, or are regularly around people, have an increased risk of getting infected. It's tough. I had people ask me, 'Can you just do it after

he's born?' I had to say 'No,' because I can't risk him getting sick," Brown said.

Online sales have proved to not be as easy as one might think. Brown received fraudulent checks for \$5,500 worth of art. "I was so pissed off that I made a piece called 'Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is.' I used parts of that check, which I cut up because it wasn't real," Brown said.

Other art Brown has produced as of late has been directly inspired by the political turmoil not only surrounding Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's policies in response to the coronavirus but to the massive wave of protests in response to the police murder of George Floyd. Brown is an avid supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement, as reflected in one of her prints, which

prominently features the black power fist as the centerpiece of the painting.

Mina Greco-Hall, an Italian-born Lansing artist who emigrated to the United States in the early-'60s and has since earned renown both locally and internationally, has described the side effects of the pandemic as being akin to "prison." She is unable to teach her usual in-person art classes and hasn't opted to take any digital alternatives, saying the virtual disconnect of teaching through computer communication would simply not suffice. The disturbing impact of the coronavirus is reflect-

ed in Greco-Hall's painting labeled "COVID-19."

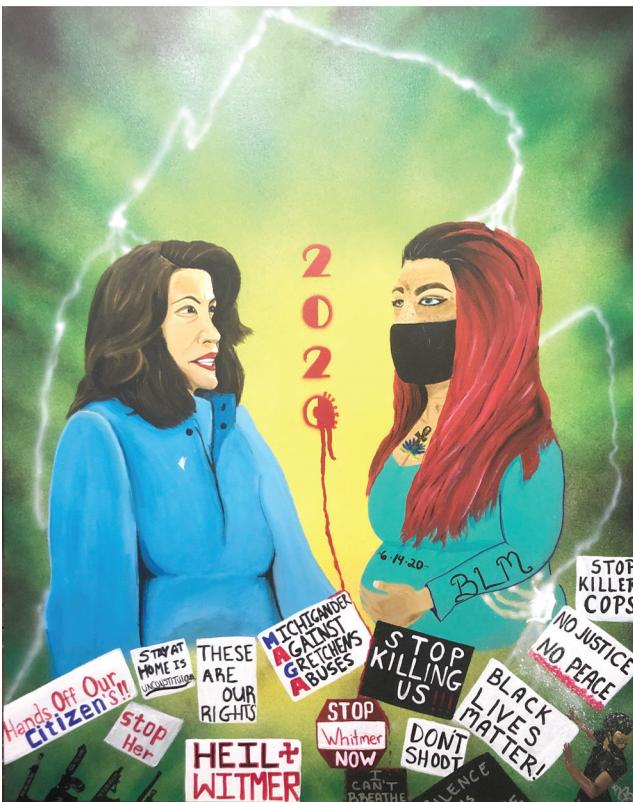
Svitlana Martynjuk said the pandemic, in a roundabout way, has inspired her to take more initiative with her creative freedom, and not abide strictly to her usual pattern of abstract artwork. For example, one of her favorite pieces she's produced lately is a wall of delectable doughnuts, an image she said she would have never produced under normal circumstances.



Svitlana Martynjuk

Doughnuts painted by Svitlana Martynjuk.

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Tamara Brown/Tea Time Art

"2020," by Tamara Brown, also known as Tea Time Art.

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## Making Strides in the Art World

Svitlana Martynjuk is a Ukrainian-American artist and entrepreneur residing in Lansing, who is taking the art world by storm as she charts her own career and opportunities by combining a strong passion for both art and business.

As Svitlana rose to local notoriety with her artwork, she began to take notice of the shocking numbers behind the glaringly apparent gender disparity issues plaguing the art world, finding that only 13.7% of living artists in major galleries are women.\* In an effort to take matters into her own hands, Svitlana founded All SHE Makes, a curated directory of womxn artists and an organization geared towards providing visibility for womxn in the arts. With over \$4,000 donated this year alone to various causes and already 30 countries represented by her organization, All SHE Makes is quickly gaining international recognition amongst art magazine publications and has collaborated with others such as the World Wildlife Fund and SHOWFIELDS, to name a few.

While expanding exposure for artists as CEO of All SHE Makes, Svitlana's own art is reaching new

creative heights nestled in her cozy art studio at Cedar Street Art Collective. Her work has been featured in multiple magazines (Real Simple™, Create!, & Pikchur) and some of her pieces can be found in-stores through international retailers West Elm and Minted. Svitlana recently completed an artist residency at the Chateau d'Orquevaux in France and is currently putting the finishing touches on a new collection of works titled "Sweet Life" which depicts 'magical donut paintings' set to be released in August. She remains a staple in her local art community through her involvement curating art exhibits for the Blue Owl coffee shops around Lansing and painting custom engagement jewelry portraits for JeanJean Vintage.

With so many projects in the works Svitlana says, "When things get hectic, setting aside some uninterrupted self-care time is necessary. Mental health is a very important component to my life and I'm happy to have found such a wonderful group of supportive friends to surround myself with here in Lansing."

\*data cited via the National Museum of Women in the Arts



Photo credit: Steven Glynn Photography



## ARTIST'S CORNER

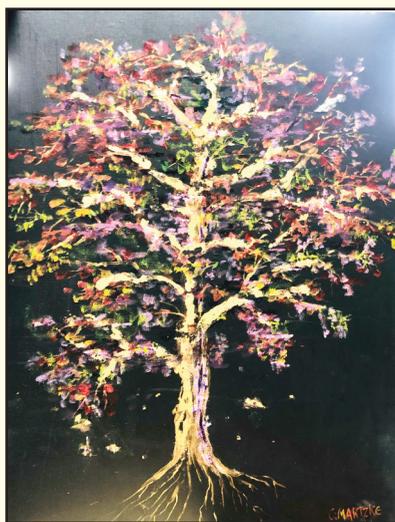
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# Artists

from page 20

“It’s weird to say, but the quarantine forced me to create art that I actually like. There was nothing else to make,” Martynjuk said. “There were no deadlines; there was nothing stopping me from making stuff that I love. Before I was being driven by customers’ opinion. For the first time ever, I painted representational art instead of abstract. For me that was a huge deal.”

Without the external pressure of making sales, Martynjuk said a lot of her insecurities faded away. “I felt freer in my painting practice. That was really good,” she said. “I’m taking a

different direction; doing whatever I feel like doing. My next collection will be tropical paintings — something I wouldn’t have done before.”

While the world’s response to the coronavirus is in flux, it’s hard to pin down exactly what the “new normal” will be for the art world. The only thing that’s clear is that artists will have to constantly adapt and evolve, or simply wind up left behind.

“I don’t know what to expect for the art world,” Preston said. “Nobody knew last summer that this one would be like this. I don’t use the term ‘new normal’ because this isn’t normal. When you look at what’s going on with our country right now, it’s easy to lose hope and get depressed. But, I’m not there. I’m looking past all of that.”

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## Matt Purdy, visual artist

The focus in most of Matt’s work is on the role of the animal in ancient human cultures. Most cultures have stories of animals portrayed as creatures of power and influence, and there is usually an enlightening truth to these tales. It is this truth that Matt seeks out and tries to convey in his work. Matt has become a perfectionist in the quest for accuracy. Spending countless hours of research online, in the woods, or at historical sites. He devotes as much time to studying archaeology as he does wildlife and the environment. By showing an animal in an archaeological setting, Matt hopes to imply an age-old con-

nection between human cultures and animals. Hopefully this leads the viewer to ponder the mythological story line in his pieces, and the double meaning in some of the titles.

Taught in part by an abstract expressionist, Matt attained a unique abstract perspective on nature. His goal in every piece is to unify an animal within its habitat by manipulating the elements and principles of design. He calls this “mimicry”, repeating textures, patterns, shapes, forms and colors to create a dynamic unity that “mimics” and reinforces the interdependency existing between an animal and its habitat.

“Deadly Gaze - Basilisk and Caiman” oils



“Primal Thoughts - Lion Cub and Tassili Rock Painting” mixed media drawing



“Of Another Time - Philippine Eagle and Ancestral Memorial” colored pencil



“Inner Spirit - Cougar and Adena Tablet” mixed media drawing

### FIND MATT PURDY:

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# ARTIST'S CORNER



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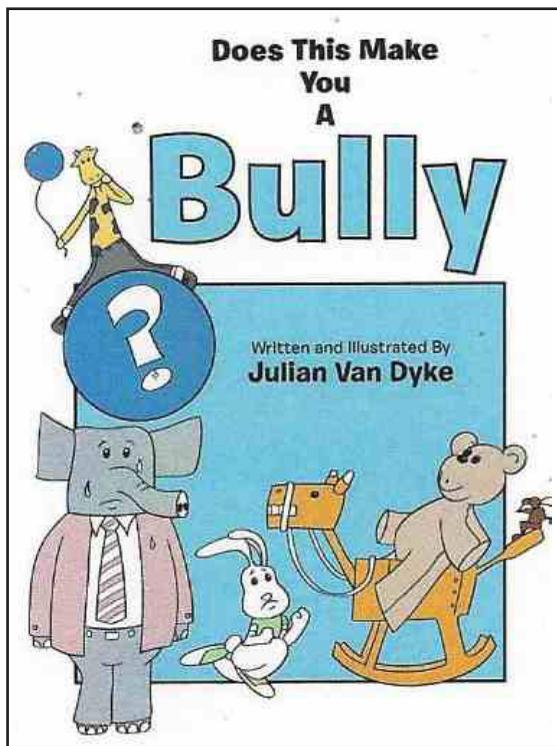
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## Multi-faceted talent: Julian K. Van Dyke

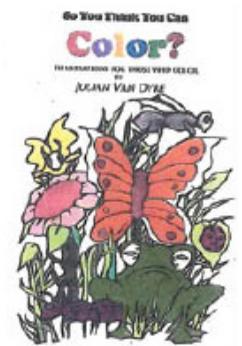
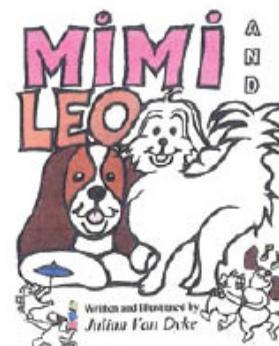
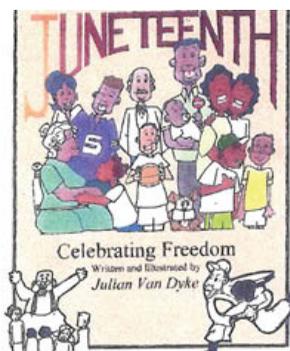
Julian K. Van Dyke the painter and muralist has completed commissioned art murals on the walls of Lansing and East Lansing in addition to being shown at Agora Gallery located in the art district of Manhattan, New York. Recently, his work was shown at the sold out Red Dot art show located in the Mana Wynwood art district of Miami, Florida.

Julian has authored books “The Music We

Call Jazz,” “The Things We Do At My School,” “Juneteenth, Celebrating Freedom,” “Does This Make You A Bully?” in addition to releasing his fun imagery in a coloring book for all ages, “So You Think You Can Color?” He finds time to visit schools and talk with students and feels that, “art is strengthened when its shown and given to our youth.”



**FIND JULIAN VAN DYKE:**  
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**ARTIST'S CORNER**

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**Celebrating the Joy of Collaboration Art**

**Ac** Lee and Nancy Kroenberg are both award-winning artists. This husband and wife team have been collaborating with their individual mediums, Nancy – ceramics and Lee – steel and copper, for approximately eight years. Lee still creates his own one-of-a-kind steel sculptures and Nancy forms her own individual ceramic creations as well. However, they have discovered a special kind of joy when they combine their art.

Lee has been sculpting since the seventies when he found a wonderful creative welding class at Lansing Community College; it provided a much-needed stress reliever from his position as a psychologist in the prison system. Many pieces are inspired from his dreams. Other times, he has a specific image in mind that he wants to create. Spontaneity also often plays a part in his creations: he will simply begin to sculpt and see where the journey takes him.

Nancy is inspired by shapes, lots of shapes. Nancy's childhood was spent in the inner city of Philadelphia, living in row houses. There were many, many geometric images created by these "stuck together" houses. While these surroundings inspired made-up games for Nancy and the other neighborhood children to play, they have remained one of the significant sources of inspiration for her art.

In terms of their collaborative art, generally these seem to spring from loosely conjured images of what could be. They often begin with the ceramic pieces and grow and change with additions of steel and the incorporation of back and forth ideas into truly unique works of art. Sometimes, the smaller clay pieces just seem to lend themselves to being

created in steel. Two examples that started out that way may be familiar to Lansing folks when they were part of Lansing's Art on the Riverwalk: Eclipse and Shapes. Grand Rapids' ArtPrize was the venue for additional collaborative art: LOVE and World Peace, the Hope.

It has certainly helped to be able to continue to create art during these very challenging times. Lee and Nancy are always happy to accommodate customers' schedules to view their art up close and personal in their Artistic Creations Plus Gallery. They practice social distancing and wear masks and require the same of all who visit so everyone can stay safe and healthy. Creating art has been an inspiring, loving, and fun incorporation into their very happy union of almost thirty-seven years. Contact them by phone or e-mail to arrange a convenient time and day to stop by and see what all the fuss is about.

**FIND ARTISTIC CREATIONS PLUS:**

285 E. Sherwood Rd.,  
Williamston  
517-347-0059  
www.artisticcreationsplus.com  
email: ljk1@att.net

**Call to Artists**

**ART IN THE WILD**

Art In The Wild is inviting established and aspiring local artists to participate in our Artist Interview Series. This will be posted on our YouTube channel (Art in the Wild) and will also be highlighted in other platforms with the intention of highlighting our trove of gifted creatives in the Greater Lansing Area, what inspires their passion, their current projects, art they have available to be collected and the passion they have to partner with our community to protect our water resources.

Go to this link to see our first video in this series:  
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Call Melody Angel, MD today to create your interview: 989-550-1181

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Artwork by  
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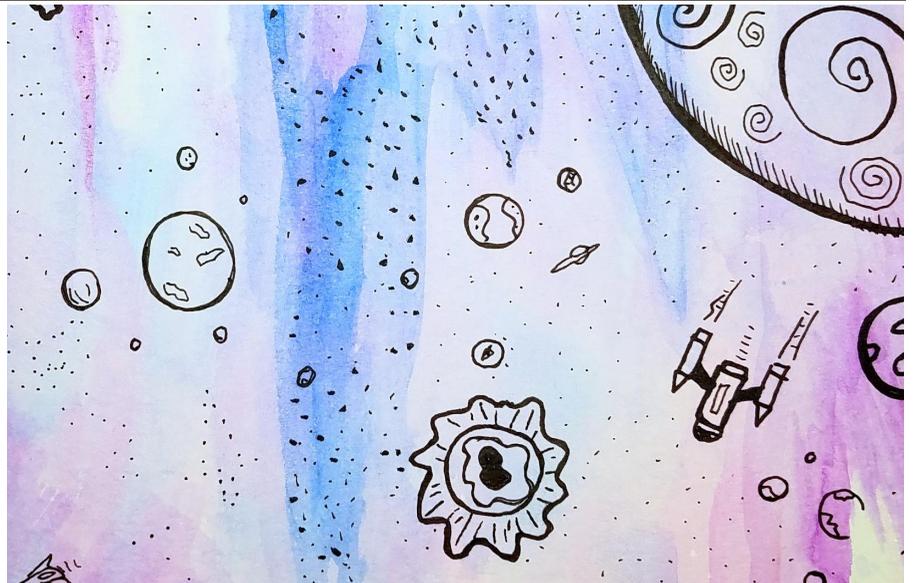


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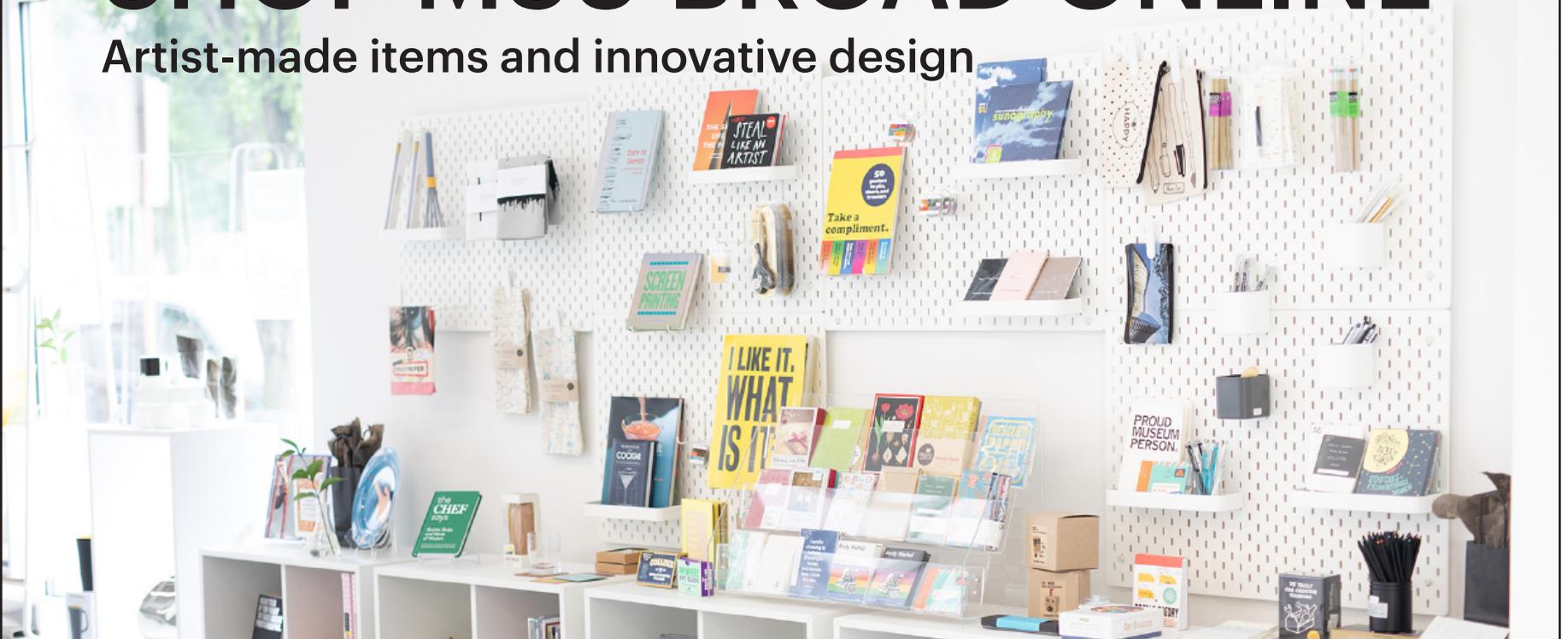
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# MSU BROAD

# Lansing area art galleries suffering after COVID-19 outbreak

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

The starving artist is a popular archetype. But recent events have forced many artists into a tight spot. When the coronavirus outbreak hit, it suddenly became a lot harder to sell art. Many of the galleries that they depended on were forced to shut down. And the galleries themselves are receiving less patronage.

## ARTpath

### Artist Talks

Recurring every Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Free with a suggested donation of \$10

Various locations along the Lansing River Trail  
<https://lansingartgallery.org/artpath-artist-talk/>

## Studio (In)

### Process at Home

Recurring every Thursday at 9 p.m.

Free  
<https://www.facebook.com/msuartlab>

“When people are unsure about their income or future, they tend to pull back a little bit,” said Melody Angel from the nonprofit organization Art in the Wild. “And we

also just don’t want to put additional stress on people who are worried about money.” To make up for it, Angel started planning free events to promote local art and artists.

Angel sought out local artists for a Facebook interview series. She said that any interested artists can apply on the Art in the Wild website.

“We particularly want diversity,” said Angel. “And artists who aren’t famous yet. We just want to hear from people in the area and amplify their voices.”

There are many complications in the art gallery world right now. Angel said that people don’t want to spend money because their income took a hit from the pandemic, some people are afraid to travel and most venues where artists can show their work are shut down.

One of the artists that Angel works with used to do group art classes, but holding those classes is an impossibility in the era of the coronavirus. So, she went virtual and started hosting online art classes.

“She’s finding that people actually like it,” said Angel. “This is a time where artists have to get creative. COVID has drastically impacted the art world, especially those dependent on an artists’ income.”

MSU’s Broad Art Museum started offering a Facebook live event called Studio (In)Process at Home, which takes place Thursdays at 9 p.m. on its Facebook page. Each week, a different artist will lead attendees through an art project that they can do at home. Attendees of the event are invited to participate or just watch.

The Lansing Art Gallery also joined in on the virtual game. They have created virtual exhibitions that are available for viewing on their website. They are also offering online classes which you can access through their website. The Lansing Art Gallery is also hosting a series of ARTpath Artist Talks every Tuesday at 6 p.m. They take place at various spots on the Lansing River Trail and offer the community a chance to connect with local artists.

The talks are free with a suggested donation of ten dollars. They are also recorded and posted to the Lansing Art Gallery website.

“In March, when this first started, I thought I’d never sell another piece,” said Mark Chatterly from Chatterly Sculptures Inc. “But it’s picked up since April. It’s getting better and better.”

Chatterly said that he gets the majority of his money through galleries. When they shut down, he had to figure out how to promote himself online.

“That took a little bit of getting used to. I’m not from the right generation,” he laughed. Chatterly felt technology-illiterate. So, he asked his daughter to help him set up a website, Facebook and Instagram.

The coronavirus outbreak hasn’t affected Chatterly’s output. He’s been working on commissions and producing a series of work about the virus. “I wanted to convey what the human collective looks like with my work,” said Chatterly. “Because we have to get through this together. I’m going to be working on that for awhile.” He described his latest piece as a wall of bodies symbolizing humanity’s connection to each other. Usually, Chatterly spends his time working on sculptures of large dogs. The opportunity to work on a piece that was relevant to the current moment meant a lot to him.

“One of my pieces inspired by COVID was sold to a collector in Chicago within a week. Only a week old and someone snatched it up,” said Chatterly. “I have a lot of pieces that don’t come together, but this one did. It worked out.”

“Our sales have been down 95%,” said Sarah Christiansen from Katalyst Art Gallery and Gift Boutique. “Now we’re at about 70% and it’s been slowly inching up.”

Katalyst has over 300 local artists featured in their gallery, and they feature a new artist every month. It is approaching its 10th anniversary this upcoming September.

Last month, Katalyst held its first virtual opening on its Facebook page. Ten



Courtesy

Mark Chatterly from Chatterly Sculptures Inc. posing with one of his finished creations.

pieces were sold. Christiansen said that she also started a website since the coronavirus outbreak began so she could sell pieces over the web.

There is a donation button on Katalyst’s website if you would like to support them, but Christiansen said that those who don’t have money to spare can simply follow Katalyst’s social media pages.

“It’s tough out there right now, and we’re doing the best we can to deal with the cards we’ve been dealt,” said Christiansen. “We’re just trying to keep our heads above water. This virus has touched every single person, maybe in different ways. But everyone has been

harmed by this.”

Kathy Holcomb from Absolute Gallery has also been struggling to keep her business afloat.

“We have a lot of loyal customers who have been trying to help as much as they can,” she said. “But it hasn’t been easy. That’s for sure.”

Absolute Gallery has been in Old Town since 2003. It does custom picture framing and sells handmade American gifts.

Christiansen has been working on creating an e-commerce website for Absolute Gallery, but she has run into some complications. She has to figure out shipping and deal with posting the items on the website. Absolute Gallery sells so many one-of-a-kind items that posting them all online has been a nightmare. Christiansen has over 20,000 items to post online, and it’s no easy task. She has to take pictures and write descriptions for each artwork.

“I keep hoping that people’s awareness of buying local is increasing because of the shutdown,” said Christiansen. “We’re trying to be here for people and getting the focus away from buying from big box stores.”

Since Absolute Gallery has reopened, they’ve received more walk-in traffic. Christiansen joined a campaign started in the U.K. called “Just a Card.” It promotes buying something small — even just a greeting card — from local businesses.

“Even buying something like a greeting card can help the little guys out,” said Christiansen. “We’re trying to make peo-

## Public Notice

The Ingham County Land Bank is accepting **Bids for Tree and Brush Removal and Trimming Services**. The Request for Proposal Packet is available August 19, 2020 at the Ingham County Land Bank, 3024 Turner Street, Lansing, Michigan, 48906, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday or at [www.inghamlandbank.org](http://www.inghamlandbank.org). Responses are due at the Land Bank offices by 10am on September 2, 2020 and will be opened at 10am September 2, 2020. The Ingham County Land Bank is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply. RFP#: ICLB TREES 08-2020

#20-192

## CITY OF LANSING SUMMARY OF ADOPTED ORDINANCE # 1264

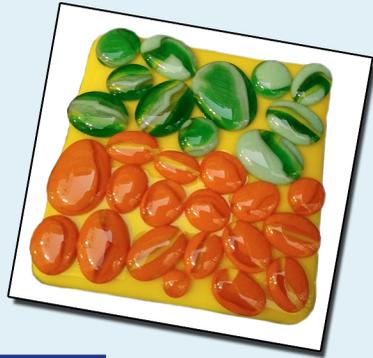
Lansing City Council adopted an Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to amend the Code of Ordinances of the City of Lansing by amending Chapter 292, Section 292.04, to provide for the appointment of a member of the Employees’ Retirement System (ERS) Board of Trustees, who is a City of Lansing Resident but who is not an ERS member nor eligible to receive ERS retirement payments.

Effective date: Upon Publication

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

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/CMMC  
[www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk](http://www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk)  
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#20-194



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## Hair Tattoo Murals to benefit Black Lives Matter

Local hairstylist Ashley Medina and barber CJ Andrews linked up to create this breathtaking BLM hair tattoo mural. The value of this design will be matched by Bliss Salon Spa Boutique, & donated to Black Lives Matter Lansing to help support the

movement.

Ashley Medina is also offering a handful of more simple BLM hair tattoos at no cost to the public.

Find more work like this on IG: @ashleymedinahair #hairtattoosbyashleymedina



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# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## The lighter side of Sunny Wilkinson

Jazz singer hosts series of Facebook live interviews

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Jazz singer Sunny Wilkinson has a friend in California who streams a daily chat show with jazz artists from all over the world. The host, Cathy Segal-

### "Lighten Up With Sunny Wilkinson"

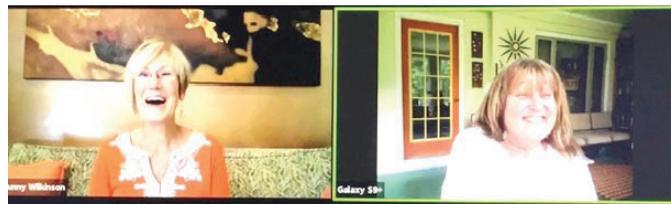
Episode 2 Premiere  
Monday,  
Aug. 24, 2 p.m.  
Watch live at Facebook.  
com/SunnyWilkinson

Garcia, asked Wilkinson to be one of her guests. "That gave me a seed of an idea," Wilkinson said.

She now has her own chat show called, "Lighten

Up With Sunny Wilkinson."

"Originally, we had thought of more serious titles," Wilkinson said. "But 'Lighten Up with Sunny Wilkinson' feels right for Covid times. We all need a little joy and a little light." The show premiered on Facebook on Aug. 11. The nearly hour-long, engaging inter-



Courtesy

Sunny Wilkinson (left) interviews her first guest, Siusan O'Rourke, on her Facebook Live show "Lighten Up With Sunny Wilkinson."

view with Siusan O'Rourke can still be viewed on Wilkinson's Facebook page.

O'Rourke is an Irish and roots singer/guitarist based in Saginaw who is part of a duo with her husband, Zig Zeitler. The second "Lighten Up" chat will feature Ellen Rowe. She is the former head of the Jazz Studies Area at the University of Michigan and an accomplished pianist, composer, arranger and activist.

"We have been friends and collaborators for 20 years," Wilkinson said. "I am really excited to have her on the show."

Wilkinson plans to touch on jazz, folk, Celtic, funk, rock, blues, pop and classical music —from all over the state — in

upcoming shows. "I am so impressed by the musicians in Michigan in every genre," she said. "I thought it would be fun to focus on our talent and spread the word." If guests have the capability, future shows may include live performances.

The interview with O'Rourke revealed a lot about the guitarist and the host. For example, viewers learn that Wilkinson comes from a family with six generations of Methodist ministers. So far, "Lighten Up" is an insightful, upbeat and inspiring show.

Wilkinson only picks artists like herself who are involved in their community. "I also want the young and

up-and-coming professional musicians to get a little knowledge and some professional tips," she said.

With five CDs as a bandleader and numerous guest appearances on other CDs, Wilkinson qualifies as an established pro. The 68 year-old is an active and sought-out jazz performer. Due to the pandemic, several booked festivals and concerts were canceled. "The biggest was the Centrum, Port Townsend Jazz Camp and Festival," she said.

After graduating from West Phoenix High in 1970, Wilkinson attended Arizona State University, where she sang and played trombone in the jazz band. Armed with a degree in choral conducting, she spent 15 years in Los Angeles pursuing a professional music career with her own jazz band originally culled from ASU players.

At a jazz conference in Washington, D.C. in 1993, she met former Ron Newman, who went on to head the jazz studies program at MSU and to conduct the Lansing Symphony Jazz Band. "We courted across the country for two years before I agreed to move to Mid-

See Wilkinson, Page 29

## Favorite Things

### Charles Filice and his photo of his mother meeting Gov. Milliken

During my 76 years I have possessed many favorite things and treasures. By far my favorite is a picture taken in 1971. It is a picture of Gov. William G. Milliken and I with our right hands raised as he administered the oath of District Courtjudge. My mother is standing between us smiling with her black purse hanging from her left arm. The only other people present in Milliken's Capitol office were two or three of his aides. But the most important person there was my mother.

Let me explain the magic and joy I feel when I look at the picture.

My mother was born and raised in Sant' Ippolito, a small hillside village in Calabria in southern Italy. My father was born in a neighboring village. Despite an 18-year difference in age, they married shortly after meeting. Four years later, he left her and their 3-year-old daughter for America to establish himself and earn enough money to send for his family. Such separations were not uncommon as immigrants prepared the way in the new world for their families. After a two-year separation in 1937 with World War II looming, he sent for his wife and



daughter.

Unable to speak English, never having ventured out of Calabria before, mother and daughter boarded a ship in Naples with passage in steerage, the lowest part of the vessel à la "Titanic." My father met them in New York and took them to their new home in Lansing, an apartment above a bar downtown. My brother and I were added to the family, both

born in the apartment.

Life was good for the Filice family, until my father suffered a massive heart attack. Seven years after being reunited, and six months after my birth, my father died leaving 3 children under 12.

My mother spoke little English and had only a fourth-grade education. She, however, was intelligent and had a fierce determination to provide and protect her family while remaining a widow until her death 53 years later. She raised her family with a firm but loving hand and faith in God.

While many wonderful, rewarding, interesting and challenging events occurred during my 43 years as district judge, nothing matches the first moment of my judicial career immortalized in the picture of Gov. Milliken, my mother and myself. Her smile shows her pride in me but it does not match how proud I was to have her next to me. From the hills of southern Italy to the office of governor of the state of Michigan! Only in America!

(Words by Charles Filice, edited by Skyler Ashley. If you have a suggestion for Favorite Things, email skyler@lansingcitypulse.com.)

# Lansing's oldest smoke shop features local glass artists

'Unique Boutique' offers eclectic variety of bong, bubblers and bowls

By KYLE KAMINSKI

If this column has taught me anything in recent weeks, it's that Lansing has plenty of premium pot and that I probably smoke far too much of it for my own good. But we can't leave out the peripheral side of the industry that has long been in place before weed was legal: head shops.

This week begins with a trip to Su Casa — quite possibly the oldest smoke shop still doing business in the capital city, and probably the head shop with the largest collection of wares. It's mostly custom jewelry, crystals, windchimes, swords, wizards, dragons and fairies in the front. But in the back, it's a stoner paradise with everything from vaporizers, grinders, roach clips, bong, metal and glass bowls, bubblers, detoxifiers, wraps, papers and everything in between.

And yes, the entire place smells heavily like incense and gives off some major hippy vibes.

Lucas Peña is the third generation to run the shop. His grandparents met some resistance from a relatively conservative City Council when it opened as



Peña



**Lansterdam in Review: Su Casa Jewelers & Unique Boutique**  
1041 N. Cedar St., Lansing  
(517) 487-9090  
sucasaboutique.com



a smoke shop in 1974. Custom jewelry was added to the shelves years later. Peña took over when he graduated high school in 2003.

He remembers crawling around in the glass shelves, probably annoying his parents as a kid.

"My 12-year-old daughter helps me too, so we're keeping it in the family," Peña said. "I really just really enjoy seeing people happy and helping them find something they haven't had before. We

have some loyal customers, and when they come in here, they always leave with a smile."

Peña maintains a unique policy compared to many commercial smoke shops: local glass only.

Every bubbler, bong and handpipe in his stock was created by glass artists from Michigan, including many items crafted right in the city of Lansing. The goal, he said, is to keep prices reasonable, while also pouring as much support as possible to locally based glass artists.

It also livens up his shelves with much more than just generic, gas station variety glass spoons.

"We actually have a lot of different artists here locally," Peña said. "They do some great work."

Some pieces are small and affordable for \$20 or less. Others are mid-range stunners that could climb up to \$60. Some of the more intricate, special-occasion bong can cost more than \$300.

Peña hooked me up with a killer deal on a hand-blown bubbler from Charlie Sanford at Global Glassworks, a studio that has been churning out stunning glassware for more than a decade. Sanford must've been too busy working on his next piece at his State Street workshop to call me back, but his work speaks for itself. This little bubbler was ergonomically designed to fit perfectly into one hand with the thumb aligning perfectly with the choke. And it's gorgeous too.

The avid ceramics hobbyist can also be found, "throwing pots in my basement," she said.

## Wilkinson

from page 28

Michigan," Wilkinson said.

They have been married for 28 years and the "Lighten Up" chats are done in the living room of their Okemos home. "Ron and I have put our heads together to sort out the tech issues," Wilkinson said. "It is pretty low-tech. Zoom Pro to Facebook Live. That's it."

Newman, who is the permanent pianist in her band, collaborates with Wilkinson on arrangements and "just about everything," she said.

"I love having Ron Newman by my side on the bandstand," Wilkinson said. "He reads my thoughts and knows what I'm going to sing before it comes out of my mouth."

To keep her voice in shape while the couple is mostly keeping quarantined,

Wilkinson warms up every day. "I'm a pedagogical geek," she said. "Making sounds that would drive any normal person out of the house."

With Newman, they have done several remote broadcasts from their home. Last week, the duo recorded a song for a "Get Out and Vote" Democratic rally. "That was fun," Wilkinson said.

She is an artist in residence at the University of Michigan. "Even with COVID, I am teaching remotely," Wilkinson said. "I taught at Interlochen's summer jazz camp."

The last time she performed live was for a master class at U of M. The Feb. 23 event was for young jazz singers.

"I came home that night, and lost my voice," Wilkinson said. She was ill for six weeks. "I went from being sick to sheltering at home."

"A glorious summer in Michigan" has helped her to cope with pandemic restrictions. Wilkinson rides her bike in the country, tends her garden, and spends time cooking great food.

It's clear Sanford has been doing some incredible work in this city for years. Browse Sanford Glass on social media to browse his expansive catalogue. He obviously takes pride in his work.

I also picked up a retro pack of wired papers that I've only ever been able to find at Su Casa. Randy's Roots since 1975 has made organic hemp papers with a thin, metal line running down the length of the joint, sort of like a built-in roach clip for easier puffing (puffing) and passing. It's more novelty than functionality — I prefer paper filters — but it's a fun party trick nonetheless.

*Lansterdam in Review is a new column written by Kyle Kaminski, a City Pulse staff writer and cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Kaminski samples some of the best bud in Greater Lansing, gets real high and writes about it.*

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# 'America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine' tells the legend of Creem Magazine

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Creem was brazen enough to call itself "America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine." It underestimated itself. First published in 1969, it rolled through the '70s and '80s with a punchiness that two of its most notable editors, Jaan Uhelszki and Susan Whitall, attribute to Mad Magazine.

"If the writers at Creem had anything in common, it was Mad Magazine," said Uhelszki, who worked at the monthly magazine from 1969 to 1976. Whitall, an editor at Creem from

**"Creem: America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine"**

is available to rent/purchase on streaming platforms such as Amazon and Hulu

1975 to 1983, agrees. "If Mad magazine ever ran a rock magazine, that was us."

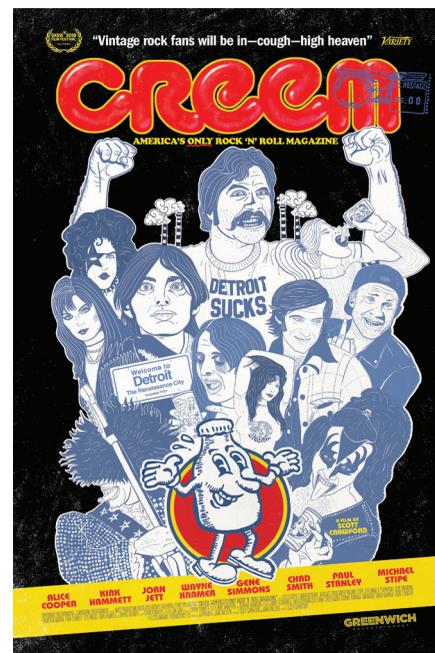
Founded by Barry Kramer, a Detroit head shop and record store owner, Creem settled in Detroit's Cass Corridor. It found itself among a seedy collection of shops that locked their doors at sunset, a long way from Birmingham, where it ended up after a short spree in Walled Lake. Cass Corridor was where Creem earned its chops, fueled by an eclectic Detroit music scene that included Alice Cooper, Iggy Pop, MC5, Ted Nugent and Mitch Ryder.

Even hipsters wore Creem's iconic "Boy Howdy" logo on their T-shirts. How "Boy Howdy" became brand-defining for the magazine, much like Alfred E. Neuman did for Mad magazine, is one of the numerous stories told in the new documentary about Creem, "America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine," a 73-minute romp through the magazine's history.

The documentary is the brainchild of J.J. Kramer, the son of Creem founder Barry Kramer. Both J.J. and Barry's spouse, Connie, are featured in the film, which is an amalgam of the magazine's history and J.J.'s search for his father, who died of a drug overdose in 1981 when J.J. was only 4. A major focus of the film is on the magazine's heavyweight writers Greil Marcus, Dave Marsh and Lester Bangs, who would go on to illustrious careers as music critics. A poignant moment of the film is when Creem's staff learns of the drug overdose death of Bangs in 1982.

Many writers point to Creem as seminal in launching their careers.

In the author's notes of his book, "Mystery Train," Marcus, who joined



Creem in 1970 after being fired from Rolling Stone, writes: "Creem gave me the chance to try out many of the ideas that eventually found their way into the book."

Whitall also points out how Bangs directly influenced her writing. "He was my baptism to being a working journalist," she said. Whitall left Creem in 1983 for a nearly four-decade career covering the music scene for The Detroit News. She has written three books, about Little Willie John, Joni Mitchell the women of Motown.

Uhelszki said she worked at Creem for more than a year before Marsh assigned her a story on Motown's Smokey Robinson. The catch: the story deadline was the next day. She met it and her career was on its way. Uhelszki lives in California, where she still writes about music, most recently the liner notes for a historic release of Iggy Pop and The Stooges at Goose

Lake.

With high-strung writers interacting with an often-irritable Kramer, there was open strife, which is retold in the film — including nasty fistfights between Bangs and Marsh, a typewriter thrown through a light table and dog shit deposited on Bang's typewriter.

In the film, Uhelszki counters a common critique of Creem that it was sexist and sometimes misogynist.

Regular readers of Creem eagerly awaited the magazine, which often ran photos of either scantily dressed female rockers, or in Grace Slick's case, a boob flash.

"It was the '70s," Uhelszki said. In the movie, she proclaims, "So kill me."

Whitall calls the magazine "sexy," but said, "I would not ever say the magazine was adult — it was extremely juvenile."

And that was what the 250,000 subscribers loved. Unlike Rolling Stone, Creem told it as it was, much to the chagrin of rockers and record executives.

Whitall said it didn't matter to record executives who just wanted coverage, good or bad. She also said during her tenure, money was flowing and record companies would fly them to London for an interview, or they would accompany a group on the road for a week. "We would still bite the hand that fed us," she said.

"We had unlimited access, not something you see today," she said. "It was fun, it was a giant playground. We made each other laugh." The vintage footage used to open the film makes it apparent it was a fun place.

Creem writers, with their own take on New Journalism, often embedded themselves with bands. Uhelszki joined Kiss on stage in full regalia and Bangs appeared on stage with the J. Geils Band typing a real-time review. He concluded by smashing his typewriter on the floor.

The documentary is rife with rockers and non-rockers, such as actor Jeff Daniels, extolling the impact of Creem on their careers and personal life.

Both Uhelszki and Whitfall agree why Creem was so important in their growth as writers.

"I could have been covering school board meetings," Whitall said.

Ironically, before landing a job at Creem, Uhelszki said she covered a school board meeting while a student at Wayne State University.

## SCHULER BOOKS

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With Author James Preller  
August 22 · 11am

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### LINDSAY NAVAMA

*Hungry for Harbor County*  
August 25 · 7pm

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### SPEAKING OF HORROR

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# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

**"Food for Thought"**  
--the first Jonesin' puzzle ever.  
[#1, May 2001]

By Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 Band that's the theme of this puzzle
- 6 "Heroz4hire" rapper \_\_\_ the Damaja
- 10 Slasher flick props
- 14 "... quack quack there, \_\_\_ quack ..."
- 15 Actor Arkin
- 16 "99 Luftballons" singer
- 17 Impulsive, courageous person, so they say
- 18 Hollywood cross street
- 19 He was a real Dick on "NewsRadio"
- 20 1-Across guitarist and vocalist
- 23 Summer month, for short
- 24 Speaks like a heavy smoker
- 26 Shop class tool
- 29 Cry convulsively
- 31 Letters on a Cardinals hat
- 32 "Bali \_\_\_" ("South Pacific" song)
- 34 1-Across and The Dude of Life album released in 1994
- 38 "Hell's Half \_\_\_" (1954 movie)
- 39 Velvet Underground vocalist Reed
- 40 Singers lower than soprano
- 41 1-Across predecessors and mentors
- 46 Jazz band's song list
- 47 They taketh away on Apr. 15
- 48 \_\_\_ Fighters (Dave Grohl band)
- 49 Org. that gives out 9-digit IDs
- 50 Sends to hell

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- 52 Sound from a lamb
- 54 1-Across keyboardist who started as a fan
- 61 Cheat, in a way
- 63 Cleopatra's river
- 64 "Jeremy" singer Vedder
- 65 Subject of "Weird" Al Yankovic's "The White [3]-Down"
- 66 The last word in sermons?
- 67 "\_\_\_ White Swan" (T. Rex song)
- 68 They're separated on some old sitcoms
- 69 Elevator, to Elvis Costello
- 70 European compilation album for 1-Across
- Down**
- 1 \_\_\_ Farm (bygone clothing line)
- 2 Mister, in Munich
- 3 Powerful and pleasing, to a Rasta
- 4 "Later"
- 5 Is of practical value
- 6 Coffeehouse quaff
- 7 Yale students, familiarly
- 8 Blow a gasket
- 9 Dig up
- 10 "Henry and June" diarist Nin
- 11 They adore strange things
- 12 Jim Morrison song, with "The"
- 13 "\_\_\_ Anything" (John Cusack movie)
- 21 Gps. like CARE and Amnesty International
- 22 Word after bake or garage
- 25 Ubiquitous December mall guys
- 26 Sings like Kurt Elling
- 27 Like an angry cat's back
- 28 Spied via the telephone
- 30 Neckwear for Frankenstein's monster?
- 31 Nondescript category
- 33 "\_\_\_ bad, bad thing"
- 35 1000 K
- 36 Friend's opposite
- 37 "Spy vs. Spy" magazine
- 42 Decoder's wear?
- 43 "Your \_\_\_" (Morrissey album)
- 44 Man, in Mantua
- 45 Cars given while yours is in the shop, e.g.
- 51 Sandwich spreads
- 53 "We love to fly \_\_\_ shows" (Delta slogan)
- 55 "Rent" character
- 56 F or G, on sheet music
- 57 It's worth next to nothing
- 58 Old Icelandic saga
- 59 "What \_\_\_ Beneath"
- 60 Remini of "The King of Queens"
- 61 Corn remnants
- 62 Raw metal source

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Answers Page 33

## SUDOKU

## Beginner

	3							5	
		2	5						6
	8	9	6		7				
1								6	3
9	5		1		6				2
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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 33

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

August 19-25, 2020

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** "We never know what is enough until we know what's more than enough," said Aries singer Billie Holiday. I don't think that applies to everyone, although it's more likely to be true about the Aries tribe than maybe any other sign of the zodiac. And I'm guessing that the coming weeks could be a time when you will indeed be vivid proof of its validity. That's why I'm issuing a "Too Much of a Good Thing" alert for you. I don't think it'll be harmful to go a bit too far and get a little too much of the good things; it may even be wise and healthy to do so. But please don't go waaayyyy too far and get waaayyyy too much of the good things.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Taurus author Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) took many years to write "The Human Comedy", an amalgam of 91 intertwined novels, stories, and essays. For this vast enterprise, he dreamed up the personalities of more than 2,000 characters, many of whom appeared in multiple volumes. I bring this to your attention, Taurus, because I believe that the next 15 months will be an excellent time for you to imagine and carry out a Balzac-like project of your own. Do you have an inkling of what that might be? Now's a good time to start ruminating.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Not until the 19th century did humans begin to take organized actions to protect animals from cruelty. Even those were sparse. The latter part of the 20th century brought more concerted efforts to promote animal welfare, but the rise of factory farms, toxic slaughterhouses, zoos, circuses, and cosmetic testing has shunted us into a Dark Age of animal abuse. I suspect our descendants will look back with horror at our barbarism. This problem incurs psychological wounds in us all in ways that aren't totally conscious. And I think this is an especially key issue for you right now. I beg you, for your own sake as well as for the animals, to upgrade your practical love and compassion for animals. I bet you'll find it inspires you to treat your own body with more reverence.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Cancerian literary critic Harold Bloom bragged to "The New York Times" that his speed-reading skills were so advanced that he could finish a 500-page book in an hour. While I believe he has indeed devoured thousand of books, I also wonder if he lied about his quickness. Nonetheless, I'll offer him up as an inspirational role model for you in the coming weeks. Why? Because you're likely to be able to absorb and integrate far more new information and fresh experiences than usual—and at a rapid pace.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** "Magic lies in challenging what seems impossible," says Leo politician Carol Moseley Braun. I agree with her, but will also suggest there's an even higher magic: when you devise a detailed plan for achieving success by challenging the impossible, and then actually carry out that plan. Judging from the current astrological omens, I suspect you're in an unusually favorable position to do just that in the coming weeks. Be bold in rising to the challenge; be practical and strategic in winning the challenge.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** "Joy is a mystery because it can happen anywhere, anytime, even under the most unpromising circumstances," writes author Frederick Buechner. What he doesn't say is that you must be receptive and open to the possibility of joy arriving anywhere and anytime. If you're shut down to its surprising influx, if you're convinced that joy is out of reach, it won't break through the barriers you've put up; it won't be able to land in your midst. I think this is especially important counsel for you in the coming weeks, Virgo. PLEASE make yourself available for joy. P.S. Here's another clue from Buechner: "Joy is where the whole being is pointed in one direction."

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** "I transformed stillnesses and darkneses into words," wrote Libran poet Arthur Rimbaud. "What was unspeakable, I named. I made the whirling world

pause." In accordance with current astrological potentials, I have turned his thoughts into a message for you. In the coming weeks, I hope you will translate silences and mysteries into clear language. What is unfathomable and inaccessible, you will convert into understandings and revelations. Gently, without force or violence, you will help heal the inarticulate agitation around you with the power of your smooth, resonant tenderness.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** "Your desires, whether or not you achieve them, will determine who you become," wrote author Octavia E. Butler. Now is a fertile time for you to meditate on that truth. So I dare you to take an inventory of all your major desires, from the noblest to the most trivial. Be honest. If one of your burning yearnings is to have 100,000 followers on Instagram or to eat chocolate-covered bacon that is served to you in bed, admit it. After you're through tallying up the wonders you want most, the next step is to decide if they are essential to your becoming the person you truly want to be. If some aren't, consider replacing them with desires that will be a better influence on you as you evolve.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** If you can manage it, I recommend taking a break from business-as-usual. I'd love to see you give yourself the gift of amusement and play—a luxurious sabbatical that will help you feel free of every burden, excused from every duty, and exempt from every fixation. The spirit I hope you will embody is captured well in this passage from author Okakura Kakuzo: "Let us have a sip of tea. The afternoon glow is brightening the bamboos, the fountains are bubbling with delight, the sighing of the pines is heard in our kettle. Let us dream of evanescence, and linger in the beautiful foolishness of things."

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Rapper Eminem advises us, "Never take ecstasy, beer, Bacardi, weed, Pepto-Bismol, Vivarin, Tums, Tagamet HB, Xanax, and Valium in the same day." What's his rationale? That quaffing this toxic mix might kill us or make us psychotic? No. He says you shouldn't do that because "it makes it difficult to sleep at night." I'm going to suggest that you abide by his counsel for yet another reason: According to my analysis, you have the potential to experience some wondrous and abundant natural highs in the coming weeks. Your capacity for beautiful perceptions, exhilarating thoughts, and breakthrough epiphanies will be at a peak. But none of that is likely to happen if you're loaded up with inebriants.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** "Everyone who has ever built a new heaven first found the power to do so in his own hell," declared philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. That's a rather histrionic statement! But then Nietzsche was a Maestro of Melodrama. He was inclined to portray human life as a heroic struggle for boldness and liberation. He imagined us as being engaged in an epic quest to express our highest nature. In accordance with your astrological potentials, I propose that you regard Nietzsche as your power creature during the coming weeks. You have a mandate to adopt his lion-hearted perspective. And yes, you also have a poetic license to build a new heaven based on the lessons you learned and the power you gained in your own hell.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Here's some knowledge from author John le Carré: "In every operation there is an above the line and a below the line. Above the line is what you do by the book. Below the line is how you do the job." According to my analysis, you have, at least for now, done all you can in your work above the line. That's great! It was crucial for you to follow the rules and honor tradition. But now it's time for a shift in emphasis. In the coming weeks, I hope you will specialize in finessing the details and massaging the nuances below the line.

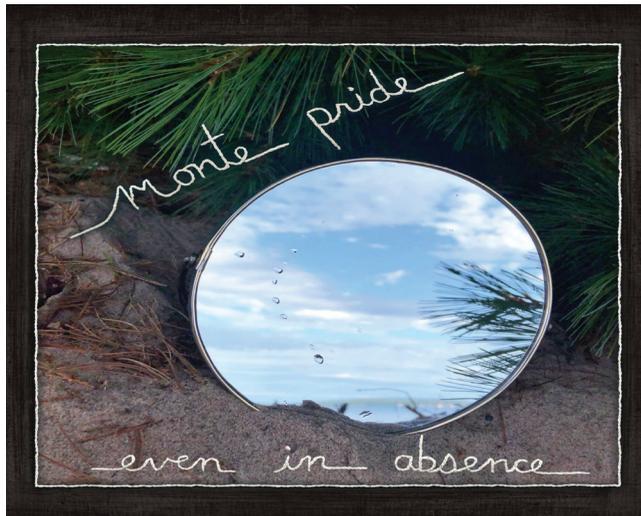
# TURN IT DOWN!

BY RICH TUPICA

## TURN IT DOWN! Q&A: MONTE PRIDE TALKS HIS NEW ALBUM, 'EVEN IN ABSENCE'



Monte Pride releases his new album this week, live streams next week. (courtesy photo)



The front and back of the "Even in Absence" LP sleeve. (Credit: Album cover art by Shaina Mahler, final editing by Eric Patrick Kelly)



### Pride's new LP features a long list of local-folk fixtures

Amid a pandemic, local folk singer-songwriter and fingerstyle guitarist Monte Pride releases his second full-length album Friday, and plans for a live stream performance on Aug. 27 via his Facebook page.

The new record features a laundry list of Michigan talent, including Sam Cooper, Brandon & Bethany Foote (Gifts or Creatures), Drew Howard, Benji Joung, Mark Lavengood, Max Lockwood (May Erlewine, Big Dudee Roo), Laurel Premo (Red Tail Ring) and Lily Talmers. They "all had a hand in bringing the songs to life," Pride said.

Pride chatted with City Pulse about his new record, which is layered with signature rich tenor voice and lush arrangements.

**When did you first start playing, and who has inspired you the most?**

**Monte Pride:** I started performing during my junior year of high school, about seven years ago. I became more serious about music in my time at Michigan State University, where I graduated with degrees in Environmental Sustainability and Sustainable Parks, Recreation and Tourism in 2018.

My fingerstyle playing was inspired by The Tallest Man on Earth. At one point in late high school, I had nearly learned his full discography. Learning his songs allowed me to easily pick up on the playing of John Prine, Nick Drake and Doc Watson and develop my own style. I discovered songwriting influences in John Prine, Gillian Welch, Paul Simon, Townes Van Zandt and others in college. I've learned a lot from their music over the years. I've always leaned into fingerstyle guitar playing and abstract songwriting, but feel that my sense for song arranging and songwriting has expanded after discovering albums like "Nick

Drake's "Five Leaves Left" or Gillian Welch's "Soul Journey." Those inspirational recordings, paired with my own in-studio experiences, have taught me to use the studio as an instrument.

**When and how did "Even in Absence" come together?**

I tracked the songs over a 12-month period throughout the state. I started recording the basic guitar and vocal tracks in August 2018 at Big Sky Recording in Ann Arbor with engineer Elan Dantus and producer Timothy Monger. From there, I took the tunes to Third Coast Recording in Grand Haven to work with engineer Joe Hettinga, and Troubadour Studio in Lansing to work with engineer Jon Herrmann. I landed at La Luna Recording and Sound to finish recording and mixing the album with Ian Gorman. The album will be available on vinyl, CD, and all streaming services. I'm extra excited about the vinyl. It's my first time having my music pressed and I love the way it turned out.

**This is your second LP. Have you noticed any noticeable changes in your songwriting?**

I feel that my music has grown a lot since my first album "Hawthorne Morning Sound," released in 2016. I've worked on honing my songwriting craft, telling stories and sharing stream-of-consciousness abstraction, and expanding song arrangements with "Even in Absence." Though the music focuses on songwriting and fingerstyle guitar, pedal steel, strings, harmony vocals, piano, electric guitar, and upright bass lift the songs. I've also focused on my singing style, improving my diction and tone.

**Listening back now, does this new LP**

**have any lyrical themes?**

The new album presents healing songs to remind that experience, relationships, lives, their love and light persist, "Even in Absence." Themes of loss and resilience, trial and growth, culmination and change surface at the album's center. The songs were written well before recent events, but the general sentiment feels pertinent these days. I hope that listeners can find solace and calm in these songs.

**Releasing an album during a pandemic must be kind of surreal, huh?**

It's been strange. There isn't a guide to

releasing an album during a pandemic, but even with everything going on and all of the deeply rooted issues we're facing, I'm looking forward to getting the new music out to hopefully bring some solace to listeners. I also miss performing a lot, but have appreciated the downtime to focus on writing for the next album and promoting this one. I've considered outdoor, distanced shows to promote the release, and while I understand they can be done safely, I don't feel that it's worth the risk of gathering and people having potentially close contact with each other.

For more, visit [montepridemusic.com](http://montepridemusic.com)

#### ABANDONED VEHICLE SALE CITY OF LANSING, MICHIGAN

Sealed bids marked **S/21/007, ABANDONED VEHICLES** will be accepted at the City of Lansing Purchasing Office, 124 W Michigan Ave 8th floor, Lansing MI. 48933 until but no later than, **1:00 PM**, local time in effect **WED. SEPTEMBER 23, 2020**. Questions regarding this sale may be directed to Stephanie Robinson, Buyer, at (517) 483-4128 or email: [stephanie.robinson@lansingmi.gov](mailto:stephanie.robinson@lansingmi.gov) - 30 DAY NOTICE

Vehicles may be inspected **WED. SEPT. 23, 2020**, as follows:  
SHROYER'S, 2740 EATON RAPIDS RD, LANSING MI. 48911 8:30 AM  
PJ'S, 1425 RENSEN, LANSING MI 10:00 AM  
NORTHSIDE TOWING, 226 RUSSELL, LANSING, MI 48906 10:45 AM

#### ABANDONED VEHICLE SALE SEPT 23, 2020

NORTHSIDE		PJ		SHROYERS	
YEAR	MAKE	YEAR	MAKE	YEAR	MAKE
1978	HONDA	2007	CADILLAC	2012	MOPED
2009	NISSAN	2004	FORD		
2020	MOPED	2009	HYUNDAI		
2018	JEEP	2008	BMW		
2016	CHEV	1999	GMC		
2002	FORD	2014	CHEV		
		1999	MERCEDES		

#20-189

# OUT ON THE TOWN

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

## Wednesday, August 19

**2020 East Lansing Kiwanis "Virtual BBQ"** - 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. For info and tickets: [elkiwanis.org](http://elkiwanis.org).

**Allen Farmers Market** - 2:30-7 p.m. Allen Farmers Market 2020, 2100 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing.

**ARTpath | Public Art on the Lansing River Trail** - 8 a.m.-9 p.m., ongoing, along the Lansing River Trail. 517-374-6400. [lansingartgallery.org](http://lansingartgallery.org).

**Farmers' Market Wednesdays** - 3 p.m. Meridian Township Farmers' Market, 5151 Marsh Rd, Okemos.

**Summer Fun Series** - 1 p.m. Zoom, [canr.msu.edu](http://canr.msu.edu)

## Thursday, August 20

**Bath Township Farmers Market** - 3-7 p.m. James Couzens Memorial Park, 13751 Main St., Bath. [shopbfm.org](http://shopbfm.org).

**Dimondale Farmers' Market** - 3-7 p.m. Village Square, 136 N Bridge St, Dimondale. 517-646-0230. [villageofdimondale.org](http://villageofdimondale.org).

**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 6-7 p.m. [facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing](http://facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing)

**South Lansing Farmers Market** - 3-7 p.m. Casimir Catholic Church, 800 W Barnes Ave, Lansing. 517-374-5700.

## Friday, August 21

**Golf Scramble** - 2 p.m. Wheatfield Valley Golf Course, 1600 Linn Rd., Williamston. For info: [havenhouseel.org](http://havenhouseel.org).

**Organic Management of Insect Pests Workshop** - Ecological approaches to pest management for the small farm and garden. 10-11 a.m. [allenneighborhoodcenter.org](http://allenneighborhoodcenter.org) for link.

**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 7:30-8:30 p.m. [facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing](http://facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing)

**Turn, Turn, Turn: Ixion's Wheel Writers Group** - 6-8:30 p.m. Sharp Park Amphitheater, 1401 Elmwood Rd, Lansing.

## Saturday, August 22

**Curbside Sauerkraut Dinner** - 4:30-6:30 p.m. Lansing Liederkrantz Club, 5828 S. Pennsylvania, Lansing. 517-882-6330.

**Experience Old Town** - Come experience Old Town for the day! 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Old Town, Lansing.

**Experience Old Town with Kathleen Walters & Doug Fritch** - 12-2 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing.

**Meridian Township Farmers' Market** - 8 a.m. Meridian Township Farmers' Market, 5151 Marsh Rd, Okemos.

**MICA Presents Quantum Harmonies** - 7-10 p.m. Behind UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St. Old Town, Lansing. [urbanbeatevents.com](http://urbanbeatevents.com).

**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 7:30-8:30 p.m. [facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing](http://facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing)

**Turn, Turn, Turn: 6-8:30 p.m.** Sharp Park Amphitheater, 1401 Elmwood Rd, Lansing.

## Sunday, August 23

**East Lansing Farmers Market** - 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Valley Court Park, 300 Valley Court, East Lansing. [cityofeastlansing.com](http://cityofeastlansing.com).

**Family Freedom Festival** - is a public event to showcase our Auxiliary programs and to celebrate the freedoms we enjoy.

10 a.m.-3 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S Pennsylvania Ave. [vfwauxmi.org](http://vfwauxmi.org).

**Turn, Turn, Turn: 6-8:30 p.m.** Sharp Park Amphitheater, 1401 Elmwood Rd, Lansing.

**Monday, August 24**  
**Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual)** - 6-7 p.m. [facebook.com/](http://facebook.com/)

SUDOKU SOLUTION								
From Pg. 31								
6	3	7	2	9	1	8	5	4
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CROSSWORD SOLUTION																	
From Pg. 31																	
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### CITY OF EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

#### NOTICE OF ADOPTION

ORDINANCE NO 1490

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE II – CIVIL RIGHTS – OF CHAPTER 22 – HUMAN RELATIONS - OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF EAST LANSING BY ADDING SECTION 22-36a TO PROHIBIT BIASED CRIME REPORTING.

THE CITY OF EAST LANSING ORDAINS:

Section 22-36a is hereby added to Chapter 22 of the Code of the City of East Lansing to read as follows:

#### Sec. 22-36a. Biased Crime Reporting.

No person shall knowingly and intentionally report to a City of East Lansing Police Officer, the City of East Lansing Police Department, a City of East Lansing Official or report to Ingham County 911, a complaint that a person has committed, or that the person may or will commit a crime or is otherwise acting suspiciously when such a report is not based on a reasonable suspicion or fear of criminal activity, but is rather based, in significant part, on the person's race, color, or national origin.

Jennifer Shuster  
City Clerk

#20-190

## Ingham County Animal Shelter

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

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



**Maverick** Is a gorgeous older husky that would love a home that would enjoy spending time with him outdoors and going on long walks. Would prefer an adult only home with no other pets.



Sponsored by Soldan's Pet Supplies  
[soldanspet.com](http://soldanspet.com)

**Lansing**  
6201 W. Saginaw Hwy  
5200 S. MLK Jr. Blvd  
**Okemos**  
1802 W. Grand River Ave.  
**DeWitt**  
12286 Old U.S. 27  
**Charlotte**  
515 Lansing St.



**Wally** is a sweet handsome boy that's been waiting since May for his forever home. He's housebroken, loves people, is good with kids and loves car rides.

Sponsored by  
**Anne & Dale Schrader**



**Bono** Loves people, attention, and wrestling with stuffed toys! Would get along with another easygoing cat. He's a handsome fella looking for his forever home.

Sponsored by  
**City Pulse**



**Kyle** is a shy guy who can be hesitant at first but warms up quickly. He enjoys being petted and would prefer a quiet home with older kids.

Sponsored by  
**Schuler Books**



**Tribble** is a sweet girl in need of some TLC. She's a bit thin and needs some fattening up, very affectionate, and loves to sun herself in a window.

In memory of  
**Rodica's cats**

# FOOD & DRINK DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

## No more game day rushes at The Peanut Barrel

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

Game day has been a staple of East Lansing life for decades. Cars flood in from the highway, the streets grow packed with pedestrians and every bar in town fills itself to the brim with patrons excited to drink and watch sports. It's going to be a strange, unique autumn in East Lansing without it, that's for sure.

### The Peanut Barrel

Open for dine-in and takeout  
521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing  
Monday-Thursday, Sunday,  
11 a.m. to 11 p.m.  
Friday-Saturday,  
11 a.m. to Midnight  
(517) 351-0608,  
peanutbarrel.com

Joe Bell, owner of The Peanut Barrel, has already suffered at the hands of the coronavirus outbreak. With less foot traffic and fewer students on the streets, fewer

customers showed up and revenue inevitably fell.

Fear of catching the coronavirus has kept customers from wanting to enter the restaurant. For The Peanut Barrel, outdoor dining has been more of a success. "We do have outdoor patio service, and we can serve inside at reduced capacity," Bell said. "The outdoor business goes from brisk to good, and the inside service goes from slow to really slow."

For Bell, and many East Lansing business owners, football season is a big deal. Bell pointed out that, as the summer winds down, outdoor dining will become less feasible. And with no game days to bring in floods of customers, he fears that all businesses in East Lansing, not just his own, will suffer great consequences.

"It's not going to be good," Bell said. "Think about Campus Street Sports-wear; the bookstore."

It's not just about game day. Bell emphasized that Michigan State sports bring customers to East Lansing for the whole weekend.

"You'd be hippy-hopping along for three days, Friday to Sunday," Bell said. "I don't think there's a store in this town that doesn't rely on game day."

Bell said that he doesn't know what to expect when students come back for the fall semester. He can't predict how many students, faculty and staff will want to go out on the town



Diners enjoy their meals outdoors at The Peanut Barrel.

Courtesy

and patronize bars and restaurants. He also pointed out that many MSU faculty and staff will be working from home.

"We've never seen anything like this," Bell said. "We're all just going to have to wait and see how it turns out." According to Bell, all he can do is prepare. For example, he said that he needs to make sure he has enough help on hand in case the restaurant gets overrun with customers. Bell said that a lack of preparation could've led to the coronavirus outbreak at Harper's Restaurant and Brew Pub.

"I think they were surprised," he explained. "I think they went, holy cow, what just happened?"

As far as coronavirus safety precautions go, The Peanut Barrel has sanitation stations around the restaurant and special storage rooms to keep its food sanitized. It also hired hosts, a new addition to the restaurant, so it can better handle crowds of people. Tables and chairs are sanitized after

each use.

When employees come in, they receive a temperature check and undergo a wellness survey. If they do not feel well, then they are encouraged to get tested. "Everyone's been cooperating," Bell said. "You have to take yourself off the schedule and get tested. If you test negative, you get put back on the schedule."

The pandemic forced restaurants into a battle for cleanliness. This is the brave new world of restauranteering — full of complications and new guidelines.

Bell said that customers have generally complied with rules about face coverings. "We had a few anti-maskers early on, and they were unpleasant," Bell said. "But it's not much of a problem now." He said that sometimes customers forget to wear a mask when they get up and move around the restaurant. But a simple reminder fixes that issue.

"We just politely say, did you for-

get?" Bell said. "It's easy to forget. But people are getting used to it, and they're doing it." Bell compared masks to the phrase "Phone, wallet, keys."

"Now it's phone, wallet, keys, mask," he laughed.

Asking for extra support makes Bell uncomfortable. Though The Peanut Barrel is going through a rough patch, he doesn't want to guilt his loyal customers into doing something that makes them feel unsafe.

"There are some people who don't want to come inside, especially older people and people who feel uncomfortable no matter what," Bell said. "But I think the community has rallied around our business as well as others. And I greatly appreciate it."



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