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# CityPULSE

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## ONE YEAR LATER



## LIVES LOST

SEE PAGE 15

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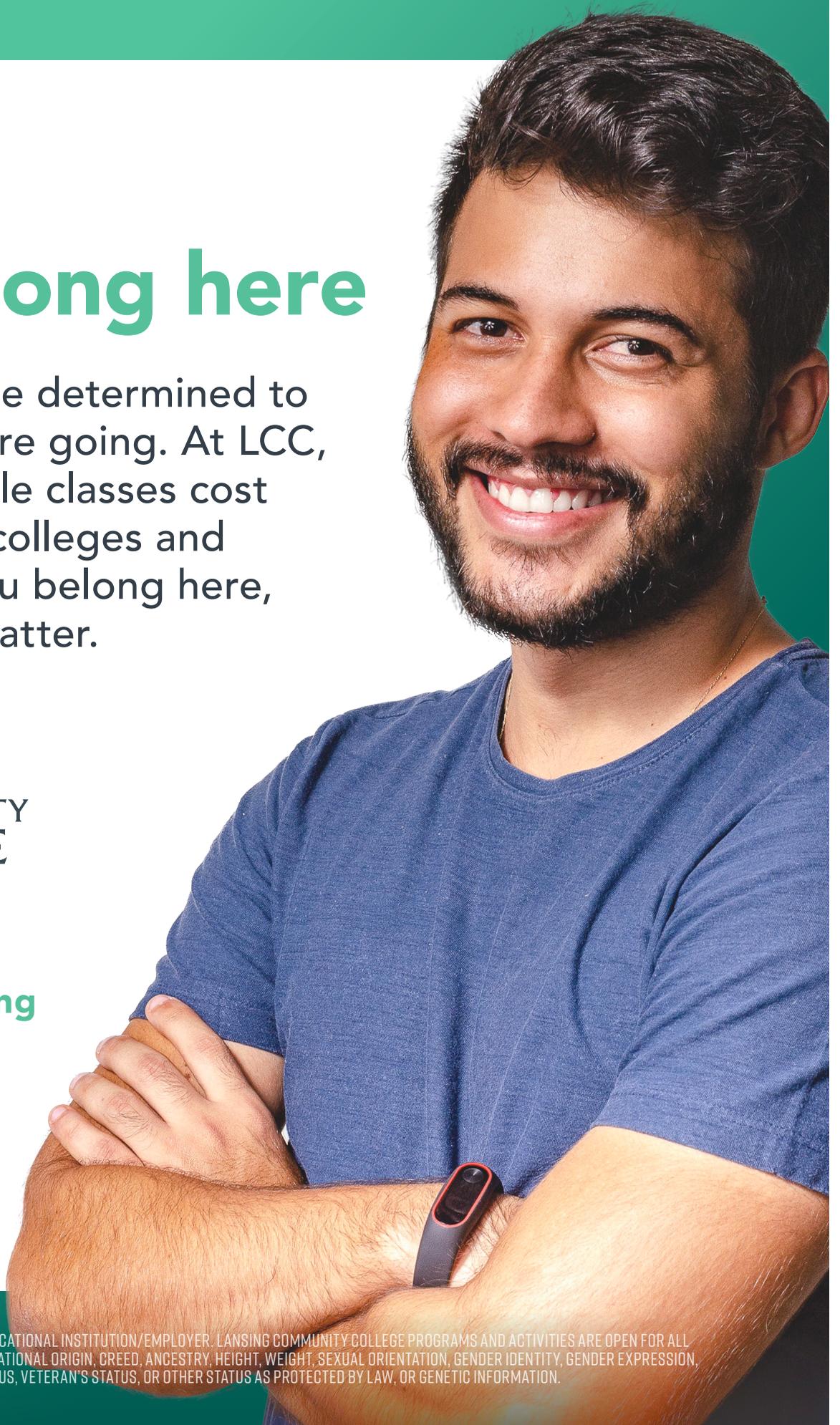
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MENTAL HEALTH  
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*Presenting the Community Mental Health Authority*  
**2020 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**

**Thursday, March 25, 2021 | 8:30 am - 11:30 am**

**FREE, VIRTUAL EVENT!**

*Everyone is welcome to attend this educational program presented by CMHA-CEI. Please [register](#) in advance.*

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

## **SHARI SIMMONS**

*Executive Director | Fire Mountain Treatment Center*



As a clinician, author, and professor, Shari provides an unforgettable story of love and transformation that will resonate with anyone who wants to understand trauma and its impact on the brain.

Shari tells the heart wrenching account of an orphaned child who suffered brutality at the hands of her mother. In this story, the client's mind was closed to the horrors of her abuse, betrayal, and abandonment until the day her memories came flooding back to her conscious mind.

Her search for self-worth was filled with jarring darkness, desperation and hopelessness that almost took her life. Through this case study, Shari helps audiences transform their ideas about clients moving from passive victims to resilient warriors.

To learn more about Shari, visit her website: <http://www.thetraumaspeakers.com>  
To purchase her book, *Which Way?* directly from Amazon, [click here](#).

## **EVENT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Program begins at 8:30 am
- Presentation of 2020 Report to the Community
- Distinguished Service Award
- Keynote Speaker: Shari Simmons

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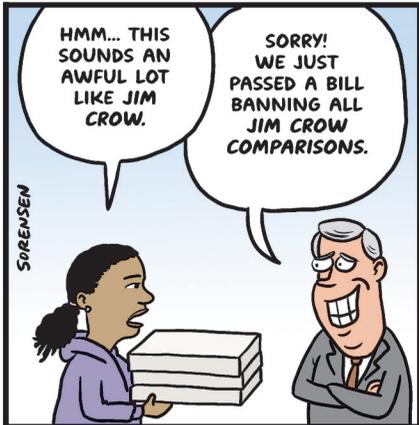
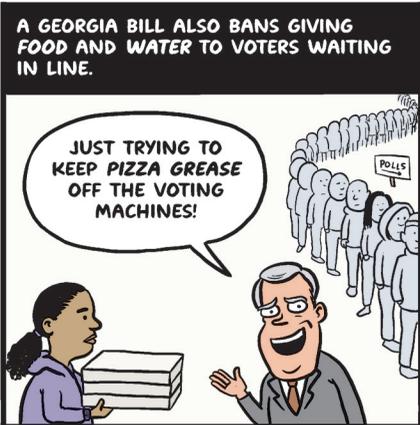
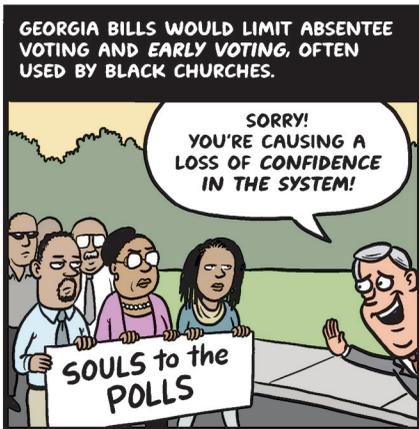
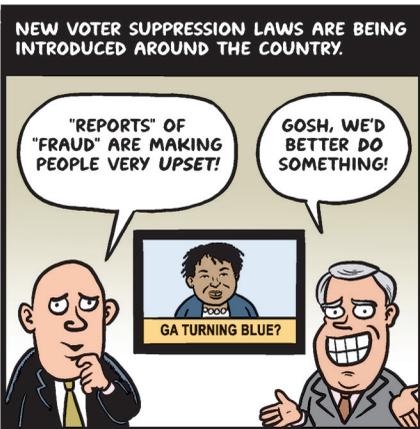
**Email:** [cward@cmham.org](mailto:cward@cmham.org)

*Program will be recorded.*

*Registered attendees will receive a link to the recording following the live event.*

*For more information, contact Christina Ward at (517) 237-3143 or [cward@cmham.org](mailto:cward@cmham.org).*

**Click here to register!**



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# CityPULSE

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**Cover Art**

Illustration by Mariah Proznik

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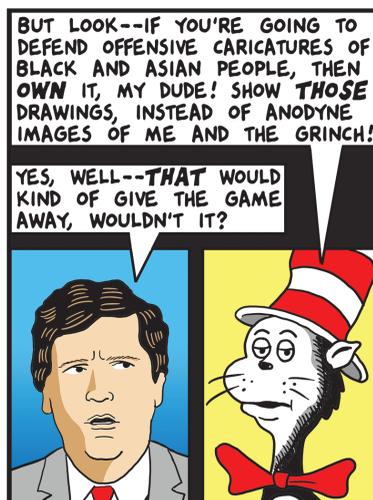
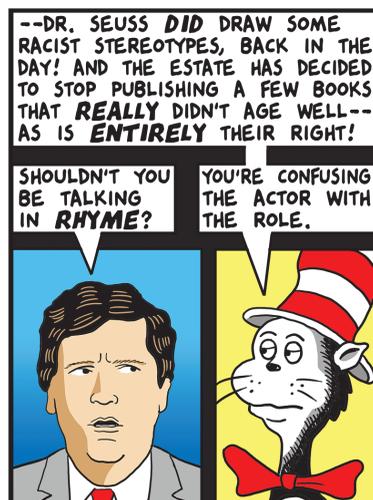
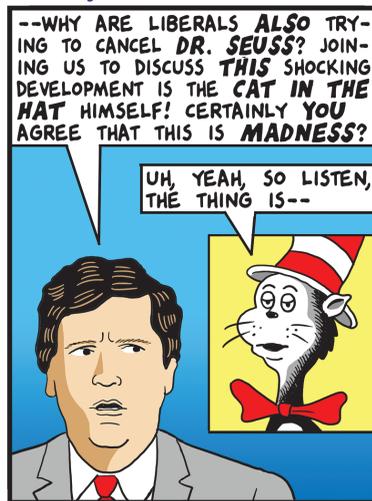
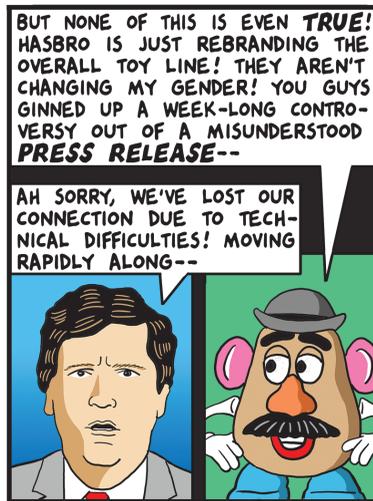
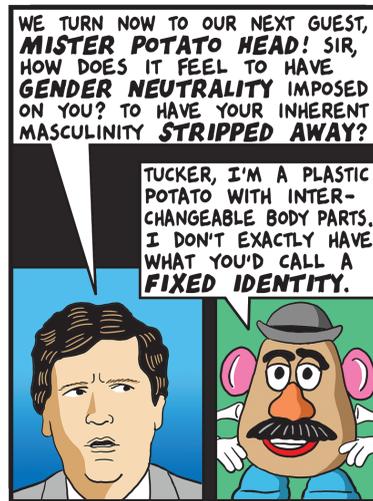
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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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# PULSE

# NEWS & OPINION

## For whom the deaths toll

Today marks the one-year anniversary of the first cases of COVID-19 being diagnosed in Michigan. It's been a rough, life-altering 12 months since then. The global death toll has eclipsed 2.6 million. The U.S. death toll blew past 500,000 a few weeks ago. Here in Michigan, the loss of life is reportedly approaching 17,000. These are just the deaths: Many thousands more will continue to suffer from the long-term damage to their bodies caused by the coronavirus.

It's hard to wrap our head around the sheer scale of these numbers. At its peak, the COVID-19 pandemic was killing more people each day than died in the 9-11 World Trade Center attack. The U.S. death tally is approaching the loss of life during the entire Civil War. It didn't have to be this way. With an aggressive, science-driven response from the start, there is little doubt that hundreds of thousands of lives could have been spared. Perhaps we have learned at least one important lesson: The quality of our political leadership, nationally and locally, really does make a difference, especially in times of crisis.

The good news is that we can now see light at the end of the tunnel. Thanks to the leadership of President Joe Biden, the vaccine supply is quickly ramping up. More than 60 million Americans have now received at least one shot of the COVID-19 vaccine and states are beginning to loosen restrictions — some much too quickly in our estimation. Nonetheless, the movement toward reopening is welcome news for long-suffering small businesses that managed to survive a full year of lost revenue and those who have been displaced from their jobs.

We've been most fortunate to live in Michigan, where Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and her team have followed the science and stood tall against critics when it counted. Despite the unpopularity of her lockdown orders, and her methodical approach to reopening Michigan's economy, Whitmer has led with pluck and persistence, putting the well-being of the state's citizens ahead of the second-guessing, partisan bickering and legislative stonewalling that has characterized the



### The CP Edit Opinion

Republican response to the pandemic.

While we are generally pleased with the job Whitmer has done, we're not happy about her administration's lack of transparency in documenting the Michigan deaths attributed to COVID. We're not willing to assume that the state's reported number — 17,000 deaths — is completely accurate because we can't independently confirm it. This is because the state refuses to release to the media the names and death certificates of those who died, unless we are willing to request them individually by the decedent's name, then cough up \$30 for each death certificate. That would cost more than a half-million dollars.

A spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services asserts that death certificates are "not considered public records in the sense they are open to inspection by the public or that the information they contain is freely available to all." Technically, she's correct. According to Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum, whose office is charged with maintaining death records for the county, some vital records are exempt from the state Freedom of Information Act,

including death certificates. Officials could, however, create administrative rules that facilitate access to the information contained in death certificates — like names and causes of death. They have yet to do so.

As recently as last year, City Pulse was able to review death certificates at Clerk Byrum's office, but that access has since been denied based on "updated legal guidance" from the State of Michigan. Shutting down access to these vital records apparently began with a statewide directive issued on Jan. 25 by State Registrar Jeff Duncan, who works in the Vital Statistics and Health Statistics division at MDHHS. It is unclear who or what led Duncan to implement the lockdown on COVID-related death

certificates.

Amid an unprecedented public health crisis, where there is a clear and compelling public interest in verifying the accuracy of the death toll as reported by the state, why not just release the records or facilitate public access to them by media organizations across the state? Is someone afraid that the death certificates and the COVID-19 body count won't match? If that's not a concern, then why the lack of transparency? Refusing to provide the media with access to these vital records only feeds the COVID conspiracy narrative and empowers Whitmer's critics in the Legislature to question whether she is being truthful with the people of Michigan.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicate that only 6% of deaths due to COVID-19 listed the malady as the sole cause of death on the death certificate. Helping the public understand how many people have died from COVID-19 and what underlying conditions may have contributed to their deaths would go a long way toward countering the conspiracy narrative and provide Michigan residents with a better understanding of the science and data behind Whitmer's pandemic orders.

In the name of transparency and good government, we urge Whitmer to lift the lockdown on COVID-related death certificates.

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

# Why do women wait so long to report sexual harassment?

By **KATHERINE REDMOND**  
Opinion



*Katherine Redmond is the executive director of the national WeLEAD Project, based in Colorado, which works with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment. City*

*Pulse requested her views to explain why women sometimes do not immediately confront sexual harassment, in light of criticism for not doing so of the two women accusing former Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero of sexual harassment.*

I am a survivor of rape. And not only that, I am a survivor of myriad offenses relating to sexual harassment, groping, fondling and physical abuse — and all areas in between. I also work with victims of the same within institutions and regarding the powerful.

Survivors generally don't want to speak up. We know the vitriol that awaits us, and the lack of accountability for our perpetrators. Simply put, the return on investment is meager.

We've witnessed survivors castigated, their lives threatened, their families harassed and the domino effect of retribution that awaits them. Powerful people are powerful because of lucrative connections and access to resources. Most victims lack the resources to redress their abuse.

So, we rely on law enforcement if the behavior is criminal. And even then, we expose our painful stories to a person who may be one of the 40% of law enforcement with domestic violence in their homes. We are expected to roll the dice that our traumatic situation will be thoroughly investigated and defy the statistics that it will actually result in prosecution.

If it's not criminal, we rely on institutions to have policies and procedures to address the behavior. Normally, institutions are beholden to the power of the perpetrator — or their enablers.

The enablers exist in all of these venues. Perpetrators aren't able to continue their reign of harassment, discrimination or abuse on their own. They require a system of enablers to shield them from accountability. They are carefully placed and groomed people in

strategic positions.

So, instead of answering yet another question of why women won't come forward — which has been played out ad nauseam for public consumption in every social media group and newspaper article — I pose this to those reading: What have you done to protect victims?

Have you spoken to victims to try to understand why they are afraid?

Have you ever watched a report of abuse in front of your kids and demeaned the victim or used myths to question the veracity of the allegations? Have you reviewed statistics regarding violence against women? Have you ever volunteered your time at the local crisis center?

Have you questioned those who would malign victims and demanded they be heard? Have you educated your sons about girls and women and the autonomy of their bodies and the respect they should be given? Have you disciplined them when they don't?

Have you reviewed your own language and behaviors in front of people, which would lead them to believe that women should be devalued and disrespected? Do you know that women do not have an equal rights amendment in the Constitution, and that it has already been ratified?

The simple answer to why women don't come forward is that we live in a society where sexist treatment has been normalized. We will find it easier to forgive an abusive man than the woman who ruined an admired man's career because she would no longer be silent.

We even show compassion to the family of the perpetrator as the victims of collateral damage of the accusation or report — and blame the victim for bringing the abusive behavior into plain sight. Do you see that we instinctively label the victim as the perpetrator almost immediately?

We have an epidemic in this country of violence against women. This epidemic didn't happen because numbers of women came forward to an audience of people willing to support them, investigate their claims and hold perpetrators accountable. This epidemic happened because we have cowards in our midst to whom self-preservation is the only value they possess.

Where do you stand?

# Michigan Democratic Party needs to embrace progressives to win

By **GABRIEL GURULE**  
Opinion



*Gabriel Gurule is a junior in the Michigan State University Honors College studying history. He is a member of the State Central Committee of the Michigan*

*Democratic Party. He also serves on the MDP Progressive Caucus' Executive Committee.*

Last month, the Michigan Democratic Party held its election for the State Central Committee, the party's governing board. MISolidarity Slate, a coalition of party-reformists, took a sizable chunk of the seats. Last week, Kyle Melinn in his opinion column "Progressive Leader Carving His Group a Place in MDP" painted a schism in the party between the two wings of the party. The progressives, a coalition of "the far left," the "youth," and "minority groups" against the more moderate groups of "education caucus" and "labor unions." As a member of the State Central Committee and the MISolidarity Slate, I would like to take this opportunity to correct the record.

I believe I could be one of the "minority youths" Melinn refers to, but I also grew up in a union family. Five generations of UAW, stretching from my great-grandfather leaving Mexico to build Model Ts to my mother working at an Obama-bailed-out Chrysler. She used to bring me to her local meetings; they'd open with a belting of Solidarity Forever. "But without our brain or muscle, not a single wheel can turn" would echo throughout the hall. Nearly a decade later, this ethos guides the MISolidarity Slate—a movement of campaign staffers, community organizers, and local activists. We're the party's doorknockers, not its king-makers. We fight to hold the party to its Platform of being "honest, responsive, and accountable to the people it serves."

For generations, the MDP has held loyalty to the party above everything else. Even when it cost us elections. Our statewide Democrats —except Dana Nessel—all were failed nominees before they were finally elected.

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow was on the ticket against Gov. John Engler in 1994 and lost. In 2002, Gary Peters was the nominee for attorney general against Mike Cox. He fell short. In 2014, Jocelyn Benson ran for secretary of state and came up emptyhanded. This seems to be the party's strategy: run candidates until they win. This isn't a tenable strategy in the long-term. We need to recruit new candidates, not hold Democrats hostage to a career ladder.

In Melinn's article, he paints the MISolidarity Slate as the leftist mirror of the Tea Party: maybe he's onto something. Look at the Tea Party: rather than kowtow to power, they fought tooth and nail. Their refusal to take prisoners was their political strength. In 2010, the Tea Party's peak, they flipped 63 seats in the House (2018's impressive Blue Wave only carried 41) as well as paving the way to Gov. Rick Snyder's election. In that year's Democratic gubernatorial primary, we had Speaker Andy Dillon, who later served in Snyder's cabinet, and Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero, who faces multiple cases of sexual harassment now. Dillon helped preside over the period of Right to Work laws and Pension taxes. Virg Bernero lost by 20+ points.

How can we show working-class families we're on their side? The Michigan Democratic Party, if we want to win, needs to return to our roots. We need to focus on protecting average families. As our districts become increasingly fair due to Voters Not Politicians, the MDP needs to field candidates for not just every State House and Senate seat—but every university and township board. Wherever a voter is represented, we need to fight for them. We cannot write off any area as hopeless.

The future of the party is not a brawl between moderates and progressives, but a coalition. As long as State Central is full of Democrats — far left or moderate — committed to our principles and our communities, we can — and will — all work together to push Michigan to become a place where minimum wage is a living wage, where healthcare doesn't cost more than college, and where college doesn't cost more than a mortgage. A Michigan where the Democratic Party is the party of the people.

# Is a walk down Virg's memory lane what we want?

I wasn't the only one to audibly sigh at Virg's letter warning us that he was seriously interested in running for mayor again, right?

I know. It's not that it wasn't expected or anything. Our former mayor chewed my ear about my lackluster enthusiasm to the possibility of Virg 2.0 last fall after Mayor Andy Schor's summer to forget.

Still, seeing it in writing ... Virg Bernero's new logo fronting a machine gun of accomplishments (as if he spoke them himself into one long text message) was exhausting. Thank goodness the end of the page put an end to it.

We all know Virg could have gone on for another page. And probably another after that. At 8-point type.

Look, I liked Virg as mayor, I really did. It's like riding the Magnum at Cedar Point or watching that last "Star Wars" movie, the Rise of Skywalker? These experiences were an adrenaline shot to the heart that I'm happy to say I did, but I'm not in a hurry to repeat.

Virg was Trump before Trump.



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

Watching the old video of Virg tearing down that FOX News reporter is fun. Angry Mayor Beer gives this city personality. I like remembering Virg for the good times and the charm.

Another run at office? Well ...

I've gotten used to not reading about the mayor and Councilwoman Carol Wood's fighting over seemingly EVERY, LITTLE THING. Honestly, it's been nice. For all of Schor's faults, at least he seems to get along with other people.

Everything isn't a battle. He accepts criticism graciously and tries to self improve. Maybe leadership on the fly isn't something we want long term for the city, but at least it's a different problem to talk about.

Personally, I don't know whom I'll ultimately support for mayor, but I will tell you this: I'm looking forward to litigating the warts of two mayoral administrations — side by side — for the better part of a year about as much as my next colonoscopy.

Who did more for the neighborhoods? Who is more in the pocket of developers?

We all ready to crack open the book on the 2013 ice storm reaction? Visions

of Michigan Avenue lined with marijuana shops. The awkwardly timed dismissal of Peter Lark? Theories about why Lansing City Attorney Janene McIntyre left with a \$160,662 parachute?

Because it's not only coming, it's coming with gas. City Pulse reported two women have come forward with sexual harassment claims against Bernero. Wait until Virg formally files for office. I'm told more is coming.

Obviously, these women wouldn't be coming forward if Bernero wasn't threatening to run for office again. Does that make it political? Or are they just warning us about Virg's character? The answer here matters, but the pathway to get there is the point of my column today.

Virg and Teri cut their lovey-dovey video about how their marriage is back on track, and that's wonderful. They're ready to take on whatever comes their way through this campaign. Great.

What about the women involved? Does bringing this information forward they REALLY want to do? Are they taking joy in this?

What about us? Are Lansing resi-

dents ready for this? Do we want to be ready for this?

Did he or didn't he? What's her story? Why is this coming out now?

How about Lansing residents more interested in the issues of 2021 — a post-COVID glut of downtown office space, racial justice, policing, city retiree benefits, no money to fix my street or my sidewalk — than taking continuous trips down memory lane about whether someone did or didn't use his position in improper ways?

Does moving forward have to mean two candidates where the focus will inevitably be spending our time looking backward?

Seriously, can't someone else in a city of 100,000 souls run this city, too? Virg can't be the only one.

There are reasons popular shows get canceled after time. There's reasons good songs fall off the Top 40. There's reasons neon colors aren't in style anymore.

There's a time and place for everything. Virg's 12 years were his time. I choose to remember them fondly.

Excuse if I'm not excited about reliving them.

*(Kyle Melinn of the Capitol News Service MIRS is at melinnky@gmail.com.)*

## LETTERS to the editor

### But what about methane?

City Pulse should clarify the statement in your recent editorial about climate change (February 24) that the Lansing Board of Water and Light's "new 250-megawatt Delta Energy Park plant will emit 50% less greenhouse gases than a coal facility." This statement appears to be based on the plant's reliance on natural gas, which when burned emits about 50 percent less carbon dioxide than coal when coal is

burned. However, carbon dioxide emissions comprise only part of the greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas and coal. Another significant portion of emissions, particularly for natural gas, is attributable to methane that escapes unburned into the atmosphere during natural gas production and distribution. Methane is a much more powerful greenhouse gas than coal, particularly over a 20-year timeframe during which scientists say we must significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avert the worst impacts of climate change. According to a 2018 study in the journal Science, methane leakage in natural gas production and distribution approximately doubles the greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas when added to natural gas' carbon dioxide

emissions. This reality likely brings natural gas-powered electricity's greenhouse gas emissions much closer to those of coal. In future reporting, City Pulse should explain whether utilities' greenhouse gas claims about natural gas are based only on carbon dioxide emissions or whether they also include methane. Meanwhile, City Pulse should continue advocating for an all-renewable energy future and against building more natural gas plants that will tend to lock in high greenhouse gas emissions.

**Dusty Horwitt  
Lansing**

*(The writer is a consultant with Physicians for Social Responsibility, a nonprofit that focuses on climate change and other health and environmental issues.)*

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**Now you have two ways to sound off:**

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- Snail mail: City Pulse, 1905 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48912
- Fax: (517) 371-5800
- At lansingcitypulse.com

**2.) Write a guest column:**

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(Please include your name, address and telephone number so we can reach you. Keep letters to 250 words or fewer. City Pulse reserves the right to edit letters and columns.)



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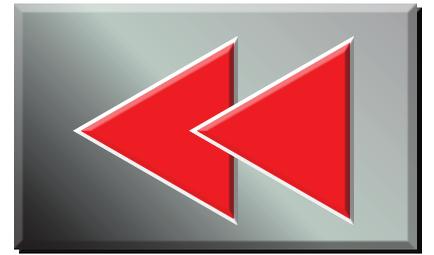
**Gregory & Pauline Martin**  
Quality Dairy Co-Founders

**Quality Dairy founded on March 11th, 1936**

by Gregory J & Pauline Martin and Harvey & Mildrid Mack with an initial investment of \$600. They worked out of a small facility in the 1400 block of South Washington Ave. in Lansing. The original QD Stores were small and sold milk on a cash and carry basis. Prior to QD's stores, milk was commonly delivered directly to homes by a milk man.

# REWIND

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI



### New firefighters lose health benefits

The Lansing City Council approved a new union contract with the International Association of Firefighters Local No. 421. The deal includes pay raises and cuts to healthcare benefits for new employees. Other bargaining units in the city, including the UAW and unions representing police, have already agreed to cut benefits for new hires in favor of city-sponsored healthcare savings accounts which require an employee match, reports the Lansing State Journal.

### Council boosts racial equity funding

City Council tweaked a longstanding ordinance that dictates 1.25% of general fund dollars be dedicated annually toward basic human needs, upping that amount to 1.35% for this year. The increase — estimated at \$140,000 — will be directed specifically toward promoting racial equity.



### Lansing greenlights booze districts

City Council approved an ordinance that will eventually allow for the creation of designated social districts where residents can consume alcohol outside in alleys and other thoroughfares between local bars and restaurants. Businesses interested in applying for a district can contact City Council President Peter Spadafore. He hopes to have some opened by the summer.

### Form-based code arrives in Lansing

Plans decades in the making came to a head when the City Council eliminated all existing zoning ordinances — except those involving pot shops — in favor of a form-based code that will take effect on May 1. Form-based code differs from traditional zoning schemes in governing the actual look and layout of new development. The biggest aim is to reverse the haphazard patchwork of parking lots, strip malls and empty big box stores that pervade Lansing.

### Pot shop hosts school supplies drive

The Botanical Co. is collecting school supplies until March 28 at its Lansing location off the entrance to the airport.



### State trooper faces felony assault charge

Parker Surbrook was placed on paid leave after a video surfaced of Surbrook that showed him directing his dog to attack an unarmed Black man who was not resisting arrest in Lansing. He allowed his dog to attack a man for four minutes in November. State Rep. Sarah Anthony called it a “blatant abuse of power that can only be described as torture.”

### Black Lives Matter co-leader files complaint

Former Lansing firefighter Michael Lynn Jr. asked the city ethics board to investigate Police Chief Daryl Green for “false statements and misinformation” that led to his “wrongful termination.”

### Schor makes it official

Mayor Andy Schor is gunning for a second term as mayor, issuing a statement that touts the “significant growth” the city experienced while also navigating the pandemic. He’s set to run this year against former three-term Mayor Virg Bernero and City Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley, though none have filed ahead of the April 27 deadline for the primary election. Former Mayor Tony Benavides — who served from 2003 to 2006 — has endorsed Schor’s campaign.



Schor

### Lansing to name snow trucks

Residents can submit fun nicknames — like “REO Plow Wagon” — for plows that will be used as part of the city’s new GPS snow plow tracking system next winter. Submissions that garner the most votes will be declared the winners. Visit [lansingmi.gov/snow-plows](http://lansingmi.gov/snow-plows) for details.

### Soccer team finds new home

The Lansing Common FC will play home matches this year at the Lansing Eastern Stadium on Pennsylvania Avenue as part of a new partnership with the Lansing School District. The facility will also serve as a field for practices. Open tryouts are slated for March 14 and April 18. Games begin in mid-May. Visit [lansingcommonfc.com](http://lansingcommonfc.com) for more details or to view a preliminary schedule.



### No charges in Baker Street arrest

Three Lansing Police Department officers won’t face criminal charges for their role in a violent arrest last year on Baker Street. Ingham County prosecutors labeled their conduct “concerning,” but they found it “did not rise to the level” of a violation of the law. The Lansing Branch of the NAACP labeled the decision as “disappointing,” insisting that the officers still deserved to be charged.

### Prisons chart extra vacancies

An Ingham County Prosecutor’s Office report shows that the number of defendants headed to prison in Greater Lansing decreased by more than 60% last year, in part due to the inability of courtrooms to operate at full-speed during the coronavirus pandemic. Only 73 cases charged locally ended in prison sentence in 2020 — down 61% from 189 tracked in 2019.

### Recreational pot pays dividends

Nearly \$10 million in taxes from last year’s recreational marijuana sales went back to more than 100 municipalities across Michigan — including about \$600,000 for three local units of governments in Greater Lansing. That includes \$280,000 for Lansing, \$308,000 for Ingham County and \$28,000 for East Lansing. Those revenue sharing payments will increase in 2022.

# Health officials tighten gathering restrictions in East Lansing

Vaccine eligibility set to expand to all adults 50 and older on March 22

No more than 15 people may gather outdoors in parts of East Lansing, including downtown, following an emergency order issued last week by Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail.

The order is set to remain in place indefinitely, building on the latest epidemic orders from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services that already restrict outdoor gatherings to 50 people or fewer elsewhere. State orders also restrict indoor gatherings to no more than 15 people from no more than three households through at least April 19.

“COVID-19 cases are decreasing, but we are still seeing higher numbers in certain areas of East Lansing. With sports and Saint Patrick’s Day celebrations on the horizon, it is critical to keep social gatherings small,” Vail announced. “We are making excellent progress in fighting COVID-19 but do not want to take steps backward.”

The restrictions stretch from the northern edge of Michigan State University to Burcham Drive, bounded by Harrison Road to the west and Hagadorn Road to the east, including adjacent properties. The area — which encompasses mostly student rental properties — was identified, in part, because of a high frequency of noise ordinance violations tied to large house parties.

Vail said the restricted area also had the highest concentration of new cases in the last month. Violations are punishable by a misdemeanor,

including up to six months in jail and a \$200 fine. Call 517-351-4220 to report social gatherings that exceed public health order limitations.

### In related news...

State officials expanded vaccine eligibility this week to include residents age 50 and older with medical conditions or disabilities, as well as caregiver family members and guardians who care for children with special health care needs. Beginning on March 22, vaccine eligibility is set to expand again to include all residents age 50 and older. The end goal: Vaccine 70% of adults.

Those eligible for a vaccine should check the website of their local health department or hospital to get registered. Additional vaccination sites — like Meijer and Rite Aid — may also be available. Those without internet access can dial 888-535-6136 for appointment assistance.

Lansing First Presbyterian Church encouraged the public to get any COVID-19 vaccine available — regardless of its brand — and to continue wearing masks.

The first Michigan case of the COVID-19 variant B.1.351 was identified in a man living in Jackson County this week. While the variant from South Africa is believed to be more contagious, there’s no indication that it results in more severe symptoms or death. Scientists are still evaluating how well the existing COVID-19 vaccines work against this new variant.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation this week that supports the COVID-19 recovery plan she sent to state lawmakers in January. It

**WEEK 51**

## CORONAVIRUS IN MICHIGAN BY THE NUMBERS...

<b>Michigan</b>				<b>Eaton County</b>			
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.		CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
3/2/21	590,217	15,558	2,269,495	3/2/21	5,703	151	27,575
3/9/21	598,968	15,699	2,648,786	3/9/21	5,782	152	32,350
<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑1.5%</b>	<b>↑0.9%</b>	<b>↑16.7%</b>	<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑1.4%</b>	<b>↑0.7%</b>	<b>↑17.3%</b>

<b>Greater Lansing</b>				<b>Clinton Co.</b>			
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.		CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
3/2/21	25,726	492	112,442	3/2/21	4,436	66	16,506
3/9/21	26,112	496	130,290	3/9/21	4,486	68	19,180
<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑1.5%</b>	<b>↑0.8%</b>	<b>↑15.9%</b>	<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑1.1%</b>	<b>↑3.0%</b>	<b>↑16.2%</b>

<b>Ingham County</b>			
	CASES	DEATHS	VACC.
3/2/21	15,587	275	68,361
3/9/21	15,844	276	78,760
<b>Weekly Change</b>	<b>↑1.6%</b>	<b>↑0.4%</b>	<b>↑15.2%</b>

The “Vaccines” category refers to the total number of doses administered to patients that reported living within each jurisdiction, according to state data. Patients require two doses.

includes a \$2.25 hourly wage increase for direct care workers, \$283 million in federal rental assistance and \$110 million for vaccine administration.

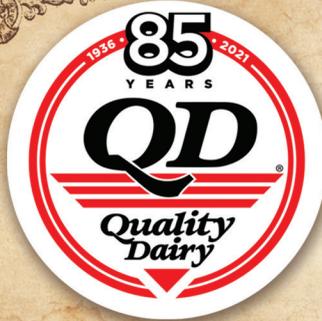
Nearly 700 small businesses across Michigan have received \$10 million in grants through the Pure Michigan Small Business Relief Initiative, including \$600,000 in the Greater Lansing area.

A recent University of Michigan report shows the coronavirus burdens that Black residents faced early in the pandemic were broader than just their increased likelihood of catching or dying from the virus. The Lansing State Journal reports that Black residents were also more likely

to have symptoms, experience racism in healthcare and fear telling others about their illness.

Whitmer ordered U.S. and Michigan flags within the State Capitol Complex to be lowered to half-staff on Wednesday to honor the one-year anniversary of the coronavirus in Michigan, as well as to mourn the thousands who have lost their lives to COVID-19. Residents are also asked to turn on their porch lights from 8-9 p.m. in remembrance of those killed by the virus to date.

— KYLE KAMINSKI



**1937** Quality Dairy began producing their always creamy sour cream, which is now known as Lansing's best sour cream!



**1940** Quality Dairy began producing their Famous Premium Ice Creams!



**1938** Quality Dairy's First Store opened at the Corner of Main Street & South Pennsylvania, in Lansing.



Quality Dairy's stores changed the way that Lansing got their dairy products. The milk jugs to the right were the ones used by Quality Dairy in those early years. No more waiting for the milkman to deliver your milk.

**Save! 85¢ ON ANY 56oz SIZE OF QD PREMIUM ICE CREAM THRU 4/4/21-WHEN YOU USE YOUR QD REWARDS CARD!**



# Alleged sexual harassment victims slap back at Bernero

## Survivor: Former three-term mayor 'still a danger to women' in 2021

Two former Lansing area women who have accused Virg Bernero of sexual harassment are speaking out again this week after the former three-term Lansing Mayor minimized and denied the incidents last week.

Woman A alleged to City Pulse last week that Bernero “groped” her in downtown Lansing in 2004. Woman B said Bernero also made a series of unwanted and sexually charged phone calls to her in 2010. They’ve each decided to speak under the condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation, but their stories have been independently verified by witnesses through City Pulse.

Bernero initially told City Pulse that he didn’t recall the incidents but labeled his behavior as “unacceptable and wrong.” He apologized for “any pain” caused to the women or his family, also noting that he and his wife, Teri, underwent counseling after he left office in 2017.

But Friday, speaking to radio personality Michael Patrick Shiels, Bernero denied the allegations, suggesting the women were liars and chalking the claims up to attempted “character assassination” and “toxic politics.” He also doubled down on the baseless claim that Mayor Andy Schor orchestrated the allegations, also noting last week that “If these charges were true, I wouldn’t vote for me.”

“With his previous statement, there was at least a slightly open door to lead us to believe he might have changed,” Woman A told City Pulse in response this week. “I was bothered by his statement that he did not remember because it made me wonder if this was such a commonplace occurrence or if he felt that entitled that he never thought twice about groping or harassing women. Even though I was bothered, I didn’t think about speaking out again until he changed his tune. His interview and his quick 180 shows us that he is still a danger to women.”

Woman A doesn’t live in Lansing. She also told City Pulse she was unfamiliar with the election.

“This is not a political attack,” she said. “Whoever the mayor is at the end of the election doesn’t impact me. I came forward because men like this do not deserve to be in power. I want Lansing to be a safe place for women to work.



Bernero

To make it safe for women, men like Virg Bernero have to be held accountable. Men like Virg have to be stopped before they harm others. It’s not character assassination when the accusations are true descriptions of your character.”

Bernero also released a campaign video over the weekend with his wife in which he described “losing focus” on his family and “making mistakes” near the end of his third term. He said their marriage has since been “rebuilt.” They’ll celebrate their 34th anniversary this year.

“We have shared lots of ups and downs,” Teri Bernero said. “If you’re married or in a long-term relationship, you know that it takes commitment, communication and, most of all, love. I love my husband and I know he loves me. Our marriage is stronger than ever because we took time and effort to work on it. We are not going backward, only forward. I know brighter times are ahead.”

Bernero also further solidified his longstanding intention to run against Schor in November.

“If you send me back to the Mayor’s Office, I promise we’ll get Lansing back on track,” he said.

During last week’s interview, Shiels also appeared to attempt to uncover the identity of the former Lansing news anchor who also made sexual harassment allegations against Bernero. At one point, he asked Bernero: “You can glean enough from that. Do you know who she is?”

The second woman accusing Bernero of sexual harassment labeled Bernero’s recent denial as “proof that this is intimidation and a setup for retaliation.” She also told City Pulse that she has absolutely no political interest in the 2021 mayoral race, noting that she had to search on Google to find out the name of the current mayor, Andy Schor.

“And frankly I find some things about him just as problematic,” Woman B told City Pulse.

Bernero told Shiels: “I think the truth will win out here. They think that they’re going to scare me out, embarrass me out or push me out of this race. Or

better yet: They want to see the return of the angry mayor. They’re hoping they can push my buttons. I’m not angry. I’m resolved. I’m resolved to defend my good name and resolved to get Lansing back on track.”

He also doubled down in a statement to City Pulse: “I am glad that victims of abuse feel increasingly empowered to speak out. But not every charge is accurate. I cannot stand by guilt by association. I apologize to those who have been offended by my tone, language or style.”

Meanwhile, several politicians and activists told City Pulse they aren’t sure that Bernero’s mistakes are totally in the past. The overarching takeaway: Nobody seems totally surprised.

“If people knew Virg, they wouldn’t find it shocking at all,” said Ingham County Commissioner Mark Grebner, who served alongside Bernero during his four terms on the commission from 1992 to 2000. “I just don’t find the allegations particularly shocking. Though, I’ve never been in social settings with him where it was appropriate — or even inappropriate — to grab people.”

Added one high-ranking Democratic insider: “Where there’s smoke, there’s fire. We haven’t heard it all. I’m not sure this is the death knell just yet, but I also think there’s more to the story.”

Schor formally announced his reelection campaign one day after the allegations against Bernero surfaced. He also told City Pulse: “This story isn’t about me. It’s about the brave women who came forward and the terrible behavior by the former mayor. They deserve our attention.”

Lansing City Councilwoman Patricia Spitzley, who is planning to run against both of them for mayor this year, took it a step further, calling for a formal investigation (possibly by the City Council) of a potential abuse of power. Bernero was mayor during one of the alleged incidents.

“As a woman and a woman of color, it is personally difficult and painful to hear these accounts of their experiences. These women need to be listened to, heard and treated with dignity and respect. It took incredible bravery for them to come forward and tell their stories,” she added.

Added Council Vice President Adam Hussain: “The allegations are very serious in my opinion. Sexual harassment of any measure can’t be tolerated, whether in private or public. My heart goes out to those impacted by these actions. I am amazed at their strength and know that

their strength will help others that have similar experiences to come out and reclaim their power.”

And Lansing isn’t too unfamiliar with how to handle offensive conduct from politicians.

Last month, the Ingham County Democratic Party — following the City Council — passed a resolution that formally admonished Councilman Brandon Betz after he sent a series of profane text messages to the co-leader of the Lansing chapter of Black Lives Matter. Party chairman and Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope said a similar move won’t be necessary for Bernero.

“While the report of the actions are disturbing, Bernero holds no current office, so it is less likely our membership would want to weigh in. His fate is already in the hands of the voters,” he said.

Added long-time City Councilwoman Carol Wood: “Anyone who uses their power to sexually harass an individual is despicable. In this day and age — and with everything that has come out over the last couple of years — I just don’t accept the excuse of ‘I should have known better.’”

Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum said she also wasn’t surprised to hear the claims against Bernero, recalling a time when Lansing’s “Angry Mayor” berated her for cosponsoring a fundraiser.

“He proceeded to yell and swear at me about a clearly political subject matter from his city of Lansing phone to my state legislative phone and, after some time had passed, I ended the call,” Byrum said. “As a human, I knew that I had done nothing to incur such verbal abuse. While the verbal abuse directed at me was not sexual in nature, it is not difficult for me to believe that he may have sexually harassed individuals. It is no secret that Virg Bernero has a temper.”

She added: “Everyone deserves to speak their truth, and abuse should never be tolerated.”

Calls to unions and labor leaders (including the usual endorsement power players in Lansing mayoral elections) weren’t as fruitful. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 333 didn’t return calls. Officials at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 665 and the Lansing Labor Council declined to comment altogether.

— TODD HEYWOOD  
& KYLE KAMINSKI

# Betz returns from unexcused hiatus following public dispute

## 1st Ward Councilman dodges questions on resignation demands

By **KYLE KAMINSKI**

Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz appears to have decided against resigning from office.

Betz checked into his 1st Council meeting in weeks on Monday night — his first public appearance since he was censured for berating the co-leader of the Lansing chapter of Black Lives Matter.

“I have no comment on resignation,” he told City Pulse today.

Betz has been under fire after he sent Lynn a string of text messages in which he called Lynn a “dickbag troll who no one listens to” and a “weak ass bitch” who also wants more political clout. Lynn repeatedly asked Betz to stop sending him messages. Betz kept them coming, later ending the chat with “I don’t represent assholes.”

In the weeks that followed, Betz and his wife departed for Alaska to visit family and “take care of personal affairs,” he said. Meanwhile, he was formally censured by the Council, fired from his job at the Michigan League for Public Policy and widely criticized by local political groups, including the Ingham County Democratic Party and the Lansing Democratic Socialists of America. Both of them — as well as Black Lives Matter — have asked that he quit the Council.

In a text message last month, Betz said he would resign “if that’s what my constituents want.”

And this week, after returning from a vacation in Alaska, Betz appeared ready to get back to business. He didn’t address his lengthy absence or the controversy at Monday’s meetings. He also refused to answer questions about whether he intends to heed the recent calls to resign.

“Council members take vacations every year. This was no different,” Betz added. “I requested an excused absence as is completely normal and typical in the course of Council, and it seems that certain members of Council were trying to score political points by not approving it.”

The Council opted against excusing Betz’ first absence on Feb. 8 — triggering a 60-day window of unexcused absences written into City Charter, after which the Council could’ve forced Betz to forfeit office and appoint his replacement in April. His recent return canceled that countdown.

Betz initially told City Pulse that he wasn’t aware that his absences were unexcused. And he still isn’t back in Lansing — at least not yet. He tuned into Monday’s Committee of the Whole meeting from the passenger seat of a moving car in Richmond, Virginia, he said. He later assured City Pulse that he would be back home in the 1st Ward after visiting family on Wednesday night.

The recent Ingham County Democratic Party resolution urged Betz to resign following his “inflammatory, crude and inappropriate language” to Lynn. It also notes that Betz’ behavior “reflects poorly on himself and our community” — ultimately reducing his “ability to fulfill the obligations of a member of the Lansing City Council,” according to last month’s resolution.

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor and other local politicians admonished Betz for his profane exchange. Council President Peter Spadafore also stripped Betz of his two committee roles.

Lynn said he also filed an ethics complaint against Betz. If he is found to have intimidated or threatened a member of the public, he could be slapped with a misdemeanor — additional grounds for office forfeiture. The Ethics Board met

on Tuesday after this story was published.

Spadafore said the Ethics Board is among the only remaining avenues that could lead to Betz’ forced departure from the Council. Without that determi-

nation, the decision rests in his hands.

“We removed him from standing committees, so I wouldn’t characterize this as letting bygones be bygones or business as usual,” Spadafore said. “We

See Betz, Page 12

**City of East Lansing  
Zoning Board of Appeals**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AT ELECTRONIC MEETING**  
Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

The Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of East Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan (“Zoning Board of Appeals”) will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., concerning the following:

A public hearing will be held to consider an application from Jessica and Benjamin Eysselinck for the property located at 211 Northlawn Avenue, in the R-2, Medium Density Singly-Family Residential, for a variance from the following requirement of Chapter 50 – Zoning Code of the City of East Lansing:

Section 50-301: accessory structures in the rear yard shall have a 3’ setback from the rear lot line and a 3’ setback from the interior side lot line.

The applicant is proposing to construct a treehouse that is located 1 foot from the rear property line where a 3 foot setback is required and 1.2 feet from the interior side property line where a 3 foot setback is required.

This meeting will only be held electronically pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of 1976, and the capacity restrictions and social distancing requirements set forth in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director’s Emergency Orders. The purpose of the meeting will be to hold the public hearing described above and consider any other business that comes before the Zoning Board of Appeals. Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, the City gives notice of the following:

- Reason for Electronic Meeting.** The Zoning Board of Appeals is holding this meeting by electronic means only due to the restrictions imposed by the MDHHS Director’s Emergency Orders. If the Orders are revised and if an in-person meeting is to be held instead of an electronic meeting, the meeting may be rescheduled to a different date and time. Notice of any such change will be posted at the City Hall and on the City’s website.
- Procedures.** The public may participate in the meeting and may make public comment electronically by video/telephone using the following method:  
  
Join Zoom Meeting by Video: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83553168163>  
  
Or Dial In By Telephone\*\* - Call in: 312-626-6799, Toll Free: 888-788-0099  
Meeting ID: 835 5316 8163  
Password: Not required  
  
\*\*To unmute microphone from a cell phone dial \*6 (star 6)  
To raise your hand from a cell phone dial \*9 (star 9)
- Contact Information.** For those who desire to contact members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to provide input or ask questions on the business that will come before the public body at the meeting, please contact David Haywood, at (517) 319-6861 prior to the start of the meeting.
- Persons with Disabilities.** Persons with disabilities may participate in the meeting through the methods set forth in paragraph 2. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services in order to attend electronically should notify Rebecca Urdiales, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 (517) 319-6922, TDD 1-800-649-377, within a reasonable time in advance of the meeting.

Jennifer Shuster  
City Clerk

**CP#21-047**

**1936-2021 85 YEARS QD Quality Dairy**

**1956** Quality Dairy introduced Lansing to QD Classic French Onion Chip Dip! ...and the people of Lansing are still hooked to this very day!

**1968** QD began producing fresh bakery goods for all of their, at the time, 13 Lansing area stores.

**1969** Quality Dairy Innovation: “Bagged Milk”  
In 1969 Quality Dairy introduced Bagged Milk Pitcher Packs. Though the idea originally came from Canada, QD was the first to sell bagged milk here in the United States. QD sold quart & half gallon sized bags that resembled a small pillow. QD’s bagged milk was discontinued in 2000, but long-time Lansing residents still talk about it fondly today.

**1969** Hand-Dipped QD Ice Cream offered at all QD’s Stores!

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# CityPULSE



## LOCAL EXPERTS

### GIFTS

#### The importance of shopping with local merchants

Shopping small and supporting our locally owned small businesses has been especially important throughout the last few months. It will continue to be important as we embrace the unknown of the future. But there are ways that you can leverage these dollars spent. Look at what you are purchasing. Where is this item made?

By purchasing from small, locally owned businesses, choosing items made domestically, and even better, by local companies, you are triggering a domino effect for your dollars.

There is a movement in the United Kingdom that has extended around the world; "Just A Card." Their efforts are to show how purchases even as small as buying a greeting card can have a dramatic increase on a small business' or makers' bottom line. Imagine is 500 people would commit to purchasing between \$3 and \$5 per month in a shop. That \$1,500-\$2,500 can mean the difference between paying bills and not. Think about it.



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### INSURANCE

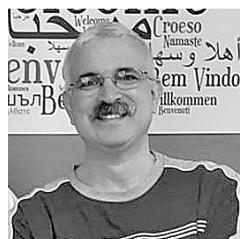
#### Nerdy INFJ Insurance Agent Seeking Meaningful Relationship

This past month I lost a long-term client. Apparently their move to Mississauga was more important to them than our relationship. So, here I am, putting myself "back on the market." Where do I start? "Middle-aged insurance agent looking for client"? Oh my, this is really uncomfortable.

"An ideal first meet" would be in a sun-drenched office with us just talking (I'm a really good listener). I mean, being so engaged in a conversation that we didn't even realized that hours had passed and we still hadn't talked about raising their bodily injury liability coverage. Seriously, I don't think that it's tacky to talk "protection" on first meet. Is it?

Would someone believe me if during our first meet that I told them that I am very passionate and care deeply about a client's wellbeing? Would I sound patronizing if I said that I wanted to protect them? That if they suffered a loss, that I'd be there for them... seven days a week? Too soon?

Ok, how about, "if ever you're just looking for an agent to talk with, I wouldn't mind you calling. No commitment." Call me maybe?



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## Betz

from page 11

have serious budget issues to deal with right now. We dealt with this in the way we can and now we have to focus on the job at hand."

Either by forfeit, resignation or otherwise, Betz' departure from office would trigger an appointed replacement from the City Council that would serve until the end of the year. A special election would then be held in November to fill the remainder of his four-year term through 2023.

Betz ousted former 1st Ward Councilwoman Jody Washington by about 300 votes in 2019.

Betz told City Pulse last month that he was "assessing" whether he should resign from office based on the feedback of his constituents — one that he maintained would "take time."

"An assessment takes more than reading a few Facebook comments and listening to the loudest 30 voices that show up to Council," Betz told City Pulse last month. "I represent a lot more people than the 30 or so people that showed up to Council or the hundreds of people on my Facebook page. The right thing to say here is that I'm assessing whether or not to resign."

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING East Lansing Building Board of appeals

#### NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

#### THE MEETING WILL ONLY BE HELD ELECTRONICALLY FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Building Board of Appeals of the City of East Lansing will hold a meeting and a public hearing on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will only be held electronically pursuant to the Open Meetings Act and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Epidemic Orders. The purpose of the public hearing is to consider an appeal of The Graduate Hotel requesting a variation for the property at 133 Evergreen Avenue from the following requirement of Chapter 32 of the Sign Code.

#### ARTICLE III. SPECIFICATIONS FOR REGULATED SIGNS

#### Section 32-105. Signs permitted for commercial premises, office and professional premises, or located within the D.D.A. District.

(a) On all premises used or occupied for commercial purposes there shall be permitted the following signs:

(1) Wall signs. One or more on-premises wall signs, directly or indirectly illuminated with an aggregate surface display area not to exceed two square feet per lineal foot of exposed wall surface fronting a public street, alley, or parking area. No wall sign shall be placed closer than 12 inches to the side of the building line or leased space line. No one sign shall be greater than 120 square feet in surface display area. Signs may have visible moving parts, visible revolving parts, or visible mechanical movement of any description or other apparent visible movement achieved by electrical, electronic, or mechanical means, including intermittent electrical pulsations, or by action of normal wind currents.

The Building Board of Appeals may also consider any business to come before it as permitted by law.

Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of 1976, and the MDHHS Epidemic Order, the City also gives notice of the following:

1. **Reason for Electronic Meeting.** The Building Board of Appeals is holding the meeting by electronic means only because of the gathering restrictions, capacity limits, and social distancing requirements set forth in the MDHHS Epidemic Orders.

2. **Procedures.** The public may participate in the meeting and may make public comment electronically by video or telephone conference using the following information:

URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84626492948>

Webinar ID: 846 2649 2948  
Call in Number: 312-626-6799  
Toll Free Call in Number: 888 788 0099

\*\*To unmute microphone from a cell phone dial \*6 (star 6)  
To raise your hand from a cell phone dial \*9 (star 9)

3. **Contact Information.** For those people who desire to contact members of the Building Board of Appeals to provide input or ask questions on the business that will come before the public body at the meeting, please contact Scott Weaver, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 319-6878, TDD 1-800-649-3777 or [sweaver@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:sweaver@cityofeastlansing.com), prior to the start of the meeting.

4. **Persons with Disabilities.** Persons with disabilities may participate in the meeting through the methods set forth in paragraph 2. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services in order to attend electronically should notify Denise Kenny, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 319-6871, TDD 1-800-649-3777 or [dkenny@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:dkenny@cityofeastlansing.com), within a reasonable time in advance of the meeting.

Jennifer Shuster  
City Clerk

CP#21-046

# Interpreters for Michigan agencies paid as little as \$4 per hour

By **BRANDON CHEW**  
Capital News Service

Language interpreters working for Michigan government agencies and based in Mexico are paid \$4 an hour by a company under a contract with the state, according to former employees.

Linguistica International Inc. is a Utah-based company that offers interpretation services and has a contract with the state that lasts until September 2023.

According to the contract, Linguistica charges \$0.50 per minute for over-the-phone Spanish interpreting, or \$30 per hour. Clients are charged \$0.56 per minute for non-Spanish over-the-phone interpreting.

The company also translates documents for \$28 per page for Spanish and \$35 per page for other languages.

Linguistica provides interpretive services for the departments of Corrections; Health and Human Services; and Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, as well as Children's Special Health Care Services, among other state agencies.

The company also serves public agencies elsewhere in the United States.

For example, Linguistica signed a \$10-million, five-year contract with the New York City Department of Education in 2019 to allow teachers to interact with parents who don't speak English. The company was one of several in a \$48 million contract with the city's Health and Hospitals Corp. in 2018.

"You just get tired of knowing that no matter how hard you work, you're never going to get more than \$4 an hour," said Orlando, a former interpreter for Linguistica. He lives in Mexico and asked to have only his first name used for anonymity.

"Properly trained, professional interpreters are extremely important in order to avoid any confusion, any cultural or

linguistic misunderstandings," he said. "This is especially true in medical settings, not to mention during a pandemic."

A New York Daily News report in January on Linguistica's low wages and allegations of lack of training and privacy protocols sparked outrage in New York City. Mayor Bill De Blasio's office called the low pay and other conditions reported by the newspaper "reprehensible."

The Mayor's Office said it contacted the city's Department of Investigation about Linguistica, but it has yet to confirm if the agency has opened an investigation, according to Daily News reporter Michael Elsen-Rooney.

Most of Orlando's work was interpreting for schools and hospitals in New York City but he said he translated calls across the United States, including Child Protective Services calls in Michigan.

"We have two contracts with translation services, and Linguistica is one of them," said Caleb Buhs, a public information officer for the state Department of Technology, Management and Budget.

"If we were to become aware there was a concern around them following any state or federal regulations, we would work with the company to develop a corrective action plan that they would need to follow in order to bring themselves into compliance," Buhs said.

There is no allegation that the company's services for Michigan agencies violate federal or Michigan labor laws.

Linguistica defended its pay rate in an emailed statement provided by Kelcey Kintner, the director of media strategy for Red Banyan, its public relations firm.

In the statement, Linguistica said, "Contrary to recent false reports, our compensation has always exceeded

minimum and industry standard wages in Mexico and in the United States. We have always hired highly fluent interpreters and provided them with an outstanding orientation program, as well as continual training."

Orlando said he quit last November and showed his last company pay stub to Capital News Service.

Orlando said the company doesn't provide medical insurance, retirement contributions or other benefits for full-time workers required by Mexican law. He also criticized training as inadequate, especially for translating medical-related calls.

"As far as the training is concerned, that was very insufficient," Orlando said. "The initial training was only about three days. The training makes almost no mention of medical terminology. They more or less assume that you already know that."

"They expect to hire only experienced interpreters at a rate of \$4 an hour," Orlando said.

Another former Linguistica employee alleged the company paid him less than \$4 an hour.

"When I was interviewed, I was told it was going to be \$4 per hour," said Becker, who asked to be identified by his nickname for anonymity, as he works for another company.

"But since I took the position of operator, not actually an interpreter, they (decreased) the payment to \$3.50," he said.

Becker, who lives in Mexico, said his job as phone operator was to connect clients with the proper interpreter for the requested language. He quit last December and said he found a higher-paying position with a tech company.

"The only option I had (was) to work for them," he said. "But now that I'm back to this technology industry, I get

almost four times more than what they paid at Linguistica."

Becker said most people who apply to Linguistica do so out of desperation.

"Most of the people that work for that company, it is because they didn't have any other option to find a job," Becker said.

Another former employee said that while Linguistica pays more than some other interpreting companies, the industry as a whole underpays its workers.

"I'm not against Linguistica, I'm against the whole system of how they contract interpreters in Mexico through outsourcing so they can pay less," said Jacob, who left Linguistica and asked that only his first name be used for anonymity, as he is working for another company.

"We do a job that should be better paid because it's very important," Jacob said. "You're connecting people, you're helping them out. Even though they pay more than the (Mexican) minimum wage, it's still underpaid."

Jacob said Linguistica fines employees for making minor mistakes, unlike other interpreting companies.

"It's pretty complicated because they ask you something that no other company asks, which is to write the information down correctly," he said. "And if you don't write it correctly, they punish you by taking money out of your pocket. There cannot be any mistakes, not even one letter wrong, one uppercase wrong."

"They could raise it by \$1 and it would be really good for many people," Jacob said. "But they don't provide you with nothing at all. They're like this monster who's trying to feed from you, and they feed and they throw you away whenever they need to."

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# ONE YEAR LATER

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## LIVES LOST IN GREATER LANSING

### Coronavirus pandemic takes toll on Greater Lansing

Four tales of pain — and triumph — since COVID-19 landed in Michigan

By **TODD HEYWOOD**

Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail is used to her phone ringing at all hours. As Greater Lansing had its second wave of COVID-19 cases, hundreds were being hospitalized — some of them dying. And Vail gets phone calls from hospitals for every death.

Vail grabs a notebook and writes down the names, sometimes in the middle of the night, with birthdates, death dates, other hospital data and a patient file number. As of last week, there were four such notebooks in her home — a contemporaneous, albeit haphazard record of the 276 people who have died from complications tied to the coronavirus in Ingham County to date.

Dustin Grimes, 32, has only a digital image of the last days of his fishing and flea market buddy — his grandpa, Gordon Small. Small died May 8 in Sparrow Hospital in Lansing. Because of health restrictions, none of his family could be there to hold his hand or whisper into his ear.

They sat death watch on a Zoom.

Don Cochran, 55, of south Lansing, is an active retired military member. He sings and works in movies on the side. In early January, he was struck by coronavirus, landing in McLaren Hospital in Lansing with perilously low oxygen. But while he has recovered from the virus, he has a constant reminder by way of the supplemental oxygen tank he now has to lug around his home.

Ingham County Medical Director Dr. Adnike Shoyinka took on multiple roles as the pandem-

ic swept across Greater Lansing. She advises on policies and medical response. She treats infectious diseases in a large hospital system. And

**Today marks the first anniversary of the virus in Michigan, dating from March 10 of last year, when the first two cases were documented.**

just three days before Christmas, she became a mourner, having lost four friends and family from across the world in the same week.

These are but four of the stories of local residents that have unfolded over the last year as the coronavirus pandemic washed over Greater Lansing, infecting, as of Tuesday, 26,112 residents and killing 496. Statewide, that tally is 598,969 infected and 15,699 dead. And across the nation, more than 29.1 million have been infected and 526,722 have died.

Today marks the first anniversary of the virus in Michigan, dating from March 10 of last year, when the first two cases were documented.

The novel respiratory virus has challenged both the state and the county in how to respond to an infectious new virus both medically and socially. It also coincided with a presidential election year. And in Lansing, protests against government actions to contain and mitigate the spread have also been met with other massive

demonstrations — including a traffic jam and a Capitol protest where armed men and women joined the crowd in storming the building while the state Legislature was in session.

#### The gathering storm

Vail and Shoyinka watched the public health update systems through late December as news of a new, contagious upper-respiratory virus garnered increasingly dire warnings of a viral storm.

Public health officials had been growing worried about a novel respiratory virus sweeping across the nation for more than a decade. Vail thought: “This is it — what we’ve been worrying about.”

Shoyinka, an infectious disease specialist who treats people with TB and HIV in Ingham County, also saw those early updates as a warning shot over the bow of American public health. She grew up in Nigeria and also did her medical studies there. She had seen outbreaks before.

“I knew what this could mean,” she said. “It wasn’t good.”

Both women were in Washington, D.C., presenting at a conference about medically assisted treatment for substance abuse in jails when their phones began to “blow up.” Health officials from across the state got warning that there had been confirmed cases of COVID in Michigan.

Both cases were in Oakland County, but they both knew I-96 also serves as a freeway for disease. Vail and Shoyinka packed their bags and

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CASES IN GREATER LANSING

# 'Grit our teeth and do the work'

A conversation with  
Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

By **TODD HEYWOOD**

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced the first two cases of COVID-19 in Michigan on March 10, 2020. And over the last year, state officials have tracked nearly 600,000 more cases and attributed more than 15,000 deaths to the virus. Whitmer sat down for an interview this week — almost exactly one year after the first two cases of the virus were diagnosed — to look back (and forward) on the pandemic.

**City Pulse:** Let's start at the beginning. What was going through your mind on March 10, 2020?

**Whitmer:** We knew that it was a matter of time. When the call came in, I was watching the primary election returns and it was like everything just fell by the way. We went right into crisis management mode and, frankly, were there for a long time — much longer than anyone anticipated. I had that sinking feeling in my gut like, "This is the beginning. Of what? We don't know, but we have got to harness everything we can do to get through this."

**CP:** Did you ever personally see what was going on in those overwhelmed hospitals in Detroit?

**Whitmer:** (She indicated no.) I think this has been one of the most challenging things: I want to go right to where the problem is and give comfort to those that are suffering, give support to those who are working. Because of how little PPE we had, I didn't want to waste any on me going and then become a distraction in these overwhelmed hospitals. It's much better to be there in person, but I was grateful that we had this technology so I can still look into people's eyes and understand and ask questions and be there to answer questions and do that. It just was not advisable.

**CP:** Have you lost anybody to this pandemic?

**Whitmer:** I've lost a number of people. Morris Hood was a very dear friend of mine, a former state senator. There's a man named Greg Anderson, who my family has known for a long, long time; Isaac Robinson and Benny Napoleon, just to name four off the top of my head.

**CP:** Has that changed the way you see and experience these statistics on rising caseloads?

**Whitmer:** Absolutely. I've talked to a lot of frontline workers and families who have lost loved ones. To hear someone else's excruciating story also puts a finer point on what's really at stake. I know there are many who have not been touched by COVID-19 and there-



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer with Dr. Joneigh S. Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy director for health and human services.

fore, I think, struggle to really empathize with the incredibly awful toll that this virus has taken on so many. And I think that's one of our challenges: When we see the numbers, it's hard to get your head around what that means. We have got 15,600 Michiganders who have died from COVID-19.

**CP:** You have experienced backlash and protests over your executive orders. There was also this alleged plot to kidnap and kill you. How do you think those events impacted you personally?

**Whitmer:** The backlash to measures that are informed by science and necessary to protect human life, a backlash to that that comes in the form of death threats against me and those close to me, it's awful and it's ugly and it's disturbing. Yet in this moment, I don't have time to waste energy on it because I've got so much work to do here. I think it was breathtaking in one regard and yet, a moment that I had to push aside so that we could stay doing what we needed to do to get our state through this tough time.

**CP:** Was it a distraction?

**Whitmer:** Yes. I think that the politics that have surrounded this public health crisis created so much animosity and distress and mistrust that it's going to continue to undermine our efforts to get past this moment. I think that's what is so frustrating, because if we all would recognize the science and rally against our common enemy, we'd get through it faster and with a lot less pain.

**CP:** There are still reports of seniors waiting for their vaccine. How do you feel, knowing that we have this light at

the end of the tunnel, so to speak, but don't have enough of it to get out there?

**Whitmer:** It's frustrating for everyone. The last administration told the world we would have 300,000 vaccines in our first week in Michigan. They created this expectation that they were never intent on, or capable of, fulfilling. Ultimately, we got 20% of what they promised us, which means we were not able to meet the expectations of the public. So while people are frustrated, I know that within the next month, month and a half, we will have more and more vaccines. This will be a frustrating moment that we will get past because everyone who wants a vaccine is going to be able to get one in the next couple of months. We're going to continue to grit our teeth and do the work knowing that we're headed in the right direction.

**CP:** Is there any one point that you specifically recall as being particularly overwhelming?

**Whitmer:** I think there have been a couple of isolated moments where it has been really hard: When the dams first collapsed and we were also evacuating 10,000 people in the middle of a pandemic. I think Benny's death hit me real hard. We were getting so close to vaccines and the rollouts and when he passed, that was hard.

**CP:** What do you think will be the lasting legacy of this past year?

**Whitmer:** What happens in the next couple of months is going to decide how well we actually rebound. As we come out of this, I know I'm going to continue trying to engage in dialogue with people who don't automatically see the

world the same way as me. I want to learn from them. I also want to be able to show them what we did — why it was the right thing to do and why it made a difference. I think coming out of this, we're also going to be re-evaluating our investments in local public health. I hope that we have learned our lesson, that depriving those resources over long periods of time made it harder for us to rise to this challenge.

**CP:** Were you surprised to see some of the racial disparities that we've seen in this pandemic?

**Whitmer:** Having Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, figuratively, by my side every step of the way has been really important. As a African-American ER doctor, she was one of the first people to see the demographic data and say, "We have got to get this out there." She and the lieutenant governor, the co-chairman of the Health Disparity Task Force, which has informed a lot of our work. It was crucial that we take it head on and it saved a lot of lives. I'm proud of that work. I credit Dr. J.

**CP:** But did you find it shocking?

**Whitmer:** Yeah. With 14% of our population at 40% of fatalities, that is shocking. I know early on, we were really trying to understand: Why is this virus having this impact? There are a lot of reasons for it, but recognizing it was shocking. Frankly, all the work we have done has made much more equitable outcomes, but we have got lots more work to do.

Courtesy

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VACCINES GREATER LANSING



## Lansing restaurants warm up to 50% indoor dining capacity

The coronavirus pandemic has turned the restaurant industry in Michigan upside down

By **SKYLER ASHLEY**

Staunch protective measures first kept restaurants closed altogether, later prohibiting customers from dining indoors for several stretches in 2020 — some lasting months at a time. And many restaurants, even ones that had been in service for decades, have closed for good.

The lasting impact has created a culinary scene that has restaurateurs flipping their business model to emphasize takeout, delivery and outdoor dining. As spring approaches, restaurants are enjoying waning restrictions for the first time in weeks, as the limitation of 25 percent capacity for indoor dining increased to 50% on March 5, lasting through at least April 19.

“The last month has been pretty good. Things are picking up over the last four to five weeks, which we all need,” said Sleepwalker Brewery co-owner Jeremy Sprague.

As Sprague recalls the initial outbreak of the coronavirus and the first major — and surreal — shutdown last spring, he said the lessons his restaurant learned kept it afloat during the last few bleak months of winter. The key has been

innovation to make up for lost revenue, he explained.

One of the ways Sleepwalker has managed to stay in the black has been through one-off weekend collaborations with neighboring restaurant, Good Truckin’ Diner. They managed a successful Valentine’s Day luncheon and have plans to host another event in April for Easter.

“We originally did this project five years ago with Good Truckin’ Diner, where we prepared a fancy eight-course meal. We were able to do it again for Valentine’s Day, and it was huge for us,” Sprague said.

Though the impact of the coronavirus has been devastating for many business owners, Sprague said the chaos has taught him many fundamental lessons that kept his restaurant afloat. In somewhat of a slight return to normalcy as indoor dining gradually returns, Sprague said Sleepwalker is also working on plans to welcome back a number of cooks for on-site training.

“COVID-19 is such a devastating circumstance, but if you’re trying to look for a silver lining for a business like Sleepwalker, it forced us as a team to really push and find out exactly how we should be running a small microbrewery in Lansing,” Sprague said.

Though long, winding shutdowns obviously harm the revenue of the restaurant industry as whole, and Sprague signed a petition launched by Saddleback Barbecue in January that

urged the state to allow restaurants to reopen for dine-in, he said he doesn’t fault Gov. Gretchen Whitmer for ultimately trying to keep the citizens of Michigan safe. The orders were necessary.

“I feel bad for the devastation that the pandemic is laying on all of us, but I did sign that petition because I wanted to see more recognition for how hard people like Art’s Pub, Good Truckin’ Diner and Henry’s Place are working,” Sprague said. “We are taking incredible measures, and I do feel we are under recognized for the amount of caution we take.”

Adrian Joseph, co-owner of Goodfellas Bagel and Deli, said his restaurant found itself in a fortunate position during the pandemic because of its sliding front windows that give customers a convenient way to pick up takeout orders. But despite the convenience, bouts of cold weather make standing in line a harsh task for Goodfellas’ customers. Joseph said he’s noticed an uptick in business since customers were allowed to place orders and sit down inside of his shop.

“People have been reaching out on Facebook asking us about inside seating, and we’ve had more people coming inside. Guests at the hotel across the street also come in pretty often,” Joseph said.

Joseph said he empathizes greatly with the restaurants that did not have immediately available resources to

make the pivot toward takeout, delivery or outdoor dining.

“First of all, I’d be really frustrated. Secondly, you just have to be creative, a lot of people did find good ways to get around it,” Joseph said. “But as a whole, I think it’s unfair and it’s almost like this administration didn’t give too much thought on how people are supposed to survive with only 50 percent capacity.”

Erik Nelson, owner of the English Inn in Eaton Rapids, primarily managed the long shutdown periods by offering comprehensive outdoor dining options. The English Inn jumped on the nationwide trend of restaurants popping up igloo-style enclosures, so diners could circumvent indoor dining bans without having to face the cold. Even though indoor dining is making a gradual return, Nelson said the English Inn has no plans to scale back its outdoor dining options.

“It’s important to provide guests with options. Not everybody is comfortable with indoor dining yet, we want to be able to serve both crowds,” Nelson said.

Nelson also said he doesn’t have a spiteful attitude toward Whitmer and the state government for prohibiting indoor dining and enforcing long shutdowns. He added: “I am very cautious. I’m hesitant to take a risk with this virus; it’s a very serious thing. I don’t want to see any more loss in any of my employees’ families, or god forbid any of my guests.”

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INGHAM COUNTY CASES

# East Lansing residents look back after one year of COVID-19

## Five stories from Michigan State University journalism students

The following interviews were conducted by students in Professor Amy Haimerl's feature writing class at Michigan State University. Each of them was asked to find East Lansing residents with interesting stories to share — particularly as we round off the first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic in Michigan. Each segment was edited for length and clarity.

### Anonymous student, bartender at anonymous downtown East Lansing bar

The buzz of laughter and a good party fills the air. People crowd together, trying to order their next drink at the bar. The state's reopening rules say it should be at 50% capacity, but it still feels crowded. Behind the bar, a Michigan State student is slinging cocktails. Even though she knows there's a risk of catching COVID-19, she works most weekends because the tips are good and she needs the money to pay her tuition. We granted the student — and the bar — anonymity to get a behind-the-scenes account of what it's like to bartend during a pandemic.

**City Pulse:** What has the atmosphere been like since the bars reopened?

**Bartender:** Honestly, it has been scary. After working a bar shift, I always wait a couple days before coming back to East Lansing. I wouldn't say our bar is "great" at following COVID-19 guidelines. Our boss just wants his business to stay afloat. I understand, but every single person working at the bar has had COVID-19, except myself.

**CP:** What about the customers?

**Bartender:** All the customers are happy to be out, but they don't care about the virus. It's very hypocritical of me to say since I work there, but they don't understand the harm of it.

**CP:** What was it like working before indoor dining reopened?

**Bartender:** Before the reopening, we had a dine-in tent for customers. Customers and workers would be standing directly next to each other. The whole area was packed. Our workers had to wear masks, but since the tents were outside we couldn't enforce masks on our customers. Even some of the bartenders got away without wearing masks, which I guess is a personal choice. I just think, as humans, we should care about others and wear a mask out of respect.

**CP:** How often do you get tested for COVID-19?

**Bartender:** I get tested whenever I know I'm going back to work at the bar. After I get done working at the bar, I usually wait a couple days to see if I have any symptoms. I know I'm

putting myself at risk, so exposure is always a consequence to making money.

**CP:** You mom is in healthcare. How does she feel about you working during a pandemic?

**Bartender:** It's hard to say because she knows I need to work for school money, but she also doesn't want me risking catching COVID-19. My mom works in a hospital, so she would rather me not work at the bar. She still supports whatever I choose to do, but sometimes I feel guilty. I want to make her proud and show her I can pay for my own schooling.

**CP:** How have the tips been?

**Bartender:** Way less. There were nights that I would bring home \$400 in tips. Now I average around \$160 a night, which is still good, I guess.

**CP:** What are customers ordering?

**Bartender:** A Shirley Temple with alcohol is definitely one of the fan favorites at the bar. It's funny seeing how drink orders change throughout the pandemic. Since Halloween, we started upcharging the drinks because so many people wanted them. We even changed the name around Valentine's Day to "Bloody Valentine." When we made the drink even more red with cranberry juice, more customers started buying it.

— CHLOE WEST

### Monique Jardell, junior field hockey player at MSU

Wake up. Practice. Class. Study. Hang out. COVID-19 test. Repeat.

This is the daily life of Monique Jardell, a student-athlete who plays field hockey for Michigan State University. She has spent most of the pandemic on campus, adjusting to online classes and wondering when she'd be able to play field hockey again. The fall sport, like so many others, was postponed due to health concerns. She hits the field again this month, though there won't be any fans in the stands. Here's a glimpse into student athlete life amid the pandemic.

**CP:** How does it feel to be back on the field after your fall season was postponed to the spring?

**Jardell:** It honestly feels surreal. Going through the fall without playing a game was really difficult. We hadn't played a game since November 2019, so this spring season has been a long time coming. Being back on the field and finally starting up the season has been so refreshing.

**CP:** How did you have to change your training because of the pandemic?

**Jardell:** It has been very different. We are having to wear masks when we play now the entire time, which makes it ten times harder, as well as trying to social distance as much as possible. Obviously when we are on the field that's pretty hard to do, but on the sideline and between drills we really



Photos by Imani Patterson

Monique Jardell

try to keep our distance. Since the season moved to the spring and it is cold, we can't practice outside. We are inside training on a different surface, which is difficult to adjust to.

**CP:** Are you worried about having a season during the pandemic?

**Jardell:** Yeah, I definitely had some concerns about the season. We have a smaller team and the risk of one of us getting COVID-19 and then some or all of us having to potentially sit out and quarantine is really daunting. We would lose a big part of the season in that case.

**CP:** How often do you have to test for COVID-19?

**Jardell:** We actually have to test six days a week for about half an hour. We go in every morning to test before we are allowed into practice or go into any other athletic facility. I feel really safe because of how constantly we test and how much we trust those tests. In order to fit these tests in with our classes and practice schedule, we actually switched our practices to the afternoon to be able to get results back before we practice.

**CP:** Did you ever consider opting out for the season?

**Jardell:** I never did; I just want to play, so it's worth the risk. The fear of COVID-19 is very real, but I feel comfortable with the way the athletic staff and program has been managing our safety. Mentally, having a season right now is really hard to focus on but also is a relief knowing we can have some sense of normalcy come back.

**CP:** How has it been being on campus and training when no one is here?

**Jardell:** It has definitely changed the entire experience. Not going to in-person classes is weird to begin with, but basically only leaving my apartment for testing and practice is a norm now. We really aren't able to see anyone outside of our circle, outside of people who we know are tested and safe

to be around. It is strange not seeing people on campus but even if campus was packed we have to stay away from them during this time.

**CP:** Is this all worth it?

**Jardell:** 100%. Being able to be on the field with my teammates and play the game I love is worth any of the extra protocols we need to follow. I love the sport, my team and this university. Being able to push through and find joy through my sport in this time is really important to me.

— ELENA SHKLYAR

### Kelsey Maccombs, executive director at Constellation Cat Café

The Constellation Cat Café opened to fanfare — Cats! Coffee! All together! — just months before the pandemic hit. Last month, it was forced to close the cafe portion. Though all is not lost, there are still plenty of purry friends to adopt. Executive Director Kelsey Maccombs talked about what the cats have been up to, as well as an outlook on the local cafe's long-term future.

**CP:** How are the cats handling all of the changes?

**Maccombs:** Honestly, they don't really know any different. They're used to a little bit of chaos because they're coming from whatever rescue situation, whether they're owner surrenders them or they were just found outside. So once they're here, they're fairly adaptable. I think they have no idea that anything weird is going on.

**CP:** Tell us about Eli Hiss. He was sort of a mascot for Constellation and the internet fell in love with him. How is he liking his adopted life? Have you kept up to date on Hiss' whereabouts?

**Maccombs:** One of my best friends ending up adopting him, so I get weekly updates. Eli is huge now, which is so funny because he was really, really underweight when I had him. As soon as he got to his forever home he started

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INGHAM COUNTY DEATHS

eating and didn't stop. They have a dog in their family and he really wants to be friends. But the dog is like, "I don't know about you."

CP: Did Constellation see an increase in adoptions during the pandemic?

Maccombs: Yeah, definitely. There's been a huge uptick in adoptions, especially since last summer. The first couple months we were totally shut down and just did a couple of adoptions. Once late spring, probably starting in May, adoptions started getting really busy and have continued to be really busy. I think we adopted out 10 cats in the last week.

CP: So why did you decide to close?

Maccombs: We just do not have the sales to support the staffing. It doesn't make sense to operate at a loss when we're funded by things like donations and other contributions. It feels like we need to use people's money responsibly and I think they want us to use that toward things that actually help cats rather than fun extras. It's basically just been really sad for all of us.

CP: What do you miss most about pre-pandemic life at the cafe?

Maccombs: Trivia is a really big one. It's so fun because you really get to nerd out with people who like the same stuff as you. You can just say obscure lines from "Harry Potter" or "Schitt's Creek" and they'll get it. I feel like a lot of times with fandoms you're really only connecting with people on the Internet, so to connect with people in real life about stuff like that is really fun.

CP: You're very passionate about the cat cafe. What motivates you to keep it going?

Maccombs: The cats are obviously the intrinsic motivator. It's so fun to see them get adopted and find the right family who can spoil them like they deserve. I'm also really motivated by my team. We have a really small team right now and everyone is so hardworking and so passionate and full of ideas. We also have a really good community of volunteers and supporters.

CP: What do you want Constellation to look like a year from now?

Maccombs: In a year, I'd like to have our coffee shop back open and thriving, and I would like to have an onsite neonatal kitten nursery in our big wild dreams! That's been something we've been kind of working on in the background and trying to get that started.

— RIZ HATTON

### William Gurzick, student and milk carton fan at MSU

During this time of year, the Breslin Center is usually filled with the smell of popcorn, a sea of Spartans and the sound of an unrelenting student section supporting its men's hoops team. Meet the Izzone: The men's basketball student section notorious for disturbing opponents with loud chanting, crazy jumping and — at least for some — some fairly outlandish costumes.

Some know William Gurzick as a

senior studying advertising. Others know him as a Shipt delivery driver. Most, though, probably know him as the man wearing a milk carton costume over his head during MSU basketball games. Gurzick is a student section leader for the Izzone this year, a year where no fans are allowed to attend games due to COVID-19 precautions. So, what does it take to run a remote student section? It's different, Gurzick said, but not impossible.

CP: Has the milk carton costume officially been hung up because of the pandemic this year?

Gurzick: Yeah, which is sad. But my brother is a freshman here, and he's going to be a section leader as well, so I'll hopefully pass it onto him. And then my sister's after him, so hopefully that will stay in the family as time goes on.

CP: Because the pandemic has forced the Breslin to be closed off to fans, how are leaders running the Izzone? Take me through the process of what you've done to keep fans engaged.

Gurzick: We still made t-shirts, except they said, "Izzone From Home," and it was like the 2020 shirt. Then, we just try to keep everyone, especially the students of the Izzone, engaged by keeping up with our Twitter and Instagram. We're just trying to keep everyone excited like we would if it were a real season.

CP: So, basically business as usual?

Gurzick: We just try to keep it as normal as possible without actually being there, so we just go on as normal but without actually going into the games.

CP: Do you think the Izzone's virtual influence this year has been helping the team at all?

Gurzick: I would hope to think so. I hope they feel our energy at some level. I think they've reacted to some Instagram or Twitter posts. I just hope we can give them some sort of juice.

CP: It's your last year here as a student. Do you feel like you're missing out on anything?

Gurzick: Not being able to have my last year in the Izzone is definitely a bummer. I'm watching the games from home. Seeing an empty Breslin Center really is tough, but we just keep trying to stay positive. Obviously for me, I just try to relish in the times that I did have there. That's the only thing I really can do now, but I'm thankful for the Izzone and MSU Basketball for doing that, giving me that happiness that it brought to me.

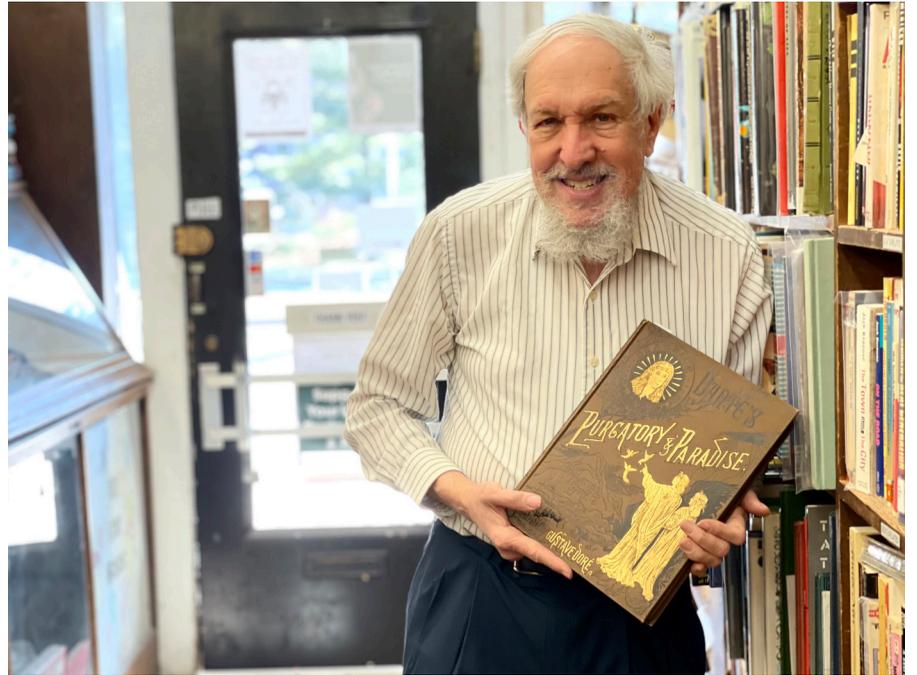
CP: What are you looking forward to the most for when you can come back to the Breslin?

Gurzick: The atmosphere. That's what I fell in love with the first time I ever walked in there when I was a kid. So, that's something that I'll hopefully be able to do soon in the future.

— JACK FALINSKI

### Ray Walsh, owner at Curious Book Shop and Archives Book Shop

Ray Walsh has been a familiar fig-



Ray Walsh

ure in East Lansing since 1969, when he first started selling books. Since then, his stores, Curious Book Shop and Archives Book Shop, have become favorite haunts of students looking to while away an hour inside looking through the packed shelves for classic novels, vintage magazines and old sci-fi paperbacks. Even as Amazon and online shopping has dominated book sales, Walsh has kept his stores open thanks to their loyalty and online support. But what do you do when most of your customers move back home?

CP: What was it like in those first few weeks after students were sent home from campus?

Walsh: It was almost like a zombie zone except there were no bodies. My employees were leaving to go home and weren't coming in for a while. It was like a double whammy. We weren't getting people coming in, but we wouldn't have enough people to handle our hours.

CP: What's the biggest change you've noticed while running Curious Book Shop?

Walsh: Well, significantly fewer people have been coming in, including students. A lot of people who frequently come in from out of town have not been coming in as much either. Missing the students is a major detriment to business. Not only mine, but many of the others downtown.

CP: Many new freshmen are still moving to the city. Have you noticed any fresh faces?

Walsh: We've had a number of people coming into both shops who said "Gee I've never been here before," or "I'm driving by and I just saw this place is open and I figured I'd see what you have." They seem to be very pleasantly surprised, and say "I'll have to tell other people." We have a Facebook Page for Curious Books and we add something to it every week and sometimes more than that. That has helped get the word out as well.

CP: Has the pandemic forced the shop to pursue new ways of reaching

customers?

Walsh: I can't say it forced us to, but I think it caused us to take more advantage of it. One of the other things that we're on, that's helped a lot at Curious, has been Etsy. A lot of people say "Well yeah, but that's for craft stuff." Well, we're putting a lot of things on there that are books and other paper items. In some cases we're doing more on sales on Etsy in a day than we are at the shop. Right now, we have 600 items on Etsy. So that has certainly helped us survive.

CP: What has been selling the best?

Walsh: Because our prices are frequently half normal retail prices, we have been selling a lot of classics: Hemingway, Faulkner, Fitzgerald. We're selling a lot of children's books, everything from Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys to Goosebumps and various other types of books. We have a number of homeschoolers coming in and we can't keep some used books in stock.

CP: Have you been reading anything interesting? What are you reading now?

Walsh: I did a review last week on a book of haiku that was published locally called "Because of this Light." I like giving local writers some recognition. I enjoyed it. It makes me want to sit down and write some haiku, too.

CP: Looking towards the future, what's in store for your businesses?

Walsh: Well we still want to try and stay in business. We want to try to have interesting books that customers will want to come in for and drive in from out of town. We still want to be a destination shop and to be able to supply a lot of books to a lot of readers and collectors. We want to try to keep our staff employed, and hopefully there will be more business in East Lansing. We are looking forward to students coming back but it's still going to be a while.

— KYLE DAVIDSON

ONE YEAR LATER

010268

EATON & CLINTON COUNTY CASES

ALL PHOTOS BY NICOLE RIGO  
(Right): Jon Howard, Flat, Black & Circular manager, reopened the vinyl and CD shop on June 1 after weeks of being closed. He and customers are required to wear masks, and customer capacity is limited to 10 people.



(Left): A protester walks down Beech Street in East Lansing during an early afternoon protest June 7, 2020, for George Floyd.  
(Top): Lansing Urgent Care Antibody Testing (Haslett).  
(Bottom): Dewey Lawrence, an employee at Schuler Books & Music, rings up customers on June 8, 2020, from behind newly installed glass shields. The store, located inside the Meridian Mall, has been open for curbside pickup throughout the pandemic.

ONE YEAR LATER

000220

EATON & CLINTON COUNTY DEATHS



(Top Left): While area restaurants and retail outlets temporarily closed due to the pandemic, other businesses like Preuss Pets had employees put on masks and changed the way they operated. Drive-thrus have been packed and others even set up makeshift outdoor sales areas.

(Bottom Left): Perry VFW Post 4063.

(Right): Peanut Barrel bartender Jessica Bunner pours drinks on June 5, 2020 for guests waiting outside on the patio.



Scott Keith, the president and CEO of Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority (which runs the stadium), stands inside an empty Jackson Field on June 1, 2020. All Lansing Lugnuts games, and other special events, are on hold due to COVID-19.

ONE YEAR LATER

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VACCINES IN MICHIGAN

## Anniversary

from page 15

headed back to Michigan the next day.

Within the first 24 hours of being back on the ground in Lansing, Vail and Shoyinka were already dealing with the first cases detected in Ingham County. Those were announced on March 12.

### Life before COVID-19

Gordon Small was a doting grandfather who loved to take his grandson, Dustin Grimes, on fishing trips. Small grew up in Lansing, served in the military during the Korean War and later returned to the area to work with Wyeth-Pfizer. In his younger days, Small would also help collect scrap metal for the war effort. And that only nurtured his love for tin toys — which continued into adulthood, Grimes said. The two also frequently went to toy shows together.

Small had moved into a senior living facility in Mason. And while he had divorced his wife in the '80s, they remained close until her death in 2018.

As the state cranked up measures to mitigate the impact of coronavirus with stayhome orders and other restrictions, Grimes and his family recognized their grandfather was at risk both because of age and underlying health conditions. He was also a smoker for many years. They made the decision early on to avoid contact with him in order to avoid exposing him to the virus.

“Between the governor's order and when he went into the hospital, I had seen him only one time,” Grimes said. “We had a nice day at the end of March, and we did go outside, social distance, masks on. He was in really good spirits. He missed the family, but he understood that this was a life-or-death thing. At the time, people were still under the impression that we would just kind of weather the storm and we would be out of this thing in a couple of weeks or maybe a couple of months if it's really bad. And then he ended up getting sick about three weeks later.”

Each week, a support staff from the VA would visit Small and assist with certain needs. In mid-April, the VA aide showed up with what she described as allergies, Grimes explained. His grandfather decided to cancel her work that day. She would soon test positive for COVID-19.

A week or so later, Grimes' mother was calling to check on Small. There was no answer on his phone — an unusual development. Knowing he had also been exposed to COVID-19, she grew concerned. She drove to Mason and let herself into his apartment. He was unresponsive, breathing but clearly in distress. He was transported to Sparrow Hospital in critical condition.

While Small regained consciousness, he never regained lucidity. Family would only communicate with him through Zoom, with a nurse holding up

the device for Small to see.

“It was us really saying goodbye,” Grimes said. “Telling him stories.”

Small died on May 8 from the disease.

Grimes said he also witnessed the passing of his grandmother just a year before, also in Sparrow Hospital. The difference between the two deaths was “night and day,” he explained. He was able to camp out with his grandmother in hospice. But how do you grieve remotely?

“You can say goodbye, but the process of saying goodbye and grieving and being able to hug your surviving family members, that's all gone,” Grimes explained. “The people that I would share this experience, trauma, celebration of his life with are in their homes doing their lockdown thing. I've seen these family members, but not in a way to fully grieve and remember.”

### Battening the hatches

Vail and Shoyinka spent the early months of the pandemic monitoring disease numbers and fighting to enforce stayhome and gathering restrictions. The infection rates stayed relatively low in the county, with the exception of an outbreak in immigrant communities in zip code 48911.

The families there lived in tightly populated apartment complexes, with some working at an egg farm in Ionia County and others at the Meijer warehouse in Eaton County. That early outbreak skewed Ingham's racial disparity numbers unlike other communities in the state. Most were of southeast Asian descent. In other parts of the state, Black residents were being hit the hardest.

In June, state officials began to loosen restrictions. And that's when Vail and her team got slammed with an outbreak tied to Harper's Bar & Restaurant in East Lansing. The outbreak made international news — and Vail ended up splitting her days between media interviews, working with the owners and also trying to contain the virus from spreading further in the city.

She said she was working up to 18 hours a day — maybe enough time for a three-hour nap.

“I would spend my days dealing with the epidemic. And then I would go home and read all the latest science so I knew what was going on, what I was going to be asked tomorrow,” she said.

The outbreak in East Lansing also coincided with the one-year anniversary of the unexpected death of Vail's father. He lived in Texas and was planning a visit when he went incommunicado. Several days later, Vail said she asked for law enforcement to stop in and check on him.

“I guess I didn't expect that the one-year anniversary of his death was going to hit me like it did,” she said. “The only thing I can think is that it was really traumatic, you know. So it was like reliving a trauma in a way, because I didn't, I had no clue that I was about to lose my father.”

Vail said it was one of the few times that the stress of the coronavirus pan-



City Pulse/ Nicole Risco

### Sparrow FastCare Frandor.

demic combined with her private life had actually overwhelmed her. She had moments where she would sob, something with which the normally factual and stoic health officer would not usually be doing.

In the meantime, Shoyinka was spending her days consulting with local health providers and businesses to identify proper handling of viral exposures and treatment. There were days she would have to get up and walk through her neighborhood, if only for a very small escape.

“I would just be walking down the street, tears running down my face,” Shoyinka explained. “There were just points where I had to walk away. I had to.”

While Shoyinka and Vail were working to respond to the epidemic, they were also facing mounting criticism from COVID-19 deniers and small government advocates. On April 15, cars jammed downtown Lansing to protest coronavirus mitigation efforts ordered by state officials.

On April 30, hundreds of protesters stormed the Capitol, some armed. Vail was unable to hit those protesters with violation orders because doing so could have jeopardized her safety.

And then, the nasty emails and letters began. Some were laced with profanity and abusive language. Some were direct threats of harm. Those letters continue. Occasionally, they include letters of support. Still, she said the threats resulted in increased police patrols near her home.

“Had it become necessary, the county would have made sure I had security,” Shoyinka said.

### The second wave

Public health officials still don't fully understand why coronavirus exploded again in October. It was a pattern unlike most respiratory viruses that usually start spreading in late December and peak in late February — just another example of just how little was known about this virus.

On Jan. 4, Don Cochran and his live-in girlfriend, who works in a pharmacy, decided to get tested for COVID-19. She had symptoms and tested positive. The two went into quarantine.

Just weeks later, Cochran — a retired military man in peak health with no history of smoking — was struggling to breathe. He went to McLaren with a

fever. He had also begun hallucinating.

He said staff checked his vitals and had him on oxygen “within seconds” of his arrival. Less than an hour later, he was hurried away to a private room to be isolated from staff and other patients.

Later, a CT scan revealed Cochran had COVID-19-related pneumonia in both of his lungs. A devout Christian, Cochran said he was ready to die if the virus wanted. His faith sustained him.

“I'm ready. If it's time for me to go, it's time for me to go. Maybe my work on Earth is done,” Cochran said. “But if not, then there's more for me to do. I'm a positive person and I always looked at the positive side of things. Look on the sunny side of life. I think a lot of your mental outlook, I guess, is where your strength can come from and how you look at things and of course, you've had a lot of struggles dealing with a lot of things in your life, obviously.”

He spent nearly 10 days in the hospital and was released with a prescription for oxygen. When City Pulse interviewed him in early February, he was attempting to wean himself off the oxygen, but he was still struggling with low oxygen levels and constant exhaustion from the virus.

Even as Cochran was struggling for his life, Michigan and the nation were rolling out vaccines. But an extremely limited supply frustrated operations, causing conflict throughout the county. It also left Vail and other health officials with an inbox full of messages begging for the vaccine.

“Those were hard,” Vail said. “You just want to help, but you can't. The vaccine just isn't there.”

One communication from an area senior left Vail emotionally wrought. Shoyinka also received frantic calls from residents in search of the virus. Vail describes the first weeks of the vaccine rollout as among the hardest days of the entire pandemic — even with a solution in sight.

“I wanted to help, but I couldn't,” Shoyinka said. “It was hard — very hard.”

On Thursday, Vail stopped into her county office to collect mail. On her desk were two letters. One berated her for the lack of a vaccine availability. The other praised her, State Medical Director Dr. Joneigh Khaldun and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer for their work to battle the virus.

“You ladies kick ass,” the letter read.

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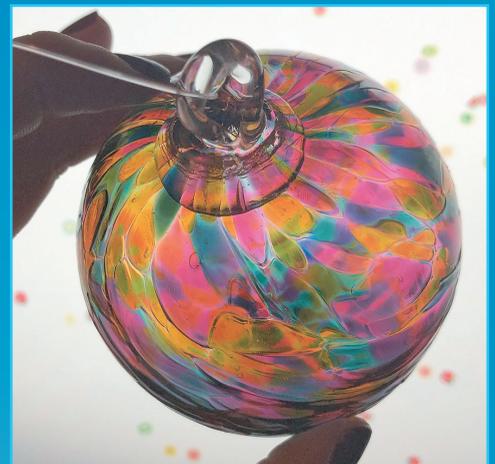
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# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## 'Let Us Breathe': A compelling opportunity

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

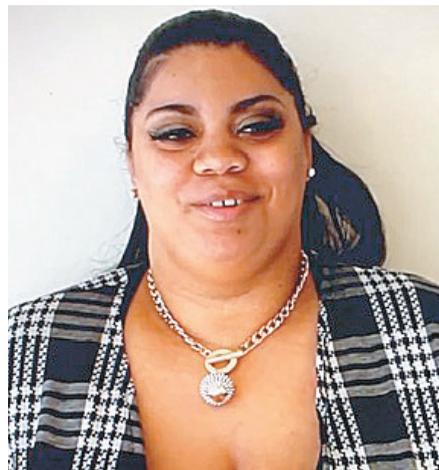
Peppermint Creek Theatre's mission includes commitments to address vital societal issues, to raise awareness, and to encourage meaningful dialogue. The production company's latest online production, "Let Us Breathe" does all three.

### "Let Us Breathe"

Available online at  
facebook.com/  
peppermintcreek

The recording, accessible on Peppermint Creek's Facebook and YouTube pages until March 31, showcases five speakers talking about personal experiences related to their culture. Each lasts about 10 minutes. Matt Hund from Gannett's Lansing Storytellers Project and Elaine Hardy recruited the quintet. Hund co-produced the show with Peppermint Creek's artistic director Chad Swan-Badgero. Hardy is a cast member, as well as East Lansing's diversity, equity and inclusion administrator.

"I like that we are creating a space for Black and brown people's voices to be heard and for them to say anything they want," Swan-Badgero said. "And I think it's really powerful that these aren't people from far away that we don't really know. These are people who live and work in Lansing and that's very



McCollum

compelling as a theatrical piece."

The speakers were coached three times via Zoom before being recorded. Rob Roznowski, Sarah Hendrickson, Lynn Lammers, John Leopard and Swan-Badgero — all veterans of area theater — were the coaches.

When the "Let Us Breathe" storytellers had polished but not memorized stories, videographer Jackson Boomershine met with each in settings they felt comfortable in. The individual recordings were edited and spliced together to make a unified video.



Chenault

Hardy speaks first about her journey to embrace her Blackness — despite how hard that can be in America and even in her own family. Hardy's potent speech is full of emotion and insights.

Ben Hall is a postal carrier, server at the Soup Spoon Café and independent musician. His second story is about his family history that includes some of Mason's first Black settlers. His quest to preserve a relative's freedom papers and to get family headstones is remarkable and eye opening.

Tammara McCollum is the owner of

Smoothie Queen on East Kalamazoo Street. Her story is about going from homelessness and living in her car, to owning the successful shop. She shows how determination and a little kindness can be life altering.

Siso Dhadhla is a proud local entrepreneur and employee of Downtown Lansing Inc. His drive to create a "Black market" of African American merchants is a tale worth telling.

Jill Chenault had many careers from lawyer to dog walker to hand model. She now cares for her mother. The COVID survivor is still suffering lingering effects. Chenault, in frank and sometimes profane language for the final story, details the warranted fear blacks feel when dealing with the virus — and how brutal the illness can be. With everyday examples, she makes the pain of injustice feel real.

None of the storytellers appears to read from a script and each displays a genuine sincerity. Edits are rare and images and voices are clear. All are filled with emotion — often inspiring tears. The "Let Us Breathe" collection is an opportunity to hear compelling Black and brown voices.

## Internal soul-searching with MLK-inspired production

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Just before COVID restrictions began a year ago, Lansing's Sycamore Creek United Methodist Church on South Pennsylvania Avenue staged a performance of "Letter From Birmingham Jail." At 7 p.m. on Saturdays through March, the church is offering

### "Letter From Birmingham Jail"

Available online, search  
Sycamore Creek United  
Methodist Church on YouTube

a very different presentation centered on the iconic Martin Luther King Jr. writing.

"We hope to make it an annual event," pastor and executive producer, Tom Arthur said. "MLK's message was a guide for me and our church for how

not to sit on the sidelines."

Instead of a live play based on the letter King wrote in response to a Methodist Bishop's criticism of the Birmingham protests in 1963, this recorded four-part series has genuine movie elements. Links to episodes can be found on SCUMC's YouTube page.

"Letters" includes footage of King and the Alabama demonstrations, displays of newspapers from the era and soundtrack music.

Clever camerawork — including a mix of views and focuses — add much. "Letters" is a visual delight that engages a viewer.

"The cinematography is beyond



Courtesy

NorryIn-Michael William Allen as Martin Luther King Jr.

See MLK, Page 25

# True crime bookstore Deadtime Stories moving to REO Town

By **COLE TUNNINGLEY**

Lansing's only true crime bookstore, Deadtime Stories, is moving from Old Town to REO Town this month. On March 27, Deadtime is holding a grand opening event — including a ribbon-cutting ceremony and serial killer-shaped cookies — to celebrate the transition.

Deadtime opened shop in the basement of Thrift Witch last year amid the pandemic. The shop's success led owner Jenn Carpenter to look for a bigger storefront.

"We did really well in our Old Town location, but anyone who's been there knows that we were in a really small space," Carpenter said. "We're fortunate that we did well enough that we needed to expand, have some more space, carry some more books."

The store carries a plethora of true crime and paranormal books, with a focus on Michigan's dark history. "I want you to be able to walk into my store and ask for any book about Michigan true crime. And I was us to have it in stock, no matter how obscure," said Carpenter.

A veteran of the local true crime scene herself, Carpenter is the author of the book "Haunted Lansing" and the founder of Demented Mitten Tours, which offers customers a guided journey through the creepiest locations in Michigan.

Using her connections in the true



## Deadtime Stories REO Town Grand Opening

March 27  
10:45 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
1132 S. Washington Ave.  
Lansing  
jenn@screamqueen517.com  
www.facebook.com/  
DeadtimeStories517

crime community, Carpenter scheduled a series of book signings set to take place throughout this April. Rod Sadler, author of the "Killing Women" series, and Judge Rosemary Aquilina, who presided over the Nassar case, are just a sampling of the guests that Deadtime has on the schedule.

"She can't write about that trial, obviously. But what some people don't know is that she also writes crime novels," said Carpenter. She plans to host a reading or signing at least every other weekend for the foreseeable future.

Despite the expansion, Deadtime is going to stay true to its roots as a safe haven for the morbidly curious.

"It's definitely still going to be a quaint little bookstore," said Carpenter. She acknowledged that starting a new business in a pandemic may seem like a bad idea. In the world of Amazon and Audible, the experience of browsing an independent, niche bookstore almost feels anachronistic.



Courtesy photos

"You can get your books instantly now. You don't even have to leave your house," lamented Carpenter. "So, my goal is to make this a place that people want to go to because there are cool things to do and see."

As someone who was raised in South Lansing, REO Town holds a special place in Carpenter's heart. She has fond memories of sitting in the car on the way back from family vacations — waiting to see Wynken, Blynken and Nod because it meant she was almost home.

Now, Lansing's famous smokestacks sit right behind her shop.

"There's so much cool stuff to do here," said Carpenter. "Opening up the shop in REO Town kinda felt like coming home to me. It's cool."

(Above) A creative display of true crime books available at Dead Time Stories.

(Below) Dead Time Stories' REO Town storefront.



## MLK

from page 24

anything I could have imagined," Arthur said. "It's way more intimate."

Randy Flick commanded the camera and editing work. Rico Bruce Wade (last seen locally in Riverwalk's Zoom, "EA Eaters Anonymous") directed.

Norryln-Michael William Allen reads as King in a jail cell. Allen channels the impassioned energy and calm intensity of the civil rights leader.

Jeff Croff, Ixion Theatre's artistic director, is the Bishop who tries to lecture King on why his protests in Birmingham are wrong. Croff took over the role suddenly when another actor dropped out.

The "Letter" enactment is divided between three episodes. The fourth episode is a stitching together of those

three. Only the first episode has no conversation afterward. They should be viewed in order and there is no cost or time limit to view them.

"The whole experience isn't just the "Letter From Birmingham" video/film," Arthur said. "It's live episodes of leaders in various settings, most local, reflecting on how MLK encourages or challenges them in their role as leaders."

Sycamore Creek's services use a similar formula. An in-house studio allows a recorded sermon to be followed by live conversation.

March 13 features reactions to MLK's words by "two white leaders of institutions who have to navigate a wide variety of convictions," Arthur said. Lansing City Council President Peter Spadafore and David Hornak are the leaders.

March 20 spotlights Sean Holland. "Who I'd call a Lansing version of MLK," Arthur said. He's a reverend friend who's active in the Black Lives

Matter Movement. The speaker closing the final episode on March 27 is Gloria Davis.

"I can imagine teachers using this," Arthur said. "I think this has the potential to be a resource for a much wider audience than just the Lansing region."

It's certainly worthy of attention beyond an already passed Black History Month.

"It's the quickest we could make it happen to MLK Day," Arthur said. "But it fits nicely with Lent leading up to Easter, which is a time of internal soul-searching."

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# Favorite Things

## Nicholas Richard and his Fender bass



*Nicholas Richard is a graduate of LCC's music program and has put that knowledge to use in touring bands such as The Plurals and City Mouse. So it's no surprise that his favorite thing is his trusty Fender jazz bass, which has seen all sorts of impressive battle scars.*

I got my bass in 2007; I got it used at Elderly Instruments. It was a late graduation gift. I split the cost with my parents as I was going into an associate's degree program from LCC. It's an American Fender Jazz Bass, and it's been to probably 46 states. My brain's rotten, so there's a couple I am forgetting that I had to borrow basses for.

It's definitely broken open my nose, and my Plurals bandmate Tommy's nose at least a few times. In REO Town, we were playing a show and the straplock busted. The neck of the bass flew up into my nose and low-key broke it. I immediately was pouring blood out of my face. Everyone in the audience was like, "Oh my god!" and laughing. I was standing there saying, "Uh, can somebody help me?" Eventually, somebody went to the bathroom and got me some paper towels.

It has hit Tommy over the years thanks to a solid decade of touring,

playing in tiny attics, living rooms and basements, while performativity doing slam dancing in rooms meant for 2 to 4 people that actually had 30 people in it. I would often be known to take a hard turn and accidentally bash him in the face.

I was first interested in music when I was 13 or 14. My dad bought me an acoustic guitar using Marlboro Miles. He's a lifelong smoker, and still smokes today. I was really into The Who and I really liked John Entwistle, and that was my dad and I's favorite band. I was getting pretty good at acoustic guitar and I got a really shitty Danelectro bass passed down to me through a friend of a friend. I played that for a while, but once I graduated and went to LCC I decided to live mas and buy an American jazz bass.

The bass is beat up real bad, I couldn't sell it at this point. But it still sounds absolutely fantastic, despite how poorly I treat it. If my house were on fire, it would be the one thing I would pull out, besides my cat.

*Interview edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley. If you have a suggestion for favorite things, please email [Skyler@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:Skyler@lansingcitypulse.com)*

# Is cannabis the cure for Covid?

MSU professor: No — but it could help with some side effects

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Recreational marijuana has certainly taken the spotlight off the medical side of the industry over the last few years. Sales for adult-use products routinely outpace their medicinal counterparts. Fewer and fewer patients are bothering to apply for or renew their medical marijuana licenses.

And this month, state officials also rolled back the requirement that recreational retailers also obtain a medical license, opening the first door to stand-alone adult-use pot shops in Michigan. Some advocates fear it could represent the death knell for the therapeutic side of the market.

But at Michigan State University, at least one professor is keeping focused on the medicinal benefits of certain cannabinoids — particularly those that could help reduce inflammation. And his research suggests it could potentially help with some of the long-term effects of COVID-19.

First, some clarity: "We don't have enough information to suggest it would be a positive thing to consume cannabis if you have COVID-19, especially smoking. This is really more about specific compounds that are well characterized and could, potentially, down the road, become useful for certain conditions," said Norbert Kaminski, a pharmacology and toxicology professor at MSU.

Kaminski — in addition to having a great last name unrelated to this writer — has been studying since the early 90's the mechanisms by which certain cannabinoids, the chemical constituents of cannabis, affect the immune system. And of more than 100 varieties that have been identified, his research shows that a few may be useful in curbing the body's inflammatory response.

In partnership with the biopharmaceutical company GB Sciences, Norbert has been working in recent months on isolating and studying the effects that certain cannabinoids can have on modifying that immune system response, ultimately reducing the body's natural instinct to swell. Among the possible treated ailments: Long-term lung inflammation triggered by the coronavirus.

"It's a small part. Our interest in cannabinoids is much broader than just COVID-19," Kaminski added. "Our interest is really on how these certain compounds can modulate the immune



Lansterdam  
in Review



Kaminski

system. And what we've found is that several of these can be good anti-inflammatory agents."

Kaminski said some non-psychoactive chemical compounds found within the cannabis plant, when isolated, can effectively focus its effects entirely on the body's immune system rather than the nervous system. That natural immune response to infection, in some cases, can create inflammation. Certain cannabinoids, instead, can tell the body to chill out and stop the swelling.

"White blood cells release large amounts of protein that can not only affect the immune system, but the tissues where the response occurs. In some severe cases of COVID-19, that response is essentially recruited to the lungs and that response can actually cause some real damage."

With declining caseloads and rising vaccine rates nationwide, Kaminski hopes his research won't necessarily need to be put to use to help coronavirus patients. Still, these cannabinoids have the potential to treat other ailments — including HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder.

"I get ribbed a little bit by some folks," Kaminski said when asked if his status as an acclaimed marijuana researcher carries certain stigmas. "People have joked, saying they want to volunteer for our studies. Nowadays, I think people mostly view this just the same as any other resource."

I also had to ask: Does MSU have a secret stash of research pot? Kaminski said his research funding from the National Institute of Health allow him access to a variety of scheduled substances that can be ordered from a federal repository. And we're not talking bags of bud. He said his samples often come in a liquid or powder form with purity rates up to 99.9%.

No. Kaminski didn't offer me any samples. I guess the family name doesn't carry much weight.

*Kyle Kaminski is City Pulse' managing editor and a cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Almost weekly, Kaminski samples some of the best cannabis products available in Greater Lansing, or covers important issues pertaining to the cannabis industry as a whole.*

# Native American new release is a powerful coming-of-age tale

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Angeline Boulley's highly anticipated young adult thriller is like a Native American powwow deeply layered with symbolism, glitter and enough mystery to keep you spinning in delight.

Boulley's debut book, "Firekeeper's Daughter," was much anticipated since it received a robust seven figures at a 2019 auction for publication rights. It was recently announced the book would be remade into a Netflix series. Firekeeper is a phrase that describes an important role in many Indigenous cultures — the person who is responsible for lighting the fire at ceremonial events such as burial rights.

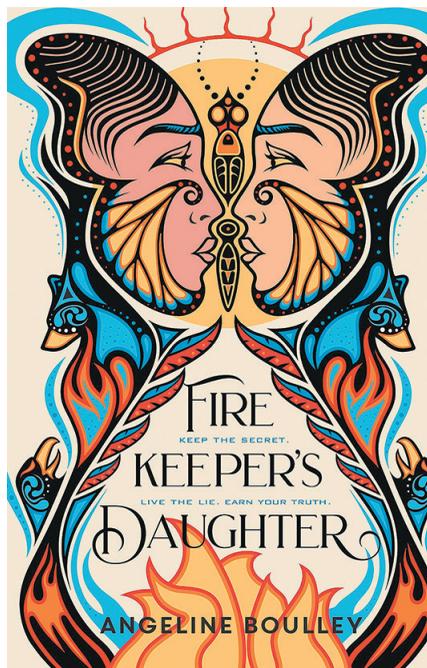
Boulley, a member of the Sault Tribe, has worked extensively in tribal government and was most recently the director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education, until she resigned to pursue writing full time. She joins a growing number of Indigenous writers who are making an impact.

Most recently, the prestigious Caldecott Medal — honoring children book authors and illustrators — was awarded to illustrator Michaela Goade and author Carole Lindstrom for their book, "We Are the Water Protectors," a picture book promoting the protection of water resources.

Prior to that, Tommy Orange wrote, "There There," about the contemporary urban Native American culture in Los Angeles. Louise Erdrich still leads the pantheon of Indigenous writers with her 12 novels set on Native American land, and Joy Harjo has played an admirable role as the nation's Poet Laureate.

Boulley's young adult tale doesn't stray far from the rural fictional reservation she created in Sault Ste. Marie, which is the centerpiece for her story. The protagonist, Daunis Fontaine, is a super-bright recent high school graduate looking forward to her freshman year at the University of Michigan, where she wants to pursue a pre-med degree. Daunis, who played hockey for her high school, is like any other young woman — up for a party and checking out the guys, except she is deeply connected to her culture and family.

Everything changes when she becomes attracted to Jamie, a new guy in town who makes the Sault's



elite travelling hockey team. No one knows much about the mysterious stranger.

Daunis life begins to spin out of control when her friends begin dying of meth overdoses, and she is recruited as a confidential informant for the FBI — the same role played by her uncle, a respected high school teacher, who died from a suspected meth overdose.

As Daunis takes on the super-secret role, the burgeoning relationship with Jamie becomes more complex as the investigation gets closer to the truth. Boulley, who compares Daunis to the fictional Nancy Drew, said, "She's the Indigenous Nancy Drew."

Boulley said it took her 10 years to write the book, and only a few weeks to sell it once she landed an agent. The author, who worked for the Sault Tribe for 12 years, has the experience

to write about not only complex tribal politics, but also family life on the reservation.

She said the idea for the book actually came to her as a teenager, when she learned about a new guy in town who turned out to be an undercover agent. "The idea stuck with me," she said.

Although Boulley wasn't raised in the Sault, she spent many idyllic summers at her grandparent's home on Sugar Island. Much of the story is centered on the island and its important role in Sault Tribe history.

The book takes on real issues, like "per cap," but also the poverty and drug and alcohol dependency, which has plagued many Native American tribes. For those who know little more than the common shibboleths about Indigenous life, the book is a tremendous addition to a genre, which has been too often highjacked by non-Indigenous writers.

In 1976, author Asa Earl Carter sold "The Education of Little Tree" as a memoir of a Native American. Carter, a non-tribal member, was later revealed to be a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Boulley said, "For many younger readers, this will be the first time reading about this particular topic and a coming-of-age story set on a reservation."



Boulley

The book also pokes fun about what Native Americans think of white attitudes toward Indigenous populations. Daunis and her friend Lilly play a unique game of bingo — secretly covering imagined bingo cards in their head. As folks around them make racist or uninformed comments about Indigenous life, such as "I want to give my dog an Indian name" and "Do you get to go to college for free," it takes only a short time before one of them reaches "bingo."

## SCHULER BOOKS

Meridian Mall · Okemos

### VIRTUAL EVENTS

Author Talks · Storytimes  
Attend an event without leaving home!

### POETRY NIGHT

with Holly Wren Spaulding,  
Alison Swan, Keith Taylor  
March 10 · 7pm

Join us virtually for a night of poetry and a reunion of sorts with Holly Wren Spaulding, Alison Swan, Keith Taylor. Watch us LIVE on Facebook.

March Is Reading Month Storytime:

### THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

March 13 · 11am

Calling all the little bookworms! We are reading a classic this week, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Grab your snack and gather around. Join us on Facebook LIVE for a story and an activity!

Medicare for All with

### DR. ABDUL EL-SAYED + MICAH JOHNSON

March 16 · 7pm

Health care and public policy experts will go beyond partisan talking points to take a serious look at the policy and politics of *Medicare for All*. Register free: [el-sayedjohnson.eventbrite.com](http://el-sayedjohnson.eventbrite.com)

REGISTER FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS ON OUR WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK PAGE:

Facebook.com/SchulerBooks  
[SchulerBooks.com/Event](http://SchulerBooks.com/Event)

## Curious Book Shop

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

The snow is falling...  
and books are calling!

## 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)





The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# 15th ANNUAL MSU ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL SUNDAY, MARCH 14

Available to view now until March 14th

**The Albanian Code (2019)**

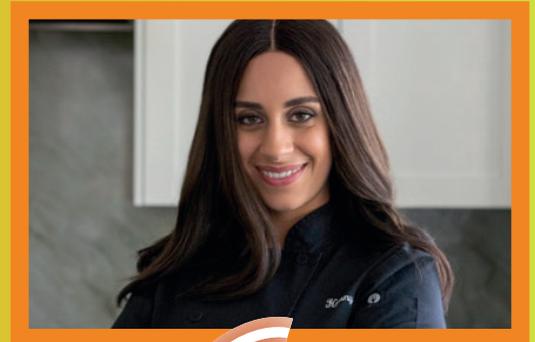
**Documentary by Yael Katzir**

Albania. Languages: Albanian, Hebrew, English (English subtitles)  
The Albanian Code is a documentary feature about the little-known saga of the thousands of Jewish refugees saved in Albania during WWII, due to the courage and humanity of the Albanian people--mostly Muslims. Most of the rescuers are no longer living; therefore it is urgent to document for posterity both saviors and saved and to leave a legacy for future generations. Premiered in Albania in the presence of the President. Screened in Paris at the Memorial de la Shoah and in Manhattan at the JCC. Winner Kosice International Film Festival 2020.

**Live virtual discussion and Q&A with Director Yael Katzir on Sunday, March 14th 11 am-12:30pm EST**



Join us for a **taste of Israel** with a virtual cooking demo of a Moroccan Israeli dish with the engaging gourmet **Chef Hunny Khodorkovsky, March 14th at 12:45 pm**. Chef Hunny Khodorkovsky was born in Israel to parents of Moroccan descent. She grew up in Montreal, lived in Los Angeles and Puerto Rico after getting married, and moved to Detroit in 2012, with her husband and 4 children. Currently, together with her business partner Stephanie Friedman, she started HUNNY, a professional chef service, offering cooking classes, demonstrations, events and vacation chef services abroad. Hunny and Stephanie value fresh, seasonal ingredients and innovative, healthy cuisine, especially when cooking for their families. Following this demo, we will hear from the **award-winning chef and narrator of *In Search of Israeli Cuisine*, Chef Michael Solomonov at 2 pm**.



**In Search of Israeli Cuisine (2016) featuring Chef Michael Solomonov**  
**Documentary**

**Director: Roger Sherman**

Israel. Language: English. In Search of Israeli Cuisine is a portrait of the Israeli people told through food. It puts a literal face on the culture of Israel. The film profiles chefs, home cooks, vintners, and cheese-makers drawn from the more than 100 cultures that make up Israel today- Jewish, Arab, Muslim, Christian, Druze. A rich and human story of the people emerges from their food.

Winner Audience Award from the Cherry Hill and Palm Beach Jewish Film Festivals in 2016.

Available to view now until March 14th



**Live virtual discussion and Q&A with film narrator Chef Michael Solomonov on Sunday, March 14th 2-3:00pm EST**

**to register for these film links and events visit:**

**[jsp.msu.edu](http://jsp.msu.edu)**



**Have questions? Please email [mentzela@msu.edu](mailto:mentzela@msu.edu)**

# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

**"Hi, Turnover"--  
when you can look  
at it both ways.**

by Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 Havana's home
- 5 Herb with leaves used in Japanese cooking
- 10 Classic Ford models
- 14 Like some arguments
- 15 Complete
- 16 On vacation
- 17 Meyer of the "Saw" movies
- 18 How to view the alternate answers crossing the circled squares
- 20 Expert's offer
- 22 Artist's stand
- 23 Army creature?
- 24 Dinner table basketful
- 26 Troubled outburst from Scooby-Doo
- 28 Charlie of the 1960s Orioles
- 30 Indigenous New Zealanders
- 33 Denounces
- 34 Performance style at UCB and Second City
- 36 '50s Ford failure
- 38 Baked Italian dish
- 39 "\_\_\_ Up" (Violent Femmes song)
- 41 "Here's \_\_\_ from me to you ..."
- 45 "Rudolph the Red-\_\_\_ Reindeer" (or the other way, Japanese audio company)
- 47 "Barber Shop Chronicles" playwright Inua \_\_\_ (or the other way, letter used to abbreviate "forte")
- 49 Encouraging words
- 52 \*Athlete running 5,280 feet (or the other way, second run of crew practice)
- 54 "Call Me \_\_\_" (Mayim Bialik sitcom)
- 55 Inter, as a pharaoh
- 57 Marry in haste
- 59 "Nightswimming" band

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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49	50	51			52		53			54		
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59			60		61	62			63		64	65
66			67				68		69			
70				71					72			
73				74					75			

- 60 "Blue Ribbon" beer maker
- 63 Cool, once
- 66 It helps clean the word in the circled squares (as well as the alternate version)
- 69 100 centesimi, pre-euro
- 70 Like jungle foliage
- 71 Cheap instrument
- 72 Done
- 73 Suffix for kitchen
- 74 FBI operative
- 75 Freshman, usually
- Down**
- 1 Classical conclusion
- 2 "Armageddon" author Leon
- 3 Wheel of Fortune wedge to be avoided
- 4 Texas shrine to "remember"
- 5 "Rugrats" father
- 6 "Fingers crossed"
- 7 "\_\_\_ Sin" (HBO Max miniseries)
- 8 "Je ne \_\_\_ quoi"
- 9 Farther along
- 10 Edinburgh boy
- 11 Like some biceps exercises, e.g.
- 12 Suddenly occur to
- 13 Electronic keyboards, casually
- 19 Outwit, in a way
- 21 Red Muppet
- 25 \*Aa and pahoehoe, for two (or the other way, like military fleets)
- 27 Designation at an Arabic meat market
- 28 "30 Rock" character Lemon
- 29 "Where \_\_\_?"
- 31 \*\_\_\_-wip topping (or the other way, more unusual)
- 32 "The Last King of Scotland" name
- 35 "Octopus's Garden" singer
- 37 \*\_\_\_-toed boots (or the other way, half of those pairs of boots)
- 40 \*DNC member (or the other way, married)
- 42 Dave Brubeck standard
- 43 "\_\_\_ complete mess"
- 44 Eugene clock setting, for short
- 46 Vitality
- 48 "Battlefield Earth" author \_\_\_ Hubbard
- 49 Dr. Seuss title turtle
- 50 Early inning statistic
- 51 Fullest extent
- 53 \*Reveals one's true feelings (or the other way, pater \_\_\_)
- 56 Russian rum cake
- 58 Cockpit figure
- 61 Be immodest
- 62 Financial advisor Orman
- 64 Maple, for instance
- 65 Intricate story
- 67 Chance \_\_\_ Rapper
- 68 Super-spicy
- 59 Linear, for short
- 60 Insolence

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Answers on page 31

## SUDOKU

## Beginner

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

### 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 31

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

March 10-16, 2021

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Artist Richard Kehl tells this traditional Jewish story: God said to Abraham, "But for me, you would not be here." Abraham answered, "I know that Lord, but were I not here there would be no one to think about you." I'm bringing this tale to your attention, dear Aries, because I think the coming weeks will be a favorable time to summon a comparable cheekiness with authorities, including even the Divine Wow Herself. So I invite you to consider the possibility of being sassy, saucy, and bold. Risk being an articulate maverick with a point of view that the honchos and experts should entertain.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Spiritual author Ernest Holmes wrote, "True imagination is not fanciful daydreaming. It is fire from heaven." Unfortunately, however, many people do indeed regard imagination as mostly just a source of fanciful daydreaming. And it is also true that when our imaginations are lazy and out of control, when they conjure delusional fears and worries, they can be debilitating. I bring this to your attention, Taurus, because I believe the coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to harness the highest powers of your imagination—to channel the fire from heaven—as you visualize all the wonderful and interesting things you want to do with your life in the next nine months.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** "I'm always waiting for a door to open in a wall without doors," wrote Gemini author Fernando Pessoa. Huh? Pessoa was consistently eccentric in his many writings, and I find this particular statement especially odd. I'm going to alter it so it makes more sense and fits your current needs. Here's your motto for the coming weeks: "I'm always ready to figure out how to make a new door in a wall without doors, and call on all necessary help to make it."

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** You can't drive to the Kamchatka Peninsula. It's a 104,000-square-mile area with a sub-Arctic climate in the far east of Russia. No roads connect it to the rest of the world. Its major city, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, is surrounded by volcanoes. If you want to travel there, you must arrive by plane or ship. And yet Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky has long had a thriving tourist industry. More so before the pandemic, but even now, outsiders have come to paraglide, hunt for bears, and marvel at the scenery. In this horoscope, I am making an outlandish metaphorical comparison of you to the Kamchatka Peninsula. Like that land, people sometimes find it a challenge to reach you. And yet when they do, you can be quite welcoming. Is this a problem? Maybe, maybe not. What do you think? Now is a good time to re-evaluate.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Biting midges, also known as no-see-ums, are blood-sucking flies that spread various diseases. Yuck, right? Wouldn't the world be a better place if we used science to kill off all biting midges everywhere? Well, there would be a disappointing trade-off if we did. The creepy bugs are the primary pollinators for several crops grown in the topics, including cacao. So if we got rid of the no-see-ums, there'd probably be no more chocolate. I'm guessing that you may be dealing with a comparable dilemma, Leo: an influence that has both a downside and an upside. The central question is: Can you be all you want to be without it in your life? Or not? Now is a good time to ponder the best way to shape your future relationship.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** According to my analysis of your imminent astrological potentials, you already are or will soon be floating and whirling and churning along on an ocean of emotion. In other words, you will be experiencing more feelings and stronger feelings than you have in quite some time. This doesn't have to be a problem as long as you do the following: 1. Be proud and appreciative about being able to feel so much. 2. Since only a small percentage of your feelings need to be translated into practical actions, don't take them too seriously. 3. Enjoy the ride!

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Poet Wendell Berry

says "it's the immemorial feelings" he likes best: "hunger and thirst and their satisfaction; work-weariness and earned rest; the falling again from loneliness to love." Notice that he doesn't merely love the gratification that comes from quenching his hunger and thirst. The hunger and thirst are themselves essential components of his joy. Work-weariness and loneliness are not simply inconvenient discomforts that he'd rather live without. He celebrates them, as well. I think his way of thinking is especially worthy of your imitation in the next three weeks.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Famous and influential science fiction novelist Philip K. Dick relied on amphetamines to fuel his first 43 novels. Beginning with \*A Scanner Darkly\*, his 44th, he did without his favorite drug. It wasn't his best book, but it was far from his worst. It sold well and was made into a movie featuring Keanu Reeves, Robert Downey Jr., and two other celebrity actors. Inspired by Dick's success without relying on his dependency—and in accordance with current astrological omens—I'm inviting you to try doing without one of your addictions or compulsions or obsessions as you work on your labor of love.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Ninety percent of all apples in the world are descended from a forest of apple trees in southeast Kazakhstan. Most of us have tasted just a few types of apples, but there's a much wider assortment of flavors in that natural wonderland. You know how wine is described as having taste notes and aromas? The apple flavor of Kazakhstan's apples may be tinged with hints of roses, strawberries, anise, pineapples, coconuts, lemon peels, pears, potatoes, or popcorn. Can you imagine traveling to that forest and exploring a far more complex and nuanced relationship with a commonplace food? During the coming weeks, I invite you to experiment with arousing metaphorically similar experiences. In what old familiar persons, places, or things could you find a surprising wealth of previously unexplored depth and variety?

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Author Andrew Tilin testified that he sometimes had the feeling that his life was in pieces—but then realized that most of the pieces were good and interesting. So his sense of being a mess of unassembled puzzle parts gave way to a deeper contentment—an understanding that the jumble was just fine the way it was. I recommend you cultivate and enjoy an experience like that in the coming weeks, Capricorn.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Indian poet Meena Alexander (1951-2018) was born under the sign of Aquarius. She became famous after she moved to the US at age 29, but was raised in India and the Sudan. In her poem "Where Do You Come From?," she wrote, "Mama beat me when I was a child for stealing honey from a honey pot." I'm sorry to hear she was treated so badly for enjoying herself. She wasn't committing a crime! The honey belonged to her family, and her family had plenty of money to buy more honey. This vignette is my way of advising you, in accordance with astrological omens, to carry out your personal version of "stealing the honey from the honeypot," dear Aquarius. Take what's rightfully yours.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** The bad news is that the narrow buffer zone between North Korea and South Korea is laced with landmines. Anyone who walks there is at risk for getting blown up. The good news is that because people avoid the place, it has become an unprecedented nature preserve—a wildlife refuge where endangered species like the red-crowned crane and Korean fox can thrive. In the coming weeks and months, I'd love to see you engage in a comparable project, Pisces: finding a benevolent use for a previously taboo or wasted part of your life.

# TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

A LOOK BACK, AND FORWARD, AT MADLANTIS RECORDS



Ryan Andrews performs with No Skull at Mac's Bar, 2018. (photo by Amanda Clark)



Ryan "RK" Andrews, 2021. (courtesy photo)



Cover art for the upcoming Bloom or Die single on Madlantis Records.

## Q&A: Ryan Andrews talks Lansing, Red Teeth and what's next for his label

Many of the heaviest, sludgiest and loudest local bands Mid-Michigan has produced have one common thread: Ryan "RK" Andrews. Over the years, Andrews has fronted numerous Lansing-area bands like Red Teeth, Dr. Device, BerT and No Skull—to only name a few. Last year, his latest project, Giant Lungs, unveiled one of his most polished, yet still experimental, records to date. Up next are releases from his newer bands, like Fall into your Grave (alt country), Ghost in the Mind (heavy prog rock) and Bloom or Die (a family band). A bulk of Andrews' discography has been issued on his own indie label, Madlantis Records — a DIY imprint he's operated for the last 17 years. Andrews chatted with City Pulse about his label and unending stream of bands and side projects. Here's what he had to say.

**It's been a bizarre year or so to say the least. Being a musician, how has it been?**

I miss playing live and seeing all my friends in the Lansing music scene. In the past, I've felt like we had a really tight scene, people usually helping each other out and really

supporting each other artistically and in many other ways. Once this Covid shit is behind us, I'm really looking forward to seeing those friends and their bands as well as playing music for those same friends. I look forward to a time when we can all connect and have a drink and laugh. I miss stories from the homies about music and touring, I miss peoples' weird personalities. We had it really good here. Any time I was on tour I was surprised that many places do not have such a tight and supportive scene as we do here in Lansing.

**So, how did you spend 2020?**

2020 was a doozy. I'm really fortunate to have a nice home and a great family, so I just laid low. Working and spending time with my wife and son was how I spent most of my time. Watching movies, ordering food and staying at home. In 2020, we were just finishing up the No Skull full length and then everything happened. But that No Skull album, plus other some other releases, were all released digitally on Bandcamp and most streaming services.

**You've always been a very DIY**

**person. How have you been recording these days?**

Recently, I've been recording at home on a Tascam 24 track and taking it to Troubadour Recordings and having (producer) Corey DeRushia edit and mix it for me. It's very cost and time effective to do it this way for me. I have a basement studio set up where I can track at my leisure, taking all the time, and food, I need (laughs). Once I get good takes, I just take the files to Troubadour and we make them pretty.

**This year, I hear you're working on some solo stuff, as well?**

I'm working on a few experimental pieces of music I'll probably release as RK Andrews, but I'm also just finalizing the first release of my band with my wife and son, Bloom or Die. I just got the mixes done, it's just two songs. Now I'm looking at doing a short run lathe cut 7-inch and I'll have it online soon. My wife, Pam, is an amazing artist and the cover art is one of her paintings. That should be out in the next month or two. The idea is that it'll be the first in the line of a few really short run lathe 7-inches for projects I'm a part of.

**Looking way back, what was the**

**first Madlantis Records release?**

Madlantis was started in 2004 with the release of the first Red Teeth album "Fastest Loser." I was going to call it Zardoz Records at first. I was super into the lost city of Atlantis and the sunken continent of Mu. I guess "Madlantis" combined the two.

I started the label because I didn't want to release our album and have it look wrong. Cover art for bands I liked had extensive liner notes, lyrics and record label logos. I thought of Madlantis as a fake label, like we were going to trick booking guys into thinking we were on a real label. On "Fastest Loser," we printed off covers for jewel CD cases but had to meticulously cut each one to fit the case. We didn't know how to do anything back then. Then, around 2006, I partnered up with Phil Clark and he helped me release the Red Teeth album "Live at the Aztec Room." We've worked together on Madlantis Records releases ever since. Phil does most of the cover layouts and internet related things. He's my Tech Department!

Follow at [facebook.com/MadlantisRecords](https://facebook.com/MadlantisRecords).

# 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, March 10

**Allen Farmers Market** - 1629 E. Kalamazoo! 3-6:30 p.m. 517-999-3911.

**Biomedical Engineering Virtual Seminar Series** - Join us for our weekly series featuring biomedical researchers from institutions across the country via Zoom. 11 a.m. [events.msu.edu](http://events.msu.edu)

**Curator Talk With Julian Chambliss** - Virtual. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. MSU Museum, 409 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing. 517-355-2370. For link: [museum.msu.edu](http://museum.msu.edu)

**Future Present Exhibition** - MSU's Science Gallery Detroit debuts exhibition in E. Broad Art Lab, 565 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing, through April 11th. Info and reservations: [detroit.sciencegallery.com](http://detroit.sciencegallery.com).

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION From Pg. 29

C	U	B	A		S	H	I	S	O		L	T	D	S	
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### SUDOKU SOLUTION From Pg. 29

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

**Jackbox Games: Fibbage 2** - Great for ALL Ages! Looking for silly family fun during LCC's Spring Break? Join us in our Zoom Room and play! 7 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

**Threads of Wisdom: Altar and Circle Casting** - Join us on Zoom for a double Threads of Wisdom discussion of Altar and Circle Casting. 6:30-7:30 p.m. [weaversoftheweb.org](http://weaversoftheweb.org).

## Thursday, March 11

**2021 Michigan Dairy Health Symposium** - 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Molecular Plant Sciences Auditorium, Rm 1200, 1066 Bogue St, East Lansing. [canr.msu.edu](http://canr.msu.edu).

**Community: Birding 101 Webinar Series** - 7-8 p.m. Michigan Audubon, 2310 Science Parkway, Suite 200, Okemos. [michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org).

**Guest Readers for Preschool Storytime** - Friends and neighbors are reading stories virtually! 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

**March Pagans Night Out** - Join us for our monthly Pagans Night Out. 6-9 p.m. Blaze Pizza, 300 N. Clippert St., Lansing. 517-209-4167. Info at [weaversoftheweb.org](http://weaversoftheweb.org).

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

## Friday, March 12

**3rd Annual MLK Holiday Art Contest** - Deadline - Today, March 12, at 1 p.m. is the deadline to submit an entry. East Lansing Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot, East Lansing. [mlkmidmichigan.com](http://mlkmidmichigan.com).

**Martinis and Music** - 9 p.m.-1 a.m. The Exchange, 314 E Michigan Ave, Lansing. 517-319-4500. [lansingexchange.com](http://lansingexchange.com).

**The Outside Track** - Celebrating St. Patrick's Day - From the Archives: Audio from the March 15, 2019 Outside Track performance will be available streaming here. [tenpoundfiddle.org](http://tenpoundfiddle.org).

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

**Virtual Preschool Family Storytime** - 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, Go to [gladl.org](http://gladl.org) for link.

**Virtual Trivia Challenge from KaHoot!** - Download the free app to your device and join us for fun trivia challenges! 4-11:45 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

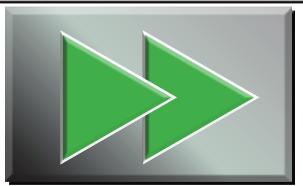
## Saturday, March 13

**Free Online Roast of Big Trouble in Little China** - Play drinking games online with green-eyed comedians as they make jokes. 9 p.m. [frontrowfilmroast.com](http://frontrowfilmroast.com).

**Letter from Birmingham Jail in 4 EPs** - Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s eloquent 1963 discourse about racism comes back to us in the form of a relevant stage-reading. 7-8 p.m. [sycamorecreekchurch.org](http://sycamorecreekchurch.org)

**Maple Syrup Saturday** - This year you're invited to register for a 10-person Maple Syrup Saturday tour. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mt. Hope Ave., Lansing. 517-483-4224. [mynaturecenter.org](http://mynaturecenter.org).

# FAST FORWARD



## UPCOMING EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS COMING TO LANSING

By SKYLER ASHLEY



**Artist Talk with Michigan Artist Mark Chatterley**  
Thursday, March 11, noon  
Register online at: [facebook.com/LansingArtGallery](http://facebook.com/LansingArtGallery)

Join the Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center for the latest installment in the Artist Talks Brown Bag Lunch Series. Take a break to learn more about Michigan artist Mark Chatterley. Chatterley will go in-depth about his unique work, and will also be available for a Q&A session.

### LAUGH Strum and Sing "One-Hit Wonders"

Saturday, March 13, 10:30 a.m.

Register online at: [benhassenger.com](http://benhassenger.com)

Lansing ukulele maestros will gather to perform an entertaining set list of famous one-hit wonders. If you have your own ukulele, you can join in on the fun and participate in the open jam.



### Maple Syrup Saturdays at Fenner Nature Center

Saturday, March 13, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Register online at: [mynaturecenter.org/maplesyrup](http://mynaturecenter.org/maplesyrup)

This year, in place of the Maple Syrup Festival, Fenner Nature Center is inviting you and your friends to register for a 10-person Maple Syrup Saturday tour. Tours will be held March 13 & 27. Led by a Fenner tour guide, you can visit stations such as the Modern Evaporator, the Historic Syrup Gathering Methods and the Hitching Demonstration. These stations will teach you all about this forest-to-table product, including how it is harvested and why it is so closely tied to Michigan heritage. Participants will also have the opportunity to try tapping a tree, carrying sap yokes and other hands-on demonstrations. Tickets are \$15 for Fenner Conservancy Members and \$20 for Non-Members.



FENNER NATURE CENTER'S  
MAPLE SYRUP SATURDAYS

## Monday, March 15

**Jump Into Reading** - Join Ms. Anna on our Facebook or YouTube channel for story time read aloud and activity. 11-11:30 a.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library. [eradl.org](http://eradl.org)

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

## Tuesday, March 16

**Guest Readers for Preschool Storytime** - 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

**Markers of Time** - Mark Chatterley Exhibition. Through March 30th. Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center, 119 N Washington Sq, Ste 101, Lansing. 517-374-6400. [lansingartgallery.org](http://lansingartgallery.org).

**Martinis and Music** - 9 p.m.-1 a.m. The Exchange, 314 E Michigan Ave, Lansing. 517-319-4500. [lansingexchange.com](http://lansingexchange.com).

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

## Sunday, March 14

**East Lansing Downtown Underground Market** - is coming to the lowest level (level P1) of the M.A.C. Avenue Garage, 310 M.A.C. Ave., East Lansing.

**MSU Tower Guard's Shamrock 5k** - 2-4 p.m. Virtual. Info at [msutowerguard.org](http://msutowerguard.org).



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- Snow Crab Leg - 1/2 lb. .... \$12.99
- Crawfish - 1 lb..... \$10.99
- Black Mussels - 1 lb..... \$9.99
- Green Mussels - 1 lb. .... \$11.99

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- Fried Fish Basket (2 filets) ..... \$7.99
- Fried Shrimp Basket (6 shrimp)..... \$8.99
- Fried Oyster Basket (6 oysters) ..... \$8.99

All discounts & promotions not valid with lunch special.



## New seafood joint brings Louisiana flavor to Lansing

By COLE TUNNINGLEY

Just in time for indoor dining's return, King Crab Cajun Seafood opened its doors on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The restaurant serves a wide variety of fried and boiled seafood available in single-serve and family portions.

"Our main dish is the boiled seafood dinner," said owner Eko Dananjaya. "We have many different types of seafood including crawfish, lobsters, crabs. It's Louisiana, Cajun-style food."

About eight months ago, Dananjaya began perfecting his craft, learning to

### Other locations:

- 934 N West Ave, Jackson, MI • 517-768-2222
- 5837 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing • 517-886-9999
- 4190 E Court St, Burton, MI • 810-265-7028
- 720 Brown Rd, Auburn Hills, MI • Coming Soon!
- OHIO
- 2216 Richland Mall, Mansfield, OH  
419-528-3288
- 267 Boardman Canfield Rd, Boardman, OH  
330-629-8003.
- INDIANA
- 4730 Grape Rd, Mishawaka, IN • Coming Soon!

craft the perfect meal. According to his first round of customers, he did a good job. So far, he's received positive reviews on Facebook and from customers who visited the restaurant in

person.

"The customers have only said kind words so far," Dananjaya said. "It's been booming. It's been busy."

Dananjaya is proud of the work he's doing. While he recommends the whole menu, he pointed out that the seafood boil is "amazing." With their order, customers get their choice of seafood, their choice of seasoning, corn and potatoes.

King Crab also serves a selection of the classic Louisiana sandwich, the Po'boy. Customers can pick between seafood as their sandwich meat or fried chicken tenders.

"We want to create a seafood experience that people never forget," Dananjaya said.

Dananjaya hopes that the people of Lansing give him and his restaurant a chance. Being the new restaurant on the block can be difficult. But with enough word-of-mouth buzz, he thinks that King Crab has the chance to flourish.

"I want people to try it out just so I can show them what we do," Dananjaya said. "I want to prove that we can do Cajun seafood better than any other place in the area. That's our main goal."

# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

### Celeriac vichyssoise

By ARI LEVAUX

It's a farmers market cliché that celeriac is good in soup. I hear it when folks inquire as to how to use this fragrant root. But I've never quite known what to do with that guidance. Add celeriac to my Campbell's tomato soup? To a batch of clam chowder? To my ramen? All I've ever done has been to substitute celeriac for celery, its close relative.

If you can get it trimmed and peeled, this knobby subterranean dwelling plant part is a worthy replacement for its watery, stringy above-ground counterpart, with more carbs and less fiber, and an almost tingy flavor on the tongue.

Most celeriac bulbs include a hairy matrix of gnarly roots that radiate from the central orb. Sometimes these snakelike appendages have already been trimmed by the time of purchase, otherwise cut them off yourself.

My friends Steve and Luci grow softball-sized celeriacs that are almost as smooth. They weigh about a pound and a half, and cost about nine bucks each at the local store, I realized to my shock at the cash register after loading up.

I called Luci and tried to get a little sassy about the price, and to her credit she was having zero of that. She knows I know her celeriacs are free of roots, hairs, knobs and dirt. I had to acknowledge they were the finest I'd ever seen.

"The best I've encountered were in the Netherlands," Luci reflected. "I don't know what those Dutch farmers do. Maybe they spit-shine their celeriacs, or grow them in velvet soil."

I asked for some advice on what to do with her valuable roots, beyond randomly adding pieces to soup. She mentioned mashing it with potatoes and grating it into salad. But their favorite way to use it is in none other than soup.

Not some other soup with celeriac, but celeriac soup, owning it like a jazz musician playing that funky note extra hard so we all know they meant to do it.

"Go trim and dice your gold-plated celeriac," Luci began, her sharp voice barely audible beneath the aggressive rapport of her knife on a cutting board, Steve cheerfully comment-bombing in



the background. "I'll have to dispatch you quickly here," she added. I'm short on time." I kept quiet, not knowing who she was talking to.

She proceeded to bark her recipe at me while yelling at Steve. Meanwhile, she continued murdering something with her knife as she finished dispatching me with this delightful vegetarian soup. It's a subtle and satisfying dish, something like vichyssoise, that beloved chilled potato leek soup, but with celeriac instead of potato joining the leeks.

The celeriac version is thinner and less starchy, with a smooth, strong celery flavor and a hint of parsley. On a whim, I made a batch with both potatoes and celeriac along with the leeks, and that was the best of all worlds: all the cream and thickness, with an extra layer of sweet earthiness. That version was my kids' favorite.

At the winter farmers market a few days later, I found the ingredients for the soup. A beautiful bunch of leeks, some glorious potatoes, and four Medusa-like celeriac — four bulbs at \$2 each.

After I trimmed and peeled those shaggy bulbs, I had about the same sized pile of lily-white cubes as from one of Luci's orbs. Given the savings in labor, and working with the sheer majesty of Luci's agricultural talent, hers is worth every penny. But when it isn't available from her I've no problem trimming down some uglier versions. The soup is always beautiful.

#### Celeriac Vichyssoise

A simple way to put celeriac into soup, where it belongs. You'll savor every bite of this fragrant, silky dish. It calls for a submersible blender, aka a blender for people who are too impatient to let the soup cool. If you don't have one, you'll have to be patient.

- 1 pound trimmed celeriac, cubed
- 1 pound leeks, chopped
- 1 pound potatoes, cubed
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 lemon
- 1 cup mayonnaise or heavy cream



Photo by Ari LeVaux

Celeriac vichyssoise made with leeks.

Dill or another fresh herb as a garnish  
Salt and pepper

I came up with the quantities myself, for Luci is not bothered by such details. So prepped as detailed in the ingredients.

"Add about the same amount of celeriac and onions, including whatever greenery of onion you can muster, such as leeks, scallions and green onions, and two quarts of chicken stock, and cook until everything is tender. Season with salt, pepper and lemon juice. Use a submersible tool to puree it, being careful not to spray the hot sludge. Add butter, milk, cream" she concluded. "All that good stuff, and salt and lots of black pepper and maybe some red pepper flakes."

*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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- 3. Bangkok House**  
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- 4. Niang Myanmar Family Restaurant**  
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[niang-myanmar-family-restaurant.business.site](http://niang-myanmar-family-restaurant.business.site)
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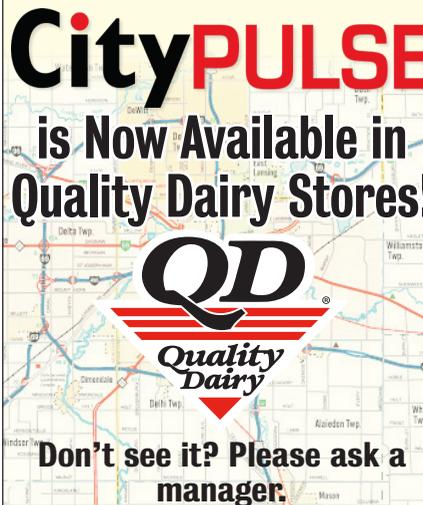
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