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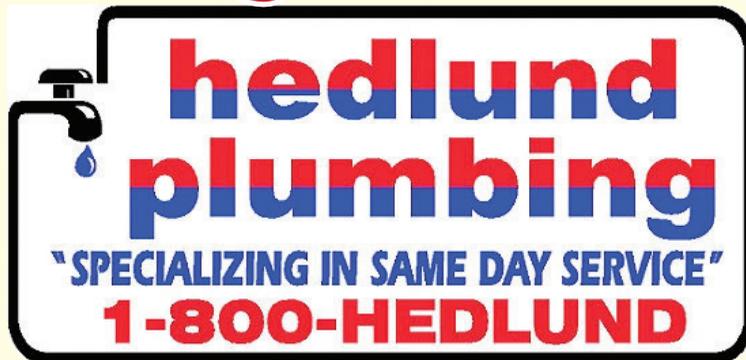
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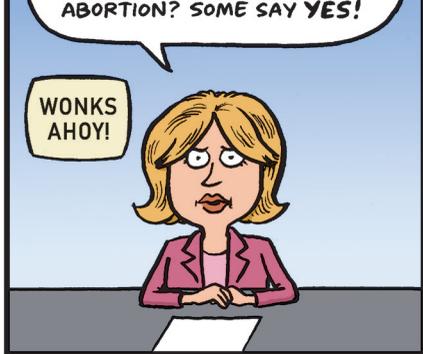
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Things You Don't Hear After a Democratic Wave



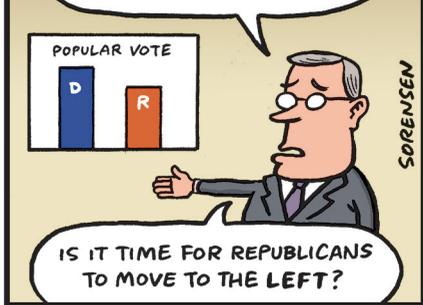
SHOULD THE GOP SOFTEN ITS STANCE ON ABORTION? SOME SAY YES!



MAYBE THE RIGHT SHOULD TRY TREATING WOMEN WITH CIVILITY INSTEAD OF HARASSING AND INSULTING THEM ONLINE.



THE COUNTRY WOULD BE PRETTY BLUE WERE IT NOT FOR GERRYMANDERING AND VOTER SUPPRESSION.



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Flash in the Pan: Seeding the new year

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Cover Art

Cover by Nevin Speerbrecher

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THIS MODERN WORLD

BY TOM TOMORROW

CAPTAIN'S LOG: THE ENTERPRISE HAS TRAVELED BACK IN TIME TO A PRIMITIVE AND BARBARIC ERA IN EARTH'S HISTORY--THE YEAR 2020! OUR MISSION--**HISTORICAL RESEARCH!**

CAPTAIN, I'VE LINKED THE SHIP'S COMPUTERS TO THE PLANETARY DATA NETWORK--

--BUT IT'S CLOGGED WITH VITRIOL, SOPHISTRY, AND MISOGYNY! I'M HAVING TROUBLE LOCATING ANY USEFUL **INFORMATION!**

SPOCK?

I AM MONITORING A COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM KNOWN AS "TWITTER"--WHERE I HAVE INADVERTENTLY BECOME INVOLVED IN A DISPUTE CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO OWN **FIREARMS!**

COMPUTER--TRANSLATE THE 21ST CENTURY COLLOQUIALISM, "LIBTARD!"

PRO-CESS-ING.

CAPTAIN--SOMEONE ON THE PLANET'S SURFACE IS TRYIN' TO HACK INTO OUR **MEMORY BANKS!**

LOCK THEM OUT--BEFORE THEY CHANGE...**HISTORY!**

AYE, SIR--BUT I DINNA THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY! THEY SEEM TO BE SEARCHING FOR--WELL--PICTURES OF NAKED WOMEN, SIR.

JIM, WHAT IN BLAZES WAS **WRONG** WITH THESE PEOPLE?

THEIR...**TECHNOLOGY**...OUTSTRIPPED THEIR...**MATURITY**. THEY BECAME **ADDICTED**...TO CONSTANT **STIMULATION** AND POINTLESS **DISTRACTION!**

IT'S A WONDER THEY **SURVIVED!**

MR. SULU--GET US **OUT** OF HERE!

SURE, CAPTAIN--AS SOON AS I UPLOAD THESE **CAT MEMES** I JUST MADE TO SOMETHING CALLED **FACEBOOK!**

HEH! I MUST ADMIT...THEY **ARE AMUSING!**

NEXT: CAN THE CREW ESCAPE THE INSIDIOUS INFLUENCE OF THE 21ST CENTURY--BEFORE IT'S **TOO LATE?**

CAPTAIN--WHY IS THERE A **PENIS** ON THE MAIN VIEWSCREEN?

BLASTED TRICORDER! I WAS...**TRYING**...TO TEXT YEOMAN RAND!

TOM TOMORROW © 2020

Tough times, hard lessons

It was the worst of times, a perfectly miserable year by any measure. Between a murderous pandemic, a corrupt and conniving president, a sharply divided and angry populace, and a sickening wave of deadly police brutality, mainly against people of color, what more could possibly go wrong? We have one more day to find out. In the meantime, let's reflect on some of the key takeaways from 2020, the Lost Year of COVID.

Thanks to COVID, we learned that even the experts are fallible and prone to overconfidence that results in bad advice. Early on in the pandemic, public health guidance from the World Health Organization said the novel coronavirus was transmitted primarily through contact with respiratory droplets that landed on surfaces, so hand washing was billed as the key to prevention. As it turns out, the virus is primarily airborne, so masks and social distancing are the most critical public health interventions. The World Health Organization — and the public health officials who relied on its guidance — should have admitted from the start that it didn't really know how the coronavirus is transmitted. The corollary to this admission would have been a fundamental change in the message: If we had been advised early on that the virus could be airborne and everyone should mask up out of an abundance of caution, thousands of lives could have been saved. It's a hard lesson to learn, but even experts need to admit when they just don't know the answer.

The COVID crisis also ripped the scab off the gross disparities in health outcomes for Black Americans, mainly due to structural racism that can be traced to our nation's long and continuing history of marginalizing people of color. In the Lost Year of COVID, Black citizens took a beating in more ways than one. First, the coronavirus showed a strong predilection to kill people of color. Then a shocking number of America's police officers demonstrated the same disturbing trait. What did we learn? That we



The CP Edit

Opinion

have a lot of work to do to close the socioeconomic gap between whites and people of color in housing, education, employment and health care. And that the law enforcement community has a lot of work to do to restore public confidence and trust. They should start by rethinking the rules of engagement that allow officers to use deadly force against people who haven't even been convicted of a crime. It's not OK to kill people — Black, white or otherwise — over petty offenses like selling a loose cigarette on the street or resisting jailers while under the influence of drugs.

Sadly, we also learned what kind of damage a narcissistic demagogue wielding the full powers of the American presidency can do in a very short time. In the process, we discovered that a consequential share of the American people are more gullible, and more susceptible to manipulation, than we ever could have imagined. If you thought the great American experiment in democracy could never be unraveled, think again. This was a near miss. Trump may have

merely illuminated the strategy for a future version of himself, only smarter and savvier. Our national experience over the past four years affirms the devastating consequences of allowing a person who is utterly unqualified by expertise, interest, intellect or character to hold this nation's highest office. It showed us that the experience, temperament and integrity of the Oval Office occupant really does matter, and that our brief dalliance with the rich-celebrity-as-president model nearly brought this nation to its knees.

The national media, too, learned some hard lessons about covering pathological liars, highlighting the bad habit of false equivalency in political reporting that allows bald-faced lies to be told with near impunity. Rather

than calling out the lie, more than a few journalists engage in the practice of "balancing," that is, providing statements from the other side that may or may not directly challenge the original lie. With the exception of some well-done fact checking, the national media all too often acquiesced to Trump's daily pack of lies. Only when he went full-blown cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs and denied he had lost the election did the national media finally do what they should have done from the start: call a lie a lie and turn off the microphone.

Lest we end on too pessimistic a note, 2020 did have some bright spots, especially the trio of fearless, effective women who are leading Michigan through its darkest hour. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson stood tall and strong in the face of disaster, both natural and Trumpian. We're grateful for their tenacious, no-nonsense leadership. We're also grateful for our fellow citizens who are still working on the front lines in hospitals, grocery stores and restaurants, putting their own lives at risk to help the rest of us get through this nightmare. We wish each of you, on behalf of a thankful community, a healthy and happy New Year. And a pay raise.

Send letters to the editor to letters@lansingcitypulse.com.
Please limit them to 250 words

Time. Place. Tragedy. Disillusionment. Hope.

By **ANDREW MUYLLE**

(The writer, 25, is a graduate of Eastern High School who is pursuing a career in musical theater.)

These are all pieces, elements of my life in the year 2020, the year we collectively experienced what at times seemed to be a complete unraveling of the senses of health, world, country and security that those who were lucky enough to experience previously had. It has been a succession of months which saw a global pandemic that has ended 1.6 million lives; murder and violence toward people of color and focus on the continued systems of racism in America; a country at war, a war of beliefs and morals and humanity and a country that has divided itself into blue and red; wildfires and countless other natural disasters in which we've heard the anguished call of Mother Earth; and so many more rips and tears, big and small, in a perhaps never-fully-realized blanket of peace, equality, and worldwide health in more ways than one.

Through all of this, I have been here, in Lansing, in my place of privilege, able to keep myself safe



Muylle

and healthy, but always watching the world, the country, and my communities.

I was born in 1995 and raised on the east side of Lansing. In 2013, I graduated from Eastern High School and went on to study musical theater in college. I moved to New York City in January 2019, and lived there full time until this past March, when

the gradual shutdown of the theater industry and the city as a whole left me, like thousands of other NYC-based artists, questioning my future, immediate and long term. I made the day-long journey from the Fort Lee Budget car rental to my mecca of sorts, the place which will always be the beginning of my story, Lansing. Crossing the George Washington Bridge as I exited Manhattan on that early March morning left me feeling, in part, that I was jumping ship and watching the Titanic sink from my privileged security, but I thought it was best, and that I would find safety and comfort in the city that created me, the city that had always been there for me and with me.

There is an energy in Lansing that is so incredibly personal to me, an energy that is embedded in my memories and my senses. I feel it when I bike down Michigan Avenue to the Capitol and spend some suspended moments looking up at it, as if for the first time. I feel it walking through Eastfield, the neighborhood where I spent the first years of my life, passing the houses of my grandmother, of neighbors and of childhood friends long moved away. I felt it when I went for a walk my first full day back in Lansing, and my legs brought me to the grand building on the corner of Marshall and Saginaw, the building I knew as Pattengill Middle School. I stood by entrance 31, where I spent nearly every morning for two and a half years, waiting with friends to be let in so we could stow our instruments in their lockers until band class. I looked out onto the western landscape from my vantage point, which afforded views of LCC and their new track, the fields where I flew kites as a child and watched fireworks on the 4th of July, and beyond that, the Don Johnson Fieldhouse, where my own graduation ceremony was held.

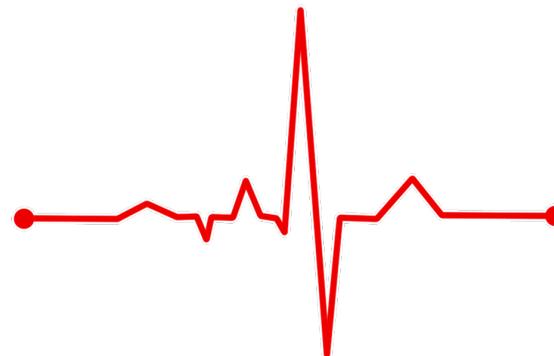
It was from these places and through these passages of assuredness that I observed the events of the year happen, as they did so mercifully. I watched as the bare bones of our world, the broken parts of our systems and societies, were exposed. I read and heard about people battling for and losing their lives, whether from a disintegration of their respiratory system, or at the barrel of a gun held by one intended to protect and serve. I participated in the ways I knew how — wearing masks everywhere except for my home, marching for justice with beautiful groups of heartbroken people, trying to find peace in everyday life and pass that on to others. It was perhaps a period most defined by my disillusionment — with the world, with my career and the future of my industry, with the morality of America, with the total, raw desperation and need of millions of people. Some days I so passionately wanted to make a change and help to such an extent, and yet I couldn't manage to make coffee, my mind so debilitated by the most recent death count. It's been a year of thought and reflection, on where I need to go from here, what steps I need to personally take to aid in the healing of our world. We've experienced trauma, and there is a long road of recovery ahead.

Let us memorialize those we lost this year, and never forget the beauty of their lives.

I can say that I am extremely grateful to have had the solace of Lansing to come to, rife with some of the most important people and memories of my young life. I will return to New York, and will continue to work toward my aspirations, but I will always carry with me the weight of what this year became and how it shifted something in my mind and soul.

Where do we go from here?

Step by step, one day at a time.



B/21/049 RED CEDAR LOG JAM PROJECT as per the specifications provided by the City of Lansing. The City of Lansing will accept sealed bids electronically on line at www.mitn.info or at the City of Lansing Purchasing Office, 124 W. Michigan Ave 8th Fl, Lansing, Michigan 48933 until **2:00 PM** local time in effect on **JAN. 21, 2021** at which time bids will be opened. **Complete specifications and forms required to submit bids are available by contacting Stephanie Robinson at (517) 483-4128 email: Stephanie.Robinson@lansingmi.gov or go to www.mitn.info.** The City of Lansing encourages bids from all vendors including MBE/WBE vendors and Lansing-based businesses.

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What if we got a do-over for 2020

How many times have we replayed those major points in life and wondered, what if I had ...

Sure, it's unhealthy to dwell on it for too long, but some reflection helps us grow. To take a risk. Rely more on our common sense. Listen to others. Trust your gut.

In a year like 2020, when so much went wrong, maybe looking at this past year's major political events through this lens is helpful.

Making the best decisions in a crisis is hard. Showing compassion and understanding to those who acknowledge mistakes, correct them and learn from them may say more about us than the person who makes them.

So, with that, here are four instances where a do-over would have changed the trajectory of 2020.

1. Department of Health and Human Services Gary Gordon: Putting recovering COVID-19 patients in nursing homes.

Background: In early April, COVID-19 case numbers were skyrocketing. People were dying quickly. Hospitals were quickly being overwhelmed. Images of an Italy-like crisis was scaring the bejesus out of everyone.

What happened: The recovering patients had to go somewhere and the Centers for Disease Control suggested nursing homes. In hindsight? Bad idea. Exposing this highly contagious virus indoors where elderly and vulnerable people live made nursing homes deadly COVID-19 incubators.



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

Republican legislators politically hammered the DHHS until they basically did what the R's suggested in creating specific stand-alone COVID recovery buildings.

What if: The TCF Center and Novi Suburban Showplace field hospitals were used to keep recovering patients until specific stand-alone COVID recovery pods could be set up.

Agreed, these huge civic centers have all the comforts of a bus terminal. Moving a lot of vulnerable sick people isn't ideal. But a lot of money and effort went to outfitting those facilities — and they were hardly used. It's hard to argue lives wouldn't have been saved.

2. Lansing Mayor Andy Schor: Not attending the May 31 Capitol demonstration condemning racism.

Background: The peaceful display against George Floyd's death at the knee of a Minneapolis police officer drew thousands to march around Lansing.

What happened: By nightfall, anxieties rose. Troublemakers replaced protesters. Numerous downtown Lansing buildings had their windows smashed and an incredible mess was left in behind.

All the while, the Lansing mayor was nowhere to be seen. Allegedly following police recommendations, Schor stayed away from downtown. It opened him up to criticism that he was either callous toward the cause or not the leader the city needed at that point in time.

What if: Schor had shown up? Took a bullhorn? Marched alongside demonstrators with the chief of police? Shared in the chants?

If the city could have hurriedly set up porta-johns, trash

See Melinn, Page 8

REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI

Healthcare reform to save city \$78M

Newly renegotiated healthcare benefits for city of Lansing retirees that take effect Friday, Jan. 1, will reduce unfunded legacy costs by \$77.6 million over the next 30 years, city officials said. Prior plans called for higher copays for about 1,300 retirees. The new deal reportedly represents a compromise that satisfies union officials and keeps retiree benefits and costs exactly the same. Officials said the savings will come from a newly negotiated fee reduction and by consolidating Medicare coverage in a Medicare Advantage plan.

MSU tracks 1,100 bias complaints

More than 1,100 students and employees told Michigan State University officials they had experienced discrimination because of their skin color or where they were from since 2015, reports the Lansing State Journal. MSU investigators reportedly found violations in only eight cases. The news triggered criticism over a reporting process that could be difficult to navigate or revictimize those reporting discrimination and bias. Meanwhile, MSU officials are reportedly looking to rework their processes and policies.

Lansing recognized for bike friendliness

The capital city was named a "bronze-level" bicycle-friendly community by the League of American Bicyclists this week, joining 485 other communities across the country in being recognized for its safe streets, commitment to creating transportation and recreational resources and encouraging healthier and sustainable transportation choices, according to a press release. Mayor Andy Schor said public infrastructure has remained among his top priorities.

Lansing recognized for lack of transparency

The city of Lansing has refused to release more than 100 emails among Mayor Andy Schor, Police Chief Daryl Green and several top staffers regarding about Anthony Hulon's April 11 death in the city lockup, the Journal reports. The medical examiner ruled Hulon's death a homicide after four officers handcuffed him and pinned him to the ground for several minutes. A wrongful death lawsuit has been filed. Another 130 pages of emails were heavily redacted or blank, which the Journal is appealing to Council President Peter Spadafore.



Before



After

Pleasantrees, 1950 Merritt Road, East Lansing

Pleasantrees Cannabis Co. opened this fall after an extensive renovation. The 1984 building was a dental office that looked fairly typical from that era with thin, horizontal vinyl siding and smallish windows. After the renovation, it appears that the only thing that remains the same is the unusual roofline. The renovated building has been updated with a new, darker green vertical siding. The wood-looking material is more likely fiber cement siding, which is more resilient and cost effective. The well-considered undermount lighting along the roofline replaced small, traditional outdoor sconces. Two modern-looking sets of four oversized horizontal casement windows in black frames replaced small windows near the entrance. And so on. The overall effect makes the building appear both modern and welcoming — befitting the company's brand. Its website emphasizes its hospitality and connection to the community. Its advertising references the play on its name: pleasant trees; its location amid a wooded setting further enhances that effect.

— CARRIE SAMPSON

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

Health officials: 'Return to normal' from COVID-19 unlikely in 2021

Uncertainty over coronavirus rebound lingers past winter months

As soon-to-be President-elect Joe Biden was celebrating the results of the primary in Michigan hours after polls closed, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was facing down an array of TV cameras. It was March 10, the date COVID-19 was detected in Michigan. And it would consume the nation.

Days later, officials in Ingham County acknowledged the first cases had arrived in Greater Lansing.

In the intervening time, Michigan has been dealt a streak of stay-at-home orders, a largely shuttered economy and the rise of a constituency hellbent on fighting the health orders designed to keep them safe and to prevent hospital systems from drowning in rising caseloads.

In Ingham County, one of the first major outbreaks of the virus was discovered on the city's southwest side among immigrant populations, most of whom worked at either the Meijer warehouse in Delta Township or Herbruck's poultry and egg production facility in Ionia County.

Conservatives still railed against

health orders, social distancing and face masks. They challenged orders that shuttered indoor dining, as well as other indoor activities where the virus was more likely to spread. By the end of April, thousands filled the streets of Lansing causing massive traffic disruptions to protest the health orders. Two weeks later, armed protesters joined hundreds of others in storming the State Capitol building demanding an end to the state orders.

Some businesses tried to fight back by continuing to operate in violation of health orders, which in turn resulted in disciplinary action from local and state governments. Ultimately, the Michigan Supreme Court overturned a 1945 emergency law which Whitmer used to issue her orders. Those were later replaced by orders from the state Department of Health and Human Services.

Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail worked with government officials in East Lansing to create mask-required zones in the downtown areas of the college town, while issuing quarantine orders on some 30 different properties that housed dozens of people — some with the virus.

Still, the coronavirus continued to prey on Greater Lansing and contin-



Vail

ues to hammer the nation.

Nine months after the first cases, a glimmer of hope is on the horizon of the coming year. Two vaccines have been approved by federal regulators and health officials have begun administering them to frontline medical providers as well as nursing home residents and workers.

Vail predicts that vaccines will be widely available for just about everyone by April 2021. Even with a mas-

sive vaccination campaign, it won't be like flipping a switch back to normal, she said.

Vail said that her team is only receiving 975 doses of the Pfizer vaccine each week.

"I can administer that in a day," she said.

With thousands of frontline health workers already in line for the country's first doses, thousands have been left waiting for their turn in the vaccination queue. The state, in tandem with national pharmacy chains like CVS and Walgreen's, announced on Monday a comprehensive, three-week plan to deliver the second vaccine, by Moderna, to skilled nursing facilities statewide.

Officials estimate that about 70-85% of the country will need both doses of the vaccine before COVID-19 eventually stops spreading between people — a point known as herd immunity.

Before the vaccines were approved, about half of Americans were reportedly hesitant to get one. Vail said that attitude has shifted to a "wait and see" approach over the last three weeks.

And even with the vaccines rolling

See Normal, Page 10

Melinn

from page 7

cans, tubs of bottled waters and even some snacks for protesters at Adado Park, the crowd would have had somewhere to congregate and decompress away from a business center.

Would some destruction had happened after nightfall anyway? Maybe. But Schor wouldn't have had to spend the remainder of 2020 showing he's not a wuss. His family would have had a few more nights of peaceful sleep, at a minimum.

3. President Donald Trump:

Referring to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as "the woman from Michigan."

What happened: Trump singled out Michigan's governor during a Mar. 27 press conference for "complaining" that the federal government didn't have a national response for COVID-19 by dismissing to Whitmer chief executive as "the woman in Michigan."

The condescending reference is

classic Trump and might have been blown off if uttered during a campaign stop in late October. Instead, insulting the governor at a time when her popularity was sky-high inadvertently created a national rallying cry.

Women and some men circled the wagons around Whitmer, a leader they saw as doing her best protecting residents with arguably little help from a hard-headed president.

The result: Yes, Trump's plainspoken, off-the-cuff quips are part of his appeal, but even Trump recognizes that avoiding martyrdom is wise. He knew it was a bad move. He never said it again.

What if: Trump didn't say it? Showed Whitmer and others a little more respect? It's a hard ask, I know, but does he lose Michigan by a little less than 145,000 votes? I'm going to guess more than 145,000 "That woman from Michigan" T-shirts were sold this year.

4. Governor Gretchen Whitmer:

Appearing on "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah."

What happened: The governor's April 1 interview on the Comedy

Central program wearing a "That Woman from Michigan" t-shirt while telling host Trevor Noah, "I don't think any of us has the energy to deal with politics right now."

The results: Up until that point, the governor received high marks from even Republican legislative leaders in steering the state through the COVID-19 pandemic. Trump's sexist dismissal of Whitmer days prior was universally frowned upon.

But instead of letting the uproar build naturally, Whitmer overplayed her hand by crossing the line into the political realm for the first time in the pandemic. She accused Trump of playing politics by subtly doing it herself.

After this point, it became fair game to criticize Whitmer for playing politics with the pandemic to raise her place in the Joe Biden Veepestakes. Lansing's traffic-jam protest happened two weeks later. The liberty protests with gun-toting patriots two weeks after that. Only in Michigan, I might add.

Sure, the bipartisan kumbaya was going to crumble eventually, but

Whitmer pushed the issue. Governors like Mike DeWine in Ohio, who avoided politics in their COVID response, kept their popularity numbers higher for a longer period than those who didn't.

What if: Whitmer appeared on FOX News instead? Talked about Michigan's response to an entirely different audience? Maybe she wasn't invited, but given how networks lit up our TV-ready governor's phone in 2020, it's hard to believe they would have turned her away.

Either way, showing up on a program that can't decide whether it's reporting serious news or parodying it changed the trajectory of the governor's public perception sooner than needed.

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

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Care for each other.
Let Love Guide you.
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Be authentic.
Engage
Live

Anonymous
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Whitmer signs \$106M COVID-19 relief bill, extends jobless benefits

Three-week vaccination campaign begins at Michigan nursing homes

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed a bipartisan relief bill this week that includes \$55 million in grants for small businesses hit by COVID-19 and \$45 million in direct unemployment payments for those laid off or furloughed as a result of the coronavirus.

The bipartisan package offers grants of up to \$20,000 for small businesses that need support this winter, as well as grants of up to \$40,000 for live music and entertainment venues.

Whitmer also signed bipartisan Senate Bill 604, sponsored by Sen. Curtis Hertel, D-East Lansing, which extended unemployment benefits from 20 to 26 weeks until the end of March.

Since March, about \$27 billion in unemployment benefits have been paid to nearly 2.3 million workers. In signing the latest bills, Whitmer said she also line-item vetoed a \$220 million “giveaway of taxpayer money” to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund — a pool of funds designed to help businesses fund benefits for laid-off workers. Whitmer said that cash should be used for vaccines and personal protective equipment and not “tax breaks to big businesses.”

President Donald Trump also signed a COVID-19 relief bill Sunday extending benefits to self-employed and gig workers, adding \$300 to weekly un-



Whitmer

employment checks. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell blocked Tuesday an effort by Democrats to up federal stimulus checks from \$600 to \$2,000.

In related news ...

A three-week campaign to vaccinate about 91,000 residents and staff at skilled nursing home facilities began statewide Tuesday. Additional priority facilities — like assisted living, personal care, residential care, adult family and adult foster homes — will receive vaccines in January.

As part of efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus, all vaccinators are required to adhere to strict testing protocols. The pharmacists themselves will also be required to be vac-

CORONAVIRUS IN MICHIGAN						
BY THE NUMBERS...						WEEK 42
MICHIGAN						
	12/22/20	12/29/20	WEEKLY CHANGE			
CASES	466,485	483,922	^4%			
DEATHS	11,705	12,282	^5%			

GREATER LANSING				EATON CO.			
	12/22/20	12/29/20	WEEKLY CHANGE		12/22/20	12/29/20	WEEKLY CHANGE
CASES	19,296	20,049	^4%	CASES	4,119	4,313	^5%
DEATHS	282	308	^9%	DEATHS	82	89	^9%

INGHAM CO.				CLINTON CO.			
	12/22/20	12/29/20	WEEKLY CHANGE		12/22/20	12/29/20	WEEKLY CHANGE
CASES	11,766	12,212	^4%	CASES	3,411	3,524	^3%
DEATHS	163	179	^10%	DEATHS	37	40	^8%

inated.

State officials still urged residents this week to continue wearing face masks, practicing social distancing. Health officials in Michigan have set a goal of vaccinating 70% of the population (about 5.6 million people) by the end of 2021. All vaccines require two doses and will be provided at no cost, though providers may still charge administrative fees. Mild side effects can include a low-grade fever, a sore arm and general discomfort — all signs the vaccine is working.

About 231,000 doses have been sent across Michigan. Another 120,000 are expected to arrive next week. To date, more than 37,000 frontline health-care workers have received a vaccine.

Next in line for the vaccine will be those over the age of 75 and frontline essential workers in fields designated as “critical infrastructure. The following phase includes those at high risk of severe illness and some other essential workers whose employment impacts public safety.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

Normal

from page 8

out this month, Vail said she doesn’t see any loosening of statewide restrictions like those on large group gatherings and mask wearing for another year.

She also realizes that as restrictions on gatherings and masks loosen, there will be lingering health issues related to a year (or more) of reduced human contact and socialization. Dr. Adineke Shoyinka, chief medical officer in Ingham County, said many local residents have already been demonstrating concerning trends of increased mental

health issues. Vail concurs.

Officials have tracked a rise in substance abuse and depression among youth and adults — issues that will linger on for months, even after a return to “normal,” Vail explained.

Vail is also concerned that a year or more of remote education will impact kids and teachers.

“Kids are pretty resilient,” Vail added. “Most of them will bounce back. What I do worry about is the impact of distance learning on test scores. How are universities going to account for what is likely to be a reduction in testing scores? And what about teachers, who are evaluated in part on those test scores? I do worry about those things a lot. I’m not sure we know the answer to that.”

On top of the impact of social isola-

tion, Vail also recognizes that the way America does business is likely going to change forever. Work-from-home options have revealed that some employees are actually getting more done from their home office than in the usual work office.

“I think we will see some businesses shifting from that,” Vail said. “There will still be a need to connect with co-workers in some way, but I think traditional offices will not return to the same.”

Once the vaccine reaches an adequate level of herd immunity, scientists will also still be struggling to understand and address the lingering effects of the coronavirus itself, Vail added.

Many people recover from the virus without lingering impacts, but a small

percentage have what has become known as “long haulers’ syndrome.” That syndrome can impact the heart, the lungs and the brain and include ongoing fatigue and muscle aches, according to the Mayo Clinic.

An Ohio State University study also reportedly determined that as many as 15% of college athletes who recovered from COVID-19 had a heart inflammation that could be severe enough to cause death. Another study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that 75% of recovering COVID-19 patients also showed signs of lingering heart issues — a number that Vail found shocking. “There is a lot more to learn at this point,” she said.

— TODD HEYWOOD

Year in Review

2020 in review: What made news this year? And what's up next?



1. The coronavirus arrived

No doubt 2020 wouldn't have been such a train wreck without COVID-19. It has fundamentally changed life in Greater Lansing and across the country.

See page 8 for an in-depth review, as well as a forecast: Will things ever get back to normal?

Photo by Nicole Rico

2. Racial justice and social equity

George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis ignited an uprising against police brutality and the disproportionate rate at which police systematically target and kill people of color. Greater Lansing was no exception to the fervor.

Protests began May 31 with a large downtown demonstration that turned ugly when a car was driven carelessly on Michigan Avenue as marchers returned to the Capitol from East Lansing. Protesters torched the car and broke numerous windows downtown, causing police to order a curfew and disperse the crowd with teargas.

Daily protests followed for months, at times finding their way to Mayor **Andy Schor's** doorstep. **Black Lives Matter** called for Schor's resignation and cuts to the police budget. Local allegations of police brutality — including a couple of violent arrests in East Lansing and **Anthony Hulon's** cop-involved homicide in the city lockup — only fueled the tensions. A Black Lives Matter mural was painted across Capitol Avenue.

Lansing City Councilman **Brandon Betz** unsuccessfully introduced a measure to reduce a significant portion of the Police Department budget. Schor also recruited a taskforce, hired a diversity officer and signed an executive directive to further anti-discrimination

efforts in Lansing.

Two social workers were embedded with the East Lansing Police Department this year, where the City Council has continued to make equitable amendments to local laws, among other reforms.

Up Next: *With at least 20 homicides tracked in Lansing in 2020, efforts to chip away funding from the Police Department are losing steam. Elected officials are still focused on public safety reforms, but many residents have also called for more cops to help tackle a rising level of crime.*

Schor doesn't anticipate his next budget to reduce police funding, which he said would likely equate to service reductions or fewer patrols. Activists like Betz plan to turn their attention toward policy reforms in 2021 rather than continuing to advocate for direct budget reductions.



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

Advance Peace, a California-based nonprofit geared toward stopping urban crime before it begins, could also launch programming in Greater Lansing in 2021. City officials were still crunching the numbers — and searching for some regional partnerships — in December.

Year in Review

3. Politics

Greater Lansing joined America in blocking President **Donald Trump** from a second term, heralding hopes for a brighter future under the leadership of former Vice President **Joe Biden**.

Brandon Betz and his admittedly “radical” eastside agenda shifted dynamics on the City Council this year following his 2019 defeat of more conservative Jody Washington in the 1st Ward and the rise of **Peter Spadafore** as president.



Betz

In East Lansing, first-term City Council members **Jessy Gregg** and **Lisa Babcock** infused their own progressive ideals into city government. The appointment of two others — **Ron Bacon** and **Dana Watson**, only the second and third African-Americans to serve — only helped to further shift those political tides after Mayor **Ruth Beier** and Mayor-turned-Councilman **Mark Meadows** resigned in July. After Beier left, Councilman **Aaron Stephens** took over as mayor, announcing a few months later that he won't seek another term.



Bacon

This year's election also brought a few key changes to local governments in Greater Lansing.

First-term Ingham County Commissioner **Thomas Morgan** was taken out in the August primary by **Bob Pena**, a civil engineer and Democrat who has lived on Lansing's east side for 35 years. Meridian Township voters also sent Clerk **Brett Dreyfus** packing in November, instead electing Democrat **Deborah Guthrie**, who previously worked as the township's communications director.



Pena

Eaton County Sheriff **Tom Reich** fended off a challenge from Republican **Rick Jones**, a former county sheriff and state legislator. Delta Township Supervisor **Ken Fletcher** also won reelection.



Reich

Former Ingham County Commissioner **Carol Koenig** was installed as a judge in the 30th Circuit Court. Republican **Pat O'Keefe** and Democrat **Rema Ella Vassar** were also elected to the Board of Trustees at Michigan State University after longtime Trustee **Joel Ferguson**, who took his lumps in the

Larry Nassar scandal — decided not to run after he was denied Democrat Party support.

Up Next: *Lansing is already turning its attention to a mayoral race in 2021. Mayor Andy Schor is expected to run for another term against At-Large Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley. Former Mayor Virg Bernero, who stepped down in 2018, has all but announced he will seek a fourth term in 2021 after stepping down three years ago.*



Schor



Spitzley

Half the seats on the Lansing City Council will be up for election in 2021. At-large members **Spadafore** and **Kathie Dunbar** are expected to run for reelection. No word on 4th Ward Councilman **Brian Jackson**.



Bernero

Three of five East Lansing City Council members are also facing expiring terms next year.

4. Developers pushed past a pandemic

Dozens of businesses have closed, either permanently or temporarily, since the COVID-19 pandemic struck Greater Lansing. But that hasn't stopped local developers from advancing several major residential and commercial construction projects.

Pat Gillespie's highly anticipated **BLOCK600** project, which includes **Capitol City Market** on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Larch Street, opened in the fall. It's also attached to apartments and the first hotel to be constructed in downtown Lansing in more than 30 years.

Across the street, the **City Rescue Mission** announced plans to expand its men's shelter. Mayor **Andy Schor** also announced plans to revitalize the old **City Market** with a shuffleboard club. The **Red Cedar project** also garnered its final round of state financing this year. Cranes have been above the skyline along Michigan Avenue all year as that



Skyler Ashley/City Pulse

Back entrance to the Capital City Market.

massive development takes shape.

To the east, towering residential projects have continued to form in East Lansing. Developers also chart-

ed plans for the “Village of Okemos” on the corner of Okemos and Hamilton roads.

In Old Town, plans are still underway to redevelop the historic Bethlehem Temple Building into the Temple Lofts. McLaren is building a new hospital in South Lansing near MSU's campus. Crews have also been working on the Heritage Hall addition on the back of the State Capitol. That \$40 million building addition is expected to open to the public by fall.

Up Next: *Developers of the Red Cedar redevelopment are planning a partial opening in the summer. Construction is also set to continue next year on the Graduate, a 10-story hotel on Grand River Avenue in East Lansing. The new home of the Allen Neighborhood Center is also expected to open along Kalamazoo Street in the fall, along with apartments and a health clinic.*



Lansing Board of Water & Light headquarters.

5. Fighting global warming

The city of Lansing pushed forward with plans to reduce its carbon footprint this year after promoting **Lori Welch** to the newly created city position of sustainability manager. Mayor Andy Schor's goal is to review the city's energy use and review sustainability plans to reduce energy consumption and find new efficiencies in 2021.

The **Lansing Board of Water & Light** also charged forward with plans to provide 40% clean energy by 2030, including plans to cease coal generation in Lansing and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by the end of 2025. Investments in solar and wind ener-

gy — including in windmills near Ithaca and a solar park in East Lansing — will help guide those goals into 2021.

Up Next: *Schor released the city's first Climate Action Plan in October, which also created an advisory commission on sustainability. That work is set to reduce the city's carbon impact, increase energy efficiency, reduce waste and explore other long-term operational savings while also protecting the environment. BWL will also formally retire the Eckert Power Plant next month as the utility continues its shift away from fossil fuels. Eventually, officials would like to sell the power plant — and its iconic smokestacks — to be redeveloped into office or residential space.*

Year in Review

6. Triple J ousted

The city of Lansing is still on the hook for nearly \$250,000 that must be repaid to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development following a year-long controversy tied to **Joan Jackson Johnson**, former department director of Human Relations and Community Services.

Jackson Johnson was placed on administrative leave last year after she was accused of maintaining conflicting interests that led to financial improprieties and misspent federal Continuum of Care grant money designed to help rehome homeless people in Lansing.

She retired in February after city officials continued to raise concerns about federal grants that flowed directly to **One Church One Family**, a housing-focused nonprofit in which Jackson Johnson had been heavily involved and that also administered portions of the grant funding.

Jackson Johnson's alleged missteps are still in the hands of federal investigators, who have not levied any criminal charges more than 10 months after she retired. Bernero and others have contended Jackson Johnson is being mis-



treated because, they claim, she did not personally profit from the alleged abuses.

City officials have since tightened internal controls to avoid similar financial oversights, including additional purchasing policies, a more transparent process for grant applications and additional financial reviews from the city's Human Relations and Community Services Advisory Board.

Up Next: *Jackson Johnson continues to serve the community as a passionate volunteer. Still, the city must now repay \$234,000 in "questioned costs" related to her tenure by early 2023. Jackson Johnson still maintains that grant and city funds were never used for a personal gain.*



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

City of Lansing retirees gather in a protest on the City Hall plaza on Oct. 12, 2020 against changes to their benefits.

7. City compromises on retirement benefits

Lansing Mayor **Andy Schor** nixed a plan in December that he announced this year to adjust health-care benefits for about 1,300 retirees. **City retirees** were outraged after Schor announced that many of those formerly represented by Teamsters and the UAW would have their benefits modified to more closely mirror that of current employees — which would have resulted in higher out-of-pocket expenses from higher office visits and prescription copays.

An eleventh-hour compromise halted those changes before they

took effect, replaced by a new plan that reportedly won't result in "long-term cost increases" while also still saving the city \$3.5 million annually. Retirees over the age of 65 may still incur some additional costs, officials said.

Up Next: *Though the prior plan would have netted a much larger savings of \$8 million annually, city officials will continue to work in tandem with union officials in 2021 to reduce nearly \$737 million in unfunded pension and retiree health-care liabilities. Schor still billed it as one of the city's "biggest financial challenges."*

8. Racial bias issues at City Hall

Lansing Mayor **Andy Schor** tried to defend himself this year from several accusations of racism within his administration after a discrimination and race-based retaliation lawsuit was levied against him, the city and other top officials in August by nine current and former city employees.

Each plaintiff — including **firefighters**, **department heads** and other **city employees** — alleged that they had been subjected to race-based "unwelcome communication and conduct" that had "substantially interfered with their employment" with the city, according to the legal complaint.

As a result, Schor's administration and fire-union officials are accused of violating the **Michigan Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act**. The complaint alleges that the employees were "subjected to repeated and continuous discriminatory treatment, hostile working environments

and adverse employment actions," including suspensions, terminations and being "forced out" of their jobs.

The suit argued that in many instances, the employees had complained to upper management, only to find themselves retaliated against for voicing discrimination concerns. It also marked at least the second racial discrimination lawsuit to be filed against the city since Schor took office.

Up Next: *An executive directive signed by Schor in December proposed a partnership with the National League of Cities to better assess racial equity in Lansing. It also requires all city employees to complete implicit bias training and calls for an advisory racial justice report from each department. The stated goal: further a "commitment to fair and bias-free treatment." The recent racial discrimination lawsuit is scheduled to continue next month in 30th Circuit Court.*

The Plaintiffs



Bruce Odom



Talifarro



David Odom



Randle



Boyce



Atkinson

The Defendants



Schor



Harkins



Weber



Year in Review



Cole Tunningley/City Pulse

Customers line up outside of Homegrown Cannabis Co.

9. Lansing's pot industry matures
HomeGrown Cannabis Co. made history after it became the first provisioning center in Lansing to open its doors for adult use, recreational marijuana sales in February. And Lansing is nearly at its ordinance-mandated capacity of 28 licensed retail pot shops as it heads into 2021. Among those who opened for medical marijuana or recreational or both: **Jars, Skymint, The Botanical Co., Stateside and Old 27 Wellness, Pure Options, Edgewood Wellness, Pleasantrees, Bazonzoes and Gage.**

To date, more than 150 cultivation and 40 processing licenses have also been issued by City Clerk **Chris Swope**

as the lucrative weed market continues to explode across the local region.

Rehbel Industries is still working on renovations at the former John Bean Building. The village of **Webberville** is also cementing itself as an unlikely hub within the state's cultivation industry — a market that is poised to rake in up to \$3 billion annually by 2025, state officials estimated.

Up Next: Meridian Township could jump into the recreational cannabis market as early as next year as officials there continue to hash out a licensing structure for would-be entrepreneurs. Micro-businesses and cannabis social lounges are also expected to open in Lansing in 2021.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

At Lemonati Family Farms on East Kalamazoo Street, plants are grown hydroponically, without soil.

10. Turnover in City Hall

Press releases that announced staffing changes within Lansing Mayor **Andy Schor's** administration were common this year. And all told, at least a dozen city officials — either by will or force — have departed Schor's administration since he took office in 2018.

Most recently, **Andrea Crawford** left her job as director of the Department of Neighborhoods and Citizen Engagement this month "to pursue other opportunities," officials said in a press release.

Crawford joined a lengthy list of city officials to leave in the last two years, including Finance Director **Angie Bennett**; Chief Information Technology Officer **Collin Boyce**; fire chiefs **Randy Taliffaro** and **Mike Mackey**; Police Chief **Mike Yankowski**; Deputy Mayor **Samantha Harkins**; Treasurer **Tammy Good**; Chief Strategy Officer **Shelbi Frayer**; Internal Auditor **Eric Brewer** and **Joan Jackson Johnson**, the city's former director of human relations and community services.

Up Next: Employee turnover isn't necessarily uncommon for a municipality that employs as many people as Lansing — especially in the most "difficult year in many decades," Schor said. He also said that his latest organizational structure will prove to be successful through 2021.



Boyce



Taliffaro



Harkins



Crawford



Frayer



Bennett



Yankowski



Mackey

Honorable Mentions:

There was a lot more news in 2020. A group of tenants banded together to form the Lansing Tenants Union as the COVID-19 pandemic forced many to be late on rent payments. A Shiawassee County man was found fit to stand trial on an open murder charge after he was accused of killing and eating the testicles of a 25-year-old hairstylist from Swartz Creek. Community fundraising efforts continued after city officials announced the closure of the iconic Moores Park Pool, and that it needs \$1.2 million in repairs. Steve Robinson took over as the seventh president of Lansing Community College this summer after Brent Knight retired following eight years. A controversial fee structure for overnight parking permits was launched — and dismantled months later — by the Lansing City Council. Homeowners near Frandor were hit with thousands of dollars in tax assessments to help cover the costs of the Montgomery Drain Project in order to reduce pollution to the Red Cedar River.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

In memorial: Among those we lost in 2020

Since March, at least 303 residents of Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties have reportedly died from complications connected to COVID-19. May we all remember each one, allowing their memories and their lives to warm and inspire our lives in the weeks, months and years to come.

Here are some of the more prominent members of the Greater Lansing community who died in 2020.

Jack Davis, 81, served the Greater Lansing community as an attorney and philanthropist. Davis served as president of the Rotary Club of Lansing, chairman of the Regional Blue Ribbon Panel on Retention of General Motors and a longtime member of the Lansing School District's Board of Education, twice as president. He chaired the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Lansing Economic Area Partnership. A 1964 graduate of Harvard Law School, Davis was also a founding attorney at Loomis Law Firm, where he practiced business and real estate law. He was also known as a tireless advocate for the arts and education in Mid-Michigan and also had served in the U.S. Army. He died in May.



Sgt. William "Bill" Darnell, 52, served for 15 years as a DeWitt Township Po-

lice Department. Prior to being hired to a fulltime position, he worked at the Capital Region International Airport, Maple Rapids and the City of DeWitt as a police officer. His career in law enforcement came to an end in 2008 when he was shot in the face during a domestic violence situation in DeWitt Township. Darnell survived and was awarded as a Top Cop by President Barack Obama in 2009. In November, Darnell died as a result of complications connected to COVID-19.



Mark Brown, 51, was a social justice activist in the Greater Lansing community. He passed away in November from a long-term lung illness. He worked with community leaders on police reforms, advocacy for undocumented immigrants and LGBTQ equality initiatives and served on a diversity committee for the city of Lansing. He was also heavily involved in uncovering the story of John Taylor, a



Union Army veteran who was lynched by an angry mob in 1866. His advocacy helped Delhi Township to rename a park in the soldier's honor, John Taylor Memorial Park. Before Brown's efforts, that space had been referred to as "Dead Man's Hill."

Gladys E. Beckwith, 91, was a pioneer in education and women's equality. She was born in Flint and attended Flint Junior College, now known as Mott Community College. She later earned her B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. from Michigan State University and taught in the K-12 system as well as at the university level. Beckwith taught at MSU from 1965 until her retirement in 1999. In 1973, she helped create the Michigan Women's Studies Association. In addition to 18 years of service on the Lansing Board of Education, she also served as the volunteer executive director of the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame from 1987 until she retired in 2008. In December, Beckwith died as a result of complications connected to COVID-19.



Michael John Ferency, 72, was a 20-year-veteran of the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office and a law professor at Michigan State University and Cooley Law School. At the pros-

ecutor's office, Ferency handled major felony cases, including the prosecution of Tim and Lisa Holland in the murder of their 7-year-old adopted son, Ricky. He also prosecuted Dr. Gregory Messenger, a Lansing area dermatologist, for manslaughter in the mid-90s. Ferency died on Christmas Day in St. Johns. He was the son of liberal East Lansing firebrand Zoltan Ferency.

George Griffiths, 91, who died in December, is a former East Lansing mayor and councilman, as well as a former Ingham County drain commissioner. He taught at Walter French Junior High School in Lansing and taught woodshop, math, science and social studies until he lost his hearing and took an early retirement. Then Griffiths started his own home improvement business and was elected to the East Lansing City Council in 1971, rising to mayor in 1975. In 1972, under Griffiths' leadership, East Lansing became the first city in the country to pass a non-discrimination ordinance that prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Griffiths also led the way to reduce fines for marijuana possession to just \$5.



— TODD HEYWOOD

This year's biggest online stories

The year 2020 was a wild one for headlines. Here are the 10 most popular stories we published on Lansingcitypulse.com. Not surprising, eight of them dealt with COVID-19 — and the other two dealt with murder.

To read any of the Top 10 digital stories, go to lansingcitypulse.com/news. Make sure you follow us online in 2021 for more great content, and be on the look out for the release of the City Pulse digital app.

1. Armed citizens escort lawmaker into Michigan State Capitol
2. Coronavirus in Michigan: Day 10
3. Michigan is on lockdown. What does that mean for businesses?

4. Michigan's flattening curve has a mixed message
5. No penalties for violating Michigan face mask order
6. Whitmer: All essential workers, symptomatic residents should get tested for COVID-19
7. Officials: Coronavirus spread 'highly likely' in Greater Lansing
8. Suspected Grindr killer to plead insanity
9. Ingham County charts first COVID-19 death
10. Ingham County murderers may get second chance



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer at one of her many press conferences on COVID in 2020.

ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

The year livestreams went mainstream

Recapping Lansing arts and culture in 2020

By SKYLER ASHLEY

In the realm of arts and culture, 2020 was a year of cancellations and postponements. As long as there's a pandemic happening and large public gatherings are prohibited, the majority of live entertainment is practically impossible.

When the pandemic first hit in March, many institutions optimistically delayed their booked events for the summer. Well, when summer rolled around and it was apparent the coronavirus was going nowhere, events got pushed back for the fall. Obviously, that also proved unrealistic. Now just about everything that was booked for 2020 is now booked for 2021.

The year threw a monkey wrench in the plans and ambitions of everybody involved in Greater Lansing's many creative scenes.

Taking the virtual route

Rather than completely putting their lives on pause, many artists turned to Facebook Live, Zoom, YouTube and Twitch to share their passions with the world. A Facebook group created by folks from Lansing's eastside neighborhood called "Party Like It's COVID-1999" quickly attracted thousands of members. Using Facebook's livestream function, hundreds of people shared themselves playing guitar, painting and even swallowing fire on a daily basis. A team of Lansing musicians also formed the Facebook group "Best Friend's Club," which hosts a weekly regiment of mock live shows in order to imitate the experience of attending a live show at a venue.

The Threadbare Mitten Festival, an eccentric indie film fest normally hosted in REO Town, hosted four days of online screenings in September. For small, low budget films produced here in Michigan, fests like Threadbare are one of the only ways for ambitious local directors to find an eager audience. Festival director Dan Kofoed noted that Threadbare still garnered interest, citing that the pandemic was creating a "pent-up demand" among the stuck-in-

side masses.

The East Lansing Art Festival, one of the best weekends of the year for several decades now, turned the entirety of its programming into an online effort. Festival manager Heather Majano hosted live art lessons, the Swift Brothers performed a set of music and local artists did demonstrations including glass blowing and metalwork.

Lansing's favorite music festivals, Old Town Blues Fest and Jazz Fest, also dipped their toes into the world of livestreaming. Viewers were able to check out a curated selection of gigs from past festivals and check out live music being broadcasted from around the world. As a nice gesture, it was all made available for free.

Silver Bells, Lansing's biggest yearly holiday tradition, also made the virtual pivot with a block of holiday programming that aired on FOX 47. Overall, there are just too many events that made the livestream switch to list in a single article.

Murals and social justice

This year also saw Lansing become adorned with socially conscious murals. In response to the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police officers, Flint artist Isaiah Lattimore painted a portrait of Floyd on the Lansing River Trail beneath I-96.

The mural attracted vandals who defaced the portrait with white squiggly lines. However, donations to repair the mural were swiftly raised and the painting was quickly restored.

Artist Farrin Mitchell painted "Black Lives Matter" on the street in front of the Capitol building. The artwork is protected by traffic cones, which prevent cars from driving over it and damaging it.

These works connect Lansing to the largest grassroots political movement of the year, as similar tributes to Floyd and Black Lives Matter popped up across the United States during a summer of widespread protest against police brutality.



Going back to the drive-in

One solution to the pandemic saw the revival of a piece of retro Americana, the drive-in. The concept was brought back to life in 2020, as many got to experience the sensation of watching a film from their vehicle for the very first time. In Lansing, Celebration Cinema hosted weekend screenings of films such as "Black Panther" and "Deadpool." Downtown Lansing Inc. also hosted drive-in screenings of its own, treating viewers to classic films such as "Do the Right Thing."

Capital City Film Festival, which was slated to have its biggest fest yet to celebrate its 10th anniversary, was forced to postpone until 2021. But it was still able to show some great independent films before 2020 came to a close, thanks to a mini drive-in edition it hosted in December. The mini CCFF also featured the debut of the visual art installation, "Terra Forms: The Saga of a Cosmic Tree." "Terra Forms" uses 3D projection mapping to transform the facade of a building into a stunning work of galactic art. CCFF plans to use the technology for other installations in the future.

Lansing theater group Peppermint Creek, which debuted its production "Hear Our Cry" with a downtown drive-in screening, also adopted the classic concept. Drive-ins were also utilized for concerts across Michigan, and it makes one wonder if Lansing will see some drive-in performances

from touring musicians come 2021.

The new 'Normal'

Even if the pandemic dies down at some point in 2021, and we're able to enjoy concerts and art galleries without the threat of spreading the virus, it's clear that certain regulations and social practices are going to be permanent for quite awhile. Scott Keith, president of Lansing Entertainment & Public Facilities Authority, which oversees the Lansing Center and Luginuts Stadium, likened the new coronavirus-specific precautions to the implementation of metal detectors, which at one point also felt foreign but are now commonplace.

Monica Ramirez-Montagut, the new director of MSU's Broad Art Museum, said the museum's staff now pays especially close attention on how to guide guests through the building in a structured manner that helps limit close contact. Scott Bell, a booking agent for Mac's Bar and tour manager of rock group The Menzingers, said it might be years before venues and festivals relax measures to keep large crowds safe from the spread of the coronavirus.

Another certainty heading into 2021 is that your favorite arts institutions, whether that's a concert hall or an art gallery, need your support now more than ever. If you are able to, it's always worth it to check out if your favorite place to catch a show is accepting donations.



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Against all odds

MSU College of Music leaves video legacy of music made in 2020

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Pearls of polyphony pour from a parking garage. Jazz licks flow from a dozen scattered bedrooms, offices and studios and swirl into a soulful statement of ultimate unity. Beethoven does not roll over, and Ellington puts up his dukes.

In spite of everything, the students and teachers at MSU's College of Music found a way to keep the music alive in the pandemic year of 2020.

A growing legacy of live streams and videos, available on the college's website, is more than a document of a challenging year. As winter sweeps in, they will comfort music-starved fans until in-person concerts can safely resume.

From formal faculty recitals to raucous virtual ensembles, there is too much variety to describe here, but a few highlights suffice to give a glimpse of the musical miracles the college wrought in 2020.

"Against All Odds: Choral Singing In a Pandemic," a video document of the college's year-end choral concert, epitomizes the challenges that defined 2020.

Everybody knows the sad science. "Singing produces aerosolized particles that hang in the air and are believed to transmit the coronavirus," MSU choral director David Rayl declares in the intro.

A stripped-down group of 16

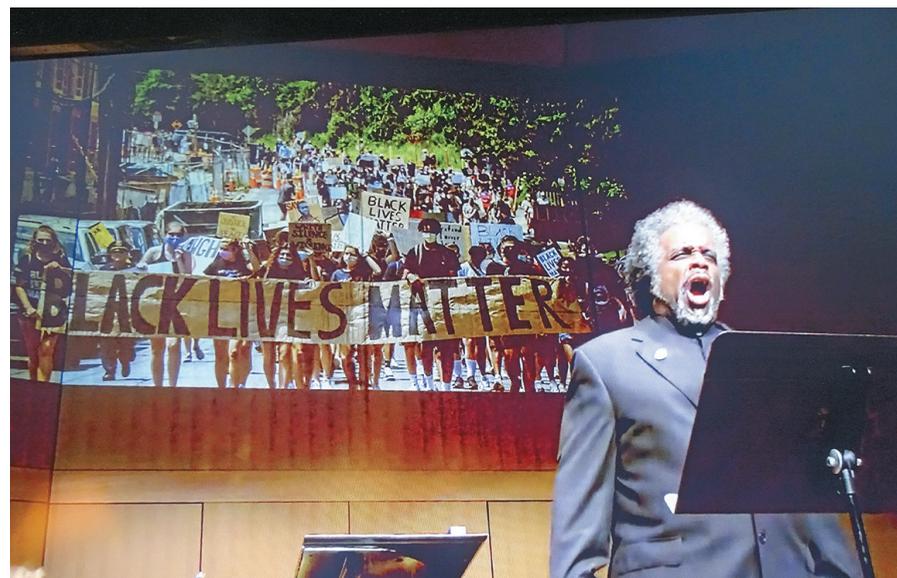
graduate students rehearsed in the Kellogg Center parking ramp, standing 20 feet apart and wearing masks.

The sounds they make send your neck hair straight up. "To the Mothers in Brazil: Salve Regina," a choral arrangement by Swedish composer Gunnar Erikson, shimmers like an aural apparition, transforming the structure's concrete slabs into a holy space of remembrance and communion.

The Jazz Studies Department wrought miracles of its own in 2020. Undaunted by the barrier of social distancing — anathema to the collaborative spirit of jazz — and unfazed by head-spinning technical challenges, jazz studies director Rodney Whitaker, the professors and students carried on the tradition of bringing distinguished visiting artists to rehearse and perform full-on collaborative concerts.

In a Dec. 4 online concert, guest guitarist Dave Stryker talks about "dealing with the cards we're dealt."

And deal they did. At its craziest, the Stryker concert splits into 18 screens. The spectacle of so many committed students hearkening to each other from their own bedrooms, basements, recital cubicles — wherever they could set up — is overwhelming evidence of the human drive to come together, no matter what. About an hour into the live



Courtesy Photo

Baritone Mark Rucker sings "He Came to Alabama" by Lena McLin, the legendary Chicago teacher and composer, part of a tribute to Black composers live streamed by the MSU College of Music Oct. 12.

stream, the band boils with creativity and synergy on Stryker's composition "Aha," unspooling a mesmerizing counterpoint of bass and piano lines, multiple guitars (including Stryker's) and looping fugues in the reeds and brass. It's the perfect set-up for the funky, organ-soaked arrangement of Marvin Gaye's "Trouble Man" that follows.

"It's a unusual way to do a residency, but we've all had to do some adjusting," Whitaker tells legendary Detroit bassist Marion Hayden in an interview prior to her Nov. 6 concert with MSU students.

Hayden called musicians "the healers of our society" and got straight to work, grooving with a kaleidoscopic array of students who come and go in deftly engineered squares and rectangles. (You also get to see what their art and bookshelves look like.)

The resulting concert is a healer and a half, highlighted by Hayden's own lyrical, heartfelt compositions. Her pensive ballad, "The Calm Before," centers on eloquent solos from Hayden and the students, with miraculous handoffs from one voice to another, across distances that vanish with the grace of technology.

The faculty and student recitals captured on video in 2020 run a huge gamut of styles and genres, from usual suspects like Chopin, Mozart and Bach to far more adventurous fare. A percussion concert from Dec. 16 jumps with vibrant patterns like the "Toccata Xoropo" by Claudia Calderón Sáenz, for no less than four vibraphones, enhanced by an assortment of shakers and happy

noisemakers. "Chic," by Molly Joyce, twinkles with gentle glockenspiel tinnabulations.

Clearly, mallet percussion is off the hook at MSU, thanks to largely stellar professor Gwen Dease, and it's one of the few instruments that don't suffer at all from social distancing. For Eric Saroian's "On Endeavor," a marimba duet, students Dan Hartung and Isaac Pyatt face off in an epic samurai duel of temporary alliances, all-out conflict and uneasy equilibrium. A sextet of students coax a calculated clangor from various-sized saucepans and other household objects, including a butter churn, in Joe W. Moore III's "At a Distance."

"Lift Ev'ry Voice," an Oct. 5 concert devoted to the music of Black composers, brings the classical and jazz sides of the college together. Baritone Mark Rucker pours his heart into a song cycle by mid-20th-century composer Florence Price. "Song to the Dark Virgin," with text by Langston Hughes, and later brings the hammer down on a tender and thundering set of songs by Chicago teacher and composer Lena McLin. Pianist Xavier Davis plays Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington, joined by bassist Rodney Whitaker and drummer Randy Gelispie for a rocking Ramsey Lewis arrangement of "Wade in the Water." Even though there no audience in the hall, and the musicians are wearing masks, their confidence, energy and warmth gives you the mojo to keep on wading in the water until we all get across.



Courtesy Photo

MSU's choral program made magic in the Kellogg Center parking garage, as chronicled in the documentary "Against All Odds: Choral Singing In a Pandemic."

A tough year for mom and pop

By SKYLER ASHLEY

You probably don't need to be reminded that it was a hard year for local business, but it's an impossible fact to avoid when recapping 2020. As soon as the coronavirus pandemic took full effect in March and the first wave of "Stay Home, Stay Safe" orders were in place, the world of brick and mortar took a vicious throttling.

Cafés that had been open for several decades and were a familiar part of life in Greater Lansing were forced to close their doors.

Despite a massive wave of closures, 2020 still saw a fair share of new businesses open their doors and, so far, they've managed to keep the lights on.

Zynda BBQ upgraded from a food truck to its first permanent space in the former location of Red Cedar Grill in Williamston. Zynda is just one of many food trucks that upgraded to brick and mortar, joining Detroit Frankie's Wood-Fired Brick Oven and the Smoke 'N Pig BBQ. Local favorites El Oasis opened up another food truck in East Lansing.

The Stadium District got its new favorite breakfast joint with Goodfellas Bagel Deli, providing Michigan Avenue with another spot to grab a bite to eat — something it definitely needed. Downtown Lansing gained a shake shop with Soul Nutrition and a cute, quirky café called the Social Sloth Café & Bakery.

Perhaps the most visible and hyped up new business of the year was Meijer's Capital City Market. Though many hoped for a Trader Joe's, if you take the time to check out the market you'll see the market can hold its own with any hipster-friendly grocery store out there.

Range 517, a shooting range, opened up near the Lansing Mall. Buddy's Pizza, a nationally renowned pizzeria chain from Detroit, also set up shop on Saginaw Highway.

Many longstanding development projects finally reached completion. Provident Place apartments in Lansing's east side neighborhood opened its doors, while Capitol View apartments closed the book on the long saga of the renovation of Oliver Towers. Metro Place apartments also cut its ribbons, offering a high-end option for downtown Lansing. Over in East Lansing, the massive Center City District project received some new tenants, Barrio Tacos and Jolly Pumpkin Café and Brewery.

As recreational marijuana received the green light in Lansing, the city saw numerous provisioning centers crop up



Year in Review

— including Skymint, Bazonzoes, Gage Cannabis Co., The Botanical Co. and Pleasantrees. Not even a global pandemic can curb Lansing's appetite for weed.

If the wave of closures has taught us anything, it's that our favorite small businesses truly need our help to survive. If you're able to, spending a few extra bucks with the little guys instead of Wal-Mart or McDonald's can go a long way.

Businesses that closed in 2020:

Permanently Closed or Closing:

Los Tres Amigos - Lansing
Frantor Deli - Lansing
Taps 25 - Downtown Lansing
The Brunch House - Lansing
Mijo's Diner - Lansing
Good Slice Pizza Co. - Lansing
Cops Cafe & Bakery - Lansing
Finley's Grill and Smokehouse - Lansing
Reno's Sports Bar & Grill West - Lansing
Studio 109 - Lansing
Center for Social Dance - Okemos
Espresso Royale - East Lansing
Fireside Grill - Dimondale
Destination Maternity - Eastwood Towne Center
Justice - Eastwood Towne Center
Claddagh Irish Pub - Eastwood Towne Center

Forever 21 - Eastwood Towne Center
Motherhood - Eastwood Towne Center
Pier 1 Imports - Eastwood Towne Center
Cantina Eastwood - Eastwood Towne Center

At Least Temporarily Closed

Strange Matter Coffee - Downtown Lansing
For Crepe Sake - Lansing
YMCA Parkwood Branch - Lansing
RIA Basketball Range - Lansing
Launch Trampoline Park - Lansing
Batter Up Bistro - Lansing
Grand Traverse Pie Co. - Lansing
La Fille Gallery - Lansing
Edmund's - Lansing
Troppo - Lansing
Jalapeno's Mexican Restaurant - Lansing
Nail'd It Beauty Bar - Lansing
The Loft - Lansing
Henry's Place - Okemos
2nd Time Around - Okemos
Jos. A. Bank - Eastwood Towne Center
Yankee Candles - Eastwood Towne Center
Sleep Number - Eastwood Towne Center

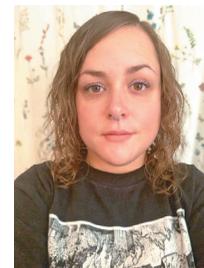
Favorite Things

A look back at your Favorite Things of 2020

2020 was a difficult and meandering year that seemed to present a new challenge or disaster on a weekly basis. Despite the larger climate of uncertainty, "Favorite Things" proved reliable as a bright spot in the pages of City Pulse. You shared with us the heartfelt stories behind your favorite knick-knacks, electronics, toys, books and whatever else you hold near and dear. Here are some highlights from the past 12 months:

Ariel Rogers and her late brother's T-shirt collection

"I still wear these shirts. It makes feel closer to him. It's really cool. He was my baby brother and the coolest guy I think I'll ever know.



He was super kind to everybody he met. He never treated anybody poorly and he would always show interest in the things you were interested in. He'd always have something to talk about and he'd be your friend. It makes me sad that his collection won't be growing, but I will keep it up. If I see a silly, fun shirt — I'll pick it up and carry on the tradition because I miss him."

Dedria A. Humphries Barker and her Abraham Lincoln books

"In doing the research on him, it showed me how elections can, and continually, give opportunity for people to be noble. Americans need to remember that now during this era of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter. Stay woke, and more and more examples will be visible every day."



Ryan Holmes and his Star Wars collection

"Growing up, Star Wars was a fairy tail in my home. We always got to stay up and eat ice cream when it was on. But I'm pretty sure I still engage with it the same way I did when I

was 5 years old. I hum the themes (l a u g h s) and there might be the occasional lightsaber sound effect. It definitely hits my kid switch."

Dan Currie and his comedy notebook

"A good comic makes it look easy. When you're trying too hard, the audience feels that. They're like, "Man, whew, this guy cares way too much."

But once you step back and realize that, you start being able to have fun up there again. The beginning of this book is when I was really trying too hard. The end of the book is when I started to have fun again."

Timothy David and his Ghostbusters proton pack

"It's been through a lot with me. Even though these days most of my Halloween adventures are spent helping my dad pass out candy at his house, it's still nice for people to see it and say, "Hey I just started showing my kids these movies!" I like to think that wherever he might be, my grandfather is still really excited that I'm still wearing this thing and people still know what it is and are happy to see it."

Interviews edited and condensed by Rich Tupica and Skyler Ashley. If you have a suggestion for Favorite Things, please email Skyler@Lansingcitypulse.com



I smoked a lot of weed this year. Here's some of the best.

One writer's totally biased guide to the dankest pot in Lansing

By KYLE KAMINSKI

This is it: The ultimate ranking of the five best cannabis products in Greater Lansing this year. This list has been painstakingly curated over the last several months while cooped up at home, shopping for and tirelessly sampling some of the best weed my editor's money could buy. Enjoy.

1. Homegrown Cannabis Co. — Harambe (Josey Wales)

Price — \$25/3.5g

THC content — 27.3%

This indica-leaning hybrid, named in honor of the gorilla who was shot and killed at the Cincinnati Zoo, is Homegrown's flagship in-house cannabis flower strain. It's real good stuff; And the staff at Homegrown knows it. Why are they still selling it for \$25 an eighth? Beats me.

At a whopping 27.3% THC, this happy and calm strain offers an incredible high at an insanely affordable price



Lansterdam in Review: 2020 Highlights

— securing it's spot as the single best cannabis product of the year in Lansing.

A similar eighter could easily set you back \$40-50. Even on the black market, it can often be challenging to find weed this powerful for prices that are this low. I've blown through at least two ounces and will certainly be back for more in 2021.

2. Stiiizy — Vaporizer Cartridges

Price — \$45/1g

THC content — 80-90%

Stiizy is a California-based cannabis brand that launched in 2017 and has since expanded to Washington and Nevada. It crept its way into Michigan's marijuana market back in August. It's probably best known for sleek vaporizers and wide variety of concentrate



pods.

After going through several cartridges this year, and trying several other brands, I'm comfortable labeling Stiizy as the best on the market.

It's slim, discreet for on-the-go tokes and can easily last throughout the day on a full battery. Perhaps the best part? The cartridge variety. Premium Jack. Sour Diesel. Purple Punch. Biscotti. OG Kush. Blue Crush. I can't pick a favorite.

Pro tip: Keeping a vape pen nearby can really help preserve the weekly stash. It does for me. If you can't find the Stiizy, the VFire Claw was a close runner-up.

3. Cloud Cover — Queso Perro

Price — \$17/1g

THC content — 20.25%

This proprietary strain is a sativa-leaning hybrid that was first bred by the Cloud Cover team at its cultivation facility in Portland. Nowadays, it's grown locally at its facilities in Webberville. And it might just be the stinkiest strain on the market today. It made my car smell dank for days.

Combining Stardawg with the '90s classic UK Cheese, the canna-wizards at Cloud Cover sell this crowd favorite for its soothing and relaxing effects, specifically curated for the end-of-day wind-down.

UK Cheese is known for its musty cheese smell, and it carries over with precision into Queso Perro which, yes, translates to Dog Cheese — a nod to Stardawg, its sativa-dominant mother. Don't be deterred by the name, however. This rich, spicy and earthy blend carries distinct notes of pine, grapefruit and garlic that tingles the senses with a full-bodied and smooth smoke sesh.

4. DNA x Skymint — Clementine

Price — \$70/3.5g

THC content — 25.1%

This year, in a collaboration with Amsterdam-based DNA Genetics, Skymint launched seven of DNA's most sought-after strains — including Strawberry Banana, Kosher Kush, LA Confidential and more. A cross between Tangie and Lemon Skunk, this jazz

band of a sativa brought home the High Times Cannabis Cup in 2015 for its balanced and citrusy flavor profile and its euphoric, uplifting and energizing effects. And believe me: This shit really is a whole new level of stoner energy.

My dog and I played fetch while I finished the joint, and we were running sprints together by the time it was finished. My coffee got cold while I raked both my front and back lawns. Then, I organized my garage for 45 minutes and carefully color coordinated my entire closet. I smoked another joint later that night after a few beers with a friend. I ended up walking my dog to Moores Park at midnight, preparing the following day's dinner and watching TV until 3 a.m.

5. Galactic Meds — Full Spectrum Oil (Sundae Driver x Forbidden Fruit)

Price — \$37.74/3.5g

THC content — 79.67%

Full spectrum oil — commonly abbreviated as FSO — is designed to incorporate as many terpenes and cannabinoids as possible into the final product. That creates an "entourage effect" where each individual component of the plant, including the non-psychoactive parts like CBD, work together to produce a complex and often long-lasting high. And that it certainly did.

A few squirts on my tongue likely exceeded the recommended dosage threefold. A burst of an almost giggly type of energy within the first hour helped make sure a few chores were done around the house. But only two hours later, I had fully melted into the seat of a leather chair.

It's worth noting that this complex sort of cerebral high seemed to be competing with an intense body high — making any real attempt to do anything productive an entertaining but ultimately fruitless experience.

Kyle Kaminski is a City Pulse staff writer and cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Every week, Kaminski samples some of the best cannabis products available in Greater Lansing, gets real high and writes about them.



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Zooming right along: A look back at theater in 2020

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Few would claim 2020 was a year that zoomed by. Those in local theater might disagree — if “Zoom” is spelled with a capital Z.

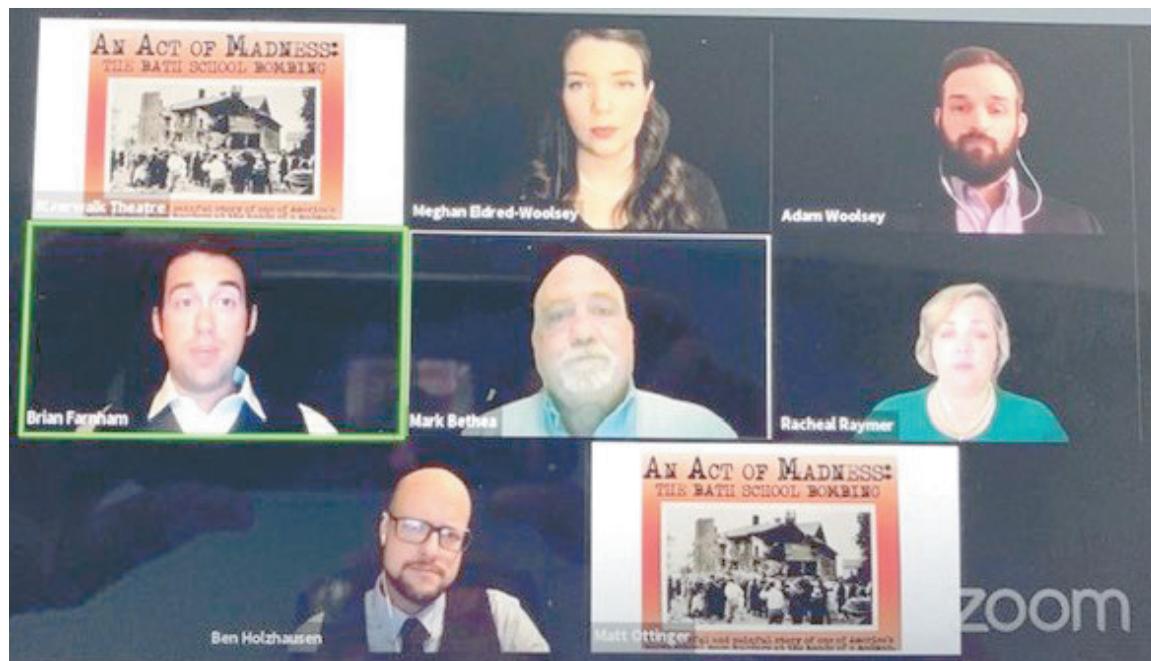
When live theater was forced by COVID-19 to go dark, Zoom performances offered bright spots in a bleak year.

A year ago, I offered predictions for the 2020 theater season. I never imagined a pandemic that would cause cancellations of so many shows — and the reimagining of how plays would have to be presented. To me, Zoom was a platform mostly for business meetings. I had no idea it would replace our live theater.

The splashy musicals many of us looked forward to never got produced. We lost “The Producers,” by Owosso Community Players, “Shrek,” by Riverwalk, “Fun Home,” by Peppermint Creek and “Guys and Dolls,” by Starlight Dinner Theatre.

But between January and March, we were treated to some amazing productions. Michigan State University’s Department of Theatre gave us “Into the Woods.” Lansing Community College had “Sunset Baby.” Riverwalk had “Boy Gets Girl” and Williamston gave us “900 Miles to International Falls.” All of those plays won Pulsars at a June ceremony — presented for the first time on Zoom.

When I predicted in January that Pulsar judges would have a hard time narrowing down the best of 2020, I had absolutely no inclination that because of health concerns, Zoom



David Winkelstern/City Pulse

Riverwalk Theatre performs “An Act of Madness: The Bath School Bombing” via Zoom.

plays would dominate a limited season.

On March 13, a Michigan ban of gatherings of more than 250 was issued. On March 16, all theaters were closed. The “Stay Home, Stay Safe” followed on March 23.

Before the shutdowns, Starlight Dinner Theatre performed only one weekend of “The Lion in Winter.” Riverwalk Theatre managed to present no more than a partial weekend of “A Motel on Marvin Gardens.”

After beginning its live run of “Julius Caesar” on March 6, The Curtainless Theatre became “The Stageless and Missing Live Audience Theatre.” That weekend marked the end of local live theater and the shift to Zoom shows.

The company was the first to switch to a Zoom format to finish its second weekend of “Caesar.” Adapting so quickly from a stage to a screen format was impressive.

In May, The Curtainless Theatre helped keep area — and classic — the-

ater alive with a Zoom presentation of “Prometheus Bound.” During the summer, it also offered Zoom performances of the three Sophocles “Oedipus Cycle” plays. That included “Oedipus Rex” in July, “Oedipus at Colonus” in August, ending with “Antigone” in September.

In early October, Riverwalk joined the Zoom parade with Jane Falion’s “An Act of Madness.” The recounting of the horrific Bath school bombing was another rare opportunity for sidelined actors to be seen.

Not all Zoom projects went as planned. After a successful virtual staged reading of Janet Colson’s original “EA (Eaters Anonymous)” on Oct. 30, technical issues with the recording prevented any other viewings.

Riverwalk’s series of Idris Goodwin plays in November had no such problems. On each Monday of November, different “Short Plays for an Anti-Racist Tomorrow” were featured via Zoom.

Goodwin’s “Black Flag,” “Act Free,” “Water Gun Song” and “#MATTER” were weekly highlights. Although all different, each made a powerful statement.

Peppermint Creek Theatre produced “Hear Our Cry.” The collective readings were first shown in a drive-in movie setting in late October at a downtown Lansing parking lot. For the month of December, the Zoom performances were available to

stream.

“Hear Our Cry” showcased 12 impactful speeches represented by a cast of local and national actors. Peppermint Creek spent months soliciting ideas and contributors for the project.

Not all of 2020’s plays were restricted to Zoom showings. When Williamston Theatre wasn’t able to present “These Mortal Hosts” in April — after rehearsals had already begun — three cameras were used to record the play. For a limited time, a pay-per-view option of the slick production was available.

In October, Williamston also provided an audio “Fire Tour” that still can be downloaded for free. The classy recording directs listeners around downtown Williamston to sites of major fires that occurred in the city between the 1800s and early 1900s.

On the weekend of Aug. 21-23, Ixion Theatre hosted an actual live performance in Sharp’s Park near the Lansing Mall. Sixteen original short scripts by local writers formed the basis of their “Turn, Turn, Turn” collection — performed by 12 actors in the outdoor setting to a masked and socially distanced audience.

Alas, the rehearsals for “Turn, Turn, Turn” were done through — you guessed it — Zoom.



Finding literary comfort during a troubling year

The best books I read in 2020

By **BILL CASTANIER**

“When the Lions Were King: The Detroit Lions and the Fabulous Fifties” reminds us that a long, long time ago in a city named Detroit, there was a football team that was the best of the best. This new book, by Richard Bak, will have you pining for Hopalong Cassidy, Bobby Layne, Terry Barr, Yale Larry and their championship seasons.

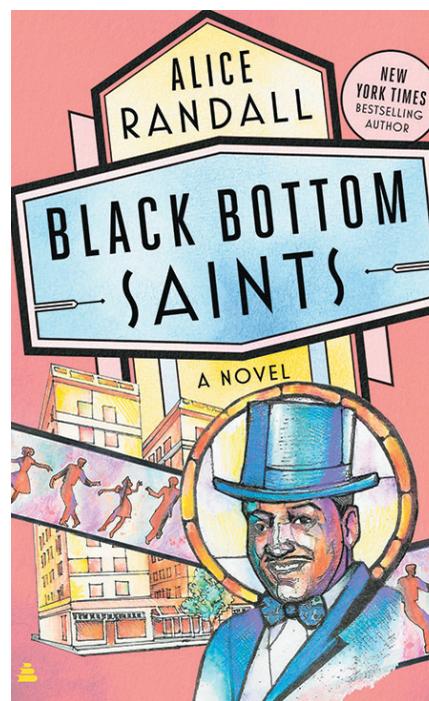
“The Dead Are Arising,” by Les Payne and his daughter, Tamara, is an impressive biography of Malcolm X. Les Payne

began the book 30 years ago, but did not live to see the book get published and win a National Book Award. “The Dead Are Arising” adds impressive new details to the life of a young Malcolm X in Lansing, based on decades-old audio recordings of Malcolm X’s friends.

“Respect: The Poetry of Detroit Music,” edited by poets M.L. Liebler and Jim Danielson, features the work of poets, writers and the voices of famed rockers, such as Jack White and Fred “Sonic” Smith. More than 142 individuals contributed to the work — including famed poet Nikki Giovanni and Lansing poet Brian Gilmore, who wrote a poem honoring Steve Wonder. This yellow-page-thick book is a gem.

“The King of Confidence,” by Miles Harvey, retells the amazing story of King James Jessie Strang, the self-anointed Mormon king of Beaver Island, who established a colony on the Lake Michigan island off the Michigan coast. The indecisive dictator, pirate and noted abolitionist, who ran the island newspaper and was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives for two terms, was assassinated by one of his own followers. Although there have been several biographies of Strang, this is the best and reveals new information about the “con-man.”

“Gangsters Up North: Mobsters, Mafia and Racketeers in Michigan’s Vacationland,” by Robert Knapp, is a fun and sometimes scholarly examination of the gangsters who vacationed in Michigan during the ’20s and ’40s. The author, a history scholar and former college professor, debunks many of the popular myths of gangsters sighted in Michigan, but also tells the real stories of gangsters who sought out Michigan. One of these mobsters is Meyer Lansky,



who used the burgeoning Michigan oil industry to laundry money. Another gangster Knapp follows is Scarface himself, Al Capone, who allegedly spent copious amounts of time in northern Michigan relaxing and hiding from the law and other gangsters. He debunks most of the sightings, but the stories of Capone’s time spending time at Round Lake and in Lansing are still considered by Knapp as probable, although there is no first-person evidence to prove that contention.

“Day of Days,” by John Smolens, a noted writer of historical fiction, explores the 1927 Bath School Bombing through the eyes of several young students who were just coming of age when the bombing killed 45, including 38 students. The sensitive look at the bombing and its impact on the com-

munity is a masterful piece of historical fiction, which also respects the history and the facts surrounding the nation’s worst school bombing.

“Black Bottom Saints” is head and shoulders above all other books I’ve read this year. It is a semi-fictionalized biography/memoir of the impresario of Detroit’s Black Bottom neighborhood, Joseph “Ziggy” Johnson. Borrowing from the Catholic Book of Saints and a cocktail recipe book, author Alice Randall tells the amazing story of Johnson, the Michigan Chronicle social and gossip columnist for more than 40 years. Lying on his deathbed, he recalls the famous and infamous “saints” he has met and worked with in Detroit during the heyday of Black Bottom, before the expressway ran through it. Randall, who was one of his thousands of students at his dance studio, recalls the magic he worked on the city with his relationships during the lingering “Up South” Jim Crow days. This is as powerful and fun of a book as you will find anywhere.

Some mystery books I can highly recommend are “Bear Bones” an intriguing mystery by local author Charles Cutter that is set on Michigan’s West Coast during the ’70s against the backdrop of the establishment of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and the controversial use of eminent domain. “Wicked Sister,” by Karen Dionne, which once again uses the natural world of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula as an important character element, is also fantastic. The psycho-thriller “Eight Perfect Murders,” by Peter Swanson, is a biblio-mystery where a killer seems to be a copycat of murderers found in classic mystery books. Finally, “Three Hours in Paris,” by Cara Black, is a heart-thumping WWII thriller about a female assassin who takes a shot at Hitler, setting off a suspenseful chase with unusual complications.

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A conversation with

ERIN BARTELS

January 5 • 7pm

The award-winning local author of *We Hope for Better Things* joins us to celebrate *All That We Carried*.

SUNRISE GRATITUDE

A conversation with

Emily Silva Hockstra

January 12 • 7pm

2020 was...complicated. Discuss setting a routine and meditation to kick off 2021.

PEACEFUL LIKE A PANDA STORYTIME

January 20 • 11am

Kira Willey (author of *Breathe Like A Bear*) joins us for *Peaceful Like A Panda* storytime. Kids can learn techniques for managing their bodies, breath, and emotions anywhere, anytime.

LIFE AMONG THE TERRANAUTS

with **Caitlin Horrocks**

January 21 • 7pm

Following her “marvelous” (*Wall Street Journal*) first novel, local author Caitlin Horrocks returns with a much-anticipated collection of short stories.

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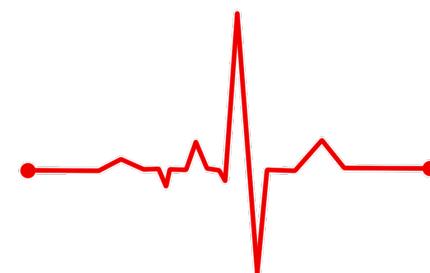
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Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"I'm Gonna Have Some Words"-- themeless time again!

by Matt Jones

Across

- 1 Underscores?
- 6 Belt holders near belts?
- 15 Establish by law
- 16 Subject of a constitutional clause
- 17 Culminated in
- 18 Porcelain, when around electricity
- 19 "Must have been news day"
- 20 Fall apart
- 21 Expand
- 22 Semiconductor classification whose first letter stands for "negative"
- 23 "Remove plastic," e.g.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15					16								
17					18								
19					20				21				
22					23			24		25			
26								27		28		29	
	30				31	32	33	34			35		
			36										
37	38	39								40	41		
42				43						44			45
46					47		48	49		50			
51			52	53		54				55			
56					57					58			
59										60			
61										62			

- 25 Wagering venue, for short
- 26 ___ Webster (Twain's "celebrated jumping frog")
- 27 BBC's Italian counterpart
- 29 Like some hours
- 30 Salty snack from an air fryer, maybe
- 36 Popeye, as the theme song goes
- 37 Passive-aggressive message header implying you should've read
- 42 Projectile at some bars
- 43 Formula One racer Vettel, to fans
- 44 Aberdeen resident
- 46 Spinning stat
- 47 Spoil, with "on"
- 50 Search engine input
- 51 Slacker's sin
- 54 Edge
- 55 Store-hours word
- 56 Restoration site of 2019
- 58 Stops on ___
- 59 Kind of phenomenon that explains why Ouija board planchettes move
- 60 1996 presidential candidate Alexander
- 61 Edge
- 62 Powers portrayer
- trust funds
- 7 "___ telling anyone"
- 8 Medium that was often psychedelic in the 1960s
- 9 Reason for a winter shot
- 10 Former Brazilian president ___ da Silva
- 11 "Diary of ___ Black Woman" (2005 film)
- 12 Put in writing
- 13 Tangled
- 14 Rave flashers
- 24 ___ d'Or (prize at Cannes)
- 28 Mosque leader
- 31 "The cow ___ [mooooo]" (pull-string toy output)
- 32 Like some bathrooms
- 33 Full of detail
- 34 "øPor quÉ no los ___?"
- 35 When Easter falls
- 37 It's "like a carrot doused in perfume," according to cookscountry.com
- 38 Go boom
- 39 More out-of-the-way
- 40 Hockey player's concern
- 41 Producers of "Dallas," "Falcon Crest," and "Knots Landing"
- 45 1840s First Family
- 48 East ___ (nation since 2002)
- 49 Nail file material
- 50 Feeling of uneasiness
- 52 Enterprise counselor Deanna
- 53 Natural rope fiber
- 57 Exclamation often prompted by Bart Simpson

Down

- 1 College founder Stanford
- 2 It's the least you can rate
- 3 Phrase said with a downcast look
- 4 "Ghostbusters" stuff
- 5 Author Harriet Beecher ___
- 6 Beneficiaries of some

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Answers Page 25

SUDOKU

Advanced

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

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 25

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezсны Dec. 30, 2020 - Jan. 5, 2021

ARIES (March 21–April 19): Author Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) carried on a long love affair with books. He read thousands of them, wrote more than 20 of them, and further postulated the existence of numerous imaginary books that were never actually written. Of all the writers who roused his adoration, a certain Russian novelist was among the most beloved. Borges wrote, "Like the discovery of love, like the discovery of the sea, the discovery of Fyodor Dostoevsky marks an important date in one's life." I'm wondering if you will experience one of these pivotal discoveries in 2021. I strongly suspect so. It may not be the work of Dostoevsky, but I bet it will have an impact close to those of your original discoveries of love and the sea.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20): Vietnamese-American novelist Viet Thanh Nguyen has won numerous awards for his work, including the Pulitzer Prize. Here are his views about the nature of accomplishment: "We don't succeed or fail because of fortune or luck. We succeed because we understand the way the world works and what we have to do. We fail because others understand this better than we do." I bring these thoughts to your attention, Taurus, because I think that in 2021 you will have an extraordinary potential to enhance your understanding of how the world works and what you must do to take advantage of that. This could be the year you become both smarter and wiser.

GEMINI (May 21–June 20): Modern civilization has not spread to every corner of the planet. There are at least 100 tribes that inhabit their own private realms, isolated from the invasive sprawl of our manic, frantic influence. Among these enclaves, many are in the Amazon rain forests, West Papua, and the Andaman Islands. I have a theory that many of us civilized people would love to nurture inner qualities akin to those expressed by indigenous people: hidden away from the mad world; content to be free of the noise and frenzy; and living in attunement with natural rhythms. In 2021, I hope you will give special care and attention to cultivating this part of you.

CANCER (June 21–July 22): Hurricane Maria struck the Caribbean island of Dominica in 2016. Scientists studied two local species of anole lizards both before and after the natural disaster. They were amazed to find that the lizards after the hurricane had super-strong grips compared to their predecessors. The creatures were better able to hold on to rocks and perches so as to avoid being swept away by high winds. The researchers' conclusion? It's an example of one of the most rapid rates of evolutionary change ever recorded. I bring this to your attention, Cancerian, because I suspect that you, too, will have the power to evolve and transform at an expedited pace in 2021—in response to positive events as much as to challenging events.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22): I hope that in 2021 you will spend a lot of time meditating on your strongest longings. Are they in harmony with your highest ideals, or not? Do they energize you or drain you? Are they healthy and holy, or are they unhealthy or unholy—or somewhere in between those two extremes? You'll be wise to re-evaluate all your burning, churning yearnings, Leo—and decide which ones are in most righteous service to your life goals. And as for those that are in fact noble and liberating and invigorating: Nurture them with all your tender ingenuity!

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): "You can't move mountains by whispering at them," says singer-songwriter Pink. Strictly speaking, you can't move mountains by shouting at them, either. But in a metaphorical sense, Pink is exactly right. Mild-mannered, low-key requests are not likely to precipitate movement in obstacles that resemble solid rock. And that's my oracle for you in the coming months, Virgo. As you carry out the project of relocating or crumbling a certain mountain, be robust and spirited—and, if necessary, very loud.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): In his masterpiece the "Mona Lisa", Leonardo da Vinci applied 30 layers of paint that were no thicker than a single human hair. Can you imagine the patience and concentration that required? I'm going to propose that you be inspired by his approach as you carry out your big projects in the coming year. I think you will have the potential to create at least one labor of love that's monumentally subtle and soulful.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): Climate change is proceeding with such speed in central Mexico that entire forests are in danger of perishing. In the hills near Ejido La Mesa, for instance, the weather is getting too hot for the fir trees that shelter millions of monarch butterflies every fall. In response, local people have joined with scientists to physically move the fir forest to a higher, cooler elevation. What might be your personal equivalent, Scorpio: an ambitious plan to carry out an idealistic yet practical project? According to my analysis of your astrological potentials, you'll have a lot of energy to work on such a scheme in 2021.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): Author Gérard de Nerval (1808–1855) made the following observation: "I do not ask of God that he should change anything in events themselves, but that he should change me in regard to things, so that I might have the power to create my own universe, to govern my dreams, instead of enduring them." If you have a relationship with the Divine Wow, that will be a perfect prayer for you to say on a regular basis in 2021. If you don't have a connection to the Supreme Intelligence, I suggest you address the same prayer to your Higher Self or Future Beauty or whatever source of sublime inspiration you hold most dear.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): The mathematically oriented website WaitButWhy.com says that the odds of winning a mega lottery can be compared to this scenario: You know that a certain hedgehog will sneeze just one time in the next six years, and you place a big bet that this sneeze will take place at exactly the 36th second of 12:05 pm next January 20. In other words, WaitButWhy.com declares, your chances of winning that lottery are very small. But while their analysis is true in general, it may not be completely applicable to you in 2021. The likelihood of you choosing the precise moment for the hedgehog's sneeze will be higher than usual. More realistically and importantly, your chances for generating positive financial luck through hard work and foresight will be much higher than usual.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): Author Anais Nin was supremely adaptable, eager to keep growing, and receptive when life nudged her to leave the past behind and expand her understanding. At the same time, she was clear about what she wanted and determined to get what she wanted. Her complex attitude is summed up in the following quote: "If you limit your choices only to what seems possible or reasonable, you disconnect yourself from what you truly want, and all that is left is compromise." I hope you will heed her counsel throughout 2021. (Here's another quote from Nin: "Had I not created my whole world, I would certainly have died in other people's.")

PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20): In 2013, workers at a clothing manufacturing plant in Gazipur, Bangladesh staged a mass protest. Did they demand a pay raise or better health benefits? Were they lobbying for air conditioning or longer lunch breaks? None of the above. In fact, they had just one urgent stipulation: to dispel the ghost that was haunting the factory. I've got a similar entreaty for you in 2021, Pisces. I request that you exorcise any and all ghosts that have been preventing you from fully welcoming in and embracing the future. These ghosts may be purely metaphorical in nature, but you still need to be forceful in banishing them.

TURN IT DOWN!

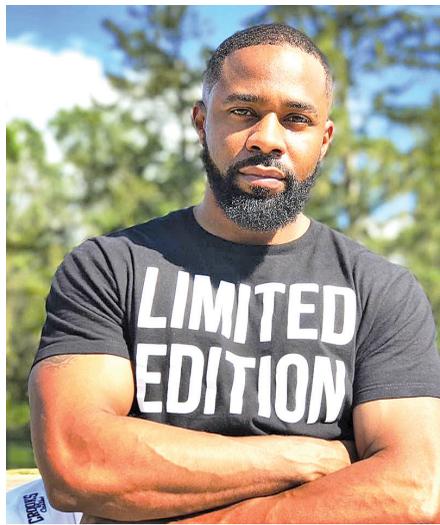
Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

AMAZING MUSIC, DREADFUL YEAR: A QUICK LOOK AT 2020



Rodeo Boys released its "Dog Leg" single (Courtesy photo)



Ward Beard, aka WardSkills, hosts "Mitten Mayhem Radio." (Courtesy photo)



A custom, feral cat Mac's Bar shirt benefits the bar's staff. (Art by Craig Horkey)

Lansing's music scene is still here, but it needs your support in 2021

With most local music venues closed or barely operating at this point, it's difficult to look back at the year in music. Hundreds of shows that should've happened didn't. Bar staff is hurting, sound techs are hurting, and — of course — so are the musicians who depend on gigging to pay bills. With that said, if you see an opportunity to support local musicians or venues, please consider doing so. The "gig economy" is a tough business, even when there isn't a pandemic, so remember those who've dedicated their lives to entertaining us. Buy their albums, buy their merch and watch their streaming events.

Of course, the pandemic put countless recording projects on hold, but some area songwriters kept that creative spark lit. Others found ways to support the scene. Here are just a few positive highlights mined from a truly grim year.

Mitten Mayhem Radio on 89.7FM [facebook.com/MittenMayhemRadio](https://www.facebook.com/MittenMayhemRadio)

Mitten Mayhem Radio on WLNZ's 89.7-FM has been a powerful force for Lansing's hip-hop scene for over five years now. Hosted by Ward Beard, aka WardSkillz, the show airs live on

Saturday nights from midnight-2 a.m. and spotlights emerging local talent, as well as business owners, athletes, politicians, public figures and more. Obviously, the program plays ample Michigan-made rap, too. Depending on the night, you could also hear live interviews, freestyles or rap cyphers. Beyond the airwaves, the show also supports the scene on its amazing YouTube channel (search: Mitten Mayhem Radio 89.7FM).

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Beard produced dozens of "Quarantine Raps" and "Vocal Distancing" videos, all featuring incredible performances from some of the finest emcees around. The series includes exclusive videos from Queen Tee, Dreal Dre, Chuck RX, Lil Whoodie, Jay Rich, Ahmad Da God, Lyric Monae, and plenty more. During this time when performers cannot perform, this channel offered a well-deserved platform. Here's to another great year of Mitten Mayhem.

Rodeo Boys — "Dogleg" [facebook.com/rodeoboysband](https://www.facebook.com/rodeoboysband)

Last summer, Rodeo Boys dropped "Cherry," its debut 11-song LP that's stacked with a smattering of grungy hooks and catchy punk-rock riffs. The

Lansing-based outfit returned a couple months back with its follow up single and video, "Dogleg." Released via Smog Moon Recordings, the punchy track teeters between hooky alt-rock and anthemic rock 'n roll. If you ever wondered what would happen if Hole and The Pixies magically melded into one dynamic outfit, look no further. Beyond the track itself, the music video fully delivers, as well. Directed by Nick and Lexi Couture, it not only features the band clad in bloody gauze, but locals Emma Risberg and Dylan Rogers offer up incredible acting cameos as brain-holding mad surgeons. It's B-movie style goodness, and a fun departure from reality — right when we need it the most.

Mac's Bar charity webstore maccsbarmerchandise.bigcartel.com

For decades, Mac's Bar has been the city's go-to grimy rock club. The large brick building on East Michigan Avenue has hosted legendary bands and countless local acts. The beer-soaked venue has been a trusty, albeit a tad dirty, haven for musicians from all genres. Need to book your friend's metal band from Chicago on a Wednesday night? Mac's Bar was

often the go-to for such missions. The staff was there, no matter how high or low of a turnout there was, to serve you and your friends.

Then, 2020 happened. Since it doesn't serve takeout food, Mac's Bar has been hit extra hard during 2020. In an effort to financially support those out-of-work staffers, a Mac's Bar charity webstore was launched and it's stocked with remarkable Mac's merch. There's a "Keys to Mac's Bar" keychain and "Golden Dumpster" pins and pocket tees (the dumpster is a legendary Mac's landmark). Lansing-based artist Craig Horkey also offered up a new gutter-punk cat t-shirt (a nod to the stray cats behind the bar) for the online store. Have a few bucks and want to support locals? Go to maccsbarmerchandise.bigcartel.com and snag some of this custom merchandise. Hopefully, soon, the world will be a safer place, and we can return to its hallowed, dirty floors and take in a show in person. Until then, let's not forget about our local scene.



OUT ON THE TOWN

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

Wednesday, December 30

Bicycle Film Festival - East Lansing - The 20th Anniversary of Bicycle Film Festival is arriving in East Lansing virtually December 18-30. Info: msubikes.wordpress.com.

Up in the Air - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Thursday, December 31

New Year Science - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual) - 6-7 p.m. facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing

Friday, January 1

Anne Hills and Michael Smith - From the Archives: Audio from the Anne Hills and Michael Smith September 27, 2013 performance will be available

streamingtenpoundfiddle.org.

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

Saturday, January 2

Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual) - 10:30-11:30 facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing

Monday, January 4

Refuge Recovery Lansing (Virtual) - 6-7 p.m. facebook.com/refugerecoverylansing

Tuesday, January 5

Can + Can Drive - Acts of Compassion is hosting a Can + Can Drive! 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Elmwood Elementary, 1533 Elmwood Rd, Lansing.



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5000 N. Grand River Ave Lansing (517) 321-3852 FB: @AirportTavernandSteakhouse

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2417 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing (517) 993-5988 eastsidefishfry.com

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voted #1 Top of the Town 2020

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 23

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

From Pg. 23

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FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Seeding the New Year

By **ARI LeVAUX**

The long nights of January always lead my imagination down a well-worn path to the garden. As I flip and click through the pages of each year's new lineup of seed catalogs, the images and descriptions of full-grown plants take my mind to an earthy paradise that is waiting in the near future and mine to plan.

For unknown reasons, instead of going ahead and placing that important order, I often hesitate, thinking I might remember something else to slip into the cart. Which is silly, of course, because I could always drag myself back online, 24/7/365, and find what I need. The seed companies already have the permission and codes to reach into my wallet and take my money. All I have to do is click "buy."

I never set out to delay my seed order too much, until the Ides of February 2020, no less, of all years, when the brand new pandemic put a run on gardening supplies, right around the time I'd placed my order.

It seems that a similar mental switch to the one that caused those skirmishes to break out in the toilet paper aisle got flipped in those inclined to garden.

The pandemic planted seeds of curiosity in many people who wanted to take some control over their own food security, just in case. In others, the seeds were already planted, and the pandemic simply added water. Either way, seed companies were deluged, and many were swamped.

My seeds were slow to arrive, but at least the order got filled. Many in the stampede of gardeners and garden-curious were not so lucky.

"We had to stop taking orders for weeks at a time, in order to pack enough seeds to keep shipping," said Jere Gettle, who founded Baker Creek Seeds in 1998. He says they operated 24 hours a day for much of the year.

"2020 was totally unprecedented, with interest in home gardening the greatest we've ever seen, even more than in 1999 before Y2K. This has probably been the biggest year since the great depression for new gardeners to start gardening," Gettle said.

To prepare for 2021, they built a 53,000-square-foot warehouse and are adding more packing machines, more staff and many more tons seed stock. But



will it be enough?

"December has been off the charts, about 3 times our normal December, with some days reaching about 6,000 orders," Gettle said. The biggest growth category was Asian greens. "Tatsoi, Yod Fah Chinese Broccoli and other vitamin rich varieties."

The 2020 catalog, printed in 2019, had a distinctly purple tinge, with dark, deep shades of indigo and violet varieties of corn, squash, beans, sunflowers and greens on display, among others, while this year's color scheme is decidedly scarlet.

"We often use red and purple featured on the covers and elsewhere, as these are both strong colors that are both beautiful and powerful, and represent some of the most powerful nutrients like anthocyanin and Lycopene," Gettle explained.

Like "Strawberry Spinach," a relative of lambsquarter that develops sweet edible berries under the leaf stems. There is also the brilliant red "Strawberry Popcorn," which really is corn — and really pops — as well as strawberry plants that are actual strawberries, such as the sweet and fragrant "Regina Alpine Strawberry," as well as red plants that don't contain the word "strawberry," like the "Jing Orange Okra" and "Pusa Rudhira Red Carrot."

Suffice it to say, I won't be waiting until February again this year. I'll have my order in by the Ides of January at the latest. Also known as "by the time you read this." So I have nothing to lose by urging you to do your genetics selection as soon as possible.

When you seed shop, don't seed shop as if you plan to homestead the back 40 square feet, because if you had to homestead for a living you would surely starve. Being friends with a farmer could feed you more than a torn-up front lawn, but to be safe you should do both.

Homesteading in your urban or suburban lot may not save you many trips to the grocery store, but you could probably live on what you can buy at the farmers



Courtesy of Baker Creek Seeds

Chinese Watermelon Radish.

market, or at the farmstands that are popping up everywhere. That's what I do, summer and winter. As I write this in the 10-degree waning light of 2020, I've got cabbage, kale, squash and potatoes, parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme, all from the market, plus garlic for my meat, baby bok choy for my ramen, and carrots, celery and onions for my mirepoix.

Buy seeds with an aim to augment what you can already acquire from your local food system.

Planting a garden is fun and worth doing, but if you want to make a real investment in your food security, invest in your local food system by buying locally. It's an investment that pays an immediate dividend, in the form of food for your money, while your money strengthens the food system itself in the

long term.

But none of this would happen without seeds. Indeed, the impossibility of growing food without them reinforces the importance of seed banks, which protect, organize and stand ready to offer the seeds in the event a variety of crop is otherwise wiped out.

While seed banks try to stay removed and above the fray, for-profit seed companies are like privately run seed banks. Rather than for storage and preservation, seed companies are built and equipped to disperse as many plant seeds as commercially possible to the gardens of the world, which themselves function as living seed banks. I can't help wondering if the seed companies truly work for the owners and gardeners, or for the plants themselves.

And gardeners, meanwhile, the organically organized seed militia being necessary to the security of food, are the infantry of a resilient community.

As for toilet paper — let's face it. You can wipe with almost anything.

Flash in the Pan is food writer Ari LeVaux's weekly recipe column. It runs in about 100 newspapers nationwide, nourishing food sections large and small with complete protein for the belly brain.

TOP FIVE

DINING GUIDE!

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 Central Park Place Okemos • 517-349-7500
 marusushi.com
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 sansu-sushi.com • 517-333-1933
- 3. Sushi Moto**
 436 Elmwood Rd Lansing
 sushimoto.us • 517-580-4321
- 4. Ukai Hibachi Grill & Sushi Bar - West Lansing**
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