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# CityPULSE

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A newspaper for the rest of us

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WHAT DOES THE ECONOMY HOLD IN STORE? LET'S PEER INTO...

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IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, TOWNS WILL SIMPLY ADOPT WAL-MART STORE NUMBERS AS NAMES.

WITHIN THE THREE CITIES, INTERNATIONAL ELITES WILL BUY UP THE WALKABLE CORES.

EVERYONE ELSE WILL BE FORCED INTO DISTANT EXURBS, WHERE THEY LIVE IN SHACKS MADE FROM FOUND OBJECTS.

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# CityPULSE

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Resolutions of Lansing leaders for 2021



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Starfarm's frontwoman on the band and her career



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Flash in the Pan: Intermittent Feasting



**Cover Art**

Photo by Khalid Ibrahim • Design by Terry Sieting

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

**ONE YEAR FROM NOW**  
HAPPY NEW YEAR! WE MADE IT THROUGH 2021 SOMEHOW!

REMEMBER WHEN WE THOUGHT 2020 WAS TERRIBLE? WE DIDN'T KNOW HOW LUCKY WE WERE!

WHO EVER IMAGINED THAT THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN EXILE AT MAR-A-LAGO WOULD GET AHOOLD OF **NUCLEAR WEAPONS**?

SHAME ABOUT NEW YORK CITY! I'LL MISS THE PLACE!

NOT THAT WE DARE TRAVEL, WITH THE FLESH-DISSOLVING **ULTRA COVID** SURGING EVERYWHERE!

I SAW AN ANTI-PROTECTIVE-SUIT PROTESTER LIQUIFY INTO **GOO** AT THE WALMART YESTERDAY!

AND DON'T EVEN GET ME **STARTED** ON THE BRAIN-EATING **SPACE PARASITES**! LIKE WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS **ALREADY**?

LET ALONE THE UNSPEAKABLE LOVECRAFTIAN **HORRORS** CRAWLING OUT OF THAT TRANSDIMENSIONAL PORTAL BENEATH **LOS ANGELES**!

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, 2021 WAS THE WORST YEAR THAT COULD **EVER** POSSIBLY HAPPEN!

THINGS WILL **DEFINITELY** GET BETTER IN 2022! I'M **SURE** OF IT!

**A YEAR AFTER THAT**  
WOW, I DIDN'T EXPECT THE EARTH TO BREAK OUT OF ORBIT AND BEGIN TO PLUNGE INEXORABLY TOWARD THE **SUN**!

NEXT YEAR **CAN'T** BE ANY WORSE!

AT LEAST, UNTIL WE PLUNGE INTO THE **SUN**.

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# PULSE

# NEWS & OPINION

## 2021: Be it resolved

### Councilman pleads faulty memory

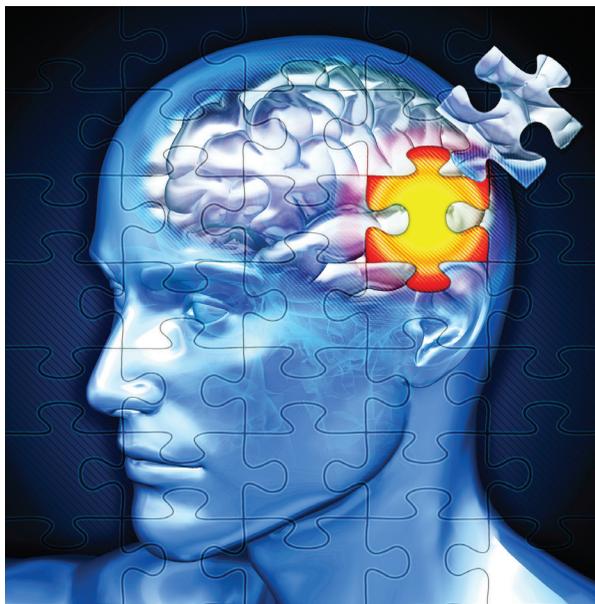
The new year is off to a rough start for Lansing City Councilman Brian Jackson, who represents the city's Fourth Ward. Reacting to a City Pulse review that found he missed 11 out of 12 meetings of the Committee on Ways and Means last year, Jackson suggested a deficient memory was to blame. We have a hard time believing that a sitting member of the Council could just forget what committees they serve on and when they meet. Besides, he also missed five out of the nine Public Safety Committee meetings and all 12 of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission sessions in 2020. Jackson's absenteeism speaks to a lack of commitment to fulfilling the responsibilities of his office, for which he receives a taxpayer-funded paycheck. Being an election year, we don't think he should be ejected from office for his negligence, although Council rules are very clear that any member who fails to attend meetings can be expelled by his or her colleagues. Be it resolved that Jackson's Fourth Ward constituents can decide later this year if their no-show Councilman is up to another term, provided he decides to run again.

### All aboard the sedition train

Just when you thought things couldn't get any crazier in the transition to the Biden presidency, now comes U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, whose district includes the west side of Greater Lansing, stepping up to the plate to do his part to destroy our democracy by refusing to certify the results of the Electoral College vote. Walberg, a Republican who laughably claimed to be "bipartisan" during his thoroughly disingenuous reelection campaign, has proven once again that he is a rabid Trumpster who is perfectly content to sacrifice his own integrity and credibility to please his unhinged master. Be it resolved that the appropriate legal authorities determine if sedition charges are warranted as Walberg and his unpatriotic peers continue to work to overthrow the will of the people.

### Mayor's race ready to roll

We expect it won't be long before the 2021 race for Lansing mayor kicks into high gear. The field is likely to include former Mayor Virg Bernero, At-Large City Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley and incum-



## The CP Edit

### Opinion

bent Mayor Andy Schor, although Schor has yet to announce if he intends to run for reelection and the other two have not yet made it official. Assuming he runs, will Lansing voters decide to keep Andy? Go another round with Bernero? Or elect the first Black woman mayor in the city's history? Be it resolved that we're keeping our powder dry on supporting any of them for now and look forward to hearing the candidates make their case to Lansing voters.

### Waiting to exhale

Lest we forget the tragic death of Haslett resident Anthony Hulon in the Lansing city jail in April, ostensibly after being asphyxiated by jailers in much the same way that Minneapolis police killed George Floyd, we urge Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel to expedite her review of the case to determine if Hulon's death was a criminal act. Nessel moved relatively quickly to dispense with allegations against Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's team for allegedly steering a no-bid contract to a politically favored

firm as part of the state's COVID-19 contact tracing program. Be it resolved that Nessel works just as hard to give Hulon's grieving family the justice and closure they deserve, and to hold accountable any Lansing jail employee who acted negligently or criminally in restraining Hulon while he pleaded that he couldn't breathe. Be it further resolved that Mayor Schor and Lansing Police Chief Daryl Green come clean about why they misled the public about the nature of the incident and why they continue to stonewall efforts by the media to get to the bottom of the story.

### Kindness matters

One of the best antidotes for anger and dismay is kindness. With a thoroughly unsettling year in the rearview mirror, and with enormous challenges facing national, state and city leaders as we dig our way out of the COVID hole, let us all practice as much kindness as possible toward our fellow humans. Kindness doesn't pay the rent or put food on the table, but it costs nothing and generates positive dividends by reminding us that we are more alike than we are different and that we are all in this together. Be it resolved that each of us will make it a point to be kind to one another as the new year unfolds.

### Support great journalism

With 2021 well underway, City Pulse remains committed to providing the Greater Lansing community with insightful, thought-provoking and entertaining journalism on the most important issues of the day. You can help! Be it resolved that you might consider a donation to City Pulse or the City Pulse Fund for Community Journalism. Congress has kept in place a \$300 tax deduction for another year for all gifts to 501(c)3s such as the City Pulse Fund, regardless if you itemize. If the deduction won't help you, then please contribute directly to City Pulse. If you would like to mail a check, please make it out to City Pulse or City Pulse Fund for Community Journalism and mail it to City Pulse, 1905 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48912. For credit cards, go to: [www.lansingcitypulse.com/donation](http://www.lansingcitypulse.com/donation) or call Suzi Smith at (517) 999-6704. She can also answer any questions.

Send letters to the editor to [letters@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:letters@lansingcitypulse.com).  
Please limit them to 250 words

# Lansing Councilman 'forgot' to attend committee meetings in 2020

## Jackson 'embarrassed' after missing 11 out of 12 Ways and Means sessions

Lansing City Councilman Brian Jackson hopes local residents will forgive his forgetfulness after records showed he missed 11 out of 12 meetings of the Ways and Means Committee — in part because he “forgot” his committee assignment after the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, he said.



Jackson

Jackson, who was elected in 2017 to represent the 4th Ward, was appointed to the City Council's finance-oriented Committee on Ways and Means last January. Minutes show he attended only one meeting in 2020, missing the committee's second meeting in February and 10 more through November.

Jackson also missed five of the nine Committee on Public Safety meetings, two City Council meetings and one Committee of the Whole meeting in 2020, records showed. A City Pulse analysis determined he had the spottiest attendance of any member of the City Council in 2020.

County records also show that Jack-

son missed all 12 meetings of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission last year. He was appointed to serve on that 19-member board in February alongside Councilmen Peter Spadafore and Brandon Betz and City Clerk Chris Swope.

But it was his Ways and Means assignment that he said he just plain forgot.

“Not sure how I forgot about that, but I was operating in most of 2020 like I was not on Ways and Means. Thank you for bringing it to my attention,” Jackson told City Pulse, which compiled attendance records for all eight members of the City Council earlier today. “I'm embarrassed.”

Minutes show Jackson attended the Ways and Means committee's first meeting in January and had an excused absence for the next one in February.

The pandemic arrived in March, shifting the next (newly virtualized) committee meeting to July. But by then, Jackson had entirely “forgot” that he was assigned to the three-person committee alongside Council President Spadafore and Councilwoman Carol Wood, he said.

At this week's City Council meeting, Jackson issued a “public apology” for his poor attendance following a brief text message exchange with a City Pulse reporter on Monday. Jackson has yet to respond to several questions, including on whether he intends to run for reelection this year.

His term representing the Fourth Ward in northwest Lansing expires on Dec. 31.

“I basically forgot I was on the committee,” Jackson told the City Council at tonight's meeting. “Thankfully, city business was not delayed as the other committee members were able to pass business and move it forward in my absence. I assure you all that it won't happen again.”

The three-person Ways and Means Committee needs two Council members to establish a quorum. Leaving only Wood and Spadafore on board last year, committee business could have been paused by something as simple as a bathroom break. Neither could miss a meeting.

“Our office manager sends meeting requests. We all agree to the schedule,” Spadafore said today. “I'm not exactly sure it's my duty to track down everyone's individual schedules, but with such a small number of people on the committee, attendance issues can present challenges.”

Spadafore, as newly reelected president in 2021, said he will consider reconfiguring committee assignments this year. That lineup will be announced at a Council meeting later this month, but could include a streamlined approach in which some similar committees are merged with others.

As for whether Jackson's attendance

will affect his consideration for committee roles this year?

“Those decisions will be made entirely based on interest and history,” Spadafore added.

The Ways and Means committee reviews any and all budget modifications and programmatic audits, as well as provides oversight to the city's short- and long-term financial condition, workforce needs and policy recommendations on nearly all finance-related matters in Lansing.

In 2020, that committee looked at several hot-button issues in Lansing, including the concept of police divestment and planned changes to retirement benefits, among dozens of other topics. Spadafore and Wood attended all 12 meetings. Jackson was absent from 11 of them.

Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar was late to arrive for at least a dozen City Council or Committee of the Whole meetings scheduled last year. Most other Council members missed a meeting or two. Spadafore and Wood were only late to one meeting each in 2020.

Under City Charter, the City Council can require its members to maintain a certain threshold of meeting attendance and reprimand repeated unexcused absences with office forfeiture. No recorded instance of the mechanism ever having been used could be found.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

## Unfair to Democratic crooks?

By ERIC FREEDMAN

(MSU journalism professor Eric Freedman has been reporting on government and politics since 1976. He shared a Pulitzer Prize for reporting in 1994 as a statehouse reporter for the Detroit News.)

President Donald Trump's lame-duck pardons have drawn righteous wrath — corrupt politicians, war criminals, nefarious political operatives and personal friends whose convictions were erased or prison sentences eased because of their close ties with the outgoing president.

In Michigan, former U.S. Rep. Mark Siljander, a Republican, is no longer a certified ex-felon.

That's thanks to his pardon for obstructing justice and serving as a foreign agent for an Islamic charity that hired him to lobby Congress to be removed from a list of organizations that allegedly supported terrorism.

He pleaded guilty to those crimes and in 2012 received a one-year federal prison term.

Siljander initially won the Southwest Michigan seat in 1981 to finish the term of fellow Republican David Stockman, who stepped down to become President Ronald Reagan's budget director. He then won reelection twice before his 1986 primary defeat.

He is one of four corrupt GOP former members of Congress to receive lame-duck pardons. The others are from Texas, New York and California. Trump has given a free pass to other Republican politicians, including pardons to former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio (contempt of court) in 2017 and, most recently, Utah state Rep. Philip Lyman (trespassing on federal land) and former Florida county commissioner Mary McCarty (honest services fraud).

One high-profile Democrat also

received a big break: Last February, Trump commuted the 14-year sentence of former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich (wire fraud, conspiracy, false statements and corrupt solicitation of funds).

But what about Michigan's corrupt Democratic politicians? We have plenty of contenders. Don't they also deserve to benefit during the irrationality of the president's pardon pandemic?

If so, disgraced former Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick should be at the top of the list. His lengthy corruption spree and the high price tag to Detroit and Michigan taxpayers for his wrongdoing rival that of several of Trump's pardoned corporate criminals.

Kilpatrick is doing his time at Oakdale Federal Correctional Institution in Louisiana and is scheduled for release on January 18, 2037, according to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

Shouldn't Monica Conyers, the former Detroit City Council member who

received a 37-month prison sentence for accepting a bribe, be on the official forgiveness register?

How about Diane Hathaway, the Democratic state Supreme Court justice sentenced to a year and a day in the clink for bank fraud?

Or former state Sen. Bert Johnson of Detroit, who got 90 days for conspiracy to commit theft?

Or former Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith, who pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice and is awaiting sentencing.

If the president is awarding presumptive pardons for those not yet convicted, he could keep such indicted Democratic officials as Taylor Mayor Rick Sollars (bribery and wire fraud) on the priority list.

And if Trump could posthumously pardon suffrage advocate Susan B. Anthony, convicted of illegal voting — he'd call it election fraud today, wouldn't he? — couldn't he do the same for the late U.S. Rep. Charles Diggs Jr. of Detroit, who received a three-year sentence for mail fraud?

# REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI

## Spadafore picked for another year as City Council president

Lansing City Council President Peter Spadafore and Vice President Adam Hussain will retain their leadership roles on the Council in 2021 after their colleagues voted, 8-0, on Monday night to keep the same team as 2020. Ingham County officials also voted for consistency on Monday evening, reelecting Commissioner Bryan Crenshaw to his third year as chairman of the Board of Commissioners to serve alongside newly named Vice Chairman Derrell Slaughter.

## Sparrow welcomes a New Year's baby — Ahmed Aden

Lansing's Sparrow Hospital's first baby of 2021 — Ahmed Aden — was born Friday at 1:21 a.m. to parents Safiya Abdullahi and Mohamed Abdi. The Lansing State Journal reports that Ahmed Aden had trouble breathing when he was born and remains in the NICU.

## Lansing cops investigate Skymint burglaries

The Lansing Police Department is investigating two recent burglaries at Skymint's dispensary on Saginaw Street after suspects dressed in all black reportedly pried open the back door and made off with an undisclosed amount of cannabis products. Police officials said burglary alarms were reported at 12:30 a.m. Dec. 28 and 3 a.m. Jan. 3. The cases remain unresolved.

## Cannabis-infused drinks en route to Michigan

The Michigan Marijuana Regulatory Agency released a bulletin Monday that outlines the first approval process for obtaining state licensing for the production of marijuana-infused beverages, including guidance that requires drinks be shelf stable and not contain any alcohol content.

## Federal judge denies motion to overturn election

In a spirited opinion released this week, D.C. District Judge James E. Boasberg denied a claim from the Wisconsin Voters Alliance that sought to overturn the results of the presidential election in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Georgia and Arizona. Boasberg concluded his scathing opinion by noting the plaintiffs' case had a poor likelihood of success.

## Whitmer signs bills to expand criminal justice reform

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed a series of bills to advance criminal justice reform in Michigan. Among them: a bipartisan "Good Moral Character" package that limits licensing agencies from considering criminal convictions when assessing the moral character of the applicant. The "Clean Slate for Kids" package also seals juvenile court records from public view and creates an automatic



expungement process for kids that avoids criminal charges.

## Home invasion leads to 93-year-old man's death

A 33-year-old Lansing man could face murder charges after police said he assaulted a 60- and 93-year-old man Dec. 30 at a home on the 1700-block of North High Street. Lansing Police Department officials said Micah Ezekiel Davis, 33, fled the scene but was located and arrested "within a short time period" near Saginaw and Comfort streets. The 93-year-old man died from his injuries Monday. As a result, police officials said that assault charges levied against Davis may soon be elevated to homicide charges.

## Student athletes can now be paid in Michigan

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation that enables student athletes to use their own name, image, likeness and reputation for financial compensation — marking the first time in Michigan history that collegiate athletes can cash in.

## Opioid overdoses fuel rise in drug-related deaths

The first three quarters of 2020 have reportedly seen 147 drug-related deaths in Ingham, Eaton, Shiawassee, Isabella and Ionia counties — the same number logged in all of 2019, reports the Lansing State Journal. The recent spike in drug-related deaths marks the highest increase reported since the data started being compiled by the Medical Examiner's Office in 2017.

## Abandoned pit bull puppy triggers local probe

Ingham County Animal Control officers are investigating a possible case of animal cruelty after a 5-month-old pit bull puppy was found tied to a kennel on the side of Waverly Road last week in Lansing. The puppy is receiving medical care. Those with information about the abandonment are asked to anonymously call 517-676-876 or email reportanimalcruelty@ingham.com.

## Arcade fans rally to support Pinball Pete's in East Lansing

The owners of Pinball Pete's near in East Lansing have raised more than \$93,000 as part of a crowdfunding campaign to help save the struggling business. Many donors are nostalgic alumni and former customers from both Michigan State University and the University of Michigan.

# Five unresolved Capitol issues in 2021

Yeah, yeah, I know, thank God 2020 is over. I hear you.

That said, it's impossible after a newsworthy year like that to not have some carryover issues to deal with.

For the Michigan Legislature, here's my top five. Give me another 650 words and I could tick off five more.

**1. Unemployment insurance** — The governor wants the unemployed to be eligible for 26 weeks of benefits as opposed to current 20, a number then-Gov. Rick Snyder created back in 2011 in reaction to the UI Fund's massive Great Recession-era debt.

Republican legislative leaders are OK with 26 weeks when the economy is sputtering due to COVID-19 restrictions. They don't want it to be a permanent thing.

Another thing.

Businesses pay into the UI fund, not the state. Republican lawmakers linked a temporary expanded 26-week benefit to a \$220 million state-paid bailout of the fund. They argued business has suffered enough from COVID-inspired government shutdowns.

With the feds riding to the rescue with its latest \$980 billion COVID recovery bill, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer vetoed it.

When Republicans and business interests are done painting Whitmer a hard-hearted scrooge, there will be a new round of negotiations. Still, it's hard to see anything passing until February, at the earliest.

**2. Police officer reform** — When the Black Lives Matter protests were happening just about everywhere last summer, the Republican House and Senate passed separate bills requiring police training in de-escalation techniques, implicit bias and crisis intervention.

Then, nothing. Apparently, the bills got tied up into a larger discussion about banning chokeholds, a duty for police officers to intervene when a colleague goes bananas and an end to qualified immunity for off-duty police officers.

Since the Legislature was passing expungement reform and decriminalization at the time, the police officer conduct stuff got pushed to the backburner until it was forgotten entirely. 2021 is a new year.

**3. More COVID-19 relief for restaurants, other businesses** — Whether this is done in the courts or through further spending bills, Michigan businesses forced to close to prevent COVID-19 spread, will eventually demand reimbursement.

Maybe some of the federal money goes here. If the state ends up not being in its projected \$1 billion hole, it's possible General Fund money is used.

But Republicans will insist restaurants, movie theaters and other venues be made whole. Whitmer, ultimately, will realize the political benefit to going there.

**4. Absentee ballot counting** — Giving city clerks only one extra day to prepare absentee ballots for counting was woefully inadequate last November. It's hard to argue otherwise.

The Machiavellian in me guesses Republicans set up the absentee voting system to be painfully slow so President Trump had something to blame his presumed loss on in Michigan.

Regardless, Republican legislators are coming around to the realization that if you don't want the uncomfortably bright national spotlight shining on Michigan the day after Election Day, the answer is to let clerks count absentee ballots early.

Set up a fair system. Republican and Democratic poll watchers and challengers work together during regular business hours, not under pressure early Wednesday morning with little to no sleep. Corners won't be cut. Everyone will know what's going on. It's working in Florida. It can work here.

**5. Elliott Larsen Civil Rights expansion** — Eventually, the secretary of state will certify that the Fair Michigan ballot initiative to expand civil rights to the LGBTQ community has the signatures to go on the 2022 ballot if the Legislature doesn't approve it first.

Republicans don't want this. This is not 2004. This is 2021, and this is a loser for them, particularly, among independents. They don't need a key Whitmer contingency group to be motivated to vote during her re-election year in 2022.

As they did with minimum wage and paid sick leave in 2018, look for Republicans to pass something to keep this off next year's ballot.

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



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

# State health officials track Michigan's 500,000th COVID-19 case

## Another 28 dead this week from viral complications in Greater Lansing

Michigan hit another grim milestone this week after it tracked its 500,000th confirmed case of the coronavirus in the state. The first two cases were recorded about 10 months ago next week.

Among the half-million cases: More than 21,000 cases tracked to date in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties, including another 1,200 cases and 27 deaths tracked within the last week.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said "hope is on the horizon" in the form of a safe and effective vaccine distribution campaign that will continue through the first several months of 2021. In the first three weeks, nearly 130,000 Michiganders have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine — an average of about 9,300 vaccines administered per day last week, state officials reported.

Still, thousands of health care workers who would be first in line for a coronavirus vaccine are declining to take it, potentially slowing efforts to curb the pandemic this week, reports Bridge Michigan. Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail estimated up to 40% of those eligible for the vaccine have declined it, though she remains hopeful that vaccine confidence is on the rise.

Meanwhile, a federal report shows

Michigan still ranks among the worst in the nation for vaccine rates among health care workers and first responders. Only Arizona, Kansas, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia have vaccinated fewer people per capita, CDC data shows.

### In related news ...

Ten city of Lansing employees will assist with COVID-19 vaccine distribution this week by providing traffic control and registration assistance while first responders and frontline health-care workers receive the vaccine, Mayor Andy Schor announced.

After state officials mandated colleges and universities to postpone inperson instruction until Jan. 18, spring classes are slated to start a week behind schedule at Michigan State University. Beginning Jan. 11, students will begin a weeklong "reading, reviewing and reflection" prior to the start of virtual classes on Jan. 19 and a transition to inperson classes that begins on Jan. 25.

The city of East Lansing is hosting a photo contest this month titled "Why I Wear A Mask." Residents can submit photos of themselves wearing a mask downtown, along with a short narrative explaining why masks are important, for a chance to win gift card vouchers of up to \$100. Visit [cityofeastlansing.com/whymask](http://cityofeastlansing.com/whymask) for details or to submit an entry before Feb. 1.

Michigan's Upper Peninsula turned

CORONAVIRUS IN MICHIGAN									
BY THE NUMBERS...						WEEK 43			
MICHIGAN									
	12/29/20	1/5/21	WEEKLY CHANGE						
<b>CASES</b>	483,922	504,410	^4%						
<b>DEATHS</b>	12,282	12,867	^5%						
GREATER LANSING			EATON CO.						
	12/29/20	1/5/21	WEEKLY CHANGE			12/29/20	1/5/21	WEEKLY CHANGE	
<b>CASES</b>	20,049	21,275	^6%		<b>CASES</b>	4,313	4,628	^7%	
<b>DEATHS</b>	308	355	^9%		<b>DEATHS</b>	89	100	^12%	
INGHAM CO.			CLINTON CO.						
	12/29/20	1/5/21	WEEKLY CHANGE			12/29/20	1/5/21	WEEKLY CHANGE	
<b>CASES</b>	12,212	12,753	^4%		<b>CASES</b>	3,524	3,895	^11%	
<b>DEATHS</b>	179	191	^7%		<b>DEATHS</b>	40	44	^10%	

into a COVID-19 hot spot during the latest surge in cases, according to a report from the Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism. In the last few months, more than 13,500 Yoopers contracted the virus, a threefold increase since the pandemic began in March. The death toll was starker: 337 dead in 10 weeks, up from 46 deaths in the first seven months, according to reports first pub-

lished in the Detroit Free Press. Kid Rock announced on Twitter this week that he plans to donate \$100,000 to help small businesses hit by coronavirus-related shutdowns. The money will be donated to the Barstool Fund, a nonprofit launched by Barstool Sports founder Dave Portnoy amid the pandemic.

— KYLE KAMINSKI



### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regular meetings of the Board of Water and Light Commissioners of the City of Lansing, Michigan, are scheduled to be held at 5:30 p.m., at the Board of Water and Light Executive Office Depot Facility, 1201 S. Washington Ave, Lansing, Michigan or conducted via WebEx Conferencing due to public safety concerns resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic, on the following dates:

**2021  
Lansing Board of Water & Light Board of Commissioners  
Regular Board Meeting Schedule**

Tuesday	January 26
Tuesday	March 23
Tuesday	May 25
Tuesday	July 27
Tuesday	September 28
Tuesday	November 16

In the event a special meeting or rescheduled meeting is held, a notice will be posted in the Lobby area of the Executive Office, 1201 S. Washington Ave., Lansing, Michigan, at least 18 hours prior to the time of the meeting.

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# Senator's claims about suspended bar don't hold up

(This story originally appeared, in a slightly different format, at the Michigan Advance online site, [www.michiganadvance.com](http://www.michiganadvance.com).)

A floor speech by state Sen. Tom Barrett, R-Charlotte, last month alleged that Michigan Liquor Control Commission inspectors preyed on the “human compassion” of



Barrett

the owners of Charlie's Bar and Grill in Potterville by suspending its liquor license for operating despite a state-ordered shutdown during the pandemic.

Barrett's video has gone viral in conservative circles as evidence of the abuse and overreach of the state government in the age of COVID-19.

The problem? The story Barrett told is untrue in all aspects except one: Liquor Control did suspend the liquor license of Charlie's Bar and Grill on Dec. 14.

Here's a fact check of Barrett's speech:

## The claim

Barrett stood on the floor of the Michigan Senate on Dec. 18 and told “a story about a business in my district.” Here's the entire speech, as recorded in the Senate Journal:

“Recently, a man dropped by Charlie's while some employees were taking a break inside. I had a couple of guys who were helping me out. During the downtime, I had them come inside and eat a couple of sandwiches,” said John Devine who's the manager. “While they were inside, a man approached them. The man told John that he was really lonely and asked if he could have something to eat. John and his wife felt bad for the man and served him a meal.”

“I wish I could tell you that this act of human compassion went relatively unnoticed and was simply a long list of unrecognized good deeds that are done on behalf of our fellow men and women every day. But not in 2020 and not in Gretchen Whitmer's Michigan, where it's always winter and never Christmas. Instead, we learned that the man who walked in asking for a meal was actually playing an elaborate ruse. He was an enforcement officer with the Liquor Control Commission dispatched to lay the screws to guys like John just trying their best to survive. A couple of days ago, John learned that he had

A GOP senator told a heart-wrenching story about a hometown bar hurt by COVID-19 orders. But almost none of it was true.



Todd Heywood/City Pulse

Charlie's Bar and Grill in Potterville has been serving a 30-day suspension of its liquor license since Dec. 14. Claims the violations were a result of an “act of human compassion” have been proven false.

his liquor license suspended. Merry Christmas, John.”

Devine, the manager of Charlie's, made the same allegations in an interview with WLNS TV in Lansing.

“Devine says a man came in and said he was lonely and tired of being stuck in the house,” that station reported on Dec. 16. “Him and his wife felt sorry for him and allowed him to sit down and eat, but what they didn't know was he worked for the Michigan Liquor Commission, which then suspended the restaurant's liquor license.”

## The facts

According to testimony provided during a Dec. 23 hearing before Administrative Law Judge Michael St. Johns, the agent from Liquor Control stopped at the bar on Dec. 3.

Video of the agent's visit showed the investigator leaving his vehicle, entering the bar and saddling up the bar. A woman with a young child strapped to her chest and no mask on approached the investigator and provided him a menu.

The video revealed that eight adults were unmasked, eating food and being served alcohol in violation of the state's pandemic emergency orders from Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Robert Gordon. Those orders prohibit indoor dining and alcohol service in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Liquor Control spokeswoman Jeanne Vogel denied that the investigator misled staff at the bar.

“The accusations are false that the investigator posed as a poor, hungry, person in need,” she wrote in an email.

The suspension order was served on Dec. 14. The investigator, accompanied by a Potterville Police Department officer, taped the suspension order — a large bright orange sign — on the door and then entered.

When the investigator explained why he was there, John Devine, the manager, became angry and began to berate the investigator as a “communist motherf---er” and a “traitor.” The incident was caught on the body camera video released by the Potterville Police Department.

St. Johns, the administrative law judge, called the outburst, which was played during the hearing, “extremely disturbing and disappointing.” He later called Devine's behavior “reprehensible.”

Charlie Devine, John's brother and the owner of Charlie's Bar and Grill, admitted the violations contained in the suspension on Dec. 23. St. Johns ordered a 30-day license suspension and a \$600 fine. John Devine also was ordered to produce a written apology to the inspector he verbally abused.

“This is you getting off lightly,” St. Johns told the bar owners. “There

are going to be severe and substantial consequences if there are further violations.”

## The verdict

Both John Devine's story and the one relayed by Barrett are false.

Devine admits that he did not personally hear the alleged story. “I was working in the kitchen,” he told the Advance. “I have to rely on what my wife told me.”

He said her observations were backed up by “the guys at the rail” while the investigator was ordering. Video of the actual order was not made part of the public hearing record.

The men that were being served when the inspector was present were bar regulars who had helped him with some upkeep on the bar.

“I mean, we've been in business for 25 years and we're in a podunk town in the middle of nowhere,” he said. “These are guys who call us and tell us they won't be in because they have the flu or diarrhea or — you know what I mean? They're like family.”

He declined to say whether he would write a letter of apology to the investigator, as required in the settlement agreement with Liquor Control and directed by St. Johns, the administrative law judge.

“That's a private thing,” he said. “It's no one's business if I write that or not.”

He maintained that the violation, which “we stipulated to,” was minor and “not like we were out there advertising we were open and serving people in violation of the orders.” He calls the actions “tyranny.”

Barrett did not respond to requests for comment. Amber McCann, spokeswoman for the GOP Senate caucus, also did not respond to an inquiry. But a fellow state senator and the WLNS news director did.

Neighboring Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr., D-East Lansing, told the Advance that “at the very least, Sen. Barrett owes his constituents an apology.”

WLNS News Director Jam Sardar said of his station's reporting: “We take our commitment to the community and the accuracy of our news product very seriously. It appears that new information has come to light to discredit the owner's recounting of the events. We have immediately taken this story off of our website and will be investigating this further in order to follow up and provide the complete story.”

— TODD HEYWOOD

# Resolve Greater Lansing:

## Local leaders outline vision for 2021



It's a new year. We asked dozens of local leaders: How can we resolve to make Greater Lansing a better place in 2020? Here's what they said:

### Lansing's Prospective Mayoral Candidates

#### Andy Schor, Lansing Mayor Prospective Lansing mayoral candidate

The top priority for 2021 is to stay safe amid the pandemic. We must continue to practice social distancing, wear masks around others, help local businesses as possible and fight the common enemy: COVID-19. The City will provide COVID-safe activities for residents and will partner with the county Health Department to vaccinate



Schor

Lansing residents and workers. Lansing will strengthen its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Mayor's Racial Justice and Equity Alliance will work with the city's diversity officer to finalize and implement their recommendations. We will commit to addressing climate change and sustainability through Lansing's climate action plan. And I will work with the City Council to provide expected services while navigating

reduced revenues due to the economic consequences of COVID-19. We will build on last year's growth, adding to the successful efforts of opening a downtown grocery store, adding new housing, installing new public art, providing rental and mortgage assistance and increasing services for those in need. Lansing is resilient, and ready for 2021!



#### Patricia Spitzley, Lansing City Councilwoman Prospective Lansing mayoral candidate

I resolve to ensure that all Lansing residents feel safe, valued and respected. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt for a long time. Humans are not meant to be so isolated. Mental health, domestic violence and child abuse are the unintended consequences of a necessary quarantine. We have also faced the ugly specter of hate



Spitzley

and divisiveness, not only across the nation, but in our own community. I resolve to continue work started in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, created as part of a resolution that declared racism a public health crisis. I resolve to hold the administration accountable as we seek out waste in city government, while providing our residents with the best



services and ensuring that they have a clean, safe to live. We must continue to seek out opportunities to diversify and grow our economy. We must not be afraid to meet new challenges. Distrust in city government and budget shortfalls await us, but by working together we will persevere.

#### Virg Bernero, Former Lansing Mayor (2006-2017) Prospective Lansing mayoral candidate

What sets Lansing apart from other places is its people. There is no obstacle we cannot overcome if we tap the talent of our people and truly pull together. Decades ago, Mayor David Hollister pulled together a blue ribbon commission with business and government leaders from throughout the region to convince General Motors to reinvest here — and it worked. GM continues to build the best cars in the world right here in Lansing and Delta Township. More recently, the region came together to save Potter Park Zoo and



Bernero

### Regionalism

bolster the Lansing River Trail through permanent, dedicated funding. When asked, local voters always support regionalism in transportation, education and recreation. Now we just need to get local politicians on board with it. For 2021, we must resolve to continue to find strength in working together.

# 2021 Vision

## Resolutions

from page 10

### Steve Japinga, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce vice president

Last year was challenging for all of us, but the Lansing region has continually demonstrated how important it was to collaborate and help those in need. This will continue in 2021 with the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force. Leaders in business, government, education and healthcare came together to develop strategies to help create a successful regional relaunch strategy for our region. The task force developed a blueprint to help businesses relaunch, reopen and re-engage operations safely. There is no doubt that we all look forward to the new year. However, there is still much work to be done. We still face significant challenges that jeopardize our community's potential for economic growth and vitality. We must resolve to continue to work together to move our region forward in a positive way.



Japinga

### Curtis Hertel Jr., 23rd District state senator, D-East Lansing

Last year was difficult for everyone. We often don't know of the personal struggles others are living through. In 2021, I hope we all can show more grace and kindness to others.



Hertel

### Carol Siemon, Ingham County prosecuting attorney

In the criminal justice system, there are continuing efforts to address needed reforms and improve racial justice and equity. But there can be no question that COVID-19 is having a once-in-a-generation impact. In my generation, losing 60,000 Americans to the Vietnam War left scars. With COVID-19, we are now approaching 2 million deaths reported worldwide. The economic, social and psychological impacts are enormous. To resolve to make Lansing a better place, we must be patient with the ongoing health and safety protocols in place, work remotely when possible, and limit social and physical contact. At the same time, we must learn what old ways of



Siemon

doing things can be left behind, which can be modified and how we can move forward in our jobs, communities, and personal lives to enhance with compassion and safety-related personal responsibility our continuing efforts for a more fair and just community for us all.

### Sam Inglot, Progress Michigan deputy director

When we create a transparent and accountable government, we create a better place to live. In 2021, elected officials should commit to more transparency and accountability. In Lansing, that starts with the police department. From public access to body camera footage to records regarding internal investigations, LPD and our elected officials have continually erected roadblocks to full transparency. The public deserves access to records regarding bad police officers. We deserve to know how they are disciplined. We deserve to know if problem police are being kept on the force. The energy that brought residents together to call for racial justice for Black and Brown communities and police accountability will continue into 2021 and beyond. Basic transparency can help build trust and establish accountability. And this lesson shouldn't only be reserved for just the police or other elected officials in Lansing, but for all levels of government, including those elected to state government. We also need to fundamentally change the rules for financial disclosure, lobbying and accountability for state elected officials.



Inglot

### Joan Jackson Johnson, former director of human relations and community services

This year has given each of us a clearer understanding of the many gifts and challenges that comprise our own lives. As we become aware of the medical, social, financial and other devastations felt by so many, let us not wrap a beginning and ending around this experience but rather allow it to open our hearts and minds to the ongoing daily needs of others.



Jackson Johnson

Greater Lansing may be defined by place, but maybe more importantly, by those who call it home. The extent to which we each give care and respect and hope to our community neighbors should best define our goals for 2021. Whether in words or deeds or attitude, let us resolve to focus our energies in the new year on sharing and giving as we express our gratitude for the gifts we too often take for granted.

### Mark Grebner, Ingham County Commissioner

Bah! Humbug.



Grebner

### Dana Watson, East Lansing City Councilwoman

We can make Greater Lansing a better place in 2021 by supporting outreach efforts with choice toward community immunity. I'm getting the COVID-19 vaccination. Also, I am determined to see our community be better by emphasizing interdependence. Each of us are visibly separate beings, however, each individual creates seen and unseen ripples for our community. Some of us have broken hearts with our actions and others have spread good trouble. Individuals impact themselves and their circle, their community and many loved ones on both ends. Next, uphold all the work we do with an equity lens. Let's strive to fine tune our interest in attracting and keeping diverse groups of workers, families and businesses. Finally, I resolve to be familiar with what racial justice and inclusivity looks like so I can serve it and choose it each time for my community. And I would be remiss if I did not keep encouraging more to respect the land.



Watson

### Samantha Vaive, Lansing Community College trustee

It is my hope in 2021 that we can all make Lansing a kinder place. Every one of us has been through a devastating year. Life will not be going back to normal overnight. In a lot of ways, we should not go back to the way things were. In 2021, we need to be kind to each other, and just as importantly, kind to ourselves. There has been a great divide in our state and our country. People are angry. And you have a right to be. People of Color are still being attacked in our streets. Never stop fighting for justice or what's right. But we need compassion and empathy from everyone to rebuild a better society. Take a moment every day to find even the smallest gratitude for your loved ones, your life, and for yourself. Lansing is an amazing place because each one of you brings something unique. Even from inside your homes, you make Lansing a community. Don't lose sight of that.



Vaive

# 2021 Vision

## Resolutions

from page 11

### Bob Trezise, Lansing Economic Area Partnership president and CEO

From an economic development perspective at LEAP, we wish all in our region to equitably receive the coronavirus vaccine, in a very well organized way, as soon as possible, so we can stop the terrible suffering and death. Secondly, we hope government stimulus from the federal and state level can be implemented in the first half of the year to get our small businesses to a place late in 2021 where they can strongly and fully reopen. Third, LEAP's new Department of Equity Economic Planning will be hard at work to make sure we begin to help correct systemic discrimination among our underserved populations, so that they can better access and participate with the economy and our economic development programs. Finally, we think we have a real opportunity to grow and attract many very significant projects throughout the region in 2021, creating good jobs and huge investment for all people in our community.



Trezise

### Frank L. Walsh, Meridian Township manager

I believe I can help in making Lansing a better place by serving our 43,000 Meridian residents with more compassion and kindness. This past year has reminded us that the world needs more of both. As we move into 2021, I plan to be very cognizant of what I can do to make life a little less challenging for those in need. Moving forward, my focus will be on how can I serve Meridian Township with a more caring and compassionate heart.



Walsh

### Julie Pingston, Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau president and CEO

This past year was like no other for the region's tourism and hospitality industry. So much of what we enjoy promoting and sharing with our 5.3 million annual visitors evaporated quickly in March and has yet to return for our local hotels, restaurants, meeting and event venues, sporting facilities, the-



Pingston

aters and so many more. I resolve to do everything I can to help ensure the visitor economy survives in 2021. Through the creativity of our local businesses, the pandemic has given residents an opportunity to rediscover their own community and enjoy outdoor adventure, public art, local food and drinks on patios, virtual performances and virtual tours. We hope you will resolve to join the Convention and Visitors Bureau in inviting and welcoming visitors back to our community as soon as we are able to in 2021 and beyond.

### George Lahanas, East Lansing city manager

We can resolve to make Greater Lansing a better place in 2021 by continuing the important work that began in 2020, from taking additional steps to combat COVID-19 to working toward greater racial equity throughout the region and supporting our local businesses. Everyone loves a good comeback story, and my fervent hope is that 2021 is just that — an opportunity to reflect upon the past year and work together for a better tomorrow. We plan to continue to work with MSU and our local health officials to safeguard the community as vaccinations are rolled out, and we also plan to continue to focus on support initiatives for our local businesses. There is a tremendous amount of work yet to be done on the equity front, but we have assembled a great team of people to lead that effort. While we've all been impacted in one way or another by the events of 2020, it brought about stronger partnerships and a lasting spirit of regionalism.



Lahanas

### Barb Byrum, Ingham County clerk

My resolution is to lift up those whose voices are not being heard, speak up when I see injustice, stand up for the citizens of Michigan and the residents of Ingham County against those who would disenfranchise them and live up to my oath to support the Constitution.



Byrum

### Scott Duimstra, Capital Area District Libraries executive director

We are still living through many of the same pre-pandemic issues as last year, like concern over area literacy rates for our students and limited access to technology for a number of residents. These issues have only been heightened by the pandemic. I resolve to make Greater



Duimstra

Lansing a better place by working with elected officials and community partners to raise literacy rates for students, ensuring easy access to reliable, fast Internet connections so our community members can use them to become thriving students, productive employees and engaged citizens. Elected officials, businesses and nonprofits have a lot to offer our community and if we work together, we have a lot we can accomplish as well.

### Ron Bacon, East Lansing City Councilman

Last year brought heights of triumph and tragedy often in the same week or the same day. We have been forever altered by 2020, but I choose to believe that our best days are yet to come. Here is a sampling of what I will take with me: If you can't find the right person, be the right person. When we put our egos and differences aside, we learn that it is as natural to serve as it is breath. We are truly all in this thing together and often those least likely to ask for help may need it the most. When we focus on a common goal, even in the face of great heartbreak, division and calamity, we will emerge on the other side triumphant. In 2021, I desire that access to anything that has been denied to us begin to flow freely in our lives, that what we have lost be restored and that our pain and loss be transformed into laughter and wisdom.



Bacon

### Lorenzo Lopez, LGBTQ and Hispanic activist

We must get the pandemic under control, reopen up the economy and the schools and create some sort of normalcy. Greater Lansing must also acknowledge its diverse population. It must also recognize the inequities that exist, strategically remove them and collectively work with the entire business sector to secure jobs for those unemployed or underemployed. Affordable housing and homelessness are critical issues that require immediate attention. Racial justice and economic justice for all citizens in the region must also be a priority. Police brutality and excessive force must be part of the discussion. We can no longer allow health care to be a privilege. The Greater Lansing area also needs to create an arts and cultural district in which all genres of art can be created and become a major source of pride, revenue and tourism. We need real action, not empty words, if we are to make Greater Lansing a better place for all.



Lopez

# THREADS IN A COMMUNITY TAPESTRY

## City Pulse's 2021 People Issue

By **LAWRENCE COSENTINO**

**S**o a podcaster, a poet, a public servant, a chef, a diversity officer, an artist, rabbi, a township clerk, the owner of a community hub and the director of a women's center walk into a room. ...

But not the same room, and not at the same time. After all, this is January 2021, and City Pulse's annual People Issue had to go completely virtual, like everything else.

At the start of each year, we pluck a bouquet of 10 people who inspire us, pique our curiosity, reflect our diversity, and give us a window into our neighbors' lives, passions and struggles.

They are not necessarily the most newsworthy, prominent or influential people of the year, as other lists would have it, but they make for an interesting virtual dinner party.

Some of them, like octogenarian Lansing public servant Willard Walker, have lived in Lansing for decades; others are relative newcomers who are quickly making their mark on the city.

They are from all over the country and the world, and they bring their diverse life experience to their day-to-day life in Lansing. Walker is from Alabama. Chef John Aste grew up in Miami. Poet Chana Kraus-Friedberg grew up in Brooklyn. Guadalupe Ayala, Lansing's first diversity and inclusion officer, grew up in El Salvador. Rabbi Amy Bigman was born in Chicago and raised in Detroit.

With such different backgrounds, life stories and cultural touchstones, this group resists generalizations. However, one thing you can say about this bunch is that all help to weave, and are woven into, an ever-evolving tapestry of community life. Chef Jose Aste named his food operation Tantay, a word from the

native language of the Incas that means "to bring people together." Melina Brann got help from the Women's Center three years ago, when she was new to town and struggling through a divorce. Three years later, as the nonprofit's director, she helps other women deal with employment challenges and domestic abuse. After discovering art late in life, artist Bob Rose found his passion creating and discovering art in public places, even in 100-year-old sewer designs.

Jerry Norris passed up more profitable business opportunities to be the founder and owner of The Fledge, a community center, charity hub and performance space for young artists. His motto: "Genius is lost in poverty."

"There's so many people living in poverty in Lansing," Norris tells us. "So, why would I move anywhere else and do something else? Why would I start another business to try to hoard wealth, when I could do something that had more meaning?"

It's also pretty obvious that all these people are do-gooders of the sort that H.L. Mencken referred to, with acid humor, as "uplifters."

And what the hell is so funny about uplifting?

"When you center experiences of some of the most marginalized people, that's when you really lift up everyone," podcaster Cameo King tells us

Fight it all you want, but this group's passion for whatever it is they do has a way of sticking to you, like glitter. Amy Bigman, the rabbi, goes around the house all week singing the Bible verse she uses to start her service. Aste isn't happy until he's up to his neck in Peruvian cuisine and dreams of turning his kitchen into a community hub. King, the podcaster, becomes a different

person — she calls it her "full version" — when she serves up raw truth in her "Good Girl Podcast."

Even Meridian Township Clerk Debbie Guthrie, charged up by her background as an athlete and sports broadcaster, wakes up in the morning obsessing about — wait for it — her 10-step plan for processing FOIA requests. "I can't wait to get to work and write it down and share it," she enthuses.

In the face of such "grit, glam and guts" (the name of King's nonprofit dedicated to uplifting young women) there is no choice but to submit — and learn.

One thing you won't find much of in these interviews is a morbid fixation on what a horrible year 2020 was. Of course, some of our featured people talk about the pandemic's effects on their lives and interests. Poet Chana Kraus-Friedberg notes a resurgence of poetry in a year of isolation and strong emotions. But for the most part, the focus is on the future.

A special nod goes to our annual People Issue photographer, Khalid Ibrahim of Eat Pomegranate Photography. Ibrahim's emotional insight, keen eye and technical mastery have helped him capture the personalities of our People Issue subjects for years, but this year threw a big curveball at him. Thanks to digital wizardry, on top of his aforementioned skills, Ibrahim was able to work his usual magic without enjoying the basic connection of being in the same room as his subjects. (Like Waldo, look for Ibrahim in each photo.) We hope such technical gymnastics won't be needed next year, but if we can learn anything from Ibrahim's work, and the words of the people on the following pages, it's that there are all kinds of ways to weave a community tapestry.

See People, Page 14



## People

from page 13

### Jose Aste, head chef/owner of Tantay

Jose Aste moved to Lansing in 2013 after growing up in Miami. Aste gave up a career in aviation for his true passion: cooking. He began in the commercial kitchen space of the Allen Neighborhood Center, selling food at the weekly farmers market. He named his operation Tantay, an Incan word that means, “To bring people together.” Aste, 35, has become known for brightening folks’ days at the market by sharing his love of Peruvian cuisine, and Tantay will be a fixture in the upcoming Allen Place expansion.

### What inspired you to leave aviation behind to become a chef and budding restaurateur?

It was kind of a chain reaction, but I was reevaluating everything and listening to my heart. I always enjoyed cooking for my friends in college and hosting little dinner parties. So, I discovered what I really wanted to do, but I needed

some help. I told a dear friend, “Listen, I have this idea. I want to set aside aviation and start something of my own. I want a restaurant. I want people to try Peruvian cuisine.” And then he challenged me: “You know, that’s not it. There has to be more.”

What I figured out is — because I love people — my goal is not just to open a restaurant, but also to create an environment that is all-inclusive. I wanted to make something different, something for families; something for everybody. I wanted to become a restaurateur and start building the footsteps of the environment and climate I want to create when people come and dine with us.

### Who taught you how to cook? How did you learn to prepare Peruvian cuisine?

It starts with eating. Man, all we ate was Peruvian food at my house. My mom and my dad [both Peruvians] cooked; they were always cooking. They were entertainers. We always had people coming over. I got into the cuisine by loving the food and, obviously, my culture. But the passion for it really comes from watching my parents. They were great at cooking and they were awesome entertainers. We always had family over; there was always party or a reunion. And where did everyone

gather? The kitchen. I really love that, and that’s something that I carry in my heart all the time. That’s the vision. That’s what I want to do, but on a bigger scale.

### How did you get involved with the Allen Neighborhood Center?

I heard from my mother-in-law they had a commercial kitchen incubator. I called and spoke with the kitchen manager, who is now a really good friend of mine, and she told me what I needed to do.

I looked at the kitchen and I said, “Holy smokes, this has everything that I need.” And I just hit the books. I got my liability insurance, my licensure — everything. And then I wanted to first dive into farmers markets.

My intention from the beginning was to create an organic following. I decided to start my business by going into people’s homes. I decided to start it off by word of mouth. The intention was to provide a genuine, proven experience in people’s homes. But at the same time, I wanted to learn from them. What do Lansing people want in terms of a restaurant experience? I was always hitting multiple birds with one stone. I always try to do that, because by going into aviation and then restaurants, I

had a lot to learn.

**Tantay is a word from the native language of the Incas that means, “To bring people together.” Can you tell me how food can connect people from different cultural backgrounds?**

Food has so much power. Especially something like Peruvian cuisine, something that’s not from around here. It’s even more powerful, because it’s something totally different. I saw it when I was going into people’s homes — especially the ones that had never tried Peruvian cuisine. They had their guests over, there’d be six to 10 people, and they would all be going through the same experience for the first time. There’s a lot of power within any food, in terms of bringing people together by having them talk about what they’re eating. It’s not only about the taste and whether it’s grass-fed or something like that, it’s also about discussing, “Who is making the food?” “Where are they from?” “Where is this cuisine from?” “How did it originate?” Food has immense power in terms of bringing people together.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley.)*



## People

from page 14

### Guadalupe Ayala, city of Lansing diversity officer

In November, Lansing Mayor Andy Schor appointed Guadalupe Ayala to be the city's first diversity, equity and inclusion officer. Ayala, 29, graduated from the University of Michigan with a bachelor of arts in Latina/o studies, sociology and Spanish. She joined the city's Human Relations and Community Services Department in 2015 as an equal employment opportunity specialist. In the mayor's announcement, Ayala is quoted as saying, "I am committed to speak for those who may be afraid to speak for themselves" and "This is a time for healing, a time to come together o unite and do positive work."

### Tell me what your new assignment entails.

I'm assigned to implement the mayor's Racial Justice and Equity Alliance plan and promote diversity and equity within the city — identifying programs and initiatives that will strengthen diversity within the organization. So it's not really just diversity but also getting

those tools and strategies that will help our staff and leaders in our community in addressing issues that they may be facing due to their demographic populations.

### What does a diverse city government look like to you?

We are in a way already diverse because our Lansing community is diverse. Definitely being inclusive of all races, color, gender, sexual orientation, being able to create an inclusive environment where all feel comfortable to strive and don't feel that they're being discriminated against or held back.

### What is the most important part of this? Hiring? Training? Where does it start?

Right now, the city is doing a scan to determine where our employees and where our community need the assistance. This plan that we're developing [which Schor announced the details of in December] is something that will assist us within City Hall, but also with the community. And if you see the survey, we're asking how people feel living and working in the city of Lansing. So it's something that we're trying to create to assist us in developing something that can help our community, our city as a whole.

### Can you give any example of how the outreach might work in a particular instance?

Language is something really common, so maybe implementing language access, where we're able to have any individual knowing any language be able to access a certain resource.

### So for someone who say speaks Spanish as their first language, perhaps the city website needs to be in Spanish as well?

Right. Something like that.

### Let's find out more about you.

I was born in California, grew up in El Salvador and came to Lansing about 21 years ago when I was in third grade. I've been here in the city since, except for college. This is what I consider my home, where my family lives, and where I started my family.

### What is your impression of Lansing in terms of diversity? Not city government, but just your experience growing up here and living here.

I feel like Lansing is very diverse. There is a huge immigration and refugee population, and I love it because I feel comfortable and able to celebrate my culture. I go to Cristo Rey Church. For the 21 years that I've been here,

I have felt comfortable expressing my religion and my culture and celebrating it. So I love Lansing. I mean, it is a really diverse city.

### Does that imply you think that minorities are generally accepted in this community?

Throughout our country, we can get various reactions, interactions with people. I've had my own where I have been discriminated in the streets for speaking English with my family. And at that time, I did not know much English. I was still little and just walking around with my mom, waiting for a bus and the person behind us said, "Stop speaking Spanish. You're in America, speak English." I understood just enough to know what he said. We didn't know how to respond. And my mom feeling saddened that she was the adult in that situation and she couldn't respond as well. So yeah, so people are there who are not accepting, but overall I feel that our community is welcoming and there is a place for us to live and, as I said, this is where I live. This is where I have my home, where my children are growing up. So, yeah.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Berl Schwartz.)*

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### Amy Bigman, rabbi at Congregation Shaarey Zedek

Amy Bigman has been the rabbi at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in East Lansing since 2007. Bigman, 55, was born in Chicago and raised in metro Detroit. She is in the 29th year of her rabbinical career. She chaired the board of the Michigan Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. She founded the East Lansing Area Clergy Association. In 2019, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer named her to the board of the Children's Trust Fund.

#### What inspired you to become a rabbi?

It just sort of added up for me. I was always proud to be Jewish, I always liked going to religious school because I liked to learn. As I got older, it meant more to me outside of just learning. It meant more to me being part of a community and what happened to our ancestors for all of this time, and so on. My dad is a retired physician. My parents really raised us to go into helping professions, and I couldn't be a doctor because of the

science and because I can't stand the sight of blood. Becoming a rabbi is being part of a helping profession.

#### Was 2020 the most challenging year of your career?

It's definitely challenging in its own unique way, but there are always challenges throughout life, in every career and every profession and every job. And so mine is no different. You're always on. And at this point, most of my congregants have my cell phone number, which I welcome them to use when they need it. And there's not the kind of separation that there is when you are usually going into a building for certain hours a day as when you are working from home. It's just true with everyone I've talked to, it doesn't matter what your career is. So it's definitely different.

#### Are there offsetting benefits from having a profession that's 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

The benefits are certainly the opportunities that I have to walk along life's journey with so many people. To be with them in their happy occasions and also I'm there for their sadnesses, when they need help in some form. People let me into their lives as a clergyman that's different than if I were their doctor or their

schoolteacher. By far the benefits outweigh the difficulties. It really is an honor to be part of this particular congregation, but also this community as well.

#### What you are drawing upon from scripture or from Jewish tradition or Jewish history during this terrible time?

When the pandemic really hit, that first week that we were closed down — I should phrase it differently: when our building was closed — our work has continued. A webinar I was on started with a song that comes from both Exodus 15 and also Psalm 108:2. And it has a really simple melody and the words are [here she spoke in Hebrew, then translated]: "God is my strength and my song, God is my deliverance." That week, I found myself literally just walking around my house humming that, to the point where I didn't realize I was humming it. I thought this is the perfect way for me to start our first Shabbat services where we are all livestream and there's no one worshiping with me. I have started every service since then with those words. The words and the melody together bring some kind of strength that I don't know that can explain specifically, but I've had a number of people tell me that they also start finding themselves singing it during the week. When the ser-

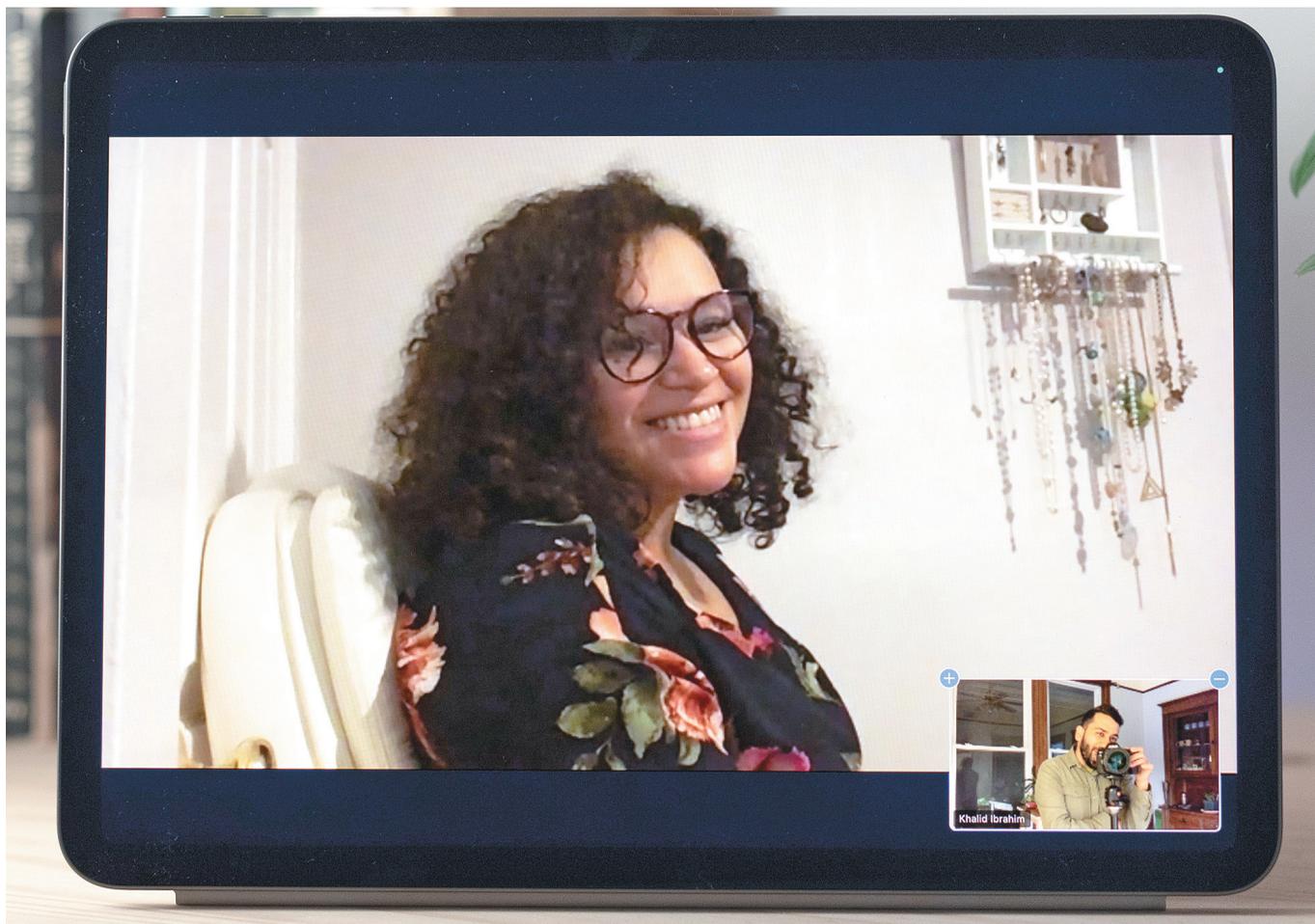
vice starts, I'm usually humming it and then I sing it quietly and then louder and then quietly again. And that's really been, I think, a meaningful way to start our worship and meaningful for me to have those words to really think about. Hopefully those words will continue to bring strength to members of our community who are watching me on Friday nights or Saturday mornings.

#### The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of churches being exempt to some extent from shutdown orders. What's your take on that?

I believe very strongly in the separation of religion and state and I speak about it often, but frankly in this case, I think that we should all be following this. We have seen evidence of churches' having worship services, and we've seen evidence of places having large weddings and so on — being spreader events. And so in Jewish tradition, we talk about the importance of Pikuach Nefesh — of saving a life. We have decided at our congregation, as have most of my colleagues, both Jewish and not, to maintain our distance.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Berl Schwartz.)*

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### Melina Brann, executive director of the Women's Center of Greater Lansing

Melina Brann, 27, has been executive director of the Women's Center of Greater Lansing since last March and has lived in Lansing for the last three years. She has a master's degree in social work from Grand Valley State University. She served on the public policy committee for the Greater Michigan chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. She's the partner of controversial Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz. Both have been advocates for local police divestment.

#### You're a relative newcomer to the capital city. How did you land here?

After college, I moved here with my ex-husband. When we got a divorce, I was really struggling. That's how I found the Women's Center of Greater Lansing. They helped me with counseling and other financial education stuff, because I really didn't know what I was doing. It's ironic that I ended up as executive director. I was trying to volunteer there when I saw the job opening.

#### Walk me through the mission of the Women's Center. What's it all about?

We were started by a group of women with the Lansing chapter of the National Organization for Women. They figured out there was this need for a space specifically for women to work on job applications. Then there was also this need for women leaving domestic violence situations.

It really started as this place to empower women who were leaving bad situations or who were entering the workforce, or who hadn't been in the workforce before. We realized that there were a lot of other issues that came along with this, and so that's when the counseling came into it.

We figured we could help these women get jobs, but they also needed coping mechanisms to help them stay in those jobs and to help live better lives. We just grew from there, and now we're more focused on providing counseling to those who are uninsured or underinsured.

#### What sort of impact are these services having on Greater Lansing?

This year we provided over 1,500 virtual and in-person counseling sessions for over 90 women. We also served over 600 women with personal needs — things like tampons, pads, soap, shampoo, conditioner. We also had over 300

hours of support groups for things like domestic violence, sexual assault, grief and loss. We also have a social group to combat that isolation.

There's a lot of women that are uninsured or underinsured, or even if they have insurance, it still costs \$50-75 to see a therapist. We're really meeting that need for people who cannot necessarily afford it in any other way, but still have really stressful stuff happening in their lives.

#### Is it everything you expected?

It's super rewarding, but super stressful. I underestimated how much would fall onto my shoulders. Luckily, we have a pretty good group of nonprofits in the Lansing area. Once you connect with some of the other executive directors, it's really nice to have them on your side.

In 10 years, hopefully we can grow in our counseling side. Right now, we only have one paid therapist, and the other people are either volunteers or graduate-level interns. I would love to be able to have a few more therapists on staff who can also serve in emergency, crisis situations.

#### How can people support the work of the Women's Center?

Most of our funding comes from individual donors. We do get a few

grants, but it's probably only 10-20% of our budget. More donations always help. Any donations that we get will probably head towards hiring a new therapist, just to meet the needs of people who are on our waitlist.

#### How does your role as a community activist meld with your professional life?

A lot of issues that our clients face are not only personal for therapy, but also systemic. If we want to impact our client's lives, then we need to really address some of the issues that are happening systemically, such as police violence and income inequality.

#### What's it like being a partner to one of the more controversial figures at City Hall?

Brandon does get a lot of people coming up to him. It's not a new thing for me. Both of my parents were heavily involved in community organizing and community stuff, so I'm used to being in the background. On a personal note, it's kind of stressful just having to be the supportive person all the time for this person who is always trying to do the right thing.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Kyle Kaminski.)*



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### Chana Kraus-Friedberg, poet

In her day job as a medical librarian at MSU, Chana Kraus-Friedberg, 40, helps students navigate complex mazes of medical research. She has written poetry, on and off, since she was 6 and started writing again recently after connecting with the Lansing poetry circuit. A set of five poems from her first collection, “Grammars of Hope,” due in February from Finishing Line Press, earned her the 2020 Marc Ritzenhein Emerging Poet Award, given each year by the Lansing Poetry Club.

### Have you found that people are connecting more with poetry in the isolation and heartbreak of 2020?

Obviously, it's been a terrible year, but poetry is having a bit of a renaissance. People are turning to it. I'm a member of a Facebook group supporting faculty during the pandemic. One woman, a law professor, said that things are so awful — she and her students are both experiencing so much stress and uncertainty — that

they started each of their online classes by reading a poem. In law school! She said her students loved it. Tons of people commented on the post, saying, “What poems are you reading?” I feel like it's a real thing. People are realizing they needed it and they just didn't know.

### How do you explain that?

Jeanette Winterson, a really famous British lesbian writer, has a quote in her autobiography, where she describes reading T.S. Eliot's “Murder in the Cathedral” right after she got kicked out of her parents' house. She just sat there and she started crying. She said, “People think that poetry isn't for everybody, but strong feelings need strong words.” And that's what poetry is and why it's so healing.

### In your own poetry, you reckon frankly with your strict Jewish upbringing in Brooklyn.

I was brought up super-duper-Orthodox. It was like growing up in the last century. I went to a Jewish girls' school where we were told explicitly and frequently that girls were stupid. We weren't allowed to watch TV or to go to movies. I knew I could study the Talmud a lot better than many men I

knew, but I wasn't allowed. If you said stuff in class that was too smart, you were told no man would marry you. It wasn't a good place to be a smart female kid and it really made me angry.

### How did you get away?

I was lucky. I went to Brooklyn College and I was in a very small, really great honors program. I applied to graduate school to do my doctorate in archaeology and they gave me a stipend. I was financially independent, I was able to leave and I left.

### What is your relationship with your parents now?

I didn't talk to them for about a decade and now I have sporadic contact with them. When I stopped being religious, I also came out as gay, which did not thrill them.

### You stopped writing poetry in your 20s, took about 15 years off, and started again when you came to Lansing. Were you reconnecting with your thoughts, or with poetry itself?

It was both, at once. You can't write poetry unless you can hear your thoughts for yourself, and in an honest way. It's possible to write a poem about something you don't feel, but it

won't be a very good poem. It's hard to fake it. When I started writing more, I found there were things I wanted to do. I wanted to light Hanukah candles, which I hadn't for a long time. I wanted to go to synagogue and sing the songs I grew up singing. Those things sort of happened at the same time.

### Your poetry jumps over a chasm from your Orthodox past to your present-day self. Having re-established that connection, do you see yourself as a bridge builder?

I left the world I left very angry — not now, but I was then. As a result, it is almost impossible for me to talk with someone who voted for Trump and be like, ‘Oh, I get where you're coming from.’ I feel like it's everything I hated about where I grew up. But in certain areas, like archaeology and anthropology, I was trained to be able to plop down in a culture and take a look at it. — examine it without judgment. When other people are saying, ‘Some cultures do blah blah blah,’ I say, ‘Santa Claus.’ It all looks weird to me.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Lawrence Cosentino.)*

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### Deborah Guthrie, Meridian Township Clerk

Meridian Township's clerk, Deborah Guthrie grew up watching sports such as football with her mother and grandmother, both of whom taught her how the game was played. A multi-sport athlete growing up in Port Huron and Okemos, Guthrie, 49, learned life lessons in sports such as volleyball that inspired her broadcasting work for ESPN, ABC and in developing HOMTV21, Meridian Township's broadcast television station. That drive led her to run for, and win, the clerk position in November's general election. She served as the township's communications director from 2011-2019. She defeated two-term incumbent Brent Dreyfuss.

#### To use a sports analogy, what role does the clerk play in the government?

I see myself as the center [in football]. It's not really out there, but you know that you have to snap the ball on every single time. You're not the quar-

terback. You're not the wide receiver. You're not the running back. You're not the playmaker. You're the center. So while you may not be out there, you're kind of directing traffic.

#### The clerk's position is responsible for election administration, serving as an officer and voting member of the township's board of trustees, and coordinating Freedom of Information Act requests, for example. How does the sports concept help you do your job?

If you think about a big game matchup, Tom Brady or whomever is getting super excited and revved up about the game and they wake up in the morning, they're super excited to go in. They want to go work early. They want to pre-plan and get themselves together. I think the workplace is the same way. You know, you wake up, you're like, "All right, I'm excited for the day. I have this 10-step plan to process FOIAs in a more efficient manner, and I can't stop thinking about it." So I can't wait to get to work and write it down and share it with my team and collaborate and start implementing it so that we can provide a better service.

#### What about your personality helps you as the clerk?

When I think about the job of, and the role of, a public servant, it is to serve the people. In my previous role, that's what I did. I thought "I have to serve the people." I need to be transparent and communicate information to the people. I feel that same way as clerk. We need to serve the people in the best way that we can. I just always cared about people and making sure that people are taken care of.

#### In your previous role as Meridian Township's communications director, you worked with prior township clerks Mary Helmbrecht and Virginia White, whom you said mentored you. What kind of advice did they give you?

For one: leadership. Being a female leader, being a representative of the community, and asking what Meridian township stands for. Meridian Township's history, what the history means and how important that is to not only ongoing questions that we receive or requests from the public or, any changes to the ordinance or anything like that, but understanding what it could mean for our future with the master plan was zoning changes, all of

those kinds of things. The way that they carried themselves and the incredible treatment and how they responded to people, even people that had differing opinions. Just the way they carry themselves in a civil manner and even if you had different points of view. You can be civil and have a different point of view. And I think that they were excellent examples of that. Virginia White was township clerk for 25 years, and they were just incredible female leaders in this community. I picked up a lot of what they were doing on a regular basis and listened to them a lot.

#### What do you advocate for in your community?

I really believe in equality and inclusion and giving a voice to the voiceless. I think that is so important. I've seen too many people suppressed or put down or bullied, and I have zero tolerance for that. Any time I can be a champion or a cheerleader for The Children's Small Talk or The Greater Lansing Women's Center or Eve's House, or Meridian Cares — I'm a strong advocate for those types of programs that help.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Sean Bradley.)*

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### **Cameo King, founder of Grit, Glam & Guts**

A decade ago, Cameo King, 37, wanted to create programs to help girls 12 to 17 reach for their dreams and expand their full potential. To do that, she created Grit, Glam & Guts — a nonprofit dedicated to raising up young women and their voices. She also runs “The Good Girl Podcast,” which helps women talk openly and safely about flaws, faith, femininity and culture.

#### **Tell me more about Grit, Glam & Gutz.**

Our goal is to give young women the tools to ensure they can reach their fullest potential, and we do that in three simple ways: increasing their self-awareness increasing their self-identity and also ensuring that they’re engaging with the power of their voice. We’ve been doing work in Lansing and across the state for the last 10 years, and I’m just excited to continue this work.

#### **Where did you find this voice to help empower women and girls to find themselves?**

I think it’s rooted in being the best and the highest expression of yourself, and I think that comes with freedom. I think that comes with healing. The thing that it’s driven by, I think it’s just something that is innate in me, that it may have been developed and cultivated while I was at Howard University, but it’s essentially me seeking the truth, the truth in every situation.

#### **Is that something that you try to share with the young women you’re working with?**

You can know your truth, but you may be ashamed of it or society has told you that’s not good, it’s bad or it’s not good enough. The goal is to cultivate the environment where you begin to connect to your truth with your freedom. Getting to that level of the highest and best expression of yourself, because that’s where the joy is, where the peace is and where the greatness is.

#### **Because you empower women of color in particular, how has the explosion of Black Lives Matter activism helped or**

#### **hurt your process of helping women find their truth?**

I’ll push back on that idea that the work is for women of color in particular. I center on the experiences of Black girls and Black women, but that does not mean the work is only for Black girls and Black women. I think that’s something that a lot of Black women who are creators and who are leaders deal with. It’s as though our content that we create — that our genius, that our intellect and that our programming that centers on black girls’ experiences — that it can’t be utilized for the development of all women, of all genders. That’s why I pushed back on that.

#### **That’s fair. Thank you. That’s a really good observation and reframe.**

Historically Black women, our stories, our genius have been at the forefront of most movements. In terms of it impacting the work, I think it has highlighted it for the rest of the world. But in terms of bringing it more to the consciousness of the rest of the world, in terms of how do Black women show up, how do Black women inform our practices, how do Black women affect the outcome of elections, I just think

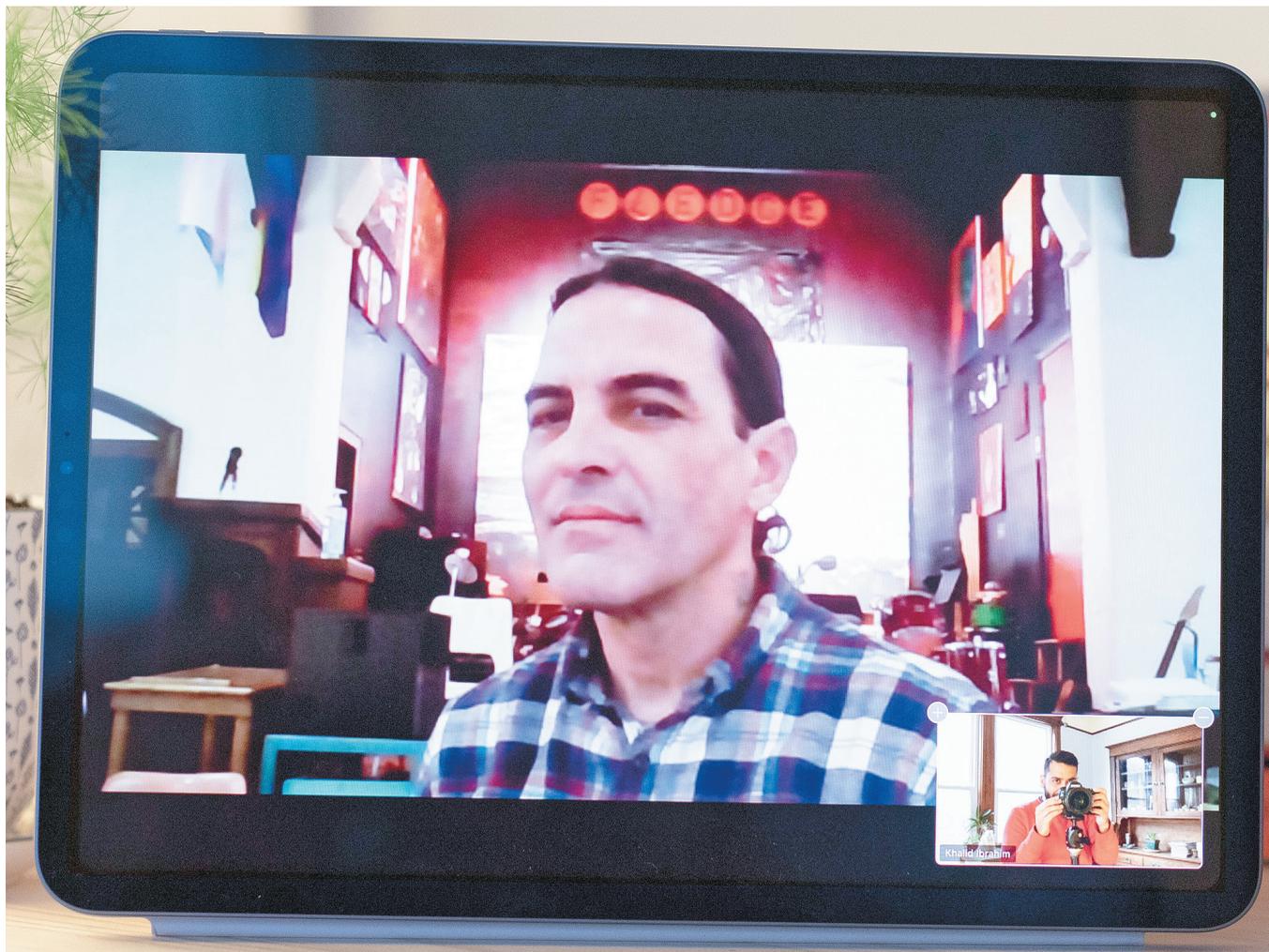
it raises the platform of the work that we do. When you center experiences of some of the most marginalized people, that’s when you really lift up everyone.

#### **What’s that underlying story for you? That truth that drives you for this work?**

I’ve been around women and girls my whole life. I’ve had really great experiences. I’ve had not-so-great experiences. They didn’t come together until I found myself working with Grit, Glam & Guts. When I did it the first year, it made sense. I loved it and I love it to this day.

For a lot of us, especially for women, we exist in places that don’t allow us to show up as our authentic selves. We do not reach our fullest potential. When the full version of Cameo shows up on “The Good Girl Podcast,” I’m a totally different person. People respond differently to my raw truth. I’ve also just had great experiences with women who have pushed me from one level to the next. And I want to extend that and create that and cultivate that for the next generation.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Todd Heywood.)*



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### Jerry Norris, owner of The Fledge

Jerry Norris started The Fledge, a Lansing community center that provides all sorts of services, to give back to the city that “raised him.” He heads many on-the-ground charitable efforts, whether that’s supplying food to those in need, helping those suffering from substance abuse or distributing small grants to local aspiring entrepreneurs. The Fledge has also become a buzzing hive for young creatives to host art shows and concerts, and Norris, 54, is to thank for providing them a space to grow.

### What inspired you to create a DIY community center with so many different services and operations?

Lansing raised me. I wanted to give back after I sold my last software company. I have always had the thought, it’s a quote that I love: “Genius is lost in poverty.” And there’s so many people living in poverty in Lansing. So, why would I move anywhere else and do something else? Why would I start another business to try to hoard

wealth, when I could do something that had more meaning?

The other thing is, I’ve seen so many things that were exclusive, that inclusion became a word and my theme that I really wanted to do. We always wanted to be radically inclusive. We believe that everybody needs a chance, because chances are hidden by that poverty. And nature does the same thing. If you look at any pond, you’ll rarely see a net over it. Whatever seeds fall in, whatever animals fall in, whatever birds land there, they accept it all and they deal with it. They might eat it. They might let it grow and thrive, but we shouldn’t exclude, because inclusion brings diversity and diversity brings strength and resilience.

### You’ve helped kickstart small businesses. Not many community centers go that far. Why is this fundraising/incubation aspect so important to The Fledge?

Poverty can be eliminated with three key points. The first is competency and education. The second is connection to a marketplace, and the third point is a little bit of funding. We can get entrepreneurs that already exist, but they’re wrapped up in flipping Percocet, or they’re flipping guns and they’re shoot-

ing at each other. If you look at the skill that it takes to do all of those things, they’re very entrepreneurial skills. But the input that people have sometimes is so limited and the opportunities they can see are limited. The opportunities we tell them that are there are unrealistic. They’re not believable.

If I can get an entrepreneur to get an organization growing, that can solve a problem in our community. Then we can make our community stronger, and if our community gets stronger, then we won’t have to lean on the government and other institutions to help us out. We can help ourselves. If we can help ourselves, then we can basically climb out of poverty.

### What has kept you here in Lansing?

I was born in the ’60s. I was a child in the ’70s. I was a young adult in the ’80s. And throughout that entire time, I had teachers and mentors and coaches that were cheering for me, that were helping me. We call this white privilege sometimes, but it was Lansing that raised me. And I owe Lansing a debt because of that.

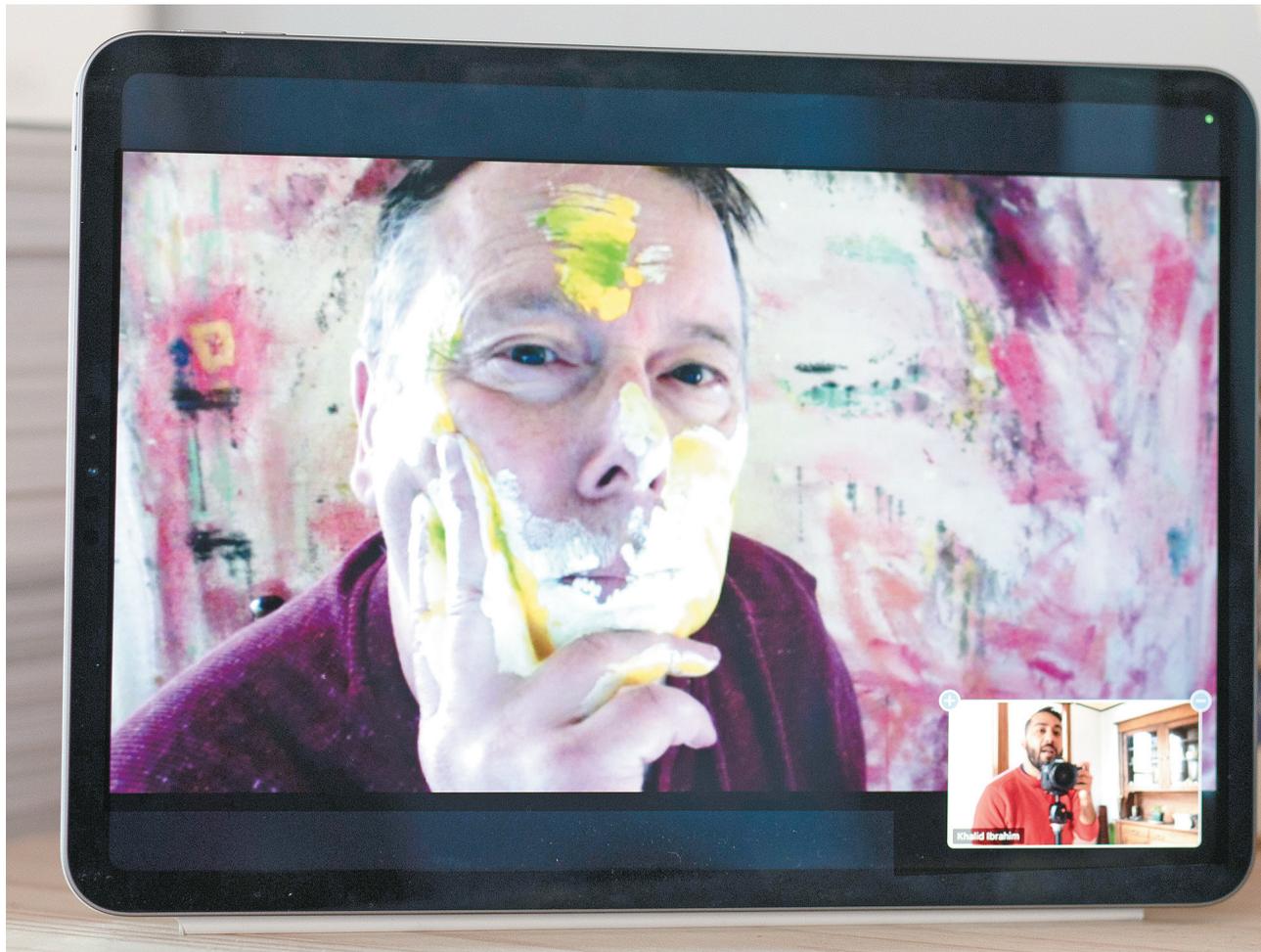
### Tell me about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the charitable work The Fledge is doing as a result.

Whenever you get into a drastic situation like the pandemic, the first thing to do is to protect your people or protect your things. And the community is our people. So, we had to go into protection mode and we had the capacity and the competency to move food. That was very much number one. Then we discovered we had a bunch of equipment that people could use, like sewing machines or 3D printers to make masks.

We had to keep people connected, and we had to beef up our safe-use supplies. People suffering from substance abuse need connection to not use or to use less. And the shutdowns and quarantine were going to take away that connection. So, we loaded up with Narcan and safe needles. We also converted our studios to help people that are going to arraignments and made them available for people that don’t have the Internet or a camera with the right audio equipment. And then, ultimately, we created a connection point to help people get back together with Refuge Recovery or Narcotics Anonymous, or whichever group they need to get by.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley.)*

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### Bob Rose, artist

Artist Bob Rose, 63, is a west sider, living a short walk from Verlinden Street. He is committed to promoting the city with his public art. He is a trustee of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing and a dedicated volunteer for Downtown Lansing Inc. He is quick to lend his hand to community art projects. He sees art everywhere, even in the city's sewers. He recently retired from the city of Lansing and believes public art needs to be collaborative.

### What do you like about the west side?

I grew up near Bay City, up in Essexville, where the Thumb comes together. I remember living where houses were close to the sidewalk and neighbors talked to each other.

When I began looking for a home here, I looked at the west side. The roads are just are amazing, twisting and turning. When I did find a house, it had a porch. And having a porch is magic. Because you're so close to the street and you can actually have a conversation with somebody walking by.

### You probably meet some pretty interesting people just sitting on your porch.

Oh, my gosh, but first of all, you meet people's dogs. That's how you know people first in the neighborhood, you know, by their dog.

### How did you end up in Lansing?

After Michigan Tech, attending the civil engineering tech school, I went to Colorado for a couple of years. I came back to the to the Great Lakes State because it just drew me back.

After meeting my wife in Midland, we moved to Lansing, and I landed a job with the city of Lansing.

### Tell us how you discovered your penchant for art late in life?

Art didn't come until a lot later in life, like in in my late 40s, and then it really didn't take off until into my 50. It's all been self-taught.

### Why the focus on public art?

I was fortunate early in my art to run into gallery owners and a restaurant owner who gave me the opportunity to put art up. It was kind of a jump into the deep end of the pool.

I was asked through the Arts Council of Greater Lansing to work on the steering committee for placemaking and to paint the street on Michigan Avenue in front of the Lansing Center.

Before that it was basically doing chalk art on sidewalks and my driveway just to practice.

There's a daycare around the corner from my house, and they come by and look at my art. I've got a regular audience.

### How did art change your life?

I wasn't trying to be involved in my community. I was one of those people asking: Why isn't this happening? Well, I discovered you have to be involved. We all have ideas what we want our community to be, and we need to accept that other folks may have different ideas.

### The mural project at Harry's Bar is getting a lot of attention right now. Tell us about it.

I was in Grand Rapids for Art Prize and I saw the bars and restaurants with art in them. Their bathrooms are like works of art, too. I talked it over with Harry's owners. They said OK, and I walked in the door and just started painting.

Most of the paintings are just done on the spot. There's a big heart, the number 33 in one, and I got a Rocket 88 painting in another, and then I got abstracts, and it's wild. The concept is that when you walk in, no matter how you're feeling, if you're feeling down its gonna take your mind off it.

### What are your 2021 plans for art projects?

Definitely getting outside. I'm working with Dominic Cochran from the Capitol City Film Festival and Lansing Media Center to do three-D projection on the Coamerica building.

And I'm also working with ceramic artist Alexandra Leonard to create a big piece of community art on the Shiawassee Bridge, and I've got a location for a mural that I'm gonna be doing outside.

### In your work with the City of Lansing you became an expert on sewers. How did that work intersect with your vision for art?

You have to hold on to the drawings for as long as the sewers operate. Some of them are operating 100-plus years. They are brick and they look egg shape. You keep making this design, and it goes back to ancient history of how you do the keystone.

Back then just a simple drawing for a light was so ornate and so beautiful and it was a work of art.

### Ten years from now, where do you see Lansing's creative community?

I see Lansing as an art hub.  
(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Bill Castanier.)

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### Willard Walker, public servant

Willard Walker, 86, is the consummate public servant. Raised in Columbus Georgia, he joined the military after graduating from the historically Black Albany State University. He has worked as a mathematics teacher; with the Birmingham, Alabama, Urban League; the Mott Foundation; for four Lansing mayors; and four departments of Michigan State government. He is working with the city to create lasting policies on diversity and racial justice in city government. He has lived on McPherson Street on Lansing's west side five decades.

### How did you end up in Lansing?

I left the Urban League in Birmingham to go to graduate school at Michigan State University in 1969. I knew about their football teams and Bubba Smith, Gene Washington and George Webster, but the head of the School of Labor and Industrial Relations, Dan Kruger, sent me an application. I was the first Black

student in industrial relations and it was a unique experience. MSU didn't really want me there. I was married with two children, and my wife stayed behind in Birmingham and I lived in Case Hall, the epicenter for black activism.

### Did your penchant for civil rights continue in your state employment?

It was always a staple of my work. We were doing pioneering work in job training and rehabilitation to address issues of equality and to get minority kids of color into job training programs. I left the state for the Mott Foundation in Flint, where I worked for eight years.

Mayor Terry McKane then asked me to chair the Martin Luther King Commission. I wasn't sure about doing that, but my grandmom always told me have good manners, so I met with him and ended up being the first chair.

### How did you get talked into working for the City of Lansing?

I got a call from Mayor David Hollister asking me to join his team. I was tired of commuting, my kids were getting ready to go to college and all my connections were in Lansing.

### You've had a 45-year association with

### youth football as coach and administrator for the Kappa Express football team. How do you feel about that?

It was another step in my own development. I grew up on the playground, a segregated black playground. So much of our life was built around the schools. It was sort of learned behavior, and a lot of that can be attributed to my grandmom who raised my family. My father and mother both died young and I really didn't know them. My grandmom would go to our games and got involved in the PTA.

It was hard to not learn lessons about how you wanted to live your life. My many engagements in the community come from the playground and my grandmom.

One of the reasons I moved to the Westside was, like my grandmom, I could walk over to the kid's school; first Main St. School and later Sexton High School. The other was I needed to see people who looked like me. Back then that's what I needed. Being on the Westside, despite living in a house with a deed that said not to sell to a black person, I had the privilege to meet a lot of people like Bill Lett and Dick Lett and to listen and learn.

When Kappa Psi showed an interest

in forming a football team, I became the first coach. We won a lot of games, but it was more than football. It was about building character; it's about giving back, and I found coaches who understood that. I was following the path I personally traveled.

### Over the 45 years, you helped coach thousands of young boys. Do you think you had an impact on them?

I'd like to think I helped build character. They still come by. I tell them if you have the time come by. I know that my grandmom would be pleased with me.

### In 2018, a new stadium, in Risdale Park, was named in your honor. How did you feel?

It was a great honor. At first, I didn't know how to take it, and I didn't know anything about it. It was a total surprise. My wife, Victoria, was a cheerleader coach for Kappa Express [youth football], and behind the scenes she quietly worked with the city to make it happen.

The dedication was like a reunion and now I feel responsible for it and we have a lot of work to do to make it more than a football field.

*(This interview was conducted, edited and condensed by Bill Castanier.)*

# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## Marketing manager by day, rock singer by night

Starfarm's Whitney Spotts dueling careers

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Whitney Spotts is well known in Lansing for her role as the lead singer of Starfarm, an '80s pop cover band that has played more local parties than she can remember. Lesser known: Her off-stage gig as the marketing manager for PG Group — the local cannabis powerplayer behind Lansing medical and recreational marijuana provisioning centers Pure Options, Old 27 Wellness, Old 27 North and Stateside Wellness.

Spotts, who at one point was the arts and culture editor for City Pulse, got involved in the cannabis industry after leaving behind her job as the events manager for Schuler Books — a job that saw her book guests such as Denis Leary and Joe Biden.

Even with dreadlocks and tattoos, Schuler gave Spotts a highly visible role in the store. She said her rock 'n' roll look just made her all the more memorable — that American society is quickly coming around to unique hairstyles and visible tattoos.

"They actually made me the face

of our company. I was the person that would go and talk to publishers. In my case, I feel like it worked in my favor," Spotts said. "Young people have embraced the idea that you can modify your body and still be an intelligent, thoughtful and well-rounded person."

Sports' first weed-related gig was as a budtender for Green Wave, one of the many early provisioning centers that have since closed down in recent years. Once that shop closed its doors, she learned that PG Group was hiring, filled out an application and was hired at first as a budtender and eventually was promoted to brand director.

"I always want to work in something I care about. I consider myself to be anti-capitalist, but I can sell things I believe in. I believed in books, and I believe in cannabis — medically and recreationally. I have a chronic pain condition, and cannabis has been the most helpful medication," Spotts added.

Spotts said one of the biggest difficulties of her job with PG Group is navigating the legal red tape when it comes



Courtesy Photo

Spotts

to promoting marijuana. She likens it to the laws surrounding advertisements of alcohol and tobacco products, with additional limitations thanks to cannabis' illegal status on the federal level. She often has to wrestle with moving goal posts as laws and regulations change on a yearly basis.

"With cannabis we have an extra hurdle — it's still illegal nationally," Spotts said. "There's a lot we're not allowed to do. It's a weird industry. For example, you can't even use the word cannabis in an advertisement. We have to figure out

how we can get the word out and educate people without getting in trouble."

One of Spotts' biggest hopes for the cannabis industry as it continues to blossom statewide is that prices can match the low costs of illicit markets and become more accessible to those who are looking for alternative forms of medicine.

"It's very exciting to be on the ground floor. I look forward to the time when running a shop isn't as expensive. The way regulations are, it's very costly. We work really hard to keep reasonable prices, so that way anyone can participate," Spotts said.

Spotts said her dual role as a rock singer and a brand director for a cannabis company draws surprised reactions from both sides. Fans of the band are surprised that she has a desk job. Her cannabis colleagues are surprised that she's a musician.

"Somebody pulled out a magazine cover I was on and said 'Is this you? What the hell?' With the band, I like it when people find out about it by themselves. It's always a fun surprise," Spotts said.

## New in Town: Rounding up new and incoming businesses

By SKYLER ASHLEY

It's a new year, so what better time to catch up with some new businesses in town?

Apple Blossom Kombucha, a locally owned kombucha company that's made a name for itself on the Greater Lansing farmers market circuit, has finally opened its long-awaited retail space on East Saginaw Street. Hours are limited — as is capacity due to the pandemic — but customers can still browse the shop and pick up a variety of different kombucha

flavors. If you're unfamiliar, kombucha is an effervescent, fermented beverage made from tea. Visit [facebook.com/appleblossomkombucha](https://facebook.com/appleblossomkombucha) for more details about the new shop.

If you haven't yet visited Capital City Market in downtown Lansing, you're missing out on a convenient way to pick up a smorgasbord of goods from small businesses that would normally require a drive out of town. For example, Capital City Market carries products from Park Lake Creamery, in Bath Township.

Down the street from Capital City Market on Michigan Avenue is the future location of Sidecar Slider Bar, which is slated to open its doors soon. Sidecar, which has several locations in

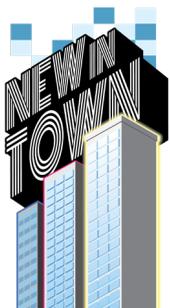
Metro Detroit, is well known for its gourmet sliders, or miniature, just-above-bite-size burgers. The joint is also known for its atmosphere, which takes inspiration from retro motorcycle culture a la Marlon Brando in "The Wild One." Follow restaurant updates at [sidecarsliderbar.com](https://sidecarsliderbar.com)

Cannabis aficionados have a brand new recreational provisioning center to check out with The Botanical Co. on Capital City Boulevard. Flip to page 26 and check out a rundown on some of their products by City Pulse managing editor Kyle Kaminski.

517 Coffee Co. purchased the former Bake N' Cakes location on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and is making its final preparations to open

its first brick-and-mortar space this year. The local coffee company has earned a lot of fans after being sold in local farmers markets and carried by several other local businesses. Follow the shop for updates at [facebook.com/517coffee](https://facebook.com/517coffee).

Comic book fans also have something awesome to look forward to this year, as Summit Comics & Games in downtown Lansing plans to double the size of its retail space after acquiring its neighboring storefront, the former home of Whipped Bakery. The extra space will give Summit the opportunity to host more pop-up sales and special events. Follow the expansion plans at [summitlansing.com](https://summitlansing.com).



# Books I am looking forward to checking out in 2021

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Early indications look like 2021 will be a very good year for reading. At the beginning of each year, I compile a list of books I want to read. The following list does not include political tomes on the recent election or the future of democracy. Those will come later.

“Let Me Tell You What I Mean,” by Joan Didion, is a collection of 12 literary nonfiction essays by one of America’s foremost authors. Didion draws on the extensive body of work published during her 50-year career.

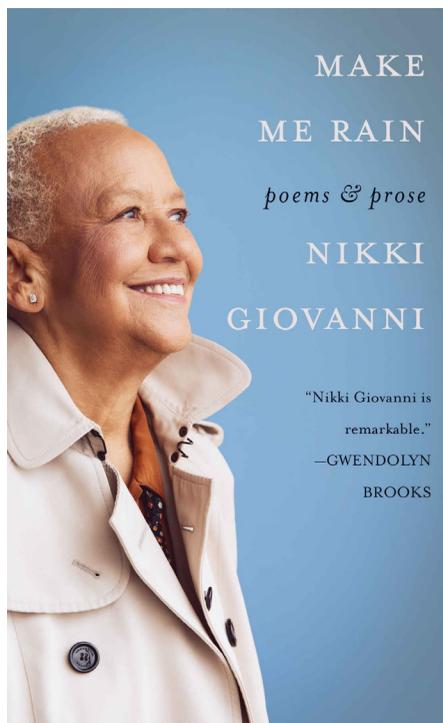
In “Tempting All the Gods,” author Jane Karoline Vieth explores the two years (1938-1940) Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. spent as an ambassador to the United Kingdom. The book’s a handful at 950-plus pages, which is roughly a page and a half for every day he was an ambassador before he was recalled for being a defeatist.

“Pewabic Pottery: The American Arts and Crafts Movement Expressed in Clay,” by Thomas Brunk, is a comprehensive history of Detroit’s pre-eminent pottery studio cofounded by Margaret Chase Perry. Amazingly, this national treasure was at one time under the auspices of Michigan State University before being spun off as a nonprofit.

LaToya Ruby Frazier, a recipient of a Gordon Parks Foundation grant, will have her first collection of photography published in 2021. Among Frazier’s work is “Flint is Family,” a five-month photographic documentation of Flint families and their experience with the man-made environmental water disaster.

“The Firekeepers Daughter,” by Sault Tribe member Angeline Boulley, is one of the most anticipated young adult-thriller titles of 2021. Boulley’s debut book and its sequel sold for seven figures, with 12 of the biggest publishing houses bidding for the books. Boulley writes with informed insight in this coming-of-age story about an 18-year mixed-heritage young woman, who gets caught up in tribal politics and a number of drug-related deaths. The author took some creative license by using a fictional tribal entity but drew heavily on her own experiences living and working in Sault Ste. Marie, where the novel is set.

Two additional books by Indigenous authors also debut this coming year. In our own backyard we have Matthew L.M. Fletcher, an MSU College of Law professor and one of the



foremost national experts on American Indian law, who has published his seventh book, “The Ghost Road: Anishinaabe Responses to Indian Hatting.” The book is an informative look at the history of hate experienced by Native Americans, and an analysis of the surprisingly racist history of policies such as the Second Amendment, the origin of which can be traced to widespread fear of Native Americans at the time.

Devon A. Mihesuah, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, has written an intriguing cookbook of sorts featuring the history and contemporary problems of the dietary nuances facing Indigenous populations. “Recovering Our Ancestor’s Gardens: Indigenous Recipes and Guide to Diet and Fitness” is a 350-

page book that can be enjoyed by all, as it explores the history of eating among Indigenous nations and how it has changed since European contact. It includes historical photography, 72 pages of recipes and makes a strong case for backyard gardens.

In the same vein, “Motor City Green,” by Joseph S. Cialdella, considers the long history of urban gardening in Detroit. The author makes the case that Detroiters turned to gardening and creating greenspaces to fight back against industrial capitalism.

Stephen Mack Jones, who hails from Lansing, graduated from MSU and pursued a successful career in advertising before retiring and writing tense thrillers set against the urban background of Detroit. Mack Jones’ newest thriller, “Dead of Winter,” is his third August Snow thriller and the action is as deadly and bloody as readers have seen in his previous books. This time, Snow comes to the rescue of a homegrown thriving Mexican business, which supplies tortillas to the region’s restaurants and grocers. Snow uses his resourcefulness to save the business from billionaire developers.

“The Great Gatsby” is back in play with a graphic novel by writer Frank Fordham and illustrator Aya Morton. There is also a prequel to look forward to. “Nick,” by Michael Farris Smith, follows one of literature’s best-known protagonist-narrators, Nick Carraway, as he goes from the trenches of World War I to Paris and New Orleans, before making his way to West Egg.

If you read one poetry book this year, read Nikki Giovanni’s 19th book of poetry from William Morrow publishing, “Make Me Rain,” a timely ad-

dition to her body of resistance poetry. This work includes poems on the Ferguson protests, Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh and President Donald Trump, for whom she has no kind words. Prior to Morrow, Giovanni was published by Detroit’s Broadside Press and its legendary founder, Dudley Randall. Giovanni, a graduate of Fisk University, teaches at Virginia Tech and, in addition to her collections of poetry, has numerous children’s books and spoken word recordings. An early fan of hip-hop, Giovanni showed off her newly minted Tupac Shakur tattoo to a Lansing audience in 1997 while visiting Lansing Community College.

## SCHULER BOOKS

Meridian Mall • Okemos

**HOLIDAY ITEMS 75% OFF  
CALENDARS 50% OFF!**

See store for details.

### VIRTUAL EVENTS

Attend an event without leaving home!

### 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.

### WEEKLY STORYTIMES

for kids on Facebook LIVE  
Saturdays • 11am

Jump into the pages of our favorite books! We will sing songs, make a craft and go on a new adventure.

### REGISTER FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS ON OUR WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK PAGE:

Facebook.com/SchulerBooks  
SchulerBooks.com/Event

### Curious Book Shop

307 E. Grand River, E. Lansing  
332-0112 ★ We validate parking  
Mon.- Sat. 10-7 pm, Sun. 12-5 pm  
[www.curiousbooks.com](http://www.curiousbooks.com)



*The snow is falling  
and books are calling!*

*10% off used hardcover  
and paperback fiction  
through January 14th!*



### Archives Book Shop

519 W. Grand River, E. Lansing  
332-8444 ★ Free Parking  
Mon.-Sat. 11-6 pm, Sun. 12-5 pm  
[thearchivesbookshop@gmail.com](mailto:thearchivesbookshop@gmail.com)

# Four dank products from Lansing's newest pot shop

Noble Road bakes up great pot cookies inside old Roma Bakery

By **KYLE KAMINSKI**

The Botanical Co. opened its doors for recreational and medical sales last month near the Capital Region International Airport. And though the family-owned business has yet to harvest its own crops, that hasn't stopped them from stocking great cannabis products.

**High Life Farms —**

**Royal Apple Cider Chocolate Bar**

**Price — \$22**

**THC content — 27.3%**

The recreational cannabis industry has come a long way since the days of cooking up pot brownies in my college apartment. This seasonal chocolate produce a quick-hitting, dreamy sort of high, and was also packed with flavor and high-quality ingredients. I'd probably snack on this chocolate bar with or without its THC.

Research also shows that chocolate (unlike gummies) may create comparatively longer lasting effects. Anandamide, a lipid found in chocolate, is a nearly chemically identical cousin to THC. When the two team up, research shows it can inhibit the breakdown of cannabinoids, causing them to stay in the system longer with enhanced effects. Sounds like solid stoner science to me.

**Noble Road —**

**Chocolate Chip Cookies**

**Price — \$21**

**THC content — 100 mg**

Tears flowed across Lansing when Roma Bakery & Deli announced its closure last September. But even after Sostine and Filomena Casticiano left the building, their old ovens inside appear to have been kept to good use as the cannabis processing headquarters of the Noble Road Co.

I started with the basics: Ten bite-sized chocolate chip cookies each packed with 10 mg of THC.

It didn't take long for the high to kick in, even after eating a big breakfast beforehand. Try drinking a milkshake before a few cookies.

**Redemption Cannabis — Goo Berry**

**Price — \$60/3.5g/prerolls**

**THC content — 19.8%**

Redemption Cannabis is about more than just selling dank weed. The company is also focused on righting decades of wrongs caused by cannabis prohibition,



**Lansterdam:**

**The Botanical Co.**

3535 Capitol City Blvd.  
Lansing  
(517) 679-1170  
thebotanical.co

with 10% of all revenues heading back to those harmed by the war on cannabis with either legal or financial support.

CEO Ryan Basore, who with six others were known as the Okemos 7, was sentenced to federal prison in 2009 for charges related to serving as a marijuana caregiver. Redemption Cannabis is his comeback story — and a chance to give back to others who have been pinched over pot.

These prerolled joints were the perfect choice for some after-dinner relaxation. I put on a documentary about serial killers, but had to switch to something more light-hearted that required (far) less attention.

**Redemption Cannabis —**

**Willie's Escape Cake Diamonds**

**Price — \$70/1g**

**THC content — 81.2%**

It's not all flowers for Redemption Cannabis. Basore's brand is also churning out some of the most impressive cannabis concentrates available in Michigan. Exhibit A: Willie's Escape Cake.

These crystalline THCA diamonds are the perfect way to add a little extra kick to your standard smoke sesh. Escape Cake is a proprietary strain from Redemption that produces strong body effects with a sweet cake-like flavor. As diamonds, much of that dessert flavor is unnoticeable.

Still, a few pieces in a dab rig are guaranteed to ignite the senses and leave you giggling — and coughing. Diamonds, in my experiences, are best enjoyed in tandem with joints to create that terpene-rich "entourage" effect in which various cannabinoids team up to provide a richer high.

*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.*

## *Favorite Things* Tiffany Hannay and her taxidermy opossum

*Tiffany Hannay is a musician who performs as the rhythm guitarist and lead singer of the Lansing rock group Rodeo Boys. When she's not rocking the microphone or the six-string, she's working in lumber and volunteering at wildlife rescues. Her favorite thing is a taxidermy opossum that she has named "Dixie."*



It was 2016, and I found this opossum on the side of the road — a car had recently struck it. My girlfriend at the time helped me load it into a bag. We took it to Nick Saade, who is a local taxidermy guy, and he mounted it for me. It's the only opossum he's ever done, he told me. It's not the grossest process ever, but it's kind of gross. I thought, "Maybe I can do it myself."

I quickly realized there was absolutely no way I was going to do that by myself. Their skin is tanned and cured and it is put over a sort of mannequin. There are only two different mannequin styles for opossums, but there are 400 different ones for deer or more popular animals. Most people don't get opossums mounted. I named mine Dixie.

It's not my first taxidermy; I've got a big mouth bass and a couple of deer heads. But it is the first I've had made for myself. I like animals a lot and I think taxidermy is cool. It's a little kitschy, and I'm into that sort

of thing. The big mouth bass is my dad's, I've inherited it and taken it to every house I've lived in throughout my 20's.

My love for opossums started when I was growing up in the country out in Leslie. I remember one time this hillbilly boy came over when I was 15 or 16; he killed one in front of me and I was really upset about it. I always thought they were cool and I learned more about them. They're actually really sweet. They are probably the most domesticated wild animals. I started volunteering at a wildlife center and really started to get to know them.

One of the opossums at the center I volunteer at is named Jasper and he got too friendly for them to release. The un-releasable opossums

go onto the educational program. Before the COVID times, we would take him to schools and stuff, and he's got a leash so we can take him for walks. He's really friendly. Opossums do this thing called "slubbing," where they lick you and rub their heads on you. Some people think it's gross but I think it's sweet.

*Interview edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley, if you have a suggestion for Favorite Things, please email Skyler@Lansingcitypulse.com*



# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Some Good Things From 2020"--it's been a tough year, but...

by Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 Time's 2020 Entertainer of the Year
- 4 Goose variety
- 10 Go without eating
- 14 Catch a bug
- 15 Cover-ups
- 16 Daily Bruin publisher
- 17 \_\_\_-Caps (candy for moviegoers, when we went out to movies)
- 18 Country singer who donated \$1 million to Covid vaccine research
- 20 Warmonger
- 22 "Over here"
- 23 Ronan of The Irish Tenors
- 24 Programming language with a coffee-cup logo
- 26 Ewe in the movie "Babe"
- 28 Square root of 2, rounded down
- 29 "Gone With the Wind" surname
- 31 Give a big hand
- 33 Got hitched
- 34 Pioneering Vice President-Elect of the United States
- 37 Network (abbr.)
- 38 Digital watch maker
- 39 "That's a relief"
- 43 Show with an unprecedented sweep of seven Emmy Awards
- 46 " \_\_\_ longa, vita brevis"
- 49 Fine-tunes
- 50 Oven controls
- 51 "Cold Mountain" extra
- 52 Apple phone software
- 53 "It \_\_\_ what you think"
- 54 "Foundation" author

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61					62	63			64		65	
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69					70						71	

- Asimov
- 56 Evil-\_\_\_ (witch and ally of Skeletor)
- 58 Drive-\_\_\_ menu
- 61 Former British Army captain who walked laps for charity in April 2020, raising over 32 million pounds by his 100th birthday
- 65 Dull routine
- 66 Poet Pound
- 67 Noisy pig
- 68 "Death \_\_\_ Salesman"
- 69 Element #10
- 70 Buddhist temple
- 71 Initialism that became increasingly prevalent in 2020
- Down**
- 1 Shindig
- 2 "Bob's Burgers" daughter
- 3 Downtempo R&B songs
- 4 Callous fellow
- 5 Word on Hawaiian license plates
- 6 "Blue" or "White" river
- 7 Efficiently
- 8 Crafty initials?
- 9 "Cleopatra" animal
- 10 Boxer Tyson
- 11 "Don't hesitate!"
- 12 "Citizen Kane" actor Everett
- 13 Soaked up some sun
- 19 Game maker since 1972
- 21 Units of purity
- 25 "Batman Forever" actor Kilmer
- 26 Deserves
- 27 Defunct Houston hockey team
- 29 Approvals
- 30 Bale stuff
- 31 Winter driving needs
- 32 Rash action
- 35 Outburst usually acknowledged by others
- 36 Run at full speed
- 40 London hub
- 41 "Electric" fish
- 42 Calendar units (abbr.)
- 44 A Marx brother
- 45 Floppy followers
- 46 Gotten up
- 47 Blow up, perhaps
- 48 Mall pizza eatery
- 53 How errors may be noted
- 55 Words with "early age" or "impassé"
- 56 Like some odds
- 57 "Oh \_\_\_!" (song from the "Imagine" album)
- 59 Elizabethan collar
- 60 Home of Arches and Zion National Parks
- 62 Swabbie's swabber
- 63 "Mamma \_\_\_" (musical based on ABBA songs)
- 64 "Golden" time

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Answers Page 29

# SUDOKU

# Beginner

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

## 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 29

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

January 6-12, 2021

**ARIES (March 21–April 19):** The pandemic has made it challenging to nurture our communities. In order to make new connections and keep our existing connections vibrant, we've had to be extra resourceful. I hope you will make this work one of your holy quests in 2021, Aries. In my astrological opinion, you should be ingenious and tireless as you nurture your web of allies. Your assignment during our ongoing crisis is to lead the way as you show us all how to ply the art of high-minded networking.

**TAURUS (April 20–May 20):** Taurus actor George Clooney is worth \$500 million. Yet his dazzling opulence is puny compared to that of Taurus entrepreneur Mark Zuckerberg, whose fortune exceeds \$100 billion. It's my duty to inform you that you will probably never achieve either man's levels of wealth. Yet I do hold out hope that in the next 12 months you will launch plans that ultimately enable you to have all the money you need. 2021 will be a favorable time to formulate and set in motion a dynamic master plan for financial stability.

**GEMINI (May 21–June 20):** One of your main themes for the next 12 months comes from Leonardo da Vinci. He wrote, "To develop a complete mind: Study the science of art. Study the art of science. Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else." If you use da Vinci's instructions as a seed for your meditations, you'll stir up further inspirations about how to make 2021 a history-making epoch in the evolution of your education. I hope you will treasure the value of "learning how to see" and "realizing how everything connects to everything else." They should be at the root of your intention to learn as much as you can.

**CANCER (June 21–July 22):** An extensive study by psychiatric researchers suggests that well more than half of us experienced a potentially disabling trauma in childhood. You're in the minority if you didn't! That's the bad news. The good news is that 2021 will be a time when you Cancerians will have more power than ever before to heal at least some of the wounds from your old traumas. You will also attract extra luck and help to accomplish these subtle miracles. To get the process started, make a list of three practical actions you can take to instigate your vigorous healing.

**LEO (July 23–Aug. 22):** Leo author Isabel Allende says, "We are in the world to search for love, find it and lose it, again and again. With each love, we are born anew, and with each love that ends we collect a new wound. I am covered with proud scars." I appreciate Allende's point of view, and understand that it's useful, even inspirational, for many people. But my path has been different. As a young man, I enjoyed my endless quest for sex and romance. It was thrilling to keep leaping from affair to affair. But as I eventually discovered, that habit made me stupid and superficial about love. It prevented me from having to do the hard psychological work necessary to continually reinvent intimacy—and become eligible for deeper, more interesting versions of love. I bring this to your attention, Leo, because I think 2021 could be your time for a personal rebirth that will be made possible by deep, interesting versions of love.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22):** Occultist Israel Regardie (1907–1985) was an accomplished author and influencer. To what did he attribute his success? I'll let him speak for himself: "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent." I hope you will write out this quote and tape it to your bathroom mirror for the duration of 2021, Virgo.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22):** The Kabbalistic Tree of Life is a mystical symbol of the hidden structure of creation. At its heart, in the most pivotal position, is the principle of beauty. This suggests

that the wise teachers who gave us the Tree did not regard beauty as merely a luxury to be sought only when all practical business is taken care of. Nor is it a peripheral concern for those who pursue a spiritual path. Rather, beauty is essential for our health and intelligence. In accordance with astrological omens, I invite you to take a cue from the Tree of Life. During the next 12 months, give special attention to people and things and experiences and thoughts and feelings that are beautiful to you. Meditate on how to nurture them and learn from them and draw inspiration from them.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21):** According to motivational speaker Les Brown, the problem for many people is not that "they aim too high and miss," but that "they aim too low and hit." I'm conveying this to you just in time for the Reach Higher Phase of your long-term astrological cycle. According to my analysis, you'll generate good fortune for yourself if you refine and expand your personal goals. Here's a key detail: Don't borrow anyone else's standards of success. Home in on your own unique soul's code, and give it fuller, deeper, wilder expression.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21):** One of my primary pleasures in reading books is to discover thoughts and feelings I have never before encountered. That's exciting! But it's hard to force myself to keep plowing through an author's prose if it's full of stuff that I already know about from my own life or from books, movies, and other art. Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels fit the latter description. I realize that many people love his fiction, but for me it is monumentally obvious and boring. What about you, Sagittarius? Where do you go to be exposed to thrilling new ways of looking at the world? Judging from the astrological omens, I conclude that this quest will be especially fun and crucial for you in the coming months.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19):** "I only want people around me who can do the impossible," said Capricorn businesswoman Elizabeth Arden. In that spirit, and in accordance with your astrological potentials, I hereby authorize you to pursue two "impossible" goals in 2021. The first comes to you courtesy of fashion writer Diana Vreeland, who wrote, "There's only one thing in life, and that's the continual renewal of inspiration." Your second "impossible" goal is from actor Juliette Binoche, who said, "My only ambition is to be true every moment I am living."

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18):** Your past is becoming increasingly irrelevant, while your future is still a bit amorphous. To help clarify the possibilities that you could harvest in 2021, I suggest you suspend your theories about what your life is about. Empty yourself out as much as you can. Pledge to re-evaluate everything you think you know about your purpose. Once you've accomplished that, meditate on the following questions: 1. What experiences do you truly need and passionately long for—not the experiences you needed and longed for in the past, but rather those that are most vivid and moving right now. 2. What are the differences between your fearful fantasies and your accurate intuitions? How can you cultivate the latter and downplay the former? 3. What are your nightly dreams and semi-conscious fantasies telling you about how to create the most interesting version of the future?

**PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20):** Author Gunter Grass wrote, "Writers know that sometimes things are there in the drawer for decades before they finally come out and we are capable of writing about them." I would universalize his thought in this way: Most of us know that possibly useful ideas and dreams are in the drawer for years before they finally come out and we know how to use them. I believe this will be an ongoing experience for you in 2021, Pisces.

# TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

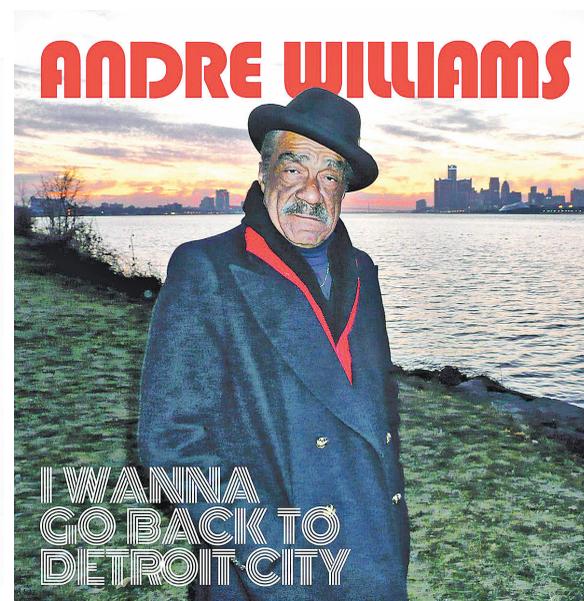
BY RICH TUPICA

## A LOOK BACK AT THE SOULFUL SOUND OF ANDRE WILLIAMS



THE FIVE DOLLARS

EXCLUSIVE FORTUNE RECORDING ARTISTS



Andre Williams recorded dozens of raw R&B records starting in the mid-'50s. (Courtesy photos)

### Detroit's proto-rapper refused to follow trends

Going back to 1950s Detroit, there was only one R&B singer known for a “talking” style of singing, and that’s Andre Williams— aka “the Godfather of Rap.”

That relaxed lyrical delivery, perfected by Williams on edgy tracks like 1957’s “Jail Bait,” is undeniably proto-hip-hop. Decades before the onset of rap, he was rhyming his way through a series of unconventional dance hits like “Bacon Fat,” “Greasy Chicken” and “Pass the Biscuits Please.”

Born Zephire Andre Williams on Nov. 1, 1936, the dynamic singer/songwriter was born in Alabama, but at age 16 ventured north and landed in Detroit. By 1955, he took over as lead singer of The 5 Dollars, a budding Motor City-based doo-wop group. After a few wild performances at the Warfield Theater on Hastings Street, the emerging outfit signed to Fortune Records, a gritty mom-n-pop label, and the rest is history.

After a series of regional R&B hits, in 1956, Williams got a boost after Epic Records, a major label, picked up the “Bacon Fat” 45 rpm and distributed it nationally. This

led to a boost in sales and packed shows across the country—but also attention from the higher-profile Motown Records.

In 1961, Williams left Fortune and began a five-year stint at the rapidly growing Motown, where he worked as mainly a producer and writer for the label’s roster of talent. In fact, he was only scheduled for one single of his own, “Rosa Lee” b/w “Shoo Ooo,” but it was never issued. Still, he remained productive. William co-wrote “Thank You For Loving Me,” Stevie Wonder’s first record. He also penned tracks for other Motown legends like Mary Wells (“Oh Little Boy What You Do to Me”), Eddie Holland (“If Cleopatra Took a Chance”) and Marvin Gaye (“Mojo Hannah”). He also oversaw the production of two LPs by The Contours and managed Edwin Starr.

In 1963, he co-wrote his most commercially success track, “Shake a Tail Feather.” It was a hit for the Five Du-Tones, who reached No. 28 on Billboard’s Hot R&B Singles chart and No. 51 on the Hot 100 chart with their rendition of the energetic party starter. Over the

years, it’s been covered by a string of other big names, most notably: Ike & Tina Turner, Bobby Purify, Ray Charles, The Kingsmen, The Romantics and The Monkees. More recently, pop acts like Hanson and The Cheetah Girls have also put their stamp on the ’60s classic.

After his exit from Motown, Williams signed with Checker Records, a subsidiary of Chess Records, Chicago’s legendary blues label. There, he cut 1968’s “Cadillac Jack,” which climbed to No. 46 on Billboard’s R&B chart. The slick, bluesy single would ultimately be his second and last appearance on the mainstream charts.

From there, he recorded for a series of smaller labels, including a pile of now-classic underground tracks like “Sweet Little Pussy Cat,” “Rib Tips, Pts. 1 & 2” and “Pig Snoots Pts. 1 & 2.” Aside from issuing novelty singles, at the onset of the ’70s he also spent time writing songs for George Clinton’s Parliament-Funkadelic and producing tunes with Ike Turner.

However, as the 1970s wound down, Williams’ battle with drug

addiction led him to many years of extreme poverty. Eventually, the acclaimed songwriter was homeless on the streets of Chicago.

Luckily, by the 1990s, a few different record labels signed Williams and helped him revamp his life and career. After Norton Records dropped his “Greasy” LP in 1996 and then In the Red Records followed with 1998’s “Silky,” the R&B legend embarked on multiple world tours and scored a new, young fanbase along the way. From there, he recorded yet another stack of raw R&B LPs and singles. His long, bizarre career was then chronicled in “Agile, Mobile, Hostile: A Year in the Life of Andre Williams,” a 2008 documentary film—it’s worth a watch for any Michigan music lover.

Williams, 82, died March 17, 2019, in Chicago. Fittingly, his final studio album (released in 2016) was titled “I Wanna Go Back to Detroit City” — a nod to the city the first that welcomed his peerless brand of soulful music.

# OUT ON THE TOWN

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

## Wednesday, January 6

**Annual Mid-Michigan Photo Club Photo Clinic** - Meet with several professionals that will help answer your questions about improving your photography. 6-9 p.m. Zoom Meeting. [mmphotoclub.com](http://mmphotoclub.com).

**Waning Moon Ritual** - 6:30-7:30 p.m. Weavers of the Web 517-657-5800. Zoom link at [weaversoftheweb.org](http://weaversoftheweb.org).

## Thursday, January 7

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

**Virtual Refugee Foster Care Information Session** - 5:30-7:30 p.m. RSVP to [RFCinfo@samaritas.org](mailto:RFCinfo@samaritas.org) at least 24 hours before the event for Zoom info.

## Friday, January 8

**33rd Annual Quilt A Thon at Country Stitches** - Fri. & Sat. 10am- 4pm. Country Stitches, 2200 Coolidge Road, East Lansing.

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

## Saturday, January 9

**Brass Philly** - the best damn Philly in Michigan every Saturday! 9:30 p.m.-12 a.m. The Avenue Cafe, 2021 E Michigan Ave, Lansing. Call 517-999-7549 to order.

**Free Online Roast of The Karate Kid** - Play drinking games online with Cobra Kai comedians. 9 p.m. [frontrowfilmroast.com](http://frontrowfilmroast.com).

**Mini L.A.B.S. Camps | Impression 5 Science Center** - Learn about basic science in STEM-themed day camps! Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116.

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

**Spy Science** - AM - 9 a.m., PM 1 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. [impression5.org](http://impression5.org).

## Monday, January 11

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

## Tuesday, January 12

**Can + Can Drive** - hosted by Acts of Compassion! 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Elmwood Elementary School, 1533 Elmwood Rd, Lansing.

### SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 27

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

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 27

B	T	S		C	A	N	A	D	A		F	A	S	T		
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# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

# Intermittent Feasting



By **ARI LeVAUX**

The New Year is often a time to contemplate one's relationship with calories. After months of culturally sanctioned gluttony, we find ourselves suddenly facing a cold, empty chasm, facing a familiar question: will we fill this void with purpose, or leftover eggnog?

The pandemic holidays of 2020 were unique, of course. The usual peer-reviewed parade of excesses moved to Zoom, which didn't stop the snacking, lounging and binge drinking that in many homes, has, in fact, been in full swing since March. All of which conspire to leave the average American all the more fat and lonely than ever by year's end.

In the beforetimes, January was always the busiest month of the year for gym signups, with the first being the busiest day. In the duringtimes of 2021 it will be more complicated, but losing weight will remain a top resolution.

Weight loss is a problem that stumps so many people, even while the answer could not be more obvious. What other problem can be solved by doing less?

Less eating, that is. Exercise is important for many, many reasons other than calorie burning. But trying to lose weight with exercise alone is like trying to wipe water off the floor without bothering to turn off the faucet that's overflowing the sink. We need to consume fewer calories, which means confronting hunger. Most people who can afford the choice will avoid that feeling, when they should probably make friends with it.

Consider the expression to "stay hungry." It means, basically, to stay motivated. To keep after your goals and shape your dreams, rather than to lazily graze upon an all-you-can-eat pasture of your past achieve-

ments.

In the context of weight loss, those hunger pangs are the feelings that come from actual work, like the ache in your thighs after leg day at the gym. And new research appears to suggest, meanwhile, that fasting can improve your workout — including muscle building — while exercise can increase the caloric burn of a fast. Like some magic pill that burns fat and builds muscle, the budding field of fasted training might be the answer to your New Year's blues.

Not to be confused with starvation, fasting is the deliberate refraining from eating. It's an ancient practice tied to many religions and cultures, from Native American vision quests to Ramadan.

Mark Mattson, a professor of neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University, ushered in the modern era of fasting, now known scientifically as caloric restriction, with his 2003 research on mice. The study suggested that long-term calorie restriction increased the little mammals' lifespans. Subsequent work by Mattson and others documented cognitive improvements in mice on calorie-restricted diets, again confirming age-old wisdom. This work helped spawn the popular diet called Intermittent Fasting, or "IFing," for short.

IFing focuses on the timing of meals, rather than their content. Most adherents shoot for 16 hours of no eating, including the time spent sleeping. If you sleep for eight hours, then you'd be fasting for about half of your waking time on any given day. One could just as accurately call the diet intermittent feasting, which is part of why it's so popular.

Martin Berkhan, the weightlifter, irreverent blogger, and owner of the Leangains brand, isn't shy about eating an entire cheesecake in a sitting, or poking fun at people who do sit-ups. Berkhan schedules his workout for the end of his fasting window, and follows the workout with a no-holds-barred feast.

Love him or hate him, and regardless of whether you want Grand Canyon abs, Berkhan did a lot to organize



Courtesy Photo

"My body has become a more efficient machine. I go further with less food."

— Bette Midler, in "Ruthless People"

the impact of caloric restriction on body building. Intermittent fasting is particularly effective, he says, because human growth hormone is naturally released in the early stages of a fast. Berkhan believes this fasting window is a powerful opportunity for the body to make the most of exercise — he does consume protein just before his regimen of squats, benches, and pull-ups, all with hundreds of pounds of added weights, but his belly is not full. The reason he can get away with all the cheesecake is that those big muscles require a lot of energy to work that hard, and they will get that energy from his fat cells after depleting the sugar in his blood.

Exercising with an empty belly is not for everyone. But if you are willing to push against your comfort zone, it does get easier. Mattson told the health blog Inverse that it takes about a month before the hunger pains from a skipped meal go away, which coincides with the period when you can measure and feel the diet's

benefits, including insulin sensitivity in those with diabetes, lower blood pressure, and even a lower resting heart rate. Fasting increases blood levels of ghrelin, a hormone that suppresses appetite, thereby making you less hungry — a counterintuitive idea that's confirmed by virtually anyone who gives fasting a serious try.

Like any diet or health regime, intermittent fasting and "fasted training" only work if you stick to them. Americans act with a sense of entitlement about food, that it's all ours for the taking and don't you tread on that right. But don't you want to see your own abs once, or once more, before it's too late? You don't need to run up Mt. Everest every morning to get there. Just be cool with being a little hungry. It's the price of progress.

*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.

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