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December 8 - 14, 2021

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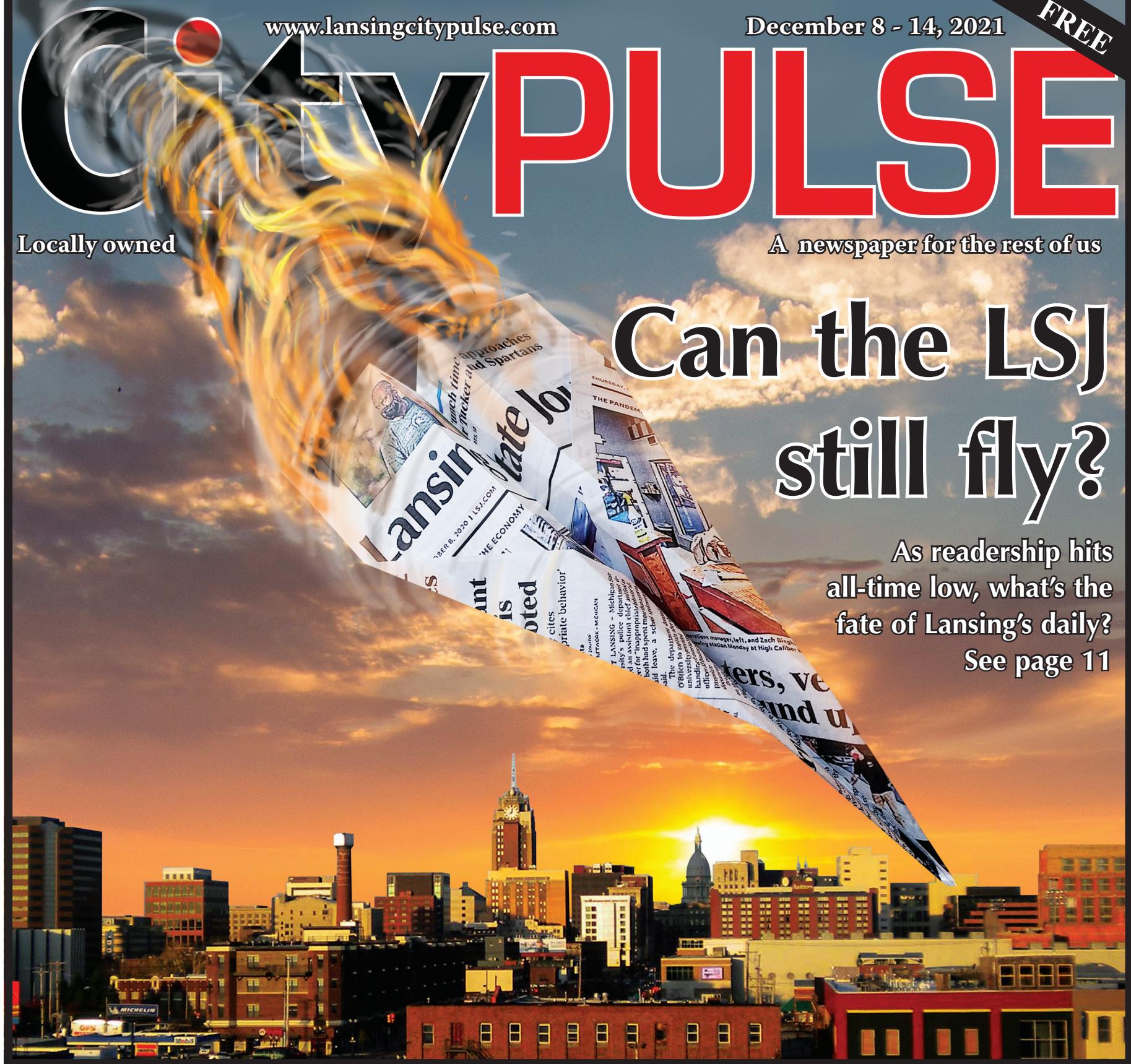
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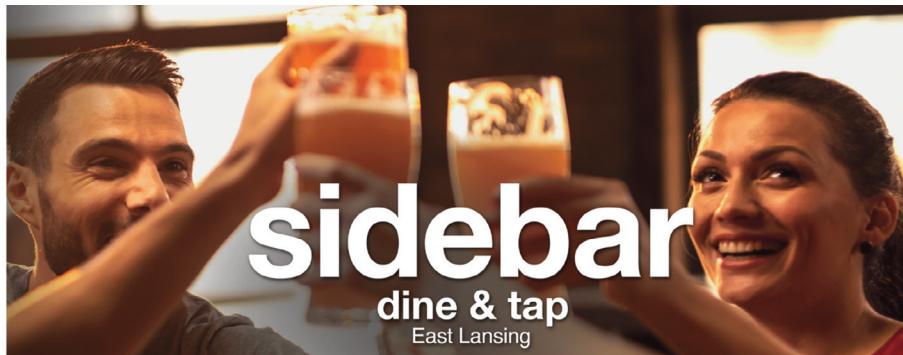
A newspaper for the rest of us

Can the LSJ still fly?

As readership hits
all-time low, what's the
fate of Lansing's daily?
See page 11



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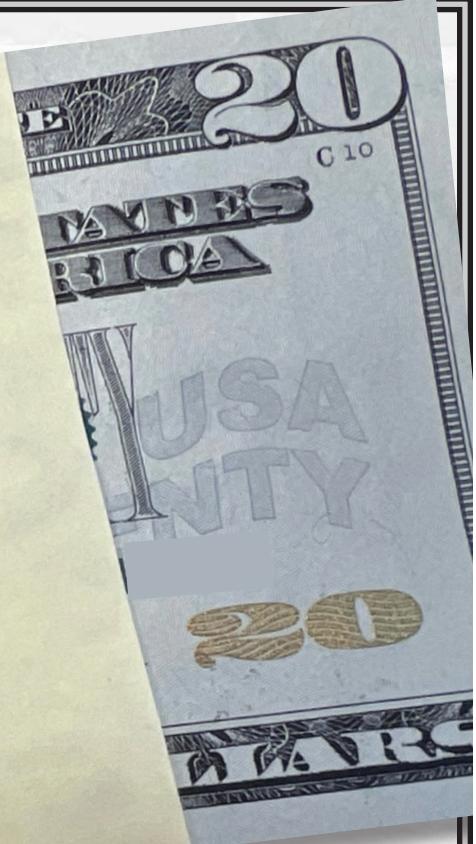
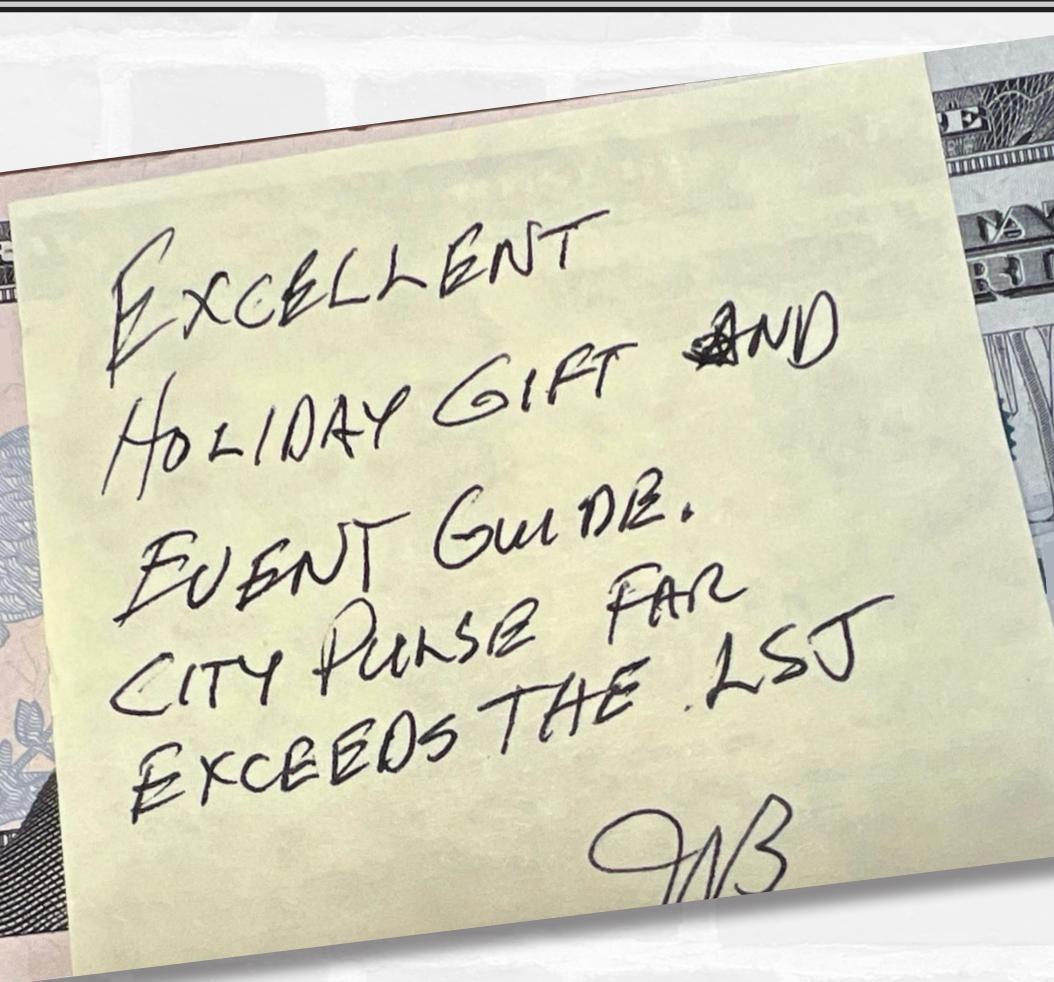


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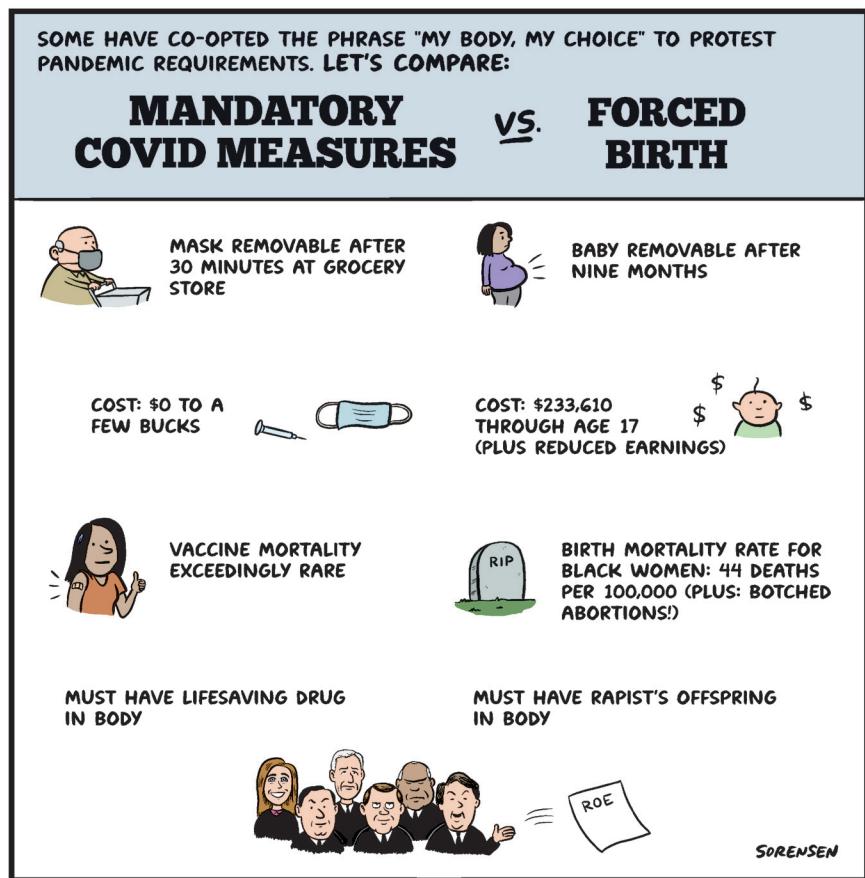


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Michigan, Mozart and Madrid



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Flash in the Pan: Sampling olive oil



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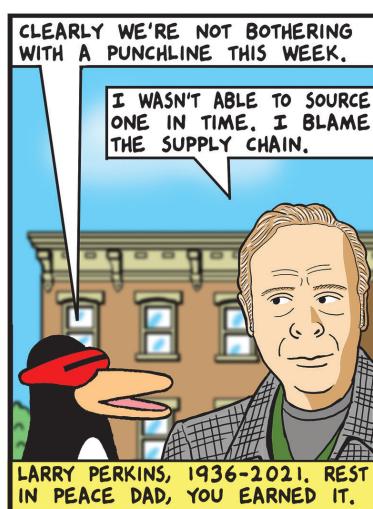
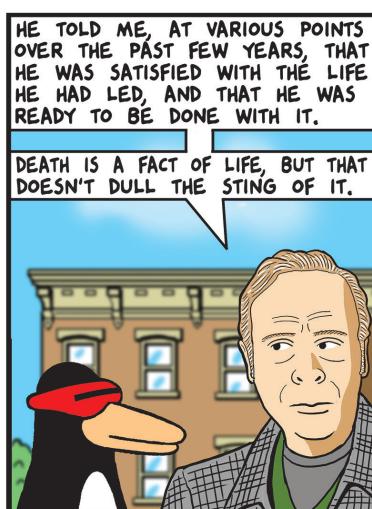
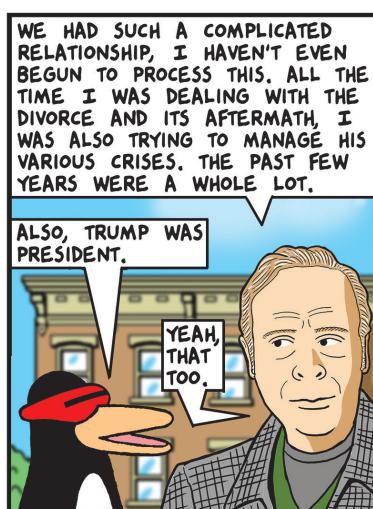
The cheese is coming



**Cover
Art**

Illustration by Nevin Speerbrecker

THIS MODERN WORLD



TOM TOMORROW ©2021...www.thismodernworld.com...www.thismodernworld.com

PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

LEAP unwittingly releases \$15K COVID-19 grant to fraudster

Trezise: At least 84 fraudulent grant applications stopped since March

At the end of August, Erika Lowe was caught by surprise when a customer congratulated her on receiving a \$15,000 grant from Ingham County's share of federal COVID-19 relief dollars.

"At first I thought he was pulling my leg," she said in an interview from a chair in her East Side Barbershop space on Michigan Avenue. "Until he pulled it up on the web and showed me."

There it was on the Lansing Economic Area Partnership website — a \$15,000 grant awarded to her business approximately two weeks before she saw the press release. She had not seen the cash, let alone applied for that particular form of COVID-19 relief cash. Something was wrong.

"I was baffled," Lowe said, noting that she called LEAP to learn that the money had been transferred to a man's account — even more baffling because it's a women-owned barbershop.

In an interview last week, LEAP CEO Bob Trezise acknowledged that the East Side Barbershop, as well as Lowe, had been victims of identity theft, and that LEAP had been the victim of fraud.

LEAP was tasked this year by the Ingham County Board of Commissioners to oversee \$11 million in COVID-19 relief funding that was released under the federal American Rescue Plan passed in March. The money was appropriated by the county to LEAP to fund small businesses — particularly those owned by women and minorities — who had been hammered by over 18 months of uncertainty in the market and health restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEAP officials immediately started the process to recall the \$15,000 bank transfer, but it wasn't until late November that the agency learned the banks had been unsuccessful in retrieving the cash. The fraudster, for the time being, had gotten away with the crime, Trezise explained.

With the banks unable to refund the fraudulently released cash, Trezise said

that LEAP and county commissioners have a key decision to make: Do they pursue criminal prosecution of the fraudsters who took the check or do they write off the cash as the cost of doing business?

County commissioners told City Pulse on Friday that they were unaware of the fraud. Chairman Bryan Crenshaw said he would support a criminal investigation and prosecution, but that decision would be up to the entire commission, acting on advice from legal counsel.

"I wish we had been informed sooner," Commissioner Ryan Sebolt told City Pulse last week.

Trezise said commissioners were informed of the incident in a monthly report, but it did not include the name of the business and other details associated with the fraudulent payment.

But despite one fraudster illegally gaining access to funds, Trezise said his organization was able to weed out many other fraudulent applications, saving taxpayers and businesses millions of dollars. Trezise said LEAP caught 84 fraudulent applications in the 1,188 that were processed. Of the \$8.1 million doled out in 632 grants, this was the only reported fraud, he said.

"I am mad about it," Trezise added. "I want to be perfect."

Trezise said the would-be frauds that they detected — as well as this successful fraud — were sophisticated operations that involved identity theft, including social security numbers and business tax identifications. In some instances, the fraudsters also created fake digital footprints that, in turn, created an illusion of them representing legitimate businesses in Greater Lansing.

When LEAP was called on to unleash millions of local, state and federal cash in a relatively short timeline, it created an open invitation of sorts to fraudsters and people with ill intentions, Trezise said. Lowe also observed: "Holy crap. There's a lot of fraud nowadays." And she's right.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, billions of dollars in federal, state and local assistance have been released to help businesses, buoy unemployment programs and give taxpayers tax-free money to compensate for pandemic-re-



Todd Heywood/City Pulse

Erika Lowe poses outside her business, East Side Barbershop, which had its identity stolen — leading to a grant of \$15,000 in county cash being passed on by LEAP to a fraudster.

lated business shutdowns and interruptions. But along with the flow of new funding programs, there has also been a wave of fraudulent activity.

By March, federal authorities had reportedly charged at least 474 defendants nationwide for attempting to gain fraudulent access to \$569 million in funding through the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loans and unauthorized unemployment checks. Trezise said he appreciates that Lowe brought the fraud to LEAP's attention and is prepared — as long as the county gives the go-ahead — to work with law enforcement to catch the perpetrator.

Lowe has since received a \$5,000 grant for her sole proprietorship that she actually applied for. The mon-

ey arrived in a check, a precautionary move instituted by LEAP after the discovery of the fraud in which the agency has stopped all bank transfers, slowing the delivery of cash to grant winners by days, in order to prevent the type of fraud they were already fighting to undo.

Lowe still has questions about how exactly the fraudster was able to get away with the grant, but she is mostly concerned about the impact that the loss of the money might have on other businesses that are struggling to keep their doors open and their lights on during the latest surge in the pandemic.

"This is money that could have been given to a different small business in Lansing," she added.

— TODD HEYWOOD

**CITY OF LANSING
SUMMARY OF
ADOPTED ORDINANCE # 1295**

An Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, to TO repeal and replace the existing Zoning Ordinance and Map, being Part 12, Title 6 of the Lansing Codified Ordinances in its entirety, except for Chapter 1300 – Marihuana Operations, with a Form Based Code and Zoning Map.

Effective date: December 29, 2021

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

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

CP#21-260

**CITY OF LANSING
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The Lansing City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, December 13, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Tony Benavides Council Chambers, 10th Floor, Lansing City Hall, 124 W. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, Michigan to consider an Ordinance of the City of Lansing, Michigan, Re-Adopting the Codified Ordinances of the City of Lansing.

For more information, please call Lansing City Council at 517-483-4177. If you are interested in this matter, please attend the public hearing or send a representative. Written comments will be accepted between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on City business days if received before 5 p.m., on the day of the Public Hearing at the City Clerk's Office, Ninth Floor, City Hall, 124 West Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48933 or email city.clerk@lansingmi.gov.

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

CP#21-261

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
INGHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S ESTATE
CASE NO 21-001275-DE-P33**

Estate of Trei William Deubel.
Date of birth: 09/30/1980.

TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:

The decedent, Trei William Deubel died June 21, 2021. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Sandra Lee Scott, 5700 Shaw Unit 5, Haslett, MI 48840, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

10/28/21
 Jeffrey A. Hank P71152
 PO Box 1358
 East Lansing, MI 48823
 855-426-5529

Sandra Lee Scott
 5700 Shaw Unit 5
 Haslett, MI 48840
 517-449-6968

CP#21-265

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
INGHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S ESTATE
CASE NO 21-1138-DE**

Estate of Delores E. Gray,
deceased. Date of birth:
04/19/1929.

TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:

The decedent, Delores E. Gray, died 05/26/2021. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Brian J. Gray, personal representative or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

10/23/21
 Joseph E. Pergande P31776
 708 Center Avenue, Suite 2
 Bay City, MI 48708
 989-894-9001

Brian J. Gray
 105 W. Seiders Road
 Kawkawlin, MI 48631
 989-662-7769

CP#21-264

Public Notice

The Ingham County Land Bank is accepting Qualifications for **Real Estate Professional Services** to list and sell residential properties. The Request for Qualification Packet is available December 8, 2021 at the Ingham County Land Bank, 3024 Turner Street, Lansing, Michigan, 48906, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday or at www.inghamlandbank.org. Responses are due at the Land Bank offices by 10am on December 22, 2021. The Ingham County Land Bank is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply. RFQ#: REAL ESTATE 12-2021

CP#21-262

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF LANSING
3209 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48917**

Regular meetings of the Charter Township of Lansing for fiscal year 2022 will be held at 3209 W. Michigan Avenue on the following dates and at the times specified:

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Meetings held at 7:00 p.m.

1/4	4/12	8/3 (Wed)	11/22
1/18	4/26	8/16	12/6
2/1	5/10	8/30	
2/15	5/24	9/13	
3/1	6/7	9/27	
3/15	6/21	10/11	
3/29	7/5	10/25	
	7/19	11/9 (Wed)	

PLANNING COMMISSION (when case is pending) Meetings held at 7:00 p.m.

1/19	4/20	7/20	10/19
2/16	5/18	8/17	11/16
3/16	6/15	9/21	12/14

BOARD OF APPEALS (when case is pending) Meetings held at 7:00 p.m.

1/24	4/25	7/25	10/24
2/28	5/23	8/22	11/28
3/28	6/27	9/26	12/12

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY GOVERNING BOARD (DDA)

Meetings held at 9:00 a.m. Location to be determined.

1/6	4/7	7/7	10/6
2/3	5/5	8/4	11/3
3/3	6/2	9/8	12/1

BUILDING AUTHORITY: 2nd Wednesday when business is pending.

Minutes of the above meeting will be available in the Office of the Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services planning to attend any Township meeting should notify the Township Clerk's Office in advance of the meeting that will be attended.

Maggie Sanders, Clerk
 Charter Township of Lansing

CP#21-259

At Coontz Law, we believe the justice system can do better. We believe in holding the Government accountable. We believe in empathetic representation of the accused. We believe Black Lives Matter. We believe we can—and will—change the world, starting right here in our backyard.

We were voted Top of the Town for a reason. It's because we have a vision for a better and more just society. And it starts with the work we're doing right now.



1905 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing, MI 48912
517.999.6704
lansingcitypulse.com
citypulse@lansingcitypulse.com

Dear readers:

For far too many in our own community, it is a daily battle that shakes confidence and forces challenging decisions: keep the heat on or keep food on the table?

Choosing to help is easy.

You can make a real difference for people facing hunger in our community by donating to the Greater Lansing Food Bank. For the last 40 years, it has helped neighbors in need access nutritious food through nationwide economic crises and unexpected life events. Last year, GLFB was able to provide more than 8 million meals to children, seniors, families and individuals in our community as we faced one of the greatest challenges to our generation.

This year, the need is still great. GLFB relies on generous donations from people you like you and me to help support their essential work. Just \$60 can feed a family of four for two weeks.

This year, the need is still great. I hope you'll use the donation envelope being provided by City Pulse inside today's paper to give whatever you can. You can also donate online at GLFoodBank.org/donate.

Please donate today.

Sincerely,

Berl Schwartz
Editor & publisher
City Pulse

Correction
Because of reporting errors, the story on the announcement that the Lansing Art Gallery will move to the Knapp's Centre wrongly stated the name of the owner, which is the George F. Edye Family, LLC. Also, Centre was misspelled several times.

The CP Edit
Will return next week

Natl. popular vote, lending reform most likely ballot issues in 2022

For anyone serious about putting a ballot proposal in front of Michigan voters in 2022, the clock is ticking.

The June 1 deadline for turning in 340,047 valid signatures to propose a change to state law isn't that far away if you're trying to get lots of people to sign a petition.

Opinion

Gathering those needed signatures — with a substantial cushion — takes more than a few months to pull off, even for an oiled political operation. So, if the Bureau of Elections hasn't heard of a proposal by now, it is probably a fair bet it won't make the 2022 ballot unless ... I'll get to that in a minute.

For now, here's the update on what's out there and what you may be voting on in November.

— **Unlock Michigan 2** puts a 28-day cap on state and county public health orders unless the timeframe is extended by the Legislature or county commission. This one is run by the same crew that did Unlock Michigan 1, which repealed the 1945 Riot Act, the law the governor used to continue issuing business shutdowns in 2020.

The organizers' goal is to put the question in front of the Republican-led Legislature, which can vote it into law without the governor's signatures.

— **Secure MI Vote** is a Republican wish list of election reforms, including getting rid of sworn affidavits for those without photo IDs at the polls and extra security checks for absentee voters.

Like Unlock 2, Democratic-aligned interest groups are trying to stop this end-run around the governor. They're still loading up agitators in shopping malls and other high traffic areas.

But high-dollar donors are also allowing Dem-aligned groups to hire away petition circulators firms so Secure MI Vote can't hire them. We'll see if this works.

— **Let MI Kids Learn** is a Betsy DeVos-driven effort that allows deep-pocketed philanthropists to donate gobs of money for scholarships that poor public school kids can use to get into a private school.

This proposal needs to be two

initiatives because it changes two separate sections of the law, but it's being run through the same political machine that is doing Unlock 2 and Secure MI Vote. Goal: A legislative yes vote.

— **Michigan United** is a grassroots operation designed to give some prisoners the chance to be let out early.

The Legislature won't support this one, so if the signatures are collected, it's going to the ballot.

— **Yes On National Popular Vote** would put Michigan in a multi-state compact that, when there's enough states, would have each state's Electoral College vote go toward the winner of the national popular vote.

If Michigan supports the Republican for president, it's (now) 15 electoral college votes would go to the Democrat if he or she wins the national popular vote. Even though it's supported by former GOP Chairman Saul Anuzis, the conservative grassroots and the GOP-legislature hate the idea. If the signatures are collected, it's going to the ballot.

— **Michigan for Fair Lending** basically eliminates payday lending by setting the interest rate for short-term loans so low businesses couldn't afford to stay open.

The Legislature won't support this one either, so this, too, would head to the ballot.

Other possibilities include additional voter reforms by the same group that put Proposal 3 on the ballot in 2018, although that's still in the discussion phase.

Pro-gun control advocates are talking about safe firearm storage or red flag laws in reaction to the Oxford High School shooting last week. This issue is so politically combustible, it's hard to imagine Republicans supporting it.

Also, what will the Michigan Supreme Court do with abortion? A decision throwing abortion policy into the state's hands could come too late for Planned Parenthood to throw something together, but they may try.

Michigan's strict 1931 anti-abortion law is perfect, according to GOP lawmakers, so if signatures are gathered, this one is going to the ballot, too.

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



POLITICS
KYLE MELINN



A record number of people recognized the iconic roofline at 3308 S. Cedar St. (below) in the last Eye for Design column; however, Ellyn Herberth was the first.

The zigzag roofline of the plaza whose star attraction is the Naing Myanmar family restaurant is known as a folded plate design. The origins of this design date to 1920s Europe; it became popular in America after WWII.

Special note: the Historical Society of Greater Lansing is hosting a program about the architectural sculptor Corrado Parducci at 7 p.m. Thursday (Dec. 9) at the Robin Theatre in REO Town. Parducci was involved in the creation of the September Eye for Design among others in the area.

Today's Eye for Design can be found in Old Town. If you know where, email carrisampson@micourthistory.org and you could win a mug!

— CARRIE SAMPSON



"Eye for Design" is our look at some of the nicer properties in Lansing. It rotates each with Eye candy of the Week and Eyesore of the Week.

REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS

By KYLE KAMINSKI



New owners at The Peanut Shop

Peanut Shop owner Tammy Melser, whose family has owned the downtown Lansing nuttory since 1960, announced her retirement on Facebook after more than 45 years of working there. She'll stay on staff through December, then make room for the new owners Adam Seyburn and Aaron



Larwick, of Okemos, who said they plan to keep the business running in the same way. The new owners also plan to eventually launch a website for The Peanut Shop for online orders.

Lansing delays one-way street changes

Plans to convert several one-way streets in downtown Lansing to allow for two-way traffic have been pushed into next spring following operational delays tied to utility relocations, late equipment deliveries, staffing shortages and wintry weather on the horizon. The city hasn't released a new schedule, but officials said some work will have to wait until March.

Frandor testing site overwhelms Sparrow

Sparrow Health System's drive-thru COVID-19 testing site in the Frandor Shopping Center tallied over 500 patients last Tuesday amid a fourth wave of coronavirus cases and hospitalizations — nearly double its usual capacity of 300 patients per day, the Lansing State Journal reports. Its hospital has also reached maximum capacity multiple times in recent weeks.



Clinton County businesses grab grant cash

The Board of Commissioners and the Lansing Economic Area Partnership awarded \$1.64 million in COVID-19 relief grants to 107 small businesses in Clinton County. About 58% of those who applied received grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Notably, about half of the eligible applications received (and the grants awarded) involved local businesses owned by women.

Strike two for Betz recall efforts

Plans to circulate a recall petition against Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz were shot down — for a second time — by the Ingham County Election Commission following concerns about a "lack of clarity" in the proposed recall language. Liz Abdoun, the attorney who filed the petition, said she plans to appeal the decision to a judge. Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more.

County blocks media from bid interviews

Deputy Ingham County Controller Teri Morton rescinded an invitation to City Pulse (and other media outlets) to attend interviews with four nonprofit organizations who applied for more than \$250,000 in taxpayer cash to operate the Advance

Peace gun intervention program in Lansing. Despite initially allowing the media to attend the interviews last week, Morton said the county decided to block them from public view because of the "very sensitive subjects dealt with by organizations dealing with gun violence prevention" and that "media presence could possibly endanger the proposers and future fellows." Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more coverage.

Sparrow nurses settle three-year contract

A new three-year contract between Sparrow Health System and its 2,200-member Professional Employee Council was reached, averting the possibility of a strike following months of tense contract negotiations that led to hundreds of nurses picketing outside the hospital last month. The agreement reportedly includes a 20% wage increase for average bedside nurses over the next three years, as well as no increases in staff healthcare premiums or reduction in sick days.

Montgomery Drain project behind schedule

Cost increases and supply chain woes have delayed progress on the multimillion-dollar effort to keep contaminated stormwater out of the Red Cedar River, reports the Lansing State Journal. After more than 10 years of planning and 18 months of construction, county officials are now reportedly struggling to find ways to keep the project afloat with its existing \$30 million budget.

Schor finishes gutting retiree healthcare

A resolution introduced to the Lansing City Council by Mayor Andy Schor serves as the final rung of his longstanding plan to eliminate retiree health care benefits for city staff hired after Jan. 1, 2016. The latest plan involves cutting health care for about a dozen of the city's top department directors — who are reportedly the only remaining staff still able to collect benefits. Schor told FOX 47 News that it was the "final step" in his plan to gut health care and save cash.

Billboard campaign launches for local cops

First-term Republican Clinton County Prosecutor Tony Spagnuolo announced a new billboard campaign designed to support local cops — including two "highly visible billboards" that picture Spagnuolo and include the tagline "Entering Clinton County: Where we Back the Blue and Take Crime Seriously." Spagnuolo said he raised \$6,000 in private funds to launch the campaign.



Copcat threats follow Oxford shooting

Several area high schools were among dozens statewide to report threats following the shooting at Oxford High School that left four students dead. A complaint about an online threat to "shoot up" Holt Jr. High School was reported to authorities on Thursday evening — later leading to a 13-year-old boy eventually being taken into police custody. Webberville Community Schools closed on Friday while the district investigated "concerning" conversations between students that ultimately didn't pose any imminent or specific threats to the district. An Owosso Public Schools student was arrested following threats that were allegedly made toward the district. And schools in Vermontville were also closed on Monday following rumors of threats of gun violence.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
Decedent's Trust Estate
STATE OF MICHIGAN
COUNTY OF INGHAM
Estate of: Charles R. Ellingson,
Decedent. Date of Birth:
January 13, 1947. Name of
Trust: Charles R. Ellingson
Revocable Living Trust.
TO ALL CREDITORS:*
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Charles R.
Ellingson, died November 9,
2021. Creditors of the decedent
are notified that all claims
against the Trust will be for-
ever barred unless presented
to Allan C. Fiscus, named
Successor Trustee, or Attorney
Bradley A. Vauter (P35762)
within 4 months after the date
of publication of this notice.
Allan C. Fiscus
1663 Georgetown Blvd.
Lansing, MI 48911
(517) 410-2823,
Successor Trustee

Bradley Vauter & Associates, P.C.
11963 E. Andre Drive, Ste. D
Grand Ledge, MI 48837
(517) 853-8015
CP#21-266

**Have something to say about
a local issue or an item that
appeared in our pages?**

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

1.) Write a letter to the editor.

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

2.) Write a guest column.

Contact Berl Schwartz for
more information: publisher@
lansingcitypulse.com or (517) 999-
5061. (Please include your name,
address and telephone number
so we can reach you. Keep letters
to 250 words or fewer. City Pulse
reserves the right to edit letters
and columns.)



Better Holideals

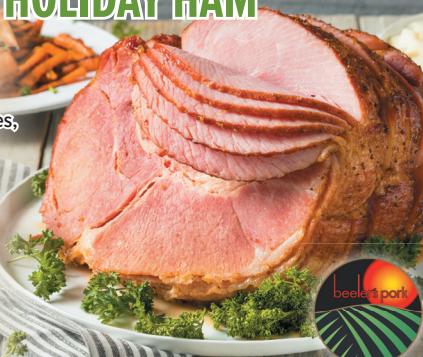
BetterHealth
MARKET & CAFÉ

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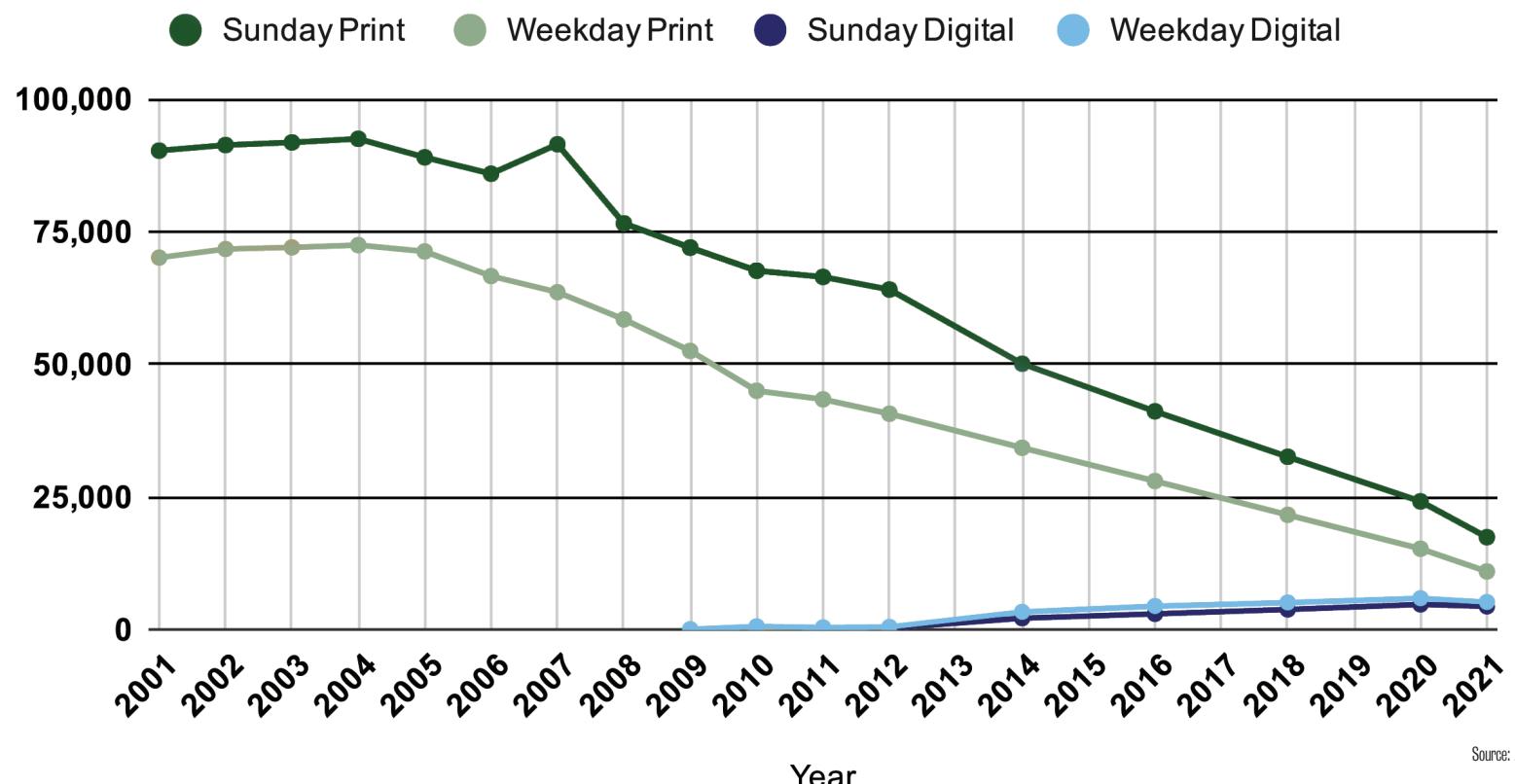
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Lansing State Journal Circulation



Source: Alliance for Audited Media

Circulation plummets to all-time low at Lansing State Journal

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Weekday copies of the Lansing State Journal as thick as 80 pages weren't uncommon in 2001.

Twenty years ago, Lansing's only daily newspaper was often filled with more than a dozen local stories from a long roster of feature writers, columnists and reporters. One writer covered only City Hall; several others kept tabs on neighboring communities like Mason, Grand Ledge and Meridian Township. Three were stationed at the Capitol. Circulation was over 70,000 weekdays and Saturday and around 90,000 Sundays — a large enough print run to sell two copies to nearly every household in the city of Lansing.

Today, the Lansing State Journal is much smaller in virtually every way, from the size of the page to the size of the staff — all driven or traceable to its plummeting circulation numbers. Recent reports showed the State Journal's print circulation has declined almost annually for the last two decades, dropping to an all-time readership low in September to an average of about 17,500 newspapers published on Sundays and only about 11,000 copies printed on weekdays — marking an 84% drop since 2001 and the first time that the State Journal's Sunday press run has ever dipped below 20,000 copies, according to the latest print circulation reports from the Alliance for Audited Media, an independent nonprofit widely used by mainstream newspapers.

Last Friday's paper was only 20 pages and featured just two local news stories from two local

news reporters on its front page. The rest of the news and feature content — aside from a couple of sports stories — was written from Detroit, Washington and elsewhere.

Full daily pages that were once reserved for local opinions, arts and culture, public schools and other neighboring communities have disappeared altogether. There was no listing of upcoming events. Last Friday's print edition only had two original photos. As of this week, only nine people still carried the title of news "reporter" at the State Journal, a substantial staffing shift from the dozens of journalists who once worked in its downtown newsroom — housed in the Journal's own building — about two decades ago. Now the Journal staff shares a floor in the Knapp's Centre, all the space necessary, given that the paper is put together at a Gannett design hub in another state. Advertising customers call out of state; some give up after weeks of no returned calls and seek other media to place their business.

And with fewer local stories from fewer local reporters being printed in smaller newspapers on smaller pages for a smaller audience, some local journalism experts (and former State Journal staffers) are skeptical over whether the company can keep churning out its newspapers at the same pace for much longer and voicing

concern about the future of local news — both in Lansing and beyond.

"We've seen a continued erosion of staff and resources for a lot of newspapers, including at the State Journal," explained Mickey Hirten, the newspaper's executive editor from 2001 to 2013. "This isn't commentary on the quality of the people still there. The staff is committed. But in my mind, the company — Gannett — has always been

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Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Dwindling circulation has kept some downtown Lansing LSJ distribution boxes empty for years.

LSJ

from page 11

more interested in expense management and cutting costs than actually improving the quality of its product and the reader experience. That has an impact, evidenced by the way we've seen the newspaper change over the years."

Hirten should know. A career-long Gannett journalist, the company let him go to save money, after which he joined City Pulse as associate publisher until he retired to Florida a few years ago.

There's a strong connection often noted between a well-informed community and the availability of reliable local news. And the pages of the State Journal — at least for some time — have served as one of Lansing's leading sources for staying abreast of local happenings.

But like at most daily newspapers across the country, the era of widespread circulation of daily print news from the State Journal appears to be on track for continued declines, Hirten said.

"This used to be a dominant institution, but one shortsighted decision after another has made this a significantly different news organization than it used to be," Hirten told City Pulse. "In 1999, we had almost 400 people working across the company. It's not the same. It can't be."

Print circulation reports mark a continued trend of fewer printed copies of the State Journal — both for home delivery and single-copy sales — but they don't provide a complete picture of its website traffic and advertising revenues. The details that are available in the audited circulation reports, however, suggests online readership hasn't filled gaps from fewer printed newspapers.

For every digital edition reader gained since 2009, the State Journal tracked a loss of eight and 10 print newspaper readers, depending on the day of the week — unlikely enough to keep pace with the wide newspaper readership tracked during the heyday of its print journalism.

Current executive editor Stephanie Angel declined an interview for this story. Corporate officials also declined to discuss the declining print circulation. Instead, they sent only a brief statement:



Angel

"Gannett is deeply committed to local journalism and to our employees. Despite the headwinds our entire industry faces, we are working steadfastly to ensure the future of local journalism and continue to keep our communities informed, including Greater Lansing," they wrote in an email.

But those headwinds can be fierce. Researchers estimate that 2,200 printed newspapers closed their doors in the last 15 years while advertising revenues — the lifeblood of traditional print journalism — have also declined by billions of dollars. According to the Pew Research Center, that has also led to about half as many jobs for local journalists between 2008 and 2018 and a nationwide halving of average print circulation for most daily newspapers across the country. Research paints the State Journal as one of about 1,200 daily newspapers still alive in the U.S. today. But compared to national averages that showcase about a 50% reduction in daily print circulation, reports for the State Journal show its circulation was hit far harder than other papers.

And Hirten isn't the only media expert to notice that ongoing local news tailspin in Lansing.

"The State Journal had a pretty substantive staff and was regularly covering local governments in the area. It seemed to have a pretty vibrant public affairs coverage plan. I used to feel like it had the resources to cover the area, and the evidence I'm seeing now is that they don't really have the resources they need to cover the area particularly well," said Perry Parks, an associate journalism professor at Michigan State University. "I think it

all started with that vicious cycle in the '90s with the advent of the internet and digital media and has been accelerating ever since."

Founded as "The Lansing Republican" in 1855 before a merger made it "The State Journal" in 1911, Lansing residents have long turned to its only surviving daily paper for previews of events and new businesses; watchdog coverage of crime, politics and municipal government; feature stories, photos and investigative reports showcasing the good (and the bad) from across the community; touching obituaries; detailed results of high school and college athletics; an editorial page — all areas that have seen some noticeable declines, even before Hirten parted ways with the company in 2013.

Gannett, then still en route to becoming the largest media company in the U.S., bought the newspaper in 1971, and it became the Lansing State Journal in 1980. Under Hirten's watch and corporate direction, more than 70 of its employees were reportedly laid off in 2008 and 2009 amid efforts to cut costs amid declining print revenues and rising interest in web-based content.

Before relied much on its website, Hirten said the State Journal tracked a "massive" profit margin of about 39%. And with that much money coming in during the early aughts, he said the company missed several opportunities to make more investments in improving the "reader experience."

Parks said many daily newspapers responded to shifting audience demands by clamping down on company costs — often through layoffs and forcing fewer journalists to tackle larger beats. Fewer resources for news gathering, in turn, have only created less news coverage, he said.

A younger generation of readers has grown accustomed to free access to its daily news.

"As newspapers started covering less and being less visible in places, then people also saw less value in the newspaper. All this content started going up for free online, and most people making simple economic decisions are going to opt for free content as opposed to content that they have to pay for," Perry explained. "It's a vicious cycle, and the trend seems rather apparent: I don't see anything structurally, or in terms of new innovation, that would reverse a trend away from continued



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

The Lansing State Journal building, at the corner of Grand and Lenawee streets, once housed about 400 employees. Gannett put it up for sale in 2016 and moved its staff — mostly the news staff after Gannett farmed out much else — to a floor of the Knapp's Centre downtown.

(Below) From a building to part of a floor: The LSJ signed a 10-year lease to move its offices to the third floor of the Knapp's Centre.



decline of daily print newspaper circulation. It's really a sad thing to see happen."

Hirten specifically recounted a meeting with Gannett officials in the late 2000s in which he said they quickly dismissed his concerns about pushing print deadlines earlier in the afternoon, which then threatened to make the following morning's papers less timely with less relevant stories. Back then, he said he could stop the presses to run a last-minute story at 11 p.m.

Nowadays, news stories for the next day must typically be filed by about 4:30 p.m. or they won't usually make the deadline for the morning, former State Journal staffers explained to City Pulse.

"I was completely shut down on that conversation," Hirten said. "They said: 'Keep that to yourself. That's not the issue.' But it was the issue, and it was certainly an issue for the editor. I don't know what the future holds now, but I'm not particularly optimistic. The larger problem is what those changes have done to really impact the old level of in-depth local news coverage."

In 2014 and 2015, the State Journal closed its Delta Township printing plant (which reportedly eliminated another 27 full-time and 76 part-time jobs) and moved out of its longtime office on Lenawee Street in favor of a smaller and cheaper space on the third floor of the Knapp's Centre, which company officials then billed as a move to help transition to a "digital-first" organization. Meanwhile, Gannett split itself into two companies in 2015 so that the former newspaper division

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LSJ

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was forced to sink or swim separate from the far more lucrative broadcast properties.

Four years later, Gatehouse Media — widely regarded as even more bottom-line oriented than Gannett — acquired Gannett, keeping the name, to create the largest single newspaper publishing company in the U.S., which reportedly owns about one in six newspapers nationwide. To make the merger work, Gannett also took on a \$1.8 billion private equity loan.

It's unclear whether layoffs there continued past 2015, but some State Journal employees were also reportedly required to take a week off without pay every month last year to help cut costs.

John K. Hartman, professor emeritus and member of the Journalism Hall of Fame at Central Michigan University, has written two books, "The USA Today Way," and "The USA Today Way 2 The Future" about Gannett's flagship national publication. Hartman, who teaches journalism at Tiffin University, said he has tracked similar declines at Gannett's daily paper in Columbus, Ohio.

He also offered a bleak outlook on the journalism industry in general, noting that younger generations — particularly those under age 50 — have simply lost interest in current events.

And he thinks Gannett's continued fight to stay relevant may be one that is battered out online.

"It's a sad story. Gannett is trying to kill the daily newspaper readership habit," Hartman said. "They've moved up deadlines, making print products smaller and less and less relevant. After a while, readers will see there isn't much content. The hope is to draw them online. But as these papers get smaller with less content, they have less advertising money. It's a downward spiral. They either find a way to give readers a reason to go to their website or they get lost in the online shuffle, probably dry up on advertising revenue completely and just go out of business."

He added: "I don't like saying this as someone who devoted much of his professional life to training newspaper reporters, but I don't have much hope. As newspapers lose staff with a smaller circulation, they carry less impact. They get so small and so inconsequential that, ultimately, they're just not a political force anymore. That creates a less informed populace."

Researchers have found that about half of the counties in the United States are left with a local newspaper of any kind — and only a third of them have a newspaper that still prints every day. More than 200 counties have been left with no newspaper whatsoever, creating poorly informed pockets of the country that media experts have labeled "news deserts."



Hartman

"This used to be a dominant institution, but one short-sighted decision after another has made this a significantly different news organization than it used to be. In 1999, we had almost 400 people working across the company. It's not the same. It can't be."

Mickey Hirten
Former executive editor
Lansing State Journal



Hirten

The Columbia Journalism Review defines those regions as a community "with limited access to the sort of credible and comprehensive news and information that feeds democracy at the grassroots level." The State Journal's continued existence as a daily newspaper is the only thing keeping Ingham County from being flagged as a news desert in its online map. Besides City Pulse, Ingham County has several weeklies, but most are owned and operated by Gannett and feature truncated versions of stories that first appeared in the daily Journal.

While Perry has noticed a decreased depth in news at the State Journal, he said other news organizations have stepped up to carry the load locally — allowing the region to dodge the risk of a total news drought, regardless of the newspaper's fate.

"I would be reluctant to say that Greater Lansing is a news desert or right on the precipice of it. You have existing news organizations here that are capable of responding to major news that also has the infrastructure to cover elections. I don't think we're seeing too great of a job covering elections, but we still see some coverage," he said. "This is also a relatively successful television market. I'm not satisfied with the local news coverage that we have here, but there are many places where it's a lot worse. You may need to go look for it, but local news is still here."

Last April, Gannett suspended quarterly dividends for its stockholders and announced it had no intention to ever reinstate them while its outstanding loan debt hovered around \$1.1 billion — even after portions of its original 11.5% interest rate had been recently refinanced.

Finance reports noted that the company sold off nearly \$200 million in assets — all of which was used to repay its outstanding debt. Among its stated priorities for 2021: Accelerate digital growth, "optimize" print operations and prioritize investments to support a digital-first vision.

"As a publisher of locally based print and online media, we face a number of challenges, including risks that the growing shift within the publishing industry from traditional print media to digital may compromise our ability to generate sufficient advertising revenues," the report noted. "Our advertising and marketing services revenues and circulation revenues may further decline if we are unable to compete effectively with other companies in the local media industry."

Hirten and Hartman said they think it may be "too late" for the State Journal (and others like it) to regain lost momentum from dwindling print circulation rates tracked over the last 20 years. Perry isn't making any predictions, but he offered a similarly grim outlook for daily print products.

"A lot of today's journalism students don't define journalism the way it has been defined over the last few decades. They're coming

in with a new understanding that the industry is changing. Opportunities are still exploding. They're just not traditional print opportunities," Perry added.

What's next for the State Journal in print? It's unlikely to disappear overnight; it will be more of a series of amputations, if it follows patterns elsewhere, including Michigan. Home delivery is one likely early target for cutting back: Lansing still has home delivery seven days a week, unlike Detroit, Flint and Ann Arbor, among other Michigan cities. Beyond that, Gannett could cut publication to fewer than seven days a week, with Tuesdays and Saturdays usually the days that will go first because of fewer sales. Printing is typically a newspaper's second biggest expense, after personnel, and an added incentive to cut is the skyrocketing cost of newsprint in 2021.

Legislative gauze designed to stop the bleeding of the local news industry has cleared the U.S. House of Representatives as part of President Joseph Biden's \$2.2 billion Build Back Better measure. It includes \$1.67 billion for annual tax incentives of up to \$25,000 per reporter to local outlets. If it passes the Senate, Gannett could reportedly collect up to \$37.5 million in payroll tax credits next year — and tens of millions more for the next three years.

Maribel Perez Wadsworth, Gannett's president of news, defended the bailout, telling The New York Times last week: "Scale allows us to solve for some things, but at the end of the day they're local newsrooms with local reporters and photographers and editors, up against the same headwinds."

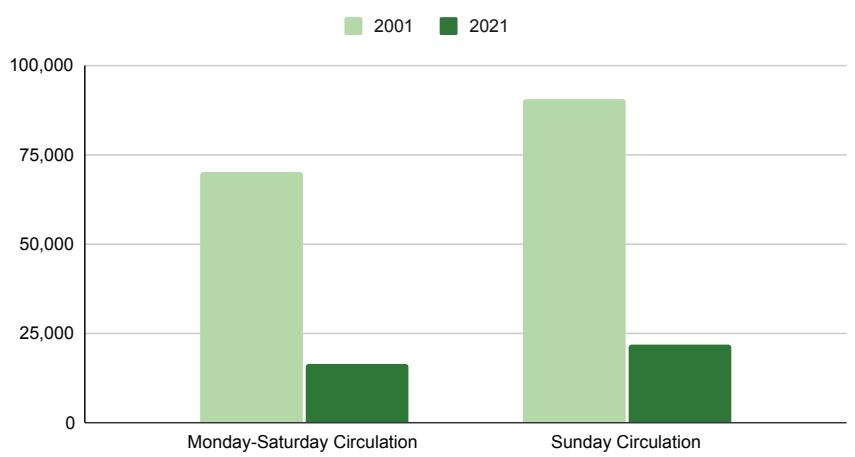
Others have raised eyebrows over giving federal funds to independent news organizations. As The New York Times noted, government assistance for news organizations is relatively uncommon. Aside from discounted mail rates for newspaper distribution, requirements that legal notices be published in local newspapers and an influx of Paycheck Protection Program cash, it's rare for news organizations to accept a federal lifeline.

And even if it passes, some experts think the cash is unlikely to reverse long-term damage to local news — only delay industry decay and perhaps allow the last holdouts to hang on longer.

"It seems much more like a stopgap or bubblegum measure," Perry added. "We don't want state-sponsored media either, so I'm not sure exactly what a couple years of a federal subsidy would accomplish. Maybe it'll keep some organizations on their feet long enough to figure something out but daily newspapers, at this point, just don't seem to be commercially viable."

Added Hartman: "That might help pay off Gannett's debt. It won't cause them to improve their product unfortunately. It's not going to change the underlying difficulties that legacy news media outlets are experiencing right now. Maybe it'll keep some of these papers afloat for a few years. Either way, we're still seeing a downward spiral — a change in attitudes, a lack of interest in civics, a lack of interest in journalism and a lack of interest in providing revenue for local news."

2001 vs. 2021 Average Circulation



ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Ann Arbor pot company plants retail roots in Lansing

Herbana set to open at former Michigan Catholic Credit Union

By KYLE KAMINSKI

I know what you're thinking: *Another dispensary is coming to Lansing?* We already have more than a dozen pot shops open across the region. How many more can the Capital City handle?

Well, ask the folks at Herbana in Ann Arbor and the answer is simple:



Lansterdam in Review:
Herbana
2001 W. Saginaw St.
Lansing

At least one more.

And after taking a trip to Tree Town last weekend to check out one of its stores in action and pick up an assortment of Herbana's in-house product line, I think our city is in for a real treat.

City Clerk Chris Swope's office granted conditional licensing approv-



als for both medical and recreational marijuana sales to Arbor Farm at 2001 W. Saginaw St. last March and July. An extension granted this year gives the company until March 25 to open its doors, though city officials

said they wouldn't be shocked to see the place fully open for business by January.

Construction permits have since been pulled and crews were still working to renovate the interior this week. A green hue from the Herbana sign illuminates the street out front at night.

And yes, I got all your emails: I've been watching it come together too. Here's what I've found:

See Lansterdam, Page 15

Mozart in Madrid

Lansing pianist Sergei Kvitko fulfills lifelong dream

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

As the snow flies in December, Sergei Kvitko's thoughts are drifting back to summer 2021, and not just because of the weather.

A sparkling new CD, released in November, documents a high point in the musical life of the Lansing-based pianist and recording engineer.

"At the time it was a dream come true," Kvitko said. "Now it just feels like a dream."

After recording hundreds of musicians and ensembles for his Blue Griffin label, based in Lansing's Potter House, Kvitko traveled to Estudio Uno in Madrid to be the soloist in a new recording of Mozart's 20th Piano Concerto and two other Mozart nuggets with the young and talented Madrid Soloists Chamber Orchestra.

Kvitko poured a lifelong love of the concerto into the recording, and even dared to add a few flourishes of his own.

"I just had to do it before I die," he said. "Maybe the pandemic brought it home — oh no, we're all going to die sooner than we thought."

The project came together thanks to Tigran Shiganyan, a bridge-building musician who serves on the faculty at the Flint Institute of Music and regularly brings American music and musicians to Uzbekistan.

Over the years, Kvitko has engineered several recordings involving Shiganyan, at his Potter House studio and abroad.

Shiganyan knew that Kvitko was in love with the concerto. Kvitko first heard it as a kid, growing up in Russia, and learned to play it in his early teens.

"My obsession with it never went away," Kvitko said. "It has everything — tragedy, fun, love, humor."

Over the decades, he listened to dozens of recordings by other artists and dreamed of making one himself.

He played it two years ago with a string quartet at a music festival in Innsbruck, Austria, but this was the



Photo by Jorge Núñez

Lansing pianist and recording engineer Sergei Kvitko realized a lifelong dream last summer, playing Mozart's 20th piano concerto with the Madrid Soloists Chamber Orchestra and conductor Tigran Shiganyan. The CD came out in November.

first time he played it with an orchestra.

Shiganyan is a longtime friend of Madrid Soloists Chamber Orchestra's artistic director, Gabor Szabo, and part of a nonprofit, Global Music Partnership, that helps such international projects take shape.

The orchestra proved to be a perfect partner for Kvitko, matching him note for note in exuberance, clarity and precision.

Besides performing as soloist, Kvitko engineered, produced and mastered the session for a CD. He freely calls the idea "insane," but he had fun — and it shows.

"I had a dream team of old and new friends," he said.

Shiganyan has worked with Kvitko for 15 years, but always as a violinist. This was the first time Kvitko saw him conduct.

"I was blown away," Kvitko said. "He has the perfect spirit, and he was so well prepared. He has very strong opinions and musical ideas, but he was there to support me."

Kvitko's zigzagging, restless musical

personality is evident throughout the disc, but his roiling brain is most vividly exposed in the cadenzas, the solo bits just before the end of each movement.

"They're a little bit romantic, but so am I," he said. The cadenzas are also full of "Easter eggs," snippets from other parts of the concerto and other Mozart works. If you're not an expert, you can just sit back and grin at all the tumbling ideas as they rush by.

The disc also includes two rondos for piano and orchestra (K. 382 and 386 if you're keeping score).

Outside of the corseted rocking out permitted in cadenzas, Mozart's scores are as sacrosanct as they come in the classical world. Nevertheless, Kvitko pushed a few boundaries, if only out of love. He sparked up the score of the Rondo in D major with flourishes and embellishments that give the music a high-definition richness and wrote out some fancy curlicues for the orchestra to match.

His solution to the burning question of whether to play one of the variations in a legato (smooth) or staccato (punchy) manner was classic Kvitko

— he did it both ways, even though that part was not repeated in Mozart's manuscript. After all, why pick between strawberry and pistachio? This passes for a scandal in the Mozart bubble, but that made it even more attractive to Kvitko. "Maybe he just forgot the repeat, or he didn't want it to go over 10 minutes and 47 seconds," he speculated. "I told Gabor the recording would be scandalous, and he said, 'Let's do it.'"

Kvitko made a serious study of another rondo that rounds out the disc. The gentle Rondo in A Major was only discovered in full form, with orchestral parts, in 1980. Again, Kvitko wrote out his own embellishments, for both piano and orchestra, but he also filled out some orchestration he felt was missing from more recent reconstructions. His editions of the rondos will be published by his recording studio, Blue Griffin.

Assembling the orchestra and technicians during COVID travel restrictions was not easy.

"It came together so fast," he said. "I've never done a project that involves so many people before. It was a miracle, and a miracle, and a miracle every day."

Lansterdam

from page 14

Branded under the name Herbana, the pot shop is a sort of sister company to Arbors Wellness in Ann Arbor — one of the state's oldest dispensaries and the first to be recreationally licensed in the state. It's also a subsidiary to one of Michigan's largest cannabis empires, Arbor Holdings, which operates its own cultivation and processing facilities, Arbor Farm and Arbor Kitchen, as well as two other medical and recreational Herbana dispensaries in Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor.

In an interview with City Pulse in 2019, Arbors Wellness owner James Daly described the company as one of the largest license holders for growing operations in Lansing. Back then, the company had plans to renovate a massive industrial growing space on the corner of Hosmer and Hazel streets to house another 15,000 plants. That building is now being renovated into a cultivation facility for Ascend Wellness, but Arbor Holdings is still carving out a wider footprint in Lansing — with plans to open its first retail location in the city before the end of March.

The building, an old Michigan Catholic Credit Union, is the former home of Walk In Truth Ministries, which sold the property for \$215,000 last May to 2001 Saginaw LLC, county records showed. It was sold again three months later last August for \$1 million to 2001 W Saginaw LLC.

Local residents might recognize the iconic dome's twin off Larch Street, which is now Chen's Chinese Restaurant. Both were designed and constructed as bank buildings in the '50s.

Messages left for Daly and other company officials at Arbor Wellness and Herbana locations in Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor weren't returned this week. State records show the company has yet to receive a license for the Lansing location from the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. A state spokesman said that means it either hasn't applied for a state license or its application for a license is still pending approval before the Marijuana Regulatory Agency.

So, while we all eagerly await the arrival of another addition to Lansing's thriving cannabis economy, I took a trip to Ann Arbor to get a sneak preview of what's in store for Lansterdam.

The entranceway, like most pot shops nowadays, was sleek and inviting —

including a cozy digital fireplace and a welcoming reception area. Wall-to-wall glass cases displayed a medley of different flower strains, concentrates, edibles and more. My biggest takeaways: The place was stunningly clean. And the staff inside (who all wore face masks) were exceptionally helpful.

Budtenders steered me toward Herbana's in-house brands, which were grown by the same company under the name Arbor Farm and packaged in-house under the Arbor Kitchen brand.

The best of the haul was a \$17 gram of Zkittlez x Kush Mints — an indica-leaning crossbreed that merged the fruitiness of Zkittlez with Kush Mints' mild mint tingle, resulting in a tropical explosion that seemed to pack the flavors of seven sweet and citrusy fruits into one dank flower.



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

A selection of products from Herbana.

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Mt Pleasant, MI 48858

Coming-of-age in the wild world of the circus

By BILL CASTANIER

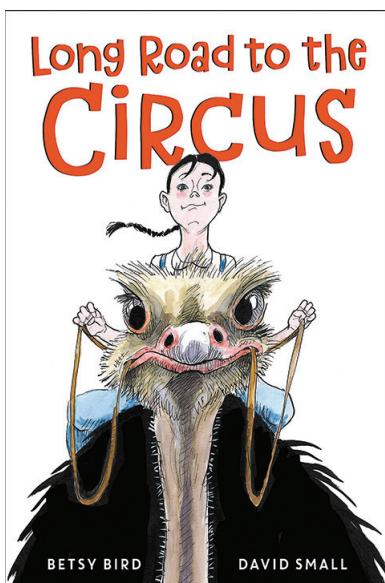
In the early 20th century, major circuses like Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey — along with hundreds of other regional circuses that crisscrossed the country — brought exotic animals and daring performers to local communities. The circus performers and animals would unload at railroad spurs and walk to a nearby field, where they would erect a tent. For many kids, the excitement was too much. When the circus pulled up its stakes, locals would often run off with its caravan to join the adventure.

A new young adult novel, "Long Road to the Circus," written by Betsy Bird and illustrated by award-winning children's book artist David Small, tells a similar story of a young southern Michigan girl who has dreams of becoming a circus performer. Bird and Small both have Michigan ties; the author was born in Kalamazoo and the illustrator lives in Mendon.

Bird first met Small when he came to speak at her school in Kalamazoo. The relationship didn't stop there, and as Bird writes in her book: "All families have stories. Sometimes those stories actually turn out to be true."

Bird's family story involved an uncle who would skip out on his farm chores to visit a circus performer who had retired to rural Mendon. He wanted to learn horse tricks from the former circus star.

Years later, Bird learned that the story was true and her uncle was visiting the home of famed circus performer Madame Marantette. Marantette was well known for her equine extravaganzas. Ready for



the next coincidence? Small and his spouse now occupy the Marantette home.

What made Marantette so unusual is how she would do her electric horseback maneuvers while riding sidesaddle. According to Bird, she still holds the world record for horse jumping while riding sidesaddle. Marantette also owned ostriches, and one unusual trick involved a racing surrey pulled by an ostrich and a horse.

In the story, we meet Suzy Bowles, 12, who is born with a preternatural grip and the tenacity to never let go of anything she sets her mind on doing. When Suzy learns that her uncle, who lives with her family, disappears every morning before dawn, she decides to follow him. What she learns will change her world forever. Her uncle is a horse trainer and is employed by Marantette, the acclaimed circus magnate.

From there onward, Bird masterfully uses fiction devices to tell a wonderful coming-of-age story. Bird toddles along with her uncle and is soon drawn into the world of the Marantette and her ostriches. Bird wants to follow in Marantette's shoes, so she begins the arduous and often painful process of learning to ride an ostrich.

As we learn, ostriches are not easy to ride. They are stubborn, huge, strong and odd in appearance, but they are also not keen on having someone on their back.

Suzy's plans are almost derailed when her parents realize she is sneaking away to ride ostriches. She has to promise to still do all her chores with no complaining.

Suzy is close to taming the errant ostrich for a special appearance at a community parade when she is thrown and injures her shoulder. Her parents ground her and forbid her to visit Marantette. With the annual parade fast approaching, Suzy hatches a plot to surreptitiously join the celebration. It would not be fair to tell the rest of the story, because of its brilliant dramatic ending.

In her acknowledgements, Bird thanks a number of people — including the local librarian who provided her with an old-fashioned clipping file that contained all the historical information she would need to write the novel. She also gives Small a shout out and says the novel wouldn't exist

without his help. Small, who provided his deft hand to some clever illustrations, such as the novel's cover of Suzy with an ostrich, talked Bird into making "Long Road to the Circus" a novel instead of a comic. Bird said is happy she listened to the master.

Bird works as a circulation development manager for the Evanston Public Library, and Small, who has received the Caldecott Medal for illustration, lives in Mendon with his wife, Sarah Stewart, herself a writer of children's books. His young adult memoir, "Stitches," was a National Book Award finalist and recipient of the Michigan Notable Book Award.

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People can't afford to take care of themselves when they don't earn enough to feed themselves, so if they aren't physically healthy, their mental health will follow. Our society has decided that healthcare is not a priority. We can't ever achieve our ideals if so many people are left behind.

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The stockings were hung by the chimney with care
knowing a book would fit perfect in there!

Favorite Things

Taylor Doty and his great-grandfather's chest

Both of Taylor Doty's grandfathers died young. His favorite thing is an heirloom that makes him feel closer to his past.

When I moved into my first apartment, I asked my mother for some stuff to help furnish it. She called my grandmother and she offered to give me this chest. It was originally my great-grandfather's, and I didn't know him nor did I know my grandfather. It was great to receive this for that reason.

My grandfather had a lot independent energy. He died getting bit by a snake while out hiking. He was pretty young; my mother was only 4 when that happened. He was only in his mid-20s. I don't know much about my great grandfather — he's a mystery to me.

I have no real idea where the box originally came from; it's possible my great-grandfather made it. I guess I should know more about it. I used to be babysat at my grandmother's house all the time, so it had always had a presence in my life. It's been in the back of my mind. My grandmother also recently passed away, so it's even more sentimental these days. She always used to keep her cigarette tray on it. I grew up with this chest, essentially.



It's a normal dresser with several drawers, but the top opens up and there's a chest section in the middle of it. I always thought the top part was really cool. It's really solid and well made. Right now, I use it as sort of a nightstand. I have a music drawer, an arts and crafts drawer and an electronics drawer. Besides my bookshelf, it's the only thing I use for storage in my room.

Not only did I not know the people that previously owned this, I haven't really been in touch with that side of my family history at all. I've always been

close with my mother, but never known much about her family. It's always been shrouded to me. Having this chest helps me feel connected to them. My grandfather was also the only person in my family besides me that plays music. I feel connected with him in that way, and owning something that belonged to him makes me feel like I knew him just a little bit.

I learned that my grandfather had a Gibson SG guitar and he used to go to bars and asked the band that was playing if he could play with them. He sounded like a sweet dude. It made me think, "Maybe I'm not totally weird for being the only person in my family that plays music. Everybody loved that guy."

This item is my only real family heirloom. It's a connection to my past. When my grandmother first gave it to me, she made me promise to take good care of it. She gave it to me expecting that connection to be there, so that means a lot to me. I don't have very many things like this.

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

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Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"What the H"--is it Cockney? Probably not.

by Matt Jones
Across

1 ___-Magnon (early human)

4 Soda can meas.

7 '70s music genre

12 Muscle near a lat

13 Certain Greek consonants

15 "Let's keep moving!"

17 Student financial assistance that makes you groan?

19 Brazilian Carnival city that's a World Heritage Site

20 GPS instruction

21 Burden on a German opera composer?

23 Tale with the Trojan Horse

25 "I just thought of somethin"

26 "Either that wallpaper goes ___ do" (Oscar Wilde's last words)

27 "Romeo and Juliet" locale

29 Delta follower

31 Relative of a joule

32 "Eighth Grade" star Fisher

35 One of a deadly seven

36 American publishing pioneer who's not feeling so well?

39 6-point plays, for short

41 Elgort of the upcoming "West Side Story" remake

42 Org. that holds Renaissance Fairs

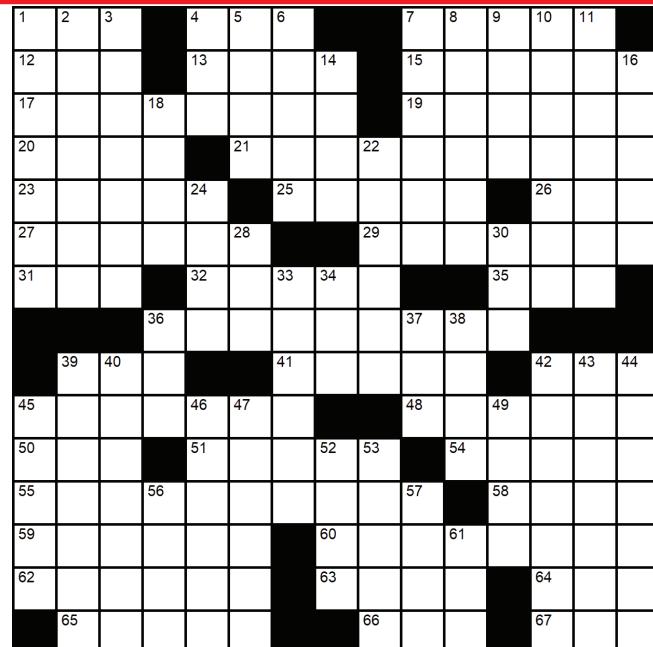
45 Get ready early?

48 Long-lasting lighters

50 "This Side of Paradise" singer Ocasek

51 Magnus Carlsen's game

54 Goes bad



55 Someone who seeks out either British singer Murs or a vitamin and supplement company?

58 Prefix before directional

59 Swiss psychologist who studied object permanence

60 Booboo for an extended amount of time?

62 Flashing effect that may require a warning

63 Monetary unit of Chile

64 "Sister Act" extra

65 ___ Boomer" (1980s TV dog drama)

66 Chihuahua of cartoons

67 ___ up to you"

Down

1 Processing speed measured in some desktops

2 Mundane

3 Tinting reddish-yellow, as with earth tones

4 Hockey Hall of Famer Bobby

5 "Eternals" director Chloe

6 "I Got You Babe" singer

7 '50s music genre

8 Post-wedding relatives

9 Hefty swallow

10 Dessert mentioned in "The Godfather"

11 Words before "our mobile app", for delivery services

14 IKEA storage box

15 Series that sounds destined to jam up?

16 "Beyond the Sea" singer Bobby

18 Tiny buzzer

22 Gives a snotty look

24 "Hamilton" highlight

28 Nothing antithesis

30 Neighbor of Syr.

33 Bond preference?

34 Quarterback Book of the New Orleans Saints

36 NetZero, once

37 Candy from a

character?

38 Yale alums

39 Structure of three stones, like some parts of Stonehenge

40 Reveal to a customs inspector

42 Italian ice cream with multiple flavors

43 Really hard snack to eat?

44 Distributes, as tasks

45 Stage accessories

46 "Things Fall Apart" novelist Chinua ___

47 Ladders' partners

49 It may have a shallow end

52 Eight-sided message at a four-way intersection

53 Ninja Turtles setting

56 Bela Lugosi's role in "Son of Frankenstein" (spelled differently from other appearances of this character)

57 Gain in status

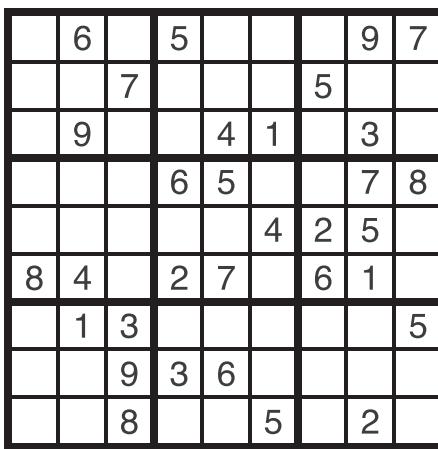
61 365 billion days

Answers on page 21

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SUDOKU

Beginner



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 21

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezsny

December 8-14, 2021

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Aries filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) was experimental and innovative and influential. His imagery was often dreamlike, and his themes were metaphysical. He felt that the most crucial aspect of his creative process was his faith. If he could genuinely believe in the work he was doing, he was sure he'd succeed at even the most improbable projects. But that was a challenge for him. "There is nothing more difficult to achieve than a passionate, sincere, quiet faith," he said. In accordance with your astrological omens during the next 12 months, Aries, I suggest you draw inspiration from his approach. Cultivating a passionate, sincere, quiet faith will be more attainable than it has ever been.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware," said philosopher Martin Buber. How true! I would add that the traveler is wise to prepare for the challenges and opportunities of those secret destinations . . . and be alert for them if they appear . . . and treat them with welcome and respect, not resistance and avoidance. When travelers follow those protocols, they are far more likely to be delightfully surprised than disappointingly surprised. Everything I just said will apply to you in the coming weeks, Taurus.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Gemini sleight-of-hand artist Apollo Robinson may be the best and most famous pickpocket in the world. Fortunately, he uses his skill for entertainment purposes only. He doesn't steal strangers' money and valuables from their pockets and purses and jackets. On one occasion, while in the company of former US President Jimmy Carter, he pilfered multiple items from a secret service agent assigned to protect Carter. He gave the items back, of course. It was an amusing and humbling lesson that inspired many law-enforcement officials to seek him out as a consultant. I suspect that in the coming weeks, you may have comparable abilities to trick, fool, beguile, and enchant. I hope you will use your superpowers exclusively to carry out good deeds and attract inviting possibilities.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Many sportswriters regard Michael Jordan as the greatest basketball player ever. He was the Most Valuable Player five times and had a higher scoring average than anyone else who has ever played. And yet he confesses, "I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. And I have failed over and over and over again in my life." He says the keys to his success are his familiarity with bungles and his determination to keep going despite his bungles. I invite you to meditate on Jordan's example in the coming days.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): In his poem "Song of Poplars," Leo author Aldous Huxley speaks to a stand of poplar trees. He asks them if they are an "agony of undefined desires." Now I will pose the same question to you, Leo. Are you an agony of undefined desires? Or are you a treasury of well-defined desires? I hope it's the latter. But if it's not, the coming weeks will be an excellent time to fix the problem. Learning to be precise about the nature of your longings is your growing edge, your frontier. Find out more about what you want, please.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Black is your lucky color for the foreseeable future. I invite you to delve further than ever before into its mysteries and meanings and powers. I encourage you to celebrate blackness and honor blackness and nurture blackness in every way you can imagine. For inspiration, meditate on how, in art, black is the presence of all colors. In printing, black is a color needed to produce other colors. In mythology, blackness is the primal source of all life and possibility. In psychology, blackness symbolizes the rich unconscious core from which all vitality emerges.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): In the first season of the animated TV series "South Park", its two creators produced an episode called "Make Love, Not Warcraft." The story lovingly mocked nerds

and the culture of online gaming. Soon after sending his handwork to executive producers, Libran co-creator Trey Parker decided it was a terrible show that would wreck his career. He begged for it to be withheld from broadcast. But the producers ignored his pleas. That turned out to be a lucky break. The episode ultimately won an Emmy Award and became popular with fans. I foresee the possibility of comparable events in your life, Libra. Don't be too sure you know which of your efforts will work best.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Nobel Prize-winning Scorpio author André Gide (1869-1951) had an unusual relationship with his wife Madeline Rondeaux. Although married for 43 years, they never had sex. As long as she was alive, he never mentioned her in his extensive writings. But after she died, he wrote a book about their complex relationship. Here's the best thing he ever said about her: "I believe it was through her that I drew the need for truthfulness and sincerity." I'd love for you to be lit up by an influence like Madeline Rondeaux, Scorpio. I'd be excited for you to cultivate a bond with a person who will inspire your longing to be disarmingly candid and refreshingly genuine. If there are no such characters in your life, go looking for them. If there are, deepen your connection.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A fashion company called Tibi sells a silver mini dress that features thousands of sequins. It's also available in gold. I wonder if the designers were inspired by poet Mark Doty's line: "No such thing, the queen said, as too many sequins." In my astrological estimation, the coming weeks will be a fun time to make this one of your mottoes. You will have a poetic license to be flashy, shiny, bold, swanky, glittery, splashy, sparkling, and extravagant. If expressing such themes in the way you dress isn't appealing, embody more metaphorical versions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "I have pasts inside me I did not bury properly," writes Nigerian poet Ijeoma Umebinyu. Isn't that true for each of us? Don't we all carry around painful memories as if they were still fresh and current? With a little work, we could depersonalize at least some of them and consign them to a final resting place where they wouldn't nag and sting us anymore. The good news, Capricorn, is that the coming weeks will be an excellent time to do just that: bury any pasts that you have not properly buried before now.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): In February 1967, the Beatles recorded their album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" in London. A man claiming to be Jesus Christ convinced Paul McCartney to let him weasel his way into the studio. McCartney later said that he was pretty sure it wasn't the real Jesus. But if by some remote chance it was, he said, he didn't want to make a big mistake. I bring this to your attention, Aquarius, because I suspect that comparable events may be brewing in your vicinity. My advice: Don't assume you already know who your teachers and helpers are. Here's the relevant verse from the Bible: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): According to Professor of Classics Anne Carson, ancient Greek author Homer "suggested we stand in time with our backs to the future, face to the past." And why would we do that? To "search for the meaning of the present—scanning history and myth for a precedent." I bring this to your attention, Pisces, because I think you should avoid such an approach in the coming months. In my view, the next chapter of your life story will be so new, so unpredicted, that it will have no antecedents, no precursory roots that might illuminate its plot and meaning. Your future is unprecedented.

Go to RealAstrology.com to check out Rob Brezsny's EXPANDED WEEKLY AUDIO HOROSCOPES and DAILY TEXT MESSAGE HOROSCOPES. The audio horoscopes are also available by phone at 1-877-873-4888 or 1-900-950-7700.

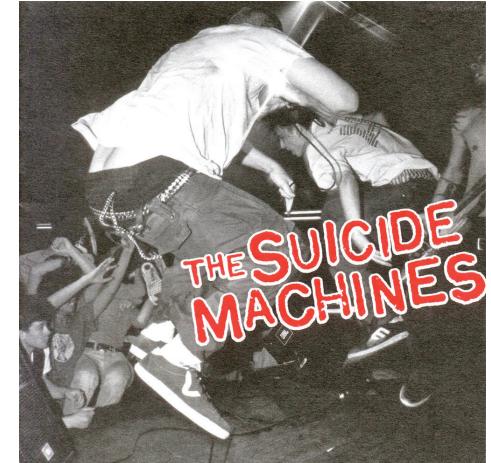
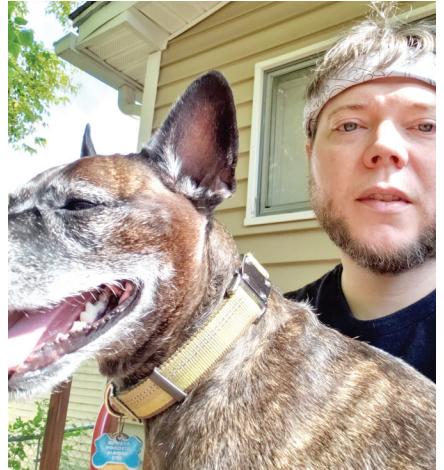
TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

LIFE CHANGING ALBUMS: CAVALCADE'S CALE SAUTER TALKS

SUICIDE MACHINES' LP



Cale Sauter, the guitarist of Cavalcade, looks back in pivotal punk album. (Courtesy photos)

Cavalcade guitarist, and BMP co-founder, digs back to a 1996 punk disc

For over a decade, Cale Sauter has been a force in Lansing's music scene. He co-founded a locally operated indie label, Bermuda Mohawk Productions, was a key member of the city's most notorious band, the Cartridge Family, and continues to unleash unparalleled metal LPs with Cavalcade. Keep your eyes out for a double LP coming from Cavalcade in 2022, and another "Bermuda Snowhawk" Christmas compilation, which is also coming soon.

Here, Sauter talks up a "gateway" album: "Destruction by Definition" LP by The Suicide Machines. It was spring 1996, he was 15.

How would you describe this album?

Cale Sauter: I'd probably start with the disclaimer that, by contemporary standards, "Destruction by Definition" doesn't sound as eclectic and experimental as it did when it was less common for more extreme genres to intermingle. I'd also note that some of the lyrics are probably going to sound a lot cooler if you were navigating high school in the late '90s or early 2000s. Though I will give the Suicide Machines credit for starting to touch on some larger social issues at a time it wasn't particularly popular for a punk band on a major label to do.

All that said, I find myself still occasionally pulling this record out primarily

for the performances, the production and how seamlessly it blended and transitioned in and out of styles and moods. Even as music genres have become more of a melting pot, very few records exist even today that manage to take me on such an exhilarating and unpredictable ride while still being perfectly balanced and sequenced. This came at the outset of a musical era that would deliver a lot of genre cross-pollinating that sounded pretty awkward, so the tight and natural sounding execution of it on "Destruction" stood out for years.

Who introduced you to The Suicide Machines?

Oddly enough, the Detroit Free Press used to have this 1-800 number where they'd have a sample of music by an artist they'd recently covered or reviewed. Dr. Kevorkian was in the news quite a bit at the time for his advocacy of euthanasia for the terminally ill via the "suicide machine" he had created. From an article about him, I learned a Detroit band had sprouted up that called themselves Jack Kevorkian & the Suicide Machines. They eventually dropped the "Jack Kevorkian &" in their name, but I recognized them when the Detroit Free Press covered their debut full-length, "Destruction by Definition." I checked it out and called the 800 number for the music sample — what a weird brief

moment in "technology."

What were your initial thoughts on the CD?

After hearing the band cycle through just about every different type of outsider rock sub-genre that was hitting with people my age, punk, metal, hardcore and ska, over the span of a one-minute sound clip, I was on board to track down the record when it came out. I was floored that I didn't have to look far. The band had signed with Hollywood Records and, with the benefit of major label distribution, I was actually able to find the CD in the music section of the Adrian Meijer. To my 15-year-old ears, it delivered on all of the eclectic promise of that sound clip, and more.

After the first listen of the CD, what stood out the most?

At the time, I was enamored with what I guess would now be considered the "second golden age" of hip-hop. As things started getting glossier across that genre in the latter half of the '90s, I started gravitating toward some of the grittier and more eclectic rock that was breaking through. In spite of that, I wasn't really sure what to make of the punk and third-wave ska revivals cropping up prior to this record. The Billboard Charts examples of '90s punk I was exposed to living in the middle of nowhere seemed a bit more cheery or poppy than I was

really feeling. The Suicide Machines, however, applied a sort of "Detroit grit" to the formula that bridged the gap for me.

In what ways has this album directly affected your life?

It's impossible to overlook how seeing this Detroit band with DIY punk roots, made up of people only 3 to 7 years older than me, defined or redefined what I thought the ceiling was for starting your own band in the Midwest. Detroit was really in a phase between musical identities at the time and I hadn't really seen any young Michigan artists break out on an international scale, or national scale for that matter, in my young life.

Most of the music I make or have made hasn't really sounded much like this album. At a philosophical level though, it influenced me tremendously as far as not shying away from disparate musical influences or experimental instrumentation ideas; not to mention giving me the confidence to dive headlong into DIY punk, booking shows — including The Suicide Machines, eventually — and releasing records independently.

Cale Sauter's Honorable mentions:

"Hearing Our Own Wars," by Small Brown Bike

"Stately Chaos Home," by Inside Five Minutes

OUT on the TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

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

LIVE + LOCAL

Peanut Barrel

521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing

Dan Dan

Friday, Dec. 10, 8 p.m.

Urban Beat

1213 Turner Rd., Lansing

Jennifer Westwood and Dylan Dunbar

Thursday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m.

The Seth Ebersole Group plus Reuben Stump Trio

Friday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

Out Cold The Showcase

Sat. Dec. 11, 8-9 p.m.



A cavalcade of local creatives and artisans are teaming up for a special limited-time holiday market at the Middle Village Micro Market. If you are still looking for gifts for friends and families, this pop-up event will have more than 20 vendors for you to choose from. Appearing at the Holiday

Makers Party will be Cussing Carries, James Friend Art, Emerald Shire, Behind the Hustle, CC's Embroidery and many more. Middle Village Market consignment shops A Novel Concept, Capital Hippie, MI-Alchemy and Sweet Encounters will also have unique holiday fare for sale.

Wednesday, December 8

Allen Farmers Market - 3-6 p.m. 2100 E Michigan Avenue, Lansing.

Book on Every Bed - Children's Book Drive - Drop off 10 a.m.-9 p.m. through Dec. 13. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. gladl.org

Light and Shadow - Michigan Landscapes by Brandt MacLean - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saper Galleries and Custom Framing, 433 Albert Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-0815.

Michigan Made | Holiday Art Exhibition - through Dec. 23. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center, 119 N. Washington Sq., Lansing. lansingartgallery.org.

Threads of Wisdom: Ancestors and Summerland - In-person or Zoom for a discussion. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St, Ste 7, Lansing. 517-657-5800. weaversoftheweb.org.

Thursday, December 9

December Pagans Night Out - Each month we pick a different area business to support and get together for food and fellowship. 6-9:30 p.m. Buddies Grill, 2040 N Aurelius Rd, Ste 12, Holt. 517-699-3670. weaversoftheweb.org.

Jennifer Westwood and Dylan Dunbar - at UrbanBeat! 7:30-10 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. urbanbeatevents.com.

Ladies' Night Out - Downtown Williamston - Each downtown business will be offering specials and discounts to celebrate you! 5-8 p.m. 100 E. Grand River, Williamston.

REACH Virtual Meet-up: Arts Incubator for Young People - Sara Gothard is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. 4-5 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.

Stitch 'N Bitch - Bring your yarn or thread for an evening of fiber arts and chit-chat. 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center #7, Lansing. 517-974-5540.

Youth Arts Alliance Pinhole Photography Workshop - Join Youth Arts Alliance teaching artist Isaac Wingfield for a 90-minute pinhole photography workshop. 7-8:30 p.m. MSU Broad Art Lab, 565 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu/artlab

Friday, December 10

Holiday Sing with song leader Sally Potter, and Doug Austin, Doug Berch and Special Guests - 7:30-10 p.m. University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison, East Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

Jr. Chemist - 9:45 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Men of Orpheus Holiday Concert - We're back! With our annual holiday concert of both sacred and secular music. Please wear a mask. 7:30 p.m. St.

Holiday Makers Party

Middle Village Micro Market

112 S. Washington Sq., Lansing

Saturday, Dec. 11, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Facebook.com/middlevillage micromarket

Environmental Stewardship Work Day - 9-11 a.m. Harrison Meadows Park, 1700 Roxburgh Ave., East Lansing. cityoffeastlansing.com.

Holt Farmers Market - shop locally-grown produce and locally-made goodies! 2150 Cedar St., Holt.

Jolly Holiday Market - Artists; baked goods; toys; woodworking; jewelry and more. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S Washington St., Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

Jr. Chemist - 9:45 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Wine in the Woods - Bring your favorite beverage and enjoy a guided walk through the woods with a naturalist. 7-9 p.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd., Okemos. 517-349-3866.

Winter Towns Holiday Fest - 1232 Turner St. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Lansing. iloveoldtown.org.

Winter Wonderland - AM session 9 a.m., PM session 1 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Events

from page 27

Sunday, December 12

An Evening of Lessons and Carols - Enjoy an evening of Christmas music that will benefit Advent House Ministries! 7 p.m. The Presbyterian Church of Okemos, 2258 Bennett Rd., Okemos. okemospres.org.

Cocoa and Collection - Bring the whole family to the MSU Broad to warm up with hot cocoa and art-making activities! 2-4 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu

Curator Tour: Per(Sister) in Song - Join MSU Broad Art Museum Director Mónica Ramirez-Montagut for a tour. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Free Your Mind Artist Tour - Join Free Your Mind: Art and Incarceration in Michigan artist Kimiko Uyeda! Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Free Your Mind: Panel Discussion and Open Forum - with the curators and key participants in the making of the exhibition. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Hip-Hop With Hakeem - Jazz students collaborate with hip-hop artist Hakeem. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Jolly Holiday Market - 11 a.m.-5 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S Washington St, Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

The Lange Choral Ensemble "The Light of Christmas" - 3-4 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 510 W. Ottawa, Lansing.

MSU Professors of Jazz: Honoring the Per(sisters) - Join an insightful pre-concert presentation. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 18

3	6	4	5	2	8	1	9	7
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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 18

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Upcoming Greater Lansing Holiday Events

We've got plenty of time left here in December to enjoy the holiday festivities in Greater Lansing. From shopping for presents, checking out cool light displays and having fun out on the ice, here are all sorts of ways to make winter a fun time:

Daily through December

Downtown Ice-Skating Rink
City Hall Plaza
124 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing
Until 10 p.m.

One of downtown Lansing's favorite traditions aside from Silver Bells is the ice-skating rink that opens up in front of city hall. Grab a friend and strap on your skates for a great way to have fun out in the frosty weather.

Every Sunday through December

REO Town Jolly Holiday Market
REO Town Marketplace
1027 S. Washington Ave., Lansing

The shops at REO Town Marketplace are collaborating for a festive flea market that offers a unique spot to track down interesting gifts for your friends and family.

Through Dec. 26

Wonderland of Lights

Potter Park Zoo
1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing
Stroll through the Potter Park Zoo in the winter air with a lovely display of glowing lights.

Dec. 10-12

Holiday Nights of Lights

Frances Park
2701 Moores River Dr., Lansing,
6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Frances Park is hosting a drive-through Christmas light display that is free for all to attend and enjoy.

Dec. 10

Abrams Planetarium Holiday Show

Abrams Planetarium
755 Science Road, East Lansing
8 p.m.

The Abrams Planetarium is putting on several seasonal laser extravaganzas this month featuring many traditional holiday images.

Dec. 11

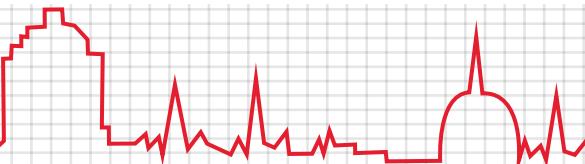
Christmas Fair at the Lansing Mall

Lansing Mall
5330 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing
11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Looking to get your Christmas shopping done without making multiple trips? The Christmas Fair at the Lansing Mall will create a holiday bazaar that will have plenty of gifts of all sorts for you to choose from.



FOOD & DRINK



DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Olive oil ology

By ARI LEVAUX

A few years ago in Rome, I found myself in a cramped room drinking olive oil from a cup. I was with a group of food writers, learning how to properly taste olive oil before traveling to the hilltop city of Perugia, where we would call upon our new tasting skills to work at an annual event celebrating Italy's best artisan extra-virgin olive oils. But first, we needed a better understanding of the magical culinary ointment that we'd be sampling.

We weren't walking around dipping bread in bowls of oil, like you do in tasting events that steer you toward a purchase. This was a serious effort to understand the complex properties of a fine extra-virgin olive oil, or EVOO. To this end, we finished each sip with a loud, drawn-out slurp called a stripaggio.

First, we covered each sample cup with a hand to let the vapors build. We then would rotate the cup circularly to coax more vapors into the trapped air above the oil, and take a whiff while staring thoughtfully toward the horizon. The smell of a good olive oil can be fruity, or dominated by the famous "fresh cut grass" smell of chlorophyll, or more elusive odors like rosemary, artichoke, green tomato or tropical fruits.



Samples of Italian extra virgin olive oil.

At the time, Italy was reeling from some oil-based scandals. It was discovered that olive oil labeled as EVOO from Italy was sometimes neither Italian, extra-virgin nor even pure olive oil. The investigation involved trained tasters doing what we were doing, in order to discern the true elixir from the frauds.

After some deep nasal inhales, I learned to sip the oil and work it

around my mouth, feeling the viscosity and tasting the progression of piquancy and bitterness that gives quality EVOO its personality.

Finally, we slurped. The stripaggio is not delicate. Most people would be embarrassed to make sounds like that while eating, but not with a roomful of gung-ho food nerds.

Sucking air through the olive oil in your mouth disperses oil droplets to hard-to-reach taste receptors of the tongue and throat, helping to paint a fuller picture of the oil's flavor. Meanwhile, as the air stretches the oil, you can feel its viscosity and how it holds together in the turbulence of your stripaggio.

Some oil starts with a fruity whiff and a buttery kiss and stays smooth all the way through, making it good for baking, or for dressing a lettuce-based salad. Some oil starts with a kiss and ends with a slap, or at least a raspy cat lick to the throat, making it more suitable for pairing with stronger flavors like chicory salads, or drizzled on pasta or other savory dishes.

Since my olive oil education, EVOO began filling the niche that I previously filled with mayonnaise, my "energy dense" condiment of choice. Mayo, like olive oil, has properties of texture as well as flavor. And they both

FLASH in the pan



improve food with fat.

Back home, I regarded California olive oil with newfound interest. As with wine, you can find some amazing olive oil coming out of the Golden State, if you know where to look. They include large-scale, high-density operations with mechanical harvesters, as well as small artisanal producers — much like the ones I visited with my group in Italy. There are Italian fingerprints all over California's wine and olive oil industries, thanks to waves of immigrants who felt at home in that Mediterranean climate of the American West and planted many of the state's original vineyards.

High-end olive oil doesn't come cheap and should be appreciated to the max. You should consider it more of a main event and less as a supporting sauce for the main event. The thing that the oil goes on is a substrate, a stage upon which to display the star in all of its glory.

My favorite substrate is bread. I know, I just said that bread isn't for real olive oil tasting. It gets in the way because it tastes so good it's hard to stay focused, and next thing you know you're in a food coma. And if you try to slurp the oily bread, you might inhale breadcrumbs and choke. The bread is for proper enjoyment of the EVOO, rather than evaluation.

So get yourself a good, crusty loaf, some tasty olive oil and some salt. You don't need pepper, because a good EVOO has those peppery notes. But some minced garlic will all but guarantee the addictive nature of the meal. Mix up the oil, salt and garlic, and start dipping. Let the seasoned oil impregnate the spongy bread, and enjoy the greasy green grassy goodness.

(*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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News for lovers of cheese, peanuts, coffee and pizza

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Though there have recently been a slew of new restaurants to cover in Greater Lansing, there is still plenty of news developing for us to cover in the culinary world of the capital city.

Cheese lovers have a new mecca to venture to in East Lansing known as **That's What Cheese Said**. The quirky new dairy-focused eatery debuted in mid-November and has a menu that nearly exhausts the culinary possibilities offered by cheese. If you sit down to order from That's What Cheese Said, you have options like signature mac and cheese dishes, grilled cheese sandwiches and potato skins. You can also get gourmet cheese on items such as chicken sandwiches, chicken tenders, pulled pork sandwiches and smoked sausage sandwiches. That's What Cheese Said also serves sides, including soup and coleslaw.

...

The Peanut Shop, a longtime Lansing favorite and a staple for snack lovers visiting downtown, is wishing one of its owners of nearly 50 years a happy retirement. Tammy Melser announced Monday in a press release that she turning over ownership of The Peanut Shop to Adam Seyburn and Aaron Larwick. The Peanut Shop isn't expected to immediately undergo any many major changes, and Melser mentioned in the release that Seyburn and Larwick are passionate about the business's nostalgic atmosphere.

...

Saddleback Barbecue announced on Facebook that is venturing into the pizza



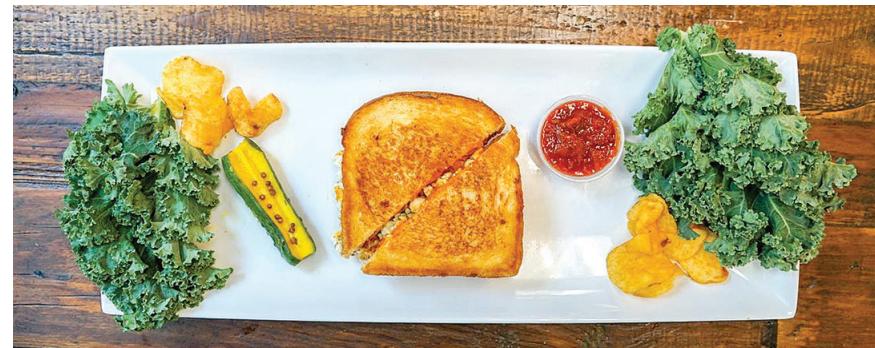
That's What Cheese Said

551 E. Grand River Road, East Lansing
Tuesday-Saturday, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Thatswhatcheesesaid.com
(517) 253-7581

business with Slice by Saddleback. The expansion is set to debut in January and will see the local barbecue giants enter the competitive Lansing pizza scene. If the restaurant's pizza pies prove to be as popular and well made as its barbecue, local foodies will be in good fortunes.

...

Also on the horizon is a new coffee shop, **Château Coffee Co.**, which is

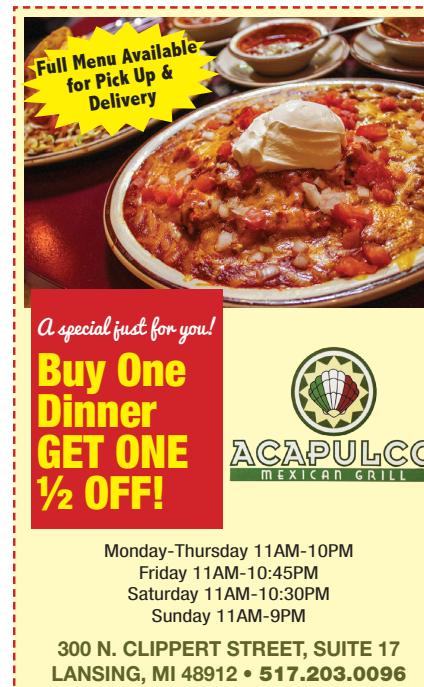


Courtesy

Gourmet grilled cheese sandwich from That's What Cheese Said.

slated for an opening in late-December. Château Coffee Co. is expected to open on South Waverly Road at the former site of a Biggy. It will provide

fresh coffee brewed with beans supplied by 517 Coffee Co., which is located on Lansing's south side on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.



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