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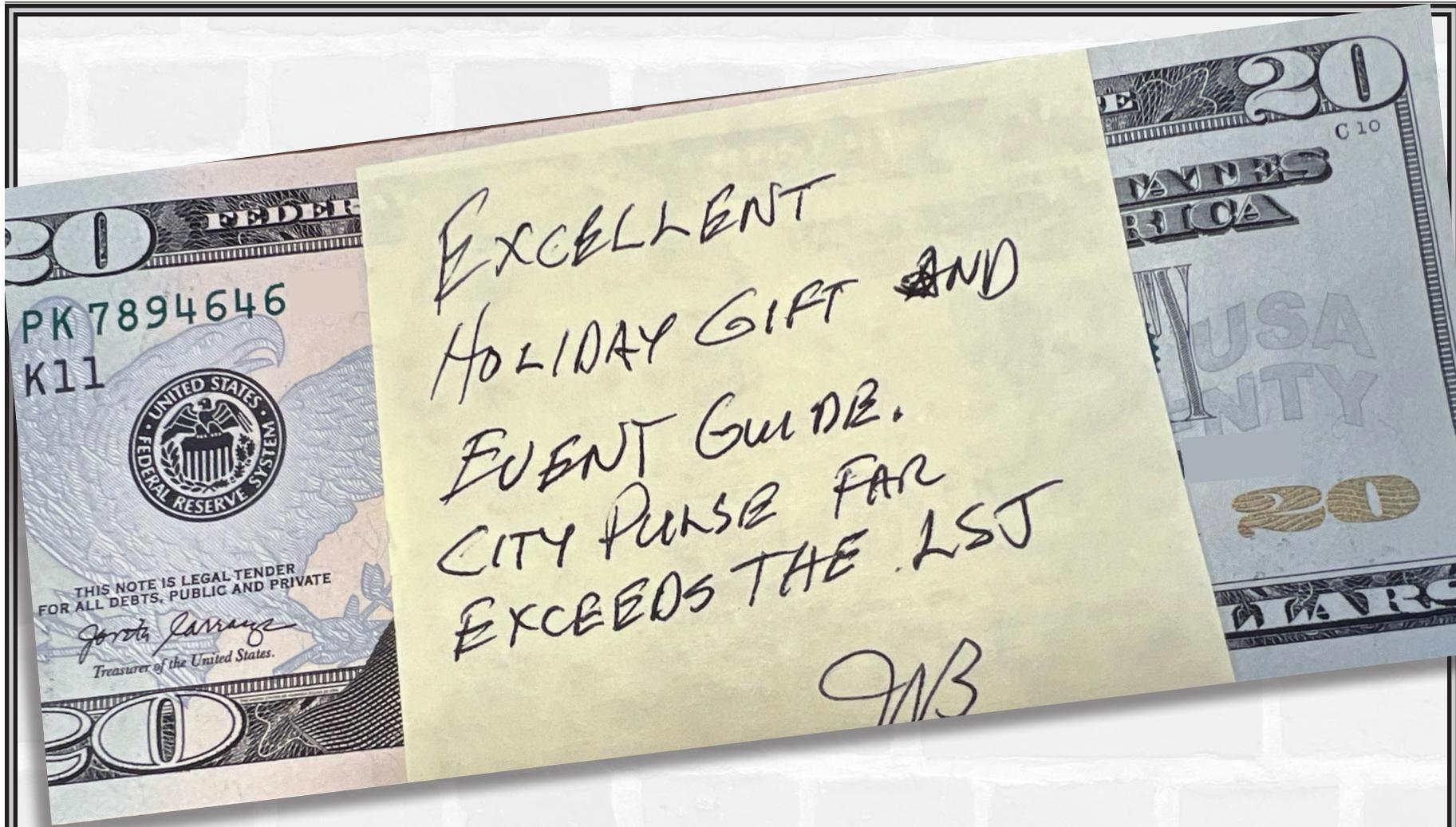
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New in Town: Slice by Saddleback opening soon



Cover Art

Illustration by Anson Stevens-Bollen

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES: (517) 999-5061
or email citypulse@lansingcitypulse.com
CLASSIFIEDS & OBITUARIES: (517) 999-6704

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER • Berl Schwartz
publisher@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5061

MANAGING EDITOR • Kyle Kaminski
kyle@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-6710

ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR • Skyler Ashley
skyler@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5068

EVENTS EDITOR/OFFICE MANAGER • Suzi Smith
suzi@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-6704

PRODUCTION • Abby Sumbler
production@lansingcitypulse.com
(517) 999-5066

MARKETING/DIGITAL DIRECTOR • Aimee West
aimee@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-6708

STAFF WRITER • Lawrence Cosentino
lawrence@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5065

SALES EXECUTIVE
Lee Purdy • lee@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-5064

SALES ASSISTANT
Caleb Woloszyn-Duffy
caleb@lansingcitypulse.com • (517) 999-6707

Contributors: Andy Balaskovitz, Capital News Service, Bill Castanier, Ryan Claytor, Mary C. Cusack, Tom Helma, Todd Heywood, Dedria Humphries Barker, Ari LeVaux, Gabrielle Lawrence, Kyle Melinn, Dennis Preston, Carrie Sampson, Jen Sorensen, Nevin Speerbrecker, Tom Tomorrow, Rich Tipica, David Winkelstern, Paul Wozniak

Delivery drivers: Dave Fisher, Adam Mercer, Garrett Clinard

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

AS 2021 WINDS DOWN, THE SUPREME COURT APPEARS TO BE ON THE VERGE OF REPEALING THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO AN ABORTION!

EXPERTS SAY IT'S JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL IN THE INCREASINGLY NIGHTMARISH DYSTOPIA OF LIFE IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA!

LIVE AMN

REPUBLICAN LEGISLATURES ACROSS THE COUNTRY SPENT 2021 PASSING GERRYMANDERING AND VOTER SUPPRESSION LAWS, AS WELL AS GIVING THEMSELVES THE POWER TO OVERRIDE RESULTS THEY DO NOT LIKE!

IT SEEMS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THE 2024 ELECTION WILL SPELL THE END OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY!

OH WELL! WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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MEANWHILE, A FEW DAYS AFTER THE MOST RECENT, ROUTINE, BARELY-WORTH-MENTIONING SCHOOL SHOOTING, TWO REPUBLICAN REPRESENTATIVES TWEETED OUT PICTURES OF THEIR FAMILIES BRANDING SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS--AS CHRISTMAS GREETINGS!

NOTHING EXPRESSES THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON QUITE LIKE MILITARY GRADE KILLING MACHINES!

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IN OTHER NEWS, THE LATEST COVID VARIANT CONTINUES TO SPREAD, AS A COMBINATION OF POLITICIZED ANTI-VACCINATION SENTIMENT AND A REFUSAL TO LIFT GLOBAL PATENT RESTRICTIONS LEAD INEVITABLY TO NEW MUTATIONS!

WHEEEEE! WE'RE GOING TO BE IN THIS PANDEMIC FOREEEEEVER!

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AND OF COURSE, THE FORMER PRESIDENT WHO TRIED TO SUBVERT AN ELECTION AND INCITED A MOB TO STORM THE CAPITOL ALMOST ONE YEAR AGO HAS FACED NO MEANINGFUL CONSEQUENCES--AND MAY WELL END UP IN THE WHITE HOUSE AGAIN!

SOURCES SPEAKING ON BACKGROUND SAY THAT HELL IS EMPTY AND ALL THE DEVILS ARE HERE!

WE'LL KEEP YOU UPDATED ON THIS DEVELOPING SITUATION!

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COMING UP NEXT: HEARTWARMING STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE BEGGING STRANGERS FOR MONEY TO HELP PAY FOR LIFE-SAVING MEDICAL PROCEDURES!

OUR COUNTRY IS BROKEN BEYOND REPAIR, BUT YOU HAVE TO ADMIRE THEIR PLUCKY SPIRIT! OR SOMETHING, I GUESS?

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, EVERYONE! WE'LL BE BACK AFTER THESE MESSAGES.

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PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

What do we know about Lansing's new Councilman? Not a lot.

Jeffrey Brown takes office as a new at-large member of the Lansing City Councilman on Jan. 1. He was elected even though many specifics about his background stayed private — and they remain that way. Efforts to find out more about him have been hindered by Brown himself, who hasn't returned calls from City Pulse since before Election Day. What is on the record is his connection to several unsuccessful home healthcare businesses and that he filed for bankruptcy in 2015, apparently costing employees tens of thousands of dollars in income.

Here's just about everything we know (or don't know) about Lansing's new Councilman.

Nobody seems to know what Brown does for a living.

In campaign materials, Brown, 37, repeatedly emphasized his appointed roles on the executive committee of the Ingham County Community Health Centers, as well as on the city of Lansing's Human Relations and Community Services Advisory Board. He also touted service on the Institutional Advisory Board of Career Quest Learning Centers and on the board of the Capital Area Disability Network and the Uplift Our Youth Foundation. None of those are paid gigs.

Brown said he's also a public speaker and author. The back of one book, which appears to have been self-published, confidently describes him as a "savvy business man with a great vision that is rising to become one of the most dynamic and truly powerful speakers in the United States and abroad."

State licensing records show Brown formed the "Inspirational Center" in 2009, which then conducted business under the name "Michigan Career Solutions." In 2015, Brown dissolved that organization to form "Advance Health Management," which later became "Inspire Care."

Records from a 2015 bankruptcy showed he made a gross income of about \$13,000 in 2013, \$17,000 in 2014 and \$30,000 in 2015. Inspire Care also operated as a home health agency that provided in-home personal care services and collected about



Brown

\$250,000 through about 85 separate checks from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Home Help program between September 2017 and last March. A MDHHS spokesman said Inspire Care closed as a home health agency last year — about the same time that Brown founded "Inspire Global."

His LinkedIn page lists him as an "executive consultant and senior advisor" there, a position that he has supposedly had since 2009, though the company doesn't appear to have any actual online presence or physical office. State licensing records also show that Inspire Global is registered to a residential address in another name.

Brown's LinkedIn page only describes the business as a "private consultancy" that specializes in "strategic management: developing, planning, and executing board of directors' targets and/or owner-level decision making and vision. Building up leaders and refining their potential has become an underpinning result. Achieve 100% client satisfaction and implementation of goals."

Additionally, Brown said he has bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees in Ministry Christian Leadership from Kingdom University International Bible College — a Florida-based university that purports to offer all the online courses needed for a doctorate degree for as low as \$5,400.

Brown, for his part, has repeatedly ignored the direct question: "What do you do for a living?"

Brown still owed wages when he filed bankruptcy in 2015.

With about a week until Election Day and most absentee ballots already mailed, FOX 47 News broke a key story about Brown's background: Records showed that he was more than \$190,000 in debt (which included \$54,000 in unpaid staff wages) when he filed for bankruptcy in 2015.

Court records independently reviewed by City Pulse showed that Brown reported only about \$27,000 in assets in 2015 alongside outstanding debts that included more than \$45,000 in wages owed to former employees of the Inspirational Center, about \$23,000 in late federal taxes, \$2,400 in student loans, \$19,000 on a 2010 BMW and \$26,000 for an unpaid office lease.

Brown initially claimed that he "didn't owe anybody any wages," but later he told reporters that he had mis-spoken and that he regrets any issues that his bankruptcy had caused for his former staff.

Two years after the bankruptcy was finalized, Brown also borrowed more than \$35,000 to buy a 2014 Cadillac CTS, which was repossessed after he fell behind on payments, FOX 47 News reported. Court records show that Brown still owes more than \$20,000 to CASE Credit Union for that car.

"As far as him serving the city of Lansing, I would seriously question that," Ed Hassenger, a former Inspirational Center staffer, told FOX 47 News. "He did not serve the people of our business."

Brown 'accidentally' hung out with Trump Republicans in 2019.

Brown said he inadvertently attended (and was photographed at) a pro-Trump fundraiser alongside conservative spitfire Linda Lee Tarver in 2019. In response to several questions about his attendance, Brown insisted that he's a Democrat who does not support Trump and has no "political relationship" with Tarver. They're just church friends. And Brown only helped with

"logistics." Brown also said he didn't realize it was a pro-Trump event until it had ended.

"Most people in the black community know one another because the black community has had to stand shoulder to shoulder to resist and fight racism for decades. To think otherwise is to be ignorant of the struggle of the black community," Brown explained of his relationship with Tarver.

Brown used familiar talking points on the campaign trail.

Brown rounded out the November election with about 2,000 fewer supporters than Councilman Peter Spadafore — who slid into his second term with about 9,300 votes. Second place was a tight race: Brown beat out challenger Claretta Duckett-Freeman with 7,307 votes to her 7,110 to fill a vacancy left by failed mayoral candidate Kathie Dunbar.

In response to a pre-election questionnaire from City Pulse, Brown said he put in more work on the campaign trail than any other at-large candidate and laid out a fairly generic platform that included vague priorities like building stronger neighborhoods, supporting small businesses, creating more jobs and working to make local government more transparent and accessible.

He also cited plans to implement "common-sense policy and investment" to build more housing, enhance local parks, boost community policing efforts and collaborate more with local schools.

That common-sense platform has since led to a wave of support from several members of the Council's traditionalist bloc, including Carol Wood, Adam Hussain and former Councilwoman Jody Washington. Brown also secured key endorsements from the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and several labor unions that represent cops, building trades, Realtors and more.

Regardless of Brown's true political leanings, many Lansing insiders — including Councilman Brian Jackson — said they expect the Council to lean more conservative in Dunbar's absence.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

Disabled woman facing eviction after questionable house sale

Her mental competency an issue as she faces Dec. 28 eviction hearing

Kathy, 62, minimizes her bipolar disorder. When she provides a list of disabilities for which she is receiving Social Security Disability Insurance, it's usually the last condition that she mentions — and only with some reluctance and prodding from her daughter Natasha Beals.

Beals and her boyfriend, David Hardin, believe Kathy has been the victim of an exploitation that targets people who are facing tax foreclosure. And now they're fighting to save Kathy's house.

With only about \$800 a month in income, Kathy — only her first name is being used to protect her identity — plays whack-a-mole with the bills. The tax bills fall behind. Each time she landed on the tax foreclosure list, the incessant phone calls began from real estate speculators looking to make a quick buck. One of those speculators was David VanDyke from The Walker Group Properties in Kent County, Kathy explained to City Pulse.

"They called me quite a few times before, they just called me at the right time," she said. "He was very, very nice. He was constantly calling back. I was telling him about the situation I was in, how horrible the neighbors were and he would just laugh. He would be very understanding."

Her statement illustrates one example of what Beals and Hardin think is part of the manifestation of her mental health problems. Kathy is convinced that her neighbors break into her house and steal peanut butter from the jar, only to return it later. Her house, she told City Pulse, is bugged and comedy material she says she creates is being transmitted to nationally recognized comic writers.

"My house was bugged. My phone was bugged," she said. "Everything was bugged."

While she made the statement in past tense, she said the bugs were active that very moment.

And because her comedy was, in her mind, being used by national caliber television shows, she was going to take the money from the sale of her house, pack up her belongings and move to New York to write for "Saturday Night Live." It would get her away from the neighbors who



Todd Heywood/City Pulse

Natasha Beals and David Hardin in front of the carport of the home they are fighting to save for Beals' mother, Kathy. The Lansing Township home was on the tax foreclosure list, and Kathy sold it for significantly under the property's value. Beals and Hardin argued Kathy was unfit to make the deal while she struggled with bipolar disorder and hoarding, among other disabilities.

broke in and stole from her, away from the bugs and also fulfill a "lifelong dream," she said she had explained to VanDyke, the real estate broker who negotiated the purchase of her home in June.

Hardin was dumbfounded when he and Beals learned of the sale. He called VanDyke.

"I asked him: How many 62 year olds pack up and move to New York City and start working for 'Saturday Night Live?'" Hardin said in an interview. "He said, 'People do it all the time.'"

Kathy will face a 55th District Court judge Dec. 28 for eviction. She has only received about \$15,000 of the \$32,000 that VanDyke agreed to pay for the \$50,000 home. The remainder was to be held in escrow until Kathy moved out, but has been swallowed up by \$200 daily fees charged by the company for missing the move out date. Kathy is a "hoarder," and that has complicated her living conditions and moving, Beal and Hardin explained to City Pulse.

Because of limited income — and the slight but fleeting financial windfall of

the house sale — Kathy did not qualify for most local low-income housing. She also couldn't show the income to obtain a traditional market-rate rental. And she has already chewed through the money she did receive to rent storage units. But the house is still full. And Kathy said she has nowhere to go.

This reporter spent weeks tracking down VanDyke and the Walker Group Properties. VanDyke finally answered his phone on Friday. When asked about Kathy, he said he was busy and could not have a conversation. When asked for a time, he said he needed to check his schedule and hung up. And he has not called back or responded to messages sent to his LinkedIn account.

VanDyke's LinkedIn account identifies his position as acquisition manager for REI Bluekey LLC, organized out of Sterling Heights, which is registered to do business for The Walker Group.

REI Bluekey LLC doing business as The Walker Group received a \$10,000 Paycheck Protection Program loan in 2020. It was forgiven this year, according to a ProPublica database on PPP loans. The company claimed the loan

would cover payroll for some of its 30 employees.

The Walker Group's address on its website tracks to a UPS Store in Kentwood. The only address for REI Bluekey is in Sterling Heights with the resident agent for the company.

Kathy's 800-square-foot ranch style house in Lansing Township was transferred in September to Walker ISA 263 LLC of Denton, Texas. According to corporate records from the state of Texas, the address for that business is a five-bedroom, four-bath, nearly 3,000-square-foot home.

Ronald Walker, of Texas, is tied to all three companies. He did not return phone calls or emails.

Ingham County Treasurer Eric Schertzing said real estate deals like this, particularly with tax foreclosure properties, are less common than they were a decade ago during the housing crisis. But they are still happening. He said his office has a list of "bad players" that they keep an eye on to make sure local residents — much like Kathy —

Eviction

from page 6

aren't being bilked out of their properties.

But it is hard to watch every property. And as this case demonstrates, players can easily create new limited liability companies in Michigan to shuffle the paper trail and make contact difficult.

Schertzing's files show numerous entries that his staff was well aware of Kathy's declining mental health. In January, a staff member wrote, "I don't think she's OK." Many of the allegations explained in this story and during the interview were included in the note.

Schertzing said he was unaware of any rule or law that required his office to call adult protective services in such a situation. A Michigan Department of Health and Human Services spokesman confirmed that county treasurer employees are not considered mandatory reporters in Michigan.

Bradley Vauter is an attorney for

Bradley Vauter and Associates PLLC in Grand Ledge who specializes in elder law and vulnerable adults' legal issues. He said that Kathy's story is not an uncommon one, but Michigan's laws to protect vulnerable adults are murky — at best.

In order for there to be a criminal process, the purchaser — in this case — would have to reasonably know that a person was a vulnerable adult, he said. But that leaves a lot of room for interpretation in the courtroom, and prosecutors are often wary of taking on such cases. Law enforcement can be even less likely to take a complaint and investigate them criminally, he said.

Vauter said those cases are instead often referred to by police as civil matters. And civil cases take money, which people like Kathy are unlikely to have available to them. Vauter said it's the reason that older residents and people with disabilities have been snared into such disputes.

"This really is a morass — that's a really good word to explain this," Vauter added.

— **TODD HEYWOOD**

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Ingham County Treasurer Eric Schertzing

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City Council primes pump for \$2.5 billion GM factory

Battery factory could create 1,700 jobs through 2026

The Lansing City Council laid some key legislative groundwork on Monday that could enable General Motors to collect millions of dollars in tax incentives and build a \$2.5 billion battery cell production plant in Delta Township, creating 1,700 new jobs in Lansing over the next five years.

And while nothing is final, some local officials are already estimating that the would-be manufacturing plant could represent the largest economic driver to ever come to Lansing.

“Our region and state are competing right now with a number of other states to land a very futuristic, massive project that will genuinely set the course for our region and state,” Bob Trezise, president of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, told the Council on Monday night. “It’s the largest economic development project in the history of our region — times two.”

The latest plans from General Motors and Ultium Cells LLC were first revealed in an application for tax incentives that was filed with the Council last week and first published on Friday with a Committee of the Whole agenda. But behind the scenes, Mayor Andy Schor said planning for the proposal had been underway for “several weeks” before they were made public last week.

Early proposals call for GM to collect untold millions of dollars in tax incentives to help build a 2.5 million square-foot factory on about 590 acres next to the Delta Assembly Plant. Officials at LEAP estimated that local tax breaks could amount to a total of \$14 million over 20 years.

If the plans stay on track, officials said crews could break ground on the three-year construction before April. The assembly floor would primarily house equipment for electrode mixing, coating and formation of batteries for electric vehicles, according to the application. In addition to creating 1,700 full-time jobs through 2026, the project could also require up to 1,000 skilled trades construction personnel to get it all built — that is, if the tax incentives are all approved.

On Monday, the Council rushed through a 21-year extension to an exist-

ing tax-sharing deal — called an Act 425 agreement — that the city has had with Delta Township since 2000. Originally put in place for the Delta Assembly Plant, the agreement allows the city to collect a portion of tax revenues on the property even though it’s technically located in Delta Township jurisdiction.

The Council also approved an application to the state to convert the future factory site into what state law defines as a “Renaissance Zone,” a designation that allows businesses like GM to receive certain tax exemptions from most property and income taxes to encour-

age business and manufacturing development in some of the state’s most “economically depressed” areas. It would also exempt GM from paying most local taxes levied on the site for the next 18 years.

City officials

also said the Act 425 agreement with Delta Township was a necessary first step because only the city — and not the township — can apply to the state for a Renaissance Zone. The existing plant will not be a part of the renaissance zone application, city officials explained.

Other tax incentives, like a facilities tax exemption, will also be sought on the project. A special public hearing on those incentives was set for Monday, Dec. 20 at Lansing City Hall. The application also noted a need for various infrastructure improvements, like road paving, street lights on Davis Road and Nixon Road, new street signage and stormwater piping fixes nearby.

The Board of Commissioners at the Lansing Board of Water & Light was also set to vote this week on a resolution that would authorize General Manager Dick Peffley to negotiate a reduced rate for future electricity costs at the future factory site — the last rung in a four-pronged approach toward luring GM to expand operations in the Greater Lansing region, Trezise said.

Trezise also painted the project as the “collective last chance” for the future of the automotive industry in Lansing. Without it, other local assembly plants and suppliers could be “at some risk in the long term future,” he told the Council. He also said it could encourage other suppliers to relocate to the city — representing a “secure electric car mak-

ing future for our region and state.”

Council President Peter Spadafore also remarked before the vote: “This is one of the most significant economic development votes we may take on this body, and it will have a decades-long impact on our community — perhaps the future of the global automotive industry.”

In a statement, Mayor Schor also described Lansing as “the perfect location” for the factory.

“Creating these good-paying jobs, billions in economic investment, and jobs to build and support this new battery plant would be transformational for the Lansing region,” he said in a statement.

A GM spokesperson told City Pulse that the company is in the “initial stages” of considering Lansing among several other locations for future business and declined to comment further.

Trezise also told the Detroit Free Press that the future of the Lansing site still hinges on a major economic incentive package being developed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and state lawmakers.

Fast-tracked state legislation that received initial approvals last week created a new set of economic development funds to help the state land major business expansions, including possible electric vehicle and battery plants, according to reports from the Associated Press.

Lawmakers reportedly didn’t say how much money they put into the accounts, but some of it is likely to come from the \$5.6 billion in discretionary federal COVID-19 pandemic rescue funds. And while proponents did not specify pending deals for which Michigan is vying, several told a House Committee that Michigan must stay competitive in the auto industry, AP has reported.

This year, General Motors also announced plans to build four North American battery plants, including one in Ohio and another in Tennessee. The Lansing location would be the third.

When the Free Press asked last week whether GM would locate a new plant in Michigan, GM CEO Mary Barra said, “Stay tuned. There’s a lot of conversations going on right now and in the not-too-distant future we’ll be able to answer that question. I need to be fair to all parties involved.” When asked how long she meant, Barra added: “Count weeks not months.”

Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more coverage as the proposed development plans move forward.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

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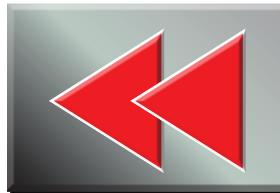


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REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI

Schor picks Lansing's top cop

Interim Police Department Chief Ellery Sosebee was picked by Mayor Andy Schor to serve as the city's next permanent police chief following former Chief Daryl Green's retirement in July. The city's Board of Police Commissioners is expected to approve the selection this month. The City Council also authorized Schor on Monday to sign Sosebee to a longer, three-year contract. The national search for a new permanent fire chief is expected to be finished early next year.



Patriot Front in Lansing?

At least one sticker advertising for the Patriot Front was spotted on a street pole in Lansing this week. The white supremacist group is reportedly known for espousing racism, antisemitism and intolerance under the guise of preserving the "ethnic and cultural origins" of their ancestors.

Schor: End the gun violence

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor, local police officials and other elected leaders gathered at City Hall to call for an end to rising levels of gun violence in the city. The Police Department has tallied 24 homicides this year, up from a record-breaking 21 homicides recorded in 2020. Last year, the city also tracked 81 non-fatal shootings and 465 gunshot reports. As of this week, a relatively consistent 81 non-fatal shootings and 421 gunshot reports have been recorded by authorities.



Schor

Young boy injured in apparent shooting

Lansing cops said a 12-year-old Lansing boy was found on the sidewalk on the 3800 block of Maybel Street with a gunshot wound at about 5 p.m. Friday (Dec. 10). The boy was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. A preliminary investigation suggests it was a drive-by shooting orchestrated by two other young men in a metallic blue sedan. Those with any information about the incident have been asked to contact authorities at 517-483-4600.

Trader Joe's coming to Meridian Twp.

The Meridian Township Zoning Board of Appeals approved a variance that greenlights the national grocery retailer to build and open a 13,500-square-foot store near Northwind Drive and Grand River Avenue at the current location of Golden Wok. The company reportedly plans to demolish the existing commercial center to accommodate the new construction. The plans also still reportedly require a site plan and building permit review.



Lansing mourns former superintendent

Longtime former Lansing School District Superintendent Dr. Richard Halik, 78, died Saturday (Dec. 11) after a brief battle with cancer. Residents remembered Halik as a compassionate colleague and friend who cared about local children and families — once convincing the district to rent a school on Genesee Street to the Black Child and Family Institute for only \$5 a year. Wainwright Elementary School was also recently renamed in Halik's honor.



Halik

Lansing cops crack down on speeding

Lansing cops have been assigned to monitor speeding and reckless driving in certain high-traffic areas of the city through February as part of a new initiative from the state Office of Highway Safety Planning. Over the last week, officers assigned to that specific detail in the city of Lansing have stopped at least 165 drivers, issued 178 tickets and given out only 20 warnings.

LCC receives largest donation ever

Thomas and Patricia Zuhl donated \$250,000 to Lansing Community College — marking the single largest cash donation in the college's history. The cash is set to be used to support more scholarships for international students, enhanced study abroad programs for local students and to help the college's faculty "globalize" their curriculum to attract more international students.

Free metered parking in Lansing

Meters for on-street parking in the city of Lansing will be free through



Jan. 2. Mayor Andy Schor said the move is designed to help encourage more business traffic downtown.

Virtual harassment climbs at MSU

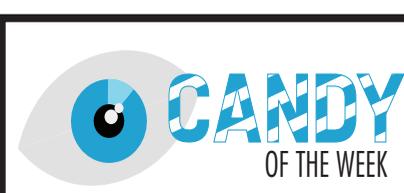
A "steady stream" of more than 500 complaints of relationship violence and sexual misconduct were reported to Michigan State University's Office of Institutional Equity during the 2020-'21 school year despite most students not being on campus, reports the Lansing State Journal. Many of those reports were reportedly linked to a rise in virtual harassment — like Zoom bombing, where people interrupt online classes or meetings with profanity and hate speech.

Okemos to pick new mascot

The search for a new mascot to replace the Chiefs at Okemos Public Schools is down to 10 candidates: Badgers, Bears, Coyotes, Eagles, Grizzlies, Ocelots, Ospreys, Otters, Owls and Wolves. A student committee will narrow the list down later this year and district officials expect to have a new logo identified by spring break in mid-April.

Women's soccer launches in 2022

Local youth club Cap City Athletic was accepted into the United Women's Soccer's Midwest North Conference and is in the process of assembling a team that will compete next summer. The new pro-am soccer team decided to launch after the region's last women's team, Lansing United, suspended operations at the close of the 2021 season. Tickets will be free for one year.



Brenke Fish Ladder

216 E. Cesar Chavez St., Lansing

The Brenke Fish Ladder is found in Burchard Park along the Lansing River Trail near Old Town. The ladder itself was constructed in 1981 as part of a series of fish ladders, or step-like pools, to help salmon and trout travel from Lake Michigan upstream to the Moore's Park Dam in Lansing. The Brenke Fish Ladder has appeared in the Eye Candy column before (10/7/15), yet its design is worthy of another mention here. As you can see in the photo, the design of the structure around the fish ladder includes wide, multi-sided steps which cascade down from the river trail to an observation platform. Along the railing appear a series of two-steps. These mimic the graduated steps of the fish ladder in the water. It is a unique design that fits its location in a visually appealing way. Other fish ladders are not nearly as aesthetically pleasing as this one. Indeed, the Brenke Fish Ladder is slightly reminiscent of Robson Square in Vancouver, a "stramp" that includes wide concrete steps interspersed with ramps for wheelchair users. Robson Square was begun in 1979 and thus is from a similar era as Brenke. While there are now concerns about the actual accessibility provided by the Robson Square stramp, it has won multiple awards for its design.

— CARRIE SAMPSON

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

No holiday from gun violence

Another Lansing teenager is dead. Three more youngsters — ages 16, 18 and a 10-week-old infant — are all hospitalized with wounds suffered during an early morning hail of bullets on the streets of the Capital City last Friday. The week before, just 90 miles down the road in Oxford, a deranged teen whose equally deranged parents bought him a pistol for Christmas took his new present to school and executed four of his classmates.

It took three days for Mayor Andy Schor to say anything at all about the latest Lansing shootings. When he did, during a Monday press conference at City Hall, he highlighted a series of measures underway to address the issue before acting as the emcee for a parade of local officials who took turns expressing their predictable outrage at the situation and demanding an end to the violence.

Schor's new law enforcement BFF — Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth — was also on hand to offer a predictably tone deaf litany of excuses that put the blame on people calling for police reforms, negative media stories about police, and of course, that the real crux of the matter is Black people killing other Black people. His department, he says, is doing the best job it's ever done. Following his remarks, Wriggelsworth was forcefully called out by a member of the audience for "blaming the oppressed for being oppressed."

New Lansing School District Superintendent Ben Shuldiner at least brought a level of humility appropriate to the moment, blaming himself for the fact that too many Lansing students are dead or in jail. Damon Milton, a leader of Lansing's Black pastors, also spoke, surprisingly to launch yet another misplaced salvo of criticism at Ingham County Prosecuting Attorney Carol Siemon for her good-faith efforts to end the inherently biased policing practice of pretextual traffic stops against people of color.

For his part, Lansing Police Chief Elliot Sosebee — newly elevated by Schor to the permanent chief position — called for community cooperation in helping his department stem the tide of violence, but he also whined about how tough it is to be a cop these days, and that accountability for the gun violence epidemic "cannot start and end" with his department. True that, but when it's your job to keep a community safe and you are failing at that job, something has to change, and that begins with having the right priorities.

Sosebee was delivered a report in October that showed Lansing police continue to arrest Black youth 4.5 times more frequently than others. Fully



The CP Edit

Opinion

85% of the young people age 17 and under who were arrested last year in Lansing were Black. And while overall youth arrests declined significantly in 2020, presumably due to the department's hands-off approach to pandemic policing, we find it shocking and inexplicable that the arrest rate for youth of color has skyrocketed in just the past seven years. In 2014, only 57% of the young people arrested by LPD were Black. When asked in late November by the Lansing State Journal what he thought of the arrest report he had had on his desk since October, Sosebee said he hadn't had a chance to look at it yet. Evidently, addressing the profound racial disparities in his department's arrest numbers doesn't fall near the top of his daily priorities. That needs to change.

In case you had any doubts, America's gun-loving chickens have come home to roost. In the streets of Lansing. In the hallways of Oxford High School. And in countless places before. Yet not one of these horrific tragedies has been enough to prompt state or federal lawmakers to get serious about enacting reasonable regulations that restrict the sale and possession of handguns.

The easy availability of these firearms — both legal and illegal — has turned our city and our nation into a Wild West shooting gallery. Combined with broken families living in abject poverty, where adult supervision of children too often falls by the wayside; a rising tide of discontent and anger rooted both in the lack of economic opportunity and the perpetual pandemic; and lackadaisical policing that fosters an "anything goes" ethos on the streets: All has conspired to lead us to this most unfortunate place.

Are more dead teenagers and wounded babies the price we're willing to pay as a society to make sure no one tramples on our constitutional "right" to keep and bear arms? Let's remember that there is no such thing as an absolute right. It's illegal to yell "fire" in a crowded movie theater, not an expression of your free speech rights under the First Amendment. Likewise, reasonable controls on gun ownership, including stiff penalties for failing to secure firearms in the home, are no more a violation of anyone's constitutional rights than being required to wear your seat belt. We can either get serious about solving America's gun problem, or we will continue to suffer the consequences.

Life is all about choices. Our state and federal lawmakers need to start making the right choices to end this nation's sickening tolerance of gun violence. If not now, when?

Have something to say about a local issue or an item that appeared in our pages? Now you have two ways to sound off:

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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.)

Unwittingly, media outlets aid redistricting plan opponents

Trust me, nobody gets more agitated by closed meeting and government records being kept from the public eye than I do.

But the Detroit papers and Bridge Michigan are fighting someone else's battle by suing for a pair



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

dering legislative districts out of Detroit into the suburbs like spokes on a wheel.

Is that good or bad? It's different. The federal courts might not be OK with this. We're taking the word of the commission's attorney, Bruce Adelson, that it is, but other attorneys will argue otherwise.

All of this should have been talked out in the spring, when the commission was busying itself with micromanaging its little bureaucracy.

Alas, this wasn't the priority. The commission didn't talk much about it. The press didn't write much about it. It was a missed opportunity and a shame.

All of the commission's hard work could be flushed down the porcelain with one adverse decision from a federal judge because this wasn't talked out. Michigan voters' new experiment with a redistricting commission would be a failure.

From the get-go, opponents to the commission had only a few legitimate arguments on dismantling the commission's maps. Arguing in federal court that they screwed up the U.S. Voting Rights Act was always on the list.

By the commission taking the path less chosen, the argument moved up to No. 1 or No. 2 in terms of best potential legal arguments.

Adelson's secret documents should have existed in the spring. The commission should have asked for them. The press should have asked about it.

Instead, these documents surfaced in the fall. Commissioners already cracked Detroit by then. Every legislative map the commission drew together has Detroit the center of a crooked pin-

wheel.

The public complained about it and the media wrote stories about the outcry, but nothing changed. The commission made its mind up.

Knowing the legal risk, the commission's legal team of four attorneys circled the wagons and gave the commission these "what's up" memos. The press wants to see them.

The attorneys don't want to play euchre with the other side seeing their cards. They are telling the press to take a hike.

This isn't about the press anymore. This is about FAIR Maps or the coalition of Detroit voters or whoever else wants to dismantle these maps in court.

The Detroit News, The Detroit Free Press and Bridge Michigan did the work of these groups by suing to make these documents public.

They are unwittingly helping the cause of shoot down this commission's work, inserting itself in a larger chess game in the name of open government, when:

— This commission's map drawing process has been painfully transparent up to this point.

— The news value of the documents is much, much more about the chase than the actual content.

— Information contained in the documents likely will be argued in open court eventually anyway.

Sure, maybe the Supreme Court orders the documents be released. The press scores what looks like an empty net goal to me.

But does the goal really equal a win? *(Email Kyle Melinn of the Capitol news service MIRS at melinnky@gmail.com.)*

Opinion

of obtuse documents the Michigan's Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission doesn't want

to see.

The juice might have been worth the squeeze six months ago, long before the redistricting commission was putting pen to paper on the maps. The public should know how Blacks historically were drawn in Michigan congressional and legislative boundaries, the subject of these documents.

Should dense pockets of Black voters be "packed" together, almost assuredly giving them representation from a Black public official?

Or should they be cracked and mixed in with white-majority suburbs, giving Black candidates more opportunities to win seats in the Legislature?

Here in Michigan, we've been packing Blacks together for at least the last three cycles. The courts have been OK with that.

But what about cracking? How does that work? Are the feds OK with lots of 40% Black districts instead of fewer 55% Black districts?

Our new citizen-led redistricting commission went the road less traveled. They cracked the maps in Detroit, spi-

LETTERS to the editor

Not all reading problems are dyslexia

Re: "Michigan students are failing students with dyslexia, advocates say" (Dec. 1):

As a person who earned a master's degree in reading and held an Illinois reading specialist teacher's certificate for many years, I would like to explain that "dyslexia" is a lay term (not used by reading teachers) regarding reading disabilities. It would be such a bad idea to try to screen for this in the schools! There are no eye exercises or special brain exercises to remediate so-called dyslexia. It is sometimes said that dyslexic children mix up the lowercase letters "b" and "d"; however, quite a few kindergarten to third-grade students do this, and they grow out of it. Imagine a kindergarten child being labeled "dyslexic" because he or she mixed up these letters.

I remediated a child whose parents thought he had dyslexia, (although, again, it is not a term reading specialists use). He was in 5th grade, but his frustration level for reading was 2nd grade material. In testing him, I found out he was sounding out every word. His classroom teachers had focused too much on phonics. By the time he got to the end of a sentence, he had lost its meaning. A child should have a reading vocabulary of words recognizable on sight – words such as "those," "some," "could", etc. By the

use of flash cards, this boy learned all the sight words appropriate to his grade level.

Some of you may have received funny "tests" on Facebook in which the vowels have been removed from words, yet you are able to understand what is written. This does illustrate that vowels are not important. Children need to know the sounds of consonants, not vowels, recognize sight words, and read for meaning. I told this boy that sentences should make sense, and he learned to stop himself at the end of a sentence if it hadn't made sense to him – to go back and have another look. By the next semester, this boy was reading at grade level.

In Illinois, reading specialists take struggling children out of the classroom to give them special, individualized help. This is not part of the special education program. Reading help is what is effective, not dyslexia screening.

Janet Pendleton Lansing

Why I quit buying the LSJ

Re: "Can the LSJ still fly?" (Dec. 8).

It's time to pull the plug, it is drowning and can't be saved. Hard to believe that this town with a major university and a great little city can't have a paper that brings out the goodness.

This is the capital of Michigan. We deserve better. Get another company that cares about us the good people of mid-Michigan.

I stopped my subscription and will not go back. Online is as bad as the paper — nothing to read. What bs.

Arnold Parent Grand Ledge

Happy Holidays

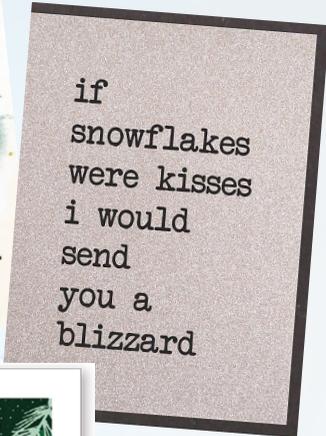
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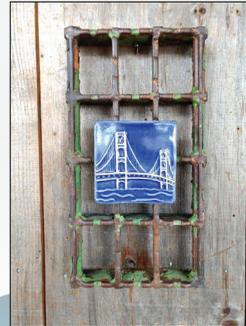
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Last Minute *Holiday Gift* Guide 

'Today' show gift guru offers hope to last-minute shoppers

By TODD HEYWOOD

It's Dec. 15 (or later) and you realize you've forgotten that office holiday gift exchange or the extended family gathering where gifts are expected. It's time to turn on the gifting powers and find something that will be a smash at the gathering or party but won't leave your wallet empty.

City Pulse had an opportunity to speak with Evette Rios, whose designs and rehabs have been featured on "Today," "Rachael Ray" and others. Rios is married to Jackson native Stephen Davies and regularly returns to the area with her family.

What are some quirky, oddball, easy last-minute gifts, particularly in a pandemic? Rios said this is the time to challenge those anxious social realities with a little old fashioned personalization.

"We all kind of need reassurance from one another that we're doing OK and that we're on the right track," she said in a Zoom interview. "It has been kind of a demoralizing couple of years for all of us, and I think the real gift we can give one another is just that, 'You're doing great, I love you, and you're valuable and you matter.'"

Rios is a fan of repurposing things as gifts that spark imagination and remind people of the connections in their lives.

For instance, she spoke of using a combination of readily available items at the local health food store to create a personalized shaving cream. She did that one year for her father, who had been whimsical about missing the hot towel, straight razor shaves of the old-time barber shops. She threw the ingredients, includ-

ing various essential oils and a shea butter, together in a blender. Then she took an old jar of spaghetti sauce, painted the lid festively, filled the jar with the cream, put a ribbon on it and added a vintage men's razor.

"My dad loved it, and it lasted a long time," she said.

Essential oils play a role in another sug-



Rios

See Rios, Page 15



Happy Holidays
from All Star Mechanical



Holiday Gift Guide



Rios

from page 14

gestion from Rios. Take a high percent alcohol solution, add selected essential oils, maybe a sprig of an herb, spice or other scent producing item, mix together and Presto! It's a room and fabric freshener, and it's homemade.

During the conversation, this reporter mentioned a last-minute gift idea created for a small theater group he was working with at the time. With an empty clear shoe box in hand, it was filled with trinkets and other things found around the house — firecrackers, playing cards, a few rocks, buttons — then a note to explain what each item in the box represented and promised for the coming year. It was a hit at the theater group, and one Rios said she'd never thought about, but gave kudos to.

"It's all about that connection, right?" she said.

One year for Valentine's Day, Rios

said she took an old box and decorated it. She labeled it "365 reasons I love you" and filled it with 365 reasons she adored her mother. As a professional interior designer, she's always on the lookout for boxes because, she said, you can fill them with items and the box itself can be reused.

Rios said boxes are one thing she is always watching for when she's hitting thrift stores and flea markets. Another thing are orphaned lamps.

"Most people want them in pairs, so you can pick one off really cheap," she said.

The shade for a lamp is a versatile canvas, she said. You can attach things to them like ribbons, or you can paint them with stencils or create a leaf print by dipping a leaf in paint and dabbing it against the shade.

"That's becoming a super chic thing right now," she said. "I am seeing hand-made stenciled shades in many high-end places."

The lamp itself can be personalized too. She took an old lamp, a handful of her sons' beaten-up and broken action figures, a hot glue gun and gold paint and created a new lamp. It was something that made the kids happy and prevented the waste of the lamp and the broken toys, which might otherwise have ended up in a landfill.

Don't forget the pets, Rios said. For dogs, she likes to take an old T-shirt and a ball — any ball that will fit in a dog's mouth. Put the ball in the shirt, tie it in place and then cut strips in the T-shirt. Braid the strips together and you have a toy that keeps human hands off the dog-slobber-covered ball while entertaining for the dog.

For cats in her world, Rios said she "marinates" toys in catnip for months, then pulls them out and provides the toy to the cats. The toys absorb much of the smell

of the intoxicating plant, and the jar of catnip's life gets extended for months.

Just remember, Rios said, this year, more than years past, is about "establishing your connection with those you love," and "showing them you've been thinking about them."



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The new normal is more normalized censorship

Project Censored's Top 10 Stories Show Old Patterns Alive and Well

By PAUL ROSENBERG

Project Censored is an American nonprofit media watchdog organization that seeks to “educate students and the public about the importance of a truly free press for democratic self-government.” Every year, the organization looks at important stories that were underreported.

This story is excerpted from the book “Project Censored’s State of the Free Press 2022,” edited by Andy Lee Roth and Mickey Huff, and published in collaboration with Random Lengths News, an alternative newspaper in Port of Los Angeles, California.

Project Censored’s co-directors, Mickey Huff and Andy Lee Roth, title their introduction to this year’s edition of *State of the Free Press*, “A Return to News Normalcy?” drawing a direct parallel between our world today to that of post-World War I America, “When the United States faced another raging pandemic and economic recession,” with other sources of tumult as well: “The United States then had experienced a crackdown on civil liberties and free speech in the form of Espionage and Sedition Acts; racial tensions flared during the Red Summer of 1919 as violence erupted from Chicago to Tulsa; Prohibition was the law of the land; and the first wave of US feminism ended with the passage of the 19th Amendment.” At the time, they noted, “People yearned for a return to ‘normalcy,’ as then-presidential hopeful Warren G. Harding proclaimed.”

But it was not to be. “The desire for simpler times, however, was more a phantom than a reality, as millions of Americans ultimately had to adjust to an ever- and fast-changing world,” including a rapidly changing media landscape — most notably the explosion of radio. And we should expect much the same. Every major change in the media landscape has brought with it the promise of expanded horizons and democratic possibility — the potential for a broader, more inclusive public conversation — only to see many of the old patterns of division, exclusion and demonization recur in new ways as well as old, as recent revelations about Facebook vividly remind us.

Project Censored isn’t alone in drawing parallels to a century ago, of course. The pandemic above all has expanded journalistic horizons, as a matter of necessity. To a lesser extent, the threat

to American democracy — part of a worldwide trend of democratic backsliding — has done so as well. But though some have expanded their horizons, many more continue as if little or nothing has fundamentally changed. Day-to-day news stories perpetuate the fantasy that normal has already returned. And in one sense they’re right: The normal patterns of exclusion and suppression that Project Censored has been tracking for over 40 years continue to dominate, with even the latest wrinkles fitting into well-established, if evolving, broad patterns that are depressingly familiar.

These patterns are reflected in Project Censored’s top ten list, with two stories each about labor struggles, racism, threats to health, the environment and free speech. Yes, that’s 12 stories, not 10, because some stories fit into more than one pattern — and some readers will surely find more patterns as well.

Several stories this year deal with topics that have gotten widespread attention — but with aspects that have been virtually, or entirely ignored. The number one story, for example, deals with prescription drug costs, a widely covered story, but with a significant difference in focus: how much those costs translate to in lost lives. The number nine story deals with police violence against people of color, but with a new focus that’s actually quite old: vicious police dog attacks. The number four story deals with climate change, again with a different focus: how heavily industrialized nations like the U.S. “have effectively colonized the global atmospheric commons for the sake of their own industrial growth.”

The point of Project Censored has never been just to expose significant stories that have been ignored, but rather to expose them as portals to a wider landscape of understanding and action. In that spirit, here is our summary of this year’s top ten censored stories:



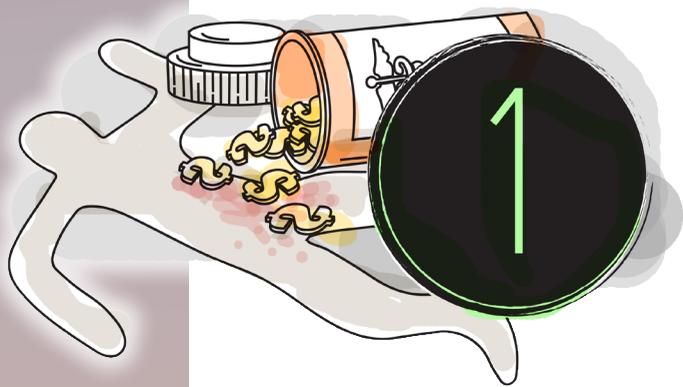
(Paul Rosenberg is the senior editor of Random Lengths News.)

Illustrations by Anson Stevens-Bollen

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Project Censored

from page 17



1. Prescription Drug Costs Set to Become a Leading Cause of Death for Elderly Americans

“Soaring prescription drug costs have been widely reported by corporate news outlets,” Project Censored notes, but they’ve utterly ignored the staggering resulting cost in human lives. More than 1.1 million seniors enrolled in Medicare programs could die prematurely in the next decade due to unaffordable prescription drugs, according to a November 2020 study reported on by Kenny Stancil for Common Dreams. “As medicines become increasingly expensive, patients skip doses, ration prescriptions, or quit treatment altogether,” Project Censored explained, a phenomenon known as “cost-related non-adherence,” which will become “a leading cause of death in the U.S., ahead of diabetes, influenza, pneumonia, and kidney disease” by 2030, according to the study by the nonprofit West Health Policy Center and Xcenda, the research arm of Amerisource-Bergen, a drug distributor.

“[E]ven with Medicare insurance, what seniors pay is linked to a drug’s price,” the study explained, which allowed them “to model how cost-related nonadherence would change under policies that would reduce drug prices, such as Medicare negotiation.” The study focused on five medical conditions that “significantly affect seniors and for which effective pharmaceutical treatments are available,” including three types of heart disease, chronic kidney disease, and type B diabetes.

“As a model for policymakers, the study pointed specifically to the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3),” which passed the House in December 2019 but died in the Senate, Project Censored noted. It’s been reintroduced after Joe Biden “declined to include Medicare negotiation in his \$1.8 trillion American Families Plan proposal,” they explained.

A May 2021 op-ed in the Hill, co-authored by Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt, cited the studies figures on preventable deaths and explained its basic framework:

H.R. 3 would limit the annual out-of-pocket costs for Medicare beneficiaries to no more than \$2,000, and would establish a top negotiated price for drugs at no more than 120 percent of the average of six other wealthy nations....

H.R. 3 would support and protect innovation and new drug development by investing some of the expected savings into the world-class research funded through the NIH.

But this op-ed was a rare exception. “The public’s understanding of the debate surrounding H.R. 3 and other proposed legislation designed to control inflation in pre-

scription drug prices ought to be informed by accurate information about the grim repercussions of continuing the status quo,” Project Censored noted. “Sadly, the corporate media have failed to provide the public with such information for far too long, and the consequences could turn out to be deadly for millions of seniors.”



2. Journalists Investigating Financial Crimes Threatened by Global Elites

Financial crimes of global elites, involving the flow of dirty money through some of the world’s most powerful banks, have made major headlines in recent years, most notably with the Panama Papers in 2016 and the FinSen Files in 2020. But we’d know a great deal more if not for the flood of threats faced by journalists doing this work — a major story that hasn’t been told in America’s corporate media, despite a detailed report from Foreign Policy Centre (FPC), “Unsafe for Scrutiny,” released in November 2020.

The report was based on a survey of 63 investigative journalists from 41 countries, which found that 71% had experienced threats and/or harassment while doing their investigations, with a large portion of those (73%) experiencing legal threats as well. Its findings were described by Spencer Woodman in an article for the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

“The report found that legal threats are chief among the types of harassment facing journalists conducting financial investigations, and often seek to exploit a skewed balance of power between often-underfunded reporting enterprises and the legal might of attorneys hired by the world’s wealthiest people and corporations,” Woodman wrote. “Focusing on frivolous cases known as ‘strategic lawsuits against public participation,’ or SLAPPs, the report asserts that such actions ‘can create a similar chilling effect on media freedom to more overt violence or attack.’” Legal threats are often communicated via private letters, “and, if successful in achieving their aim, the public will never know,” the report said.

Physical threats and online harassment were also a grave concern, but they were geographically uneven. “While no journalists surveyed in North America reported physical threats, 60% of respondents working in sub-Saharan Africa, and 50% of respondents from North Africa and the Middle East region reported threats of physical attack,” Woodman noted. Daphne Caruana Galizia was murdered by a car bomb in Malta in

October 2017, but he added, “The report asserts that an assassination is often not a starting point for those seeking to silence reporters but instead a crime committed after a pattern of escalating threats, noting that Caruana Galizia had faced numerous legal threats and actions and that her family is still fighting 25 lawsuits over her reporting.”

Project Censored noted Galizia’s murder along with that of Slovak investigative journalist Ján Kuciak, adding that “According to FPC’s report, an additional thirty reporters from Brazil, Russia, India, Ukraine, Mexico, and other countries who were researching financial corruption have been murdered since 2017.”

As for legal threats, “Unlike Canada, Australia, and certain US states, the United Kingdom has not passed anti-SLAPP legislation, making its courts an attractive venue for elites seeking to use the law to bully journalists into silence,” Project Censored noted, citing a May 8, 2021, Guardian column by Nick Cohen which described the UK’s court system as “the censorship capital of the democratic world.” Cohen in turn cited the case of financial reporter Catherine Belton, author of the 2020 book, “Putin’s People: How the KGB Took Back Russia and Then Took On the West,” “As Cohen explained, in response, a host of Putin’s super-wealthy associates are now bombarding Belton with one lawsuit after another,” Project Censored observed.

The silence about this silencing has been deafening, Project Censored noted. There has been some coverage overseas, but “to date, however, no major commercial newspaper or broadcast outlet in the United States has so much as mentioned the FPC’s report.”



3. Historic Wave of Wildcat Strikes for Workers’ Rights

After millions of people were designated “essential workers” when the U.S. went into lockdown in March 2020, thousands of wildcat strikes erupted to challenge dangerous working conditions and chronic low wages, exacerbated by refusal to protect against COVID-19 and cutting or sharply increasing the cost of medical insurance, for those who had it. A further strike surge was driven by “Black and Brown workers using digital technologies to organize collective actions as a way to press some of the demands for racial justice raised by Black Lives Matter and George Floyd protestors,” Project Censored noted. The nation’s fourth busiest port, Charleston, S.C., shut down during George Floyd’s funeral on June 9, for example.

At the labor news website Payday Report, Mike Elk created a continuously updated COVID-19 Strike Wave Interactive Map, which had identified “1,100 wildcat strikes as

Project Censored

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of March 24, 2021, many of which the corporate media have chosen to ignore,” according to Project Censored, including “more than 600 strikes or work stoppages by workers in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement,” in June 2020 alone, according to Elk.

“While local and regional newspapers and broadcast news outlets have reported on particular local actions, corporate news coverage has failed to report the strike wave as a wave, at no time connecting the dots of all the individual, seemingly isolated work stoppages and walkouts to create a picture of the overarching trend,” Project Censored reported.

The sole exception where there was national coverage was in August 2020 when highly paid baseball and basketball pro athletes walked out in violation of their contracts to protest the shooting of Jacob Blake by Wisconsin police. The coverage ended quickly once they returned a few days later.

Wildcat strikes occur when workers simply stop working, often in response to a specific incident, such as employer actions putting lives at risk by skimping on protective gear or attempting to cut workers’ healthcare. The situation was exacerbated by the Donald Trump administration’s failure to issue mandates requiring specific safety measures, as reported by Michael Sainato at the Guardian.

Examples covered by Elk that Project Censored cited include:

- In Santa Rosa, California, 700 healthcare workers went on strike because their hospital lacked sufficient personal protective equipment to keep employees safe, and management warned employees that their insurance fees would be doubled if they wanted continued coverage for their families.
- In St. Joseph, Missouri, 120 sheet metal workers went on strike due to management’s repeated attempts to cut their healthcare benefits during the pandemic.
- In May 2020, workers at 50 McDonald’s, Burger King, Starbucks, and other fast food establishments throughout Florida staged a day-long strike for higher pay and better protective equipment.
- In April 2021, employees at Chicago-area Peet’s Coffee & Tea locations staged a coordinated work stoppage along with the Fight for \$15 campaign to demand workplace protections and quarantine pay.

Furthermore, Elk noted that the 600 strikes in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement “is likely a severe underestimation as many non-union Black and Brown workers are now calling out en masse to attend Black Lives Matter protests without it ever being reported in the press or on social media.”

Elk also noted that “[M]any black workers interviewed by Payday Report say that, once again, white labor leaders are failing to understand non-traditional organizing that has developed from viral social media movements.... Instagram automation and similar automation on Facebook and Twitter help to build a huge following for grassroots movements, so something that had no following a month ago can suddenly go viral and reach millions of people within hours or even minutes.”

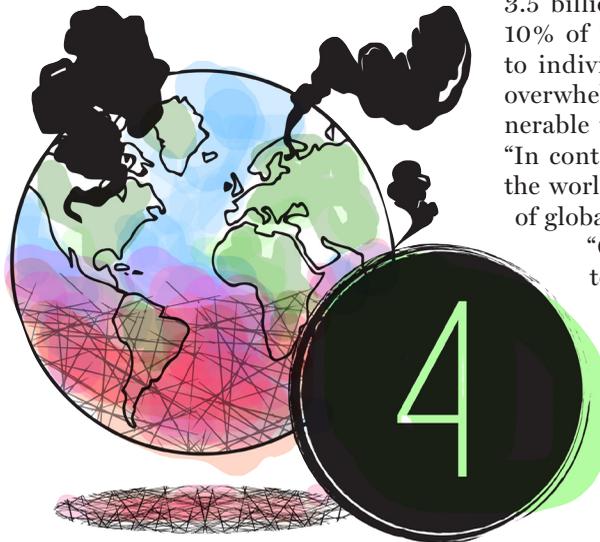
That threat empowers even solitary indi-

vidual workers, Tulsa-based Black filmmaker and activist Marq Lewis told Elk:

He says he personally knows of multiple examples of black workers in Tulsa approaching their bosses without the support of a union and winning changes in their workplace.

“A lot of people may say this is not a strike, well, you tell that to these workers now who are getting their grievances heard,” Lewis says.

That’s the censored story within the story within the story.



4. ‘Climate Debtor’ Nations Have ‘Colonized’ the Atmosphere

The United States and other developed countries in the global north are responsible for 92% of all the excess carbon dioxide emissions driving global warming, according to a study in the September issue of *The Lancet Planetary Health*. The U.S. alone was responsible for 40%, followed by Russia and Germany (8% each), the United Kingdom (7%), and Japan (5%).

The study’s author, economic anthropologist Jason Hickel, told Sarah Lazare, of *In These Times*, that his research began from the premises that “the atmosphere is a common resource” and that “all people should have equal access” to a fair share of it. He calculated each nation’s fair share of a sustainable global carbon budget, based on population, along with an analysis of “territorial emissions from 1850 to 1969, and consumption-based emissions from 1970 to 2015.” In turn, this was used to calculate “the extent to which each country has overshoot or undershot its fair share,” according to the study. Thus the above list of the largest climate debtors.

The results, he told *In These Times*, show that “the countries of the Global North have ‘stolen’ a big chunk of the atmospheric fair-shares of poorer countries, and on top of that are responsible for the vast majority of excess emissions... [T]hey have effectively colonized the global atmospheric commons for the sake of their own industrial growth.”

In contrast, the study found that “most countries in the Global South were within their boundary fair shares, including India and China (although China will overshoot soon).” The leading climate creditors to date are India (34% of global “undershoots”), China (11%), Bangladesh and Indonesia (5% each) and Nigeria (4%).

“High-income countries must not only reduce emissions to zero more quickly than other countries, but they must also

pay down their climate debts,” the study said. “Just as many of these countries have relied on the appropriation of labour and resources from the Global South for their own economic growth, they have also relied on the appropriation of global atmospheric commons, with consequences that harm the Global South disproportionately.”

“Other studies and analyses have pointed to the disproportionate responsibility of the Global North, and wealthy countries, for driving the climate crisis,” Lazare noted. Most dramatically, a 2015 study by Oxfam International “found that the poorest half of the world’s population — roughly 3.5 billion people — are to blame for just 10% of ‘total global emissions attributed to individual consumption,’ yet they ‘live overwhelmingly in the countries most vulnerable to climate change.’” She reported. “In contrast, the richest 10% of people in the world are responsible for roughly 50% of global emissions.”

“Corporate news outlets appear to have entirely ignored the findings of Jason Hickel’s *Lancet* study,” Project Censored noted. “Although it may be imperative to act ‘quickly and together’ to reduce carbon emissions, as Vice President Harris asserted at the April 2021 climate summit, corporate media have failed to cover Hickel’s cutting-edge research, which demonstrates that the United States and other would-be leaders in addressing climate change are in fact, as the world’s worst climate debtors, disproportionately responsible for climate breakdown.”



5. Microplastics and Toxic Chemicals Increasingly Prevalent in World’s Oceans

According to a pair of scientific studies published in the summer of 2020, microplastic particles and a family of toxic chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS have become more widespread in the world’s oceans than previously realized and have begun to contaminate the global seafood supply. The two problems are related because PFAS — a family of highly stable “forever chemicals” with more than 4,700 known members — can occur as microplastics, they can stick to microplastic particles in water, and are involved in the production of plastics.

In July 2020, a German-American study published in the scholarly journal *Environmental Science & Technology* revealed that PFAS — which are used in a range of products including carpets, furniture, clothing, food packaging and nonstick coatings — have now been found in the Arctic Ocean.

“This discovery worries scientists,” Project Censored explains, “because it means that PFAS can reach any body of water anywhere in the world and that such chemicals are like-

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ly present in our water supply.” This is concerning because, as Daniel Ross reported for Truthout, there are “Known human health impacts ... include certain cancers, liver damage, thyroid problems and increased risk of asthma. As endocrine disruptors, these chemicals have been linked to increased risk of severe COVID-19.”

Ross cited a number of other studies as well, noting that, “Emerging research suggests that one important pathway [for PFAS spreading] is through the air and in rainwater,” and that they had been widely detected in China, the U.S., and elsewhere.

“PFASs are probably detectable in ‘all major water supplies’ in the U.S.,” according to an Environmental Working Group study, Ross reported. “What’s more, over 200 million Americans could be drinking water containing PFAS above a level EWG scientists believe is safe, according to the organization’s most recent findings.”

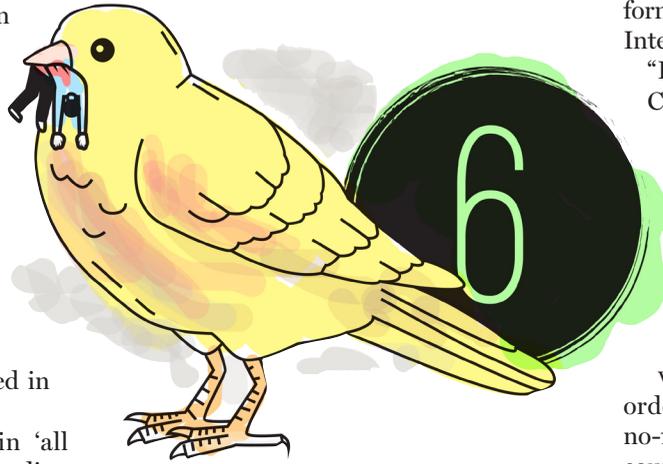
The second study, in August 2020, also published in Environmental Science & Technology, came from researchers at the QUEX Institute, a partnership between the University of Exeter and the University of Queensland. They looked for and found microplastics (pieces of plastic, less than five millimeters in length — about the size of a sesame seed) in five seafood products sold in Australian markets: crabs, oysters, prawns, squid, and sardines — which had the highest concentration. According to the study’s lead author, as reported by Robby Berman in Medical News Today, a seafood eater with an average serving “could be exposed to ... up to 30 mg of plastic when eating sardines,” about as much as a grain of rice. “We do not fully understand the risks to human health of ingesting plastic, but this new method [they used for detecting selected plastics] will make it easier for us to find out,” another co-author said. “Roughly 17% of the protein humans consume worldwide is seafood,” Berman noted. “The findings, therefore, suggest people who regularly eat seafood are also regularly eating plastic.”

Aside from the Guardian, “no major news outlet has paid attention to the topic of microplastics in seafood,” Project Censored noted, referring to an October 2020 story by Graham Readfearn, reporting on a new Australian study indicating that at least 14 million tons of microplastics are likely sitting on the ocean floor — “more than 30 times as much plastic at the bottom of the world’s ocean than there is floating at the surface.” However, the study’s co-author, Dr. Denise Hardesty, “said the amount of plastic on the ocean floor was relatively small compared to all the plastics being released, suggesting the deep-sea sediments were not currently a major resting place for plastics,” Readfearn reported. “Leaders from more than 70 countries signed a voluntary pledge in September to reverse biodiversity loss which included a goal to stop plastic entering the ocean by 2050,” he noted, but major countries including the United States, Brazil, China, Russia, India, and Australia had not signed on.

6. Canary Mission Blacklists Pro Palestinian Activists, Chilling Free Speech Rights

Before the “critical race theory” moral panic fueled a nationwide uprising to censor discussions of race in education, there was an opposite moral panic decrying “cancel cul-

ture” stifling certain people — especially in education. But even at the peak of the “cancel culture” panic, perhaps the most canceled people anywhere in America — pro-Palestinian activists and sympathizers — got virtually no attention. Even though a well-funded, secretly run blacklist website, known as Canary Mission, explicitly targeted



thousands of individuals — overwhelmingly students — with dossiers expressly intended to ruin their careers before they even began, and which “have been used in interrogations by Israeli security officials,” according to the Forward, a Jewish publication. They’ve also been used by the FBI, as reported by The Intercept.

The website, established in 2015, “seeks to publicly discredit critics of Israel as ‘terrorists’ and ‘anti-Semites,’” Project Censored noted, but its careless style of accusation has caused a backlash, even among pro-Israeli Jews. “While some of those listed on the site are prominent activists, others are students who attended a single event, or even student government representatives suspected of voting for resolutions that are critical of Israel,” the Forward reported. More than that, it reported three examples when Canary Mission was apparently retaliating against critics, including Jews.

But by far, its main targets are Palestinians, particularly activists involved with the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions or BDS movement that works to peacefully pressure Israel — similarly to South Africa in the 1980s — to obey international law and respect Palestinians’ human rights. As the Intercept reported in 2018, “While Canary Mission promotes itself as a group working against anti-Semitism, the blacklist’s effective goal is to clamp down on growing support for Palestine in the United States by intimidating and tarnishing Palestinian rights advocates with the brush of bigotry.”

While the FBI told the Intercept that it “only investigates activity which may constitute a federal crime or pose a threat to national security,” this didn’t match up with its actions. “If the FBI was concerned about criminal activity among the student activists, its agents made no indication of that in the interviews,” the Intercept reported. “They did, however, ask questions that echoed far-right propaganda about unproven links between pro-Palestine activist groups and militant groups.”

The list itself has had a chilling effect on First Amendment rights, another Intercept story reported. “A survey of over 60 people profiled on Canary Mission, conducted by the group Against Canary Mission, found that 43 percent of respondents said they toned down their activism because of the blacklist, while 42 percent said they suffered acute anxiety

from being placed on the website.” Some have even received death threats.

“For many otherwise unknown activists, a Canary Mission profile is their most visible online presence,” Project Censored reported, “It’s the first thing that comes up when you Google my name, the claim that I’m a terrorist supporter and an extremist,” one former activist on Palestinian issues told the Intercept.”

“Beyond Canary Mission,” Project Censored noted, “a variety of pro-Israel organizations that seek to suppress pro-Palestinian activism have pursued litigation against chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine,” as reported in The Nation by Lexi McMenamin. A highlighted example at UCLA demanded the release of the names of speakers at a national conference, whose identities had been protected “in order to prevent them from being put on no-fly lists, potentially denied entry to other countries, or contacted by the FBI over their organizing work.” In March 2021 a California judge rejected that demand, noting that disclosure of their names “would violate their rights to freedom of association, anonymous speech, and privacy.”

Project Censored also cited a May 2021 federal court ruling that the state of Georgia cannot compel groups or individuals who contract with public entities to disavow support for the BDS movement against Israel, finding that the state’s law “places an unconstitutional incidental burden on speech.” Georgia is one of 35 states with similar anti-BDS laws or executive orders.

“Heightened violence in Israel/Palestine in May 2021 has focused attention on powerful pro-Israel media biases in US news coverage, but Canary Mission and legal efforts to suppress pro-Palestinian activism have nonetheless received minimal corporate news coverage,” Project Censored summarized, citing a handful of exceptions, a New York Times and a Washington Post opinion, plus two New York Times articles “dating back to 2018, [that] made passing mention of Canary Mission, as a ‘shadowy organization,’” But, Project Censored concluded, “Aside from this coverage, major establishment news outlets have provided no substantive reports on the role played by Canary Mission and other pro-Israel organizations in stifling the First Amendment rights of pro-Palestinian activists.”



7. Google's Union-Busting Methods Revealed

In 2018, Google dropped its long-time slogan, “Don’t be evil” from its code of conduct. In 2019, Google hired IRI Consultants, a union avoidance firm, “amid a wave of unprecedented worker organizing at the company,” as Vice’s Motherboard put it in January 2021, while reporting on leaked files from IRI that provided a disturbing picture of how far Google may have strayed in its willingness sabotage its workers’ rights. The

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1935 National Labor Relations Act makes it illegal for companies to spy on employees and guarantees workers the right to organize and engage in collective bargaining. “Nevertheless,” Project Censored noted, “companies like Google attempt to circumvent the law by hiring union avoidance firms like IRI Consultants as independent contractors to engage in surveillance and intimidation on their behalf.”

“[E]mployers in the United States spend roughly \$340 million on union avoidance consultants each year,” Lauren Kaori Gurley reported for Motherboard, but their practices are apparently so disreputable that IRI doesn’t identify its clients on its website “beyond saying the firm has been hired by universities, renewable energy companies, auto-makers, ‘the nation’s largest food manufacturers,’ and ‘several top ten worldwide retailers,’ she reported. Consultants specialize in operating in the grey areas of the law,” John Logan, a professor of labor and employment studies at San Francisco State told Gurley. “They’re not quite illegal but they’re sort of bending the law if they’re not breaking it.”

“The [leaked] documents show that the firm collected incredibly detailed information on 83 Seattle hospital employees, including their ‘personality, temperament, motivations, ethnicity, family background, spouses’ employment, finances, health issues, work ethic, job performance, disciplinary history, and involvement in union activity in the lead-up to a union election,” Project Censored noted, “including descriptions of workers as ‘lazy,’ ‘impressionable,’ ‘money oriented,’ and ‘a single mother.’”

The documents Motherboard reported on didn’t come from Google, but from two Seattle-based hospitals owned by Conifer Health Solutions, who hired IRI on the sly — a common practice.

“Tracking the union avoidance firms behind anti-union campaigns is intentionally made difficult by firms that subcontract out work to other firms that hire independent contractors to avoid federal reporting requirements laid out by the Department of Labor and shield themselves from public scrutiny,” Motherboard explained, adding that the union organizing the workers had no idea of IRI’s involvement.

“Google is not the only Big Tech company to enlist union avoidance consultants in recent years. In fall 2020 and spring 2021, employees at Amazon’s massive fulfillment center in Bessemer, Alabama launched a much-publicized unionization effort,” Project Censored noted. “As John Logan detailed in a lengthy article for LaborOnline, Amazon responded to the Bessemer drive by spending at least \$3,200 per day on anti-union consultants Russ Brown and Rebecca Smith and by bringing in a second union-busting consulting firm,” as well as hiring “one of the largest law firms in the country specializing in union avoidance.” Employees voted more than 2-1 against joining the union, but the election was overturned for a set of eight labor law violations after Project Censored’s book went to the publisher — a decision that Amazon is appealing.

“There has been some establishment press coverage of large corporations hiring union-avoidance firms to undermine workplace organizing, mostly focusing on tech giants like Google and Amazon,” Project

Censored noted, including late 2019 stories in The New York Times and Washington Post reporting that Google had hired IRI, and a Feb. 23, 2020, New York Times Magazine cover story entitled “the Great Google Revolt,” which “mentioned in passing” the use of anti-union consultants by Google and others in Silicon Valley. “However, there has been no corporate news coverage whatsoever of the sensational leaks that Motherboard released in January, and there has been very little in-depth corporate media reporting on the use of union-busting consultants in general,” Project Censored summed up, concluding, “The documents leaked to Motherboard confirm and greatly elaborate upon what labor organizers and educators have suspected of the specific tactics the union-busting firms employ.”



8. Pfizer Bullies South American Governments over COVID-19 Vaccine

“Pfizer has essentially held Latin American governments to ransom for access to its life-saving COVID-19 vaccine,” Project Censored reports, the latest example of how it’s exerted undue influence to enrich itself at the expense of low- and middle-income nations going back to the 1980s, when it helped shape the intellectual property rules it’s now taking advantage of.

“Pfizer has been accused of ‘bullying’ Latin American governments in Covid vaccine negotiations and has asked some countries to put up sovereign assets, such as embassy buildings and military bases, as a guarantee against the cost of any future legal cases,” according to reporters at the Bureau of Investigative Journalism.

In one case it resulted in a three-month delay in reaching a deal. “For Argentina and Brazil, no national deals were agreed at all,” BIJ reported. “Any hold-up in countries receiving vaccines means more people contracting Covid-19 and potentially dying.”

It’s normal for governments to provide some indemnity. But, “Pfizer asked for additional indemnity from civil cases, meaning that the company would not be held liable for rare adverse effects or for its own acts of negligence, fraud or malice,” BIJ reported. “This includes those linked to company practices — say if Pfizer sent the wrong vaccine or made errors during manufacturing.”

“Some liability protection is warranted, but certainly not for fraud, gross negligence, mismanagement, failure to follow good manufacturing practices,” the World Health Organization’s director of the Collaborating Center on National and Global Health Law, Lawrence Gostin, told BIJ. “Companies have no right to ask for indemnity for these things.”

During negotiations, which began in June 2020, “the Argentinian government believed that, at the least, Pfizer ought to be accountable for acts of negligence on its part in the delivery and distribution of the vaccine, but, instead of offering any compromise, Pfizer ‘demanded more and more,’ according to one government negotiator,” Project Censored summarized. “That was when Pfizer called for Argentina to put up sovereign assets as collateral. Argentina broke off negotiations

with Pfizer, leaving the nation’s leaders at that time without a vaccine supply for its people,” in December. “It was an extreme demand that I had only heard when the foreign debt had to be negotiated, but both in that case and in this one, we rejected it immediately,” an Argentine official told BIJ.

That same month, “just after the United States approved Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use, In These Times’ Sarah Lazare filed a detailed report on the history of the pharmaceutical giant’s opposition to expanding vaccine access to poor countries, beginning in the mid-1980s during the negotiations that eventually resulted in the establishment of the WTO in 1995.

“Both globally and domestically, Pfizer played an important role in promoting the idea that international trade should be contingent on strong intellectual property rules, while casting countries that do not follow U.S. intellectual property rules as engaging in ‘piracy,’” a view they promoted to multiple business networks, shielded from wider public debate. “It was not

a given, at the time, that intellectual property would be included in trade negotiations,” she explained. “Many Third World countries resisted such inclusion, on the grounds that stronger intellectual property rules would protect the monopoly power of corporations and undermine domestic price controls.”

“It is difficult to think of a clearer case for suspending intellectual property laws than a global pandemic,” and “a swath of global activists, mainstream human rights groups and UN human rights experts have added their voices to the demand for a suspension of patent laws,” Lazare noted. But Pfizer was joined in its opposition by pharmaceutical trade groups and individual companies, such as Moderna, another COVID-19 vaccine maker.

As a result, “One could make a map of global poverty, lay it over a map of vaccine access, and it would be a virtual one-to-one match,” she wrote. “Once again majority black and brown countries, by and large, are left to suffer and die.”

“Pfizer’s dealings in South America are not exactly secret,” Project Censored noted, but “as of May 2021, there has been no corporate media coverage of Pfizer’s actual dealings in South America or how the pharmaceutical giant helped establish the global intellectual property standards it now invokes to protect its control over access to the vaccine.”

Nor is this anything new, it concluded: “Big Pharma has a long, underreported track record of leaving developing nations’ medical needs unfulfilled, as Project Censored has previously documented.”

9. Police Use Dogs as Instruments of Violence, Targeting People of Color

The use of vicious dogs to control Black people dates back to slavery, but it’s not ancient history, according to an investigative series of 13 linked reports, titled “Mauled: When Police Dogs are Weapons,” coordinated by the Marshall Project in partnership with AL.com, IndyStar, and the Invisible Institute. They found evidence that the pattern continues to this day, with disproportionate use of police dogs against people of color, often resulting in serious injury, with little or no justification. Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a majority-Black city of 220,000, is the dog-bite capital of America, with a

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bite rate more than double the next-ranked city, Indianapolis. According to Bryn Stole and Grace Toohey's February 2021 report:

Between 2017 and 2019, Baton Rouge police dogs bit at least 146 people, records show. Of those, 53 were 17 years old or younger; the youngest were just 13. Almost all of the people bitten were Black, and most were unarmed and suspected by police of nonviolent crimes like driving a stolen vehicle or burglary.

But Baton Rouge is hardly alone. Approximately 3,600 Americans annually are sent to the emergency room for severe bite injuries resulting from police dog attacks. These dog bites “can be more like shark attacks than nips from a family pet, according to experts and

has significantly raised public awareness of police using disproportionate force against people of color, police “K-9 violence has received strikingly little attention from corporate news media.” There were exceptions: In October 2020, USA Today published a Marshall Project story simultaneously with the project, and in November 2020, The Washington Post ran a front-page story citing the Marshall Project's reporting. In addition, NBC News covered Salt Lake City's suspension of its K-9 program, “after a video circulated of a police dog biting a Black man who was kneeling on the ground with his hands held up.” But aside from these examples, “coverage appears to have been limited to local news outlets,” Project Censored concluded.

10. Activists Call Out Legacy of Racism and Sexism in Forced Sterilization

Forced sterilization was deemed constitutional in a 1927 Supreme Court decision, *Buck v. Bell*, after which forced sterilizations increased dramatically, to at least 60,000 forced sterilizations in some 32 states during the 20th century, predominantly targeting women of color. And while state laws have been changed, it's still constitutional and still going on today — with at least five cases of women in ICE custody in Georgia in 2019 — while thousands of victims await restitution, as reports from the Conversation and YES! Magazine has documented.

“Organizations such as Project South, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, and the Sterilization and Social Justice Lab are actively working to document the extent of this underreported problem — and to bring an end to it.” Project Censored noted. But their work is even more underreported than the problem itself.

“During the height of this wave of eugenics by means of sterilization in the U.S., forced hysterectomies were so common in the Deep South that activist Fannie Lou Hamer coined the term ‘Mississippi Appendectomy’ to describe them,” Ray Levy Uyeda wrote in a YES! Magazine article, “How Organizers are Fighting an American Legacy of Forced Sterilization,” which begins with the story of Kelli Dillon. Dillon was a California prison inmate in 2001 when she underwent a procedure to remove a potentially cancerous growth — and the surgeon simultaneously performed an unauthorized hysterectomy, one of 148 forced sterilizations that year in California prisons, and one of 1,400 carried out between 1997 and 2010.

Dillon began organizing inside the women's prison gathering testimonials from other victimized prisoners “and provided the personal accounts to staff at Justice Now that was laying the groundwork to petition for legislation that would ban the procedures in prisons,” Uyeda reported. She eventually sued the state of California for damages,

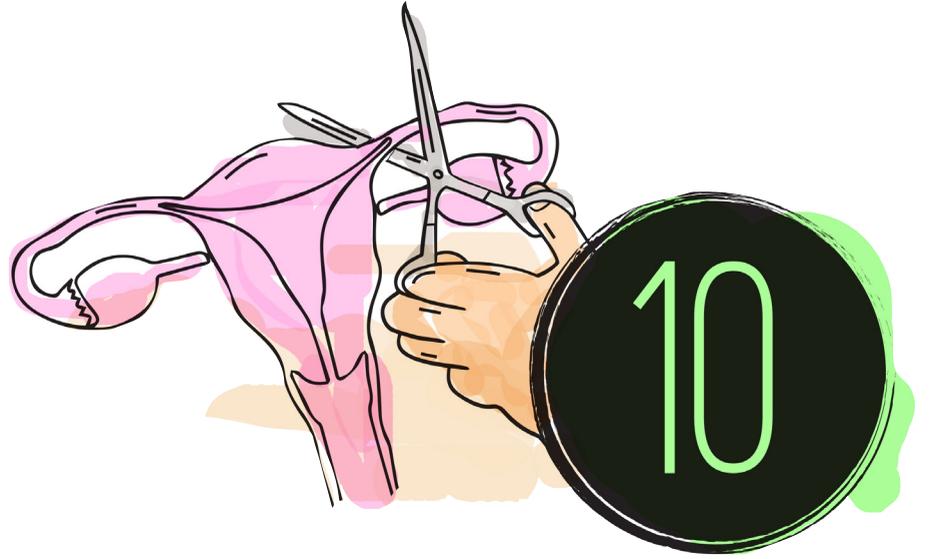
and helped to shape legislation to compensate victims (finally passed this year) a story told in the 2020 documentary film “Belly of the Beast.”

“All forced sterilization campaigns, regardless of their time or place, have one thing in common. They involve dehumanizing a particular subset of the population deemed less worthy of reproduction and family formation,” Alexandra Minna Stern wrote at the Conversation. Stern directs the Sterilization and Social Justice Lab, where “our interdisciplinary team explores the history of eugenics and sterilization in the U.S. using data and stories” — 35,000 of them so far captured from “historical records from North Carolina, California, Iowa and Michigan.”

The history was more complicated than one might expect, Stern explained. “At first, sterilization programs targeted white men, expanding by the 1920s to affect the same number of women as men. The laws used broad and ever-changing disability labels like ‘feble-mindedness’ and ‘mental defective.’ Over time, though, women and people of color increasingly became the target, as eugenics amplified sexism and racism,” she wrote. “It is no coincidence that sterilization rates for Black women rose as desegregation got underway.”

“California Latinas for Reproductive Justice is working to secure legislative change for victims of the state's sterilization efforts between 1909 and 1979,” Uyeda wrote. It was signed into law after Project Censored's book went to print, making California the third state with such legislation, following the lead of North Carolina and Virginia, in 2013 and 2015, respectively.

“The history of eugenics has been thoroughly researched and criticized by scholars and human rights activists, but coverage by the corporate media of the US practice of forced sterilization throughout the 20th century and into the 21st has tended to be limited and narrowly focused,” Project Censored noted. There was some corporate news coverage after the ICE forced sterilization stories emerged, but generally without “any mention of the activists resisting the practice. ... Some establishment press articles on the topic of forced sterilization include comments from members of these organizations to provide context on the issue, but few spotlight the groups' tireless organizing and record of accomplishments.” Two exceptions cited were articles from Marie Claire magazine and Refinery29, “a website targeted at younger women.” This only began to change in July 2021, as Project Censored's book was going to print, “with the Associated Press and other establishment news outlets reporting that California is preparing to approve reparations of up to \$25,000 per person to women who had been sterilized without consent.”



medical researchers,” a team of five reporters wrote in October 2020, as part of a summary of the main finding of their research. Other highlights from the series included:

- “Though our data shows dog bites in nearly every state, some cities use biting dogs far more often than others.” This ranged from just one incident in Chicago from 2017 to 2019 to more than 200 in Los Angeles and more than 220 in Indianapolis.
- “Most bite victims are men, and studies suggest that in some places, they have been disproportionately Black.” This includes the Ferguson, Missouri police department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, where it's been found that “dogs bit non-White people almost exclusively.”
- “Bites can cause life-altering injuries, even death. Dogs used in arrests are bred and trained to have a bite strong enough to punch through sheet metal.”
- “Many people bitten were unarmed, accused of non-violent crimes or weren't suspects at all.”
- “Some dogs won't stop biting and must be pulled off by a handler, worsening injuries.”
- “There's little accountability or compensation for many bite victims,” for a wide range of reasons. “Even when victims can bring cases, lawyers say they struggle because jurors tend to love police dogs,” what's known as “the Lassie effect.”

Though the Black Lives Matter movement

Last Minute *Holiday Gift* Guide

Procrastinating? Here are lotsa last-minute gift ideas

By ERIN HAGEN

If you are anything like my husband and love to do all of your shopping last minute, then this article was written for you. He says he actually enjoys shopping on the 23rd or 24th, when he finds it peaceful and quiet. Most of us have done all of our hustling and bustling by this time and that is our time to put our feet up and sip a holiday cocktail and relax. Oh, who am I kidding, I'm sweating over making food and wrapping presents. So, a peaceful night out shopping doesn't sound so bad at all!

that's saying a lot. Her eye for gift making and giving allows her to imagine the perfect item you are looking for. Her knowledge of all the perfumes, candles and chocolates to name a few, make her special. She takes all the guesswork out of it for you, she is excellent at knowing what makes people smile. The store is brimming with food items, housewares, jewelry, the dreamiest blankets, and much more. In fact, it would be easier to list what is not in the store. They have a lovely helpful staff and do a beautiful job gift wrapping if time allows.

staff that will be happy to help you get whatever you are looking for.

preteen, and they both are asking for them, it's their uniform. Beyond that, they have fantastic stocking stuffers like socks, hydration supplements, bags for men and women, watches, and sunglasses. Also, Playmakers has running clinics on Wednesdays from 6 pm to 8 pm. That offers a free assessment to explore solutions and sometimes includes referrals for further treatment. And if you can't make it into the store, Playmakers offers a Virtual shopping and HomeFit experience. It is a way to get the exact pair of shoes or clothing for you and your needs without leaving the comfort of your own home. What a great gift idea for the home body in your life?!? You would have to be so hard pressed to not find something for someone in your world there.



October Moon

One of my favorite places to swing into last minute for any occasion is **October Moon**, 119 E. Cesar Chavez Ave., in Old Town. The store is always filled with sights, sounds and smells for all your senses — it's an experience. I don't think I have ever been in to the store and felt as though Aura, the owner, was low on any items, and today



Holiday Lansing Parlor

Holiday Lansing Parlor hair salon, at 232 N. Verlinden Ave. in Lansing, is a cute, fun and interesting space. They have a full range of services for haircuts and color with highly skilled colorists and stylists. I am a big fan. In addition to their services and a full range of hair care products. They also have a full-time aesthetician who offers a wide variety of services for eye brows and eye lashes. They have a very friendly and helpful



Playmakers

Playmakers, 2299 W. Grand River Road, Okemos, is always such a great gift giving go-to. You can find something for everyone in the family, including the elusive teenage girl because they have Lululemon, a line of active wear that is all the rage these days. On almost every teenage girl's Christmas list is black leggings, I know this not only because I have two girls, one a teenager and one

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Last Minute
Holiday Gift Guide



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Gifts

from page 23



REO Town

Truckin' Diner and Saddleback BBQ or grab a great cup of coffee at Blue Owl Coffee Co. and peruse the shops. Every time I am there, I love to stop into the Vintage Junkies, 1133 S. Washington Ave. It is a feast for the eyes! The scenery and products are always changing from decade to decade and genres, so it's an adventure. They have a small collection of vintage clothing and jewelry that is so well curated. So whether your looking for something to hang on a wall or put on a table or a table, you may just find it there. And if you don't find what you're looking for that time, you need to keep going, they are continually getting new items.

A good place to go anytime of the year for a good laugh is Bad Annie's Sweary Goods, 1209 Turner St., in Old Town. For that person in your life with fantastic wit and a lover of all things naughty, this is the place for them and you. It is a good plan to spend a bit of time in the shop reading and laughing at all the hilarious, candles, hand towels and socks. To see it is to believe it. Thank goodness we have one of these



Bad Annie's Sweary Goods



Azzi Jewelers

awesome off beat, off the wall, one of kind shops that keeps this town funky.

Last but not least, you can always stop into Azzi's Jewelers, 3007 E. Saginaw St., in Lansing, for a sparkly bauble of some sort. The vast selection includes watches, wedding rings, down to simple and elegant everyday necklaces and jewelry. Recently it started carrying the Swarovski silver bracelets they are very popular with women and young women.

(Erin Hagen is a personal shopper and stylist.)

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Last Minute Holiday Gift Guide



Last-minute holiday shopping tips

Some people thrive by doing all of their tasks early. Others seem to do their best work when faced with a time crunch. The methods individuals use to manage their time at work and play may extend to the ways they approach holiday shopping as well.



There's no right or wrong way to handle holiday shopping tasks, though Christmas Eve crowds at malls and throughout shopping districts suggest that there's more late comers than there are early birds. The following tips can help those who typically wait until the last minute to check names off their lists.

- Utilize free shipping services. Shoppers who shop for gifts online at the last minute run the risk of gifts not arriving on time. Many online retailers charge a premium for expedited shipping. Try to stick to shopping at online retailers that offer free shipping even

in the eleventh hour.

- Create a budget. When rushing around from store to store, it may be easy to spend more than you want to. Make a list of how much you want to spend on each person, and stick to that limit for each person. Move on to the next store if you didn't find what you need in your price range.

- Establish a time limit. Stores have strategies in place to keep shoppers in their establishments longer, hoping you'll make impulse buys. These tricks include scenting the air with inviting aromas, putting necessities at the rear of the store, failing to display the time, and putting discounted items by the registers or door to attract shoppers. Set an alarm on your watch or phone for each store so you get what you need and get out on time.

- Subdivide bulk gifts. Think about

See Tips, Page 26

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In a time when the city is reeling from so much gun violence, when the city is dying for change, when we are looking to our leaders to show us the way out, when we needed a voice of reason and understanding, when voices were crying out, when families are weeping, our mayor paraded out THE LAW, to explain to us that the problem is Black on Black crime in Monday's press conference.

What Andy did is violent, it is violence. The teamwork between Andy and Law Enforcement will ultimately lock up, or kill Black people, because that's the solution that we've always witnessed. It works for them, but it doesn't work for our communities, it never has and it never will. This grandstanding will make the problem worse.

It seems to me that Lansing has missed countless opportunities to lead, not only this city, but the state and the country, particularly with regard to policing in the 21st century. We do all need to work together, but we don't need the police to puff out their chests and skirt the real issue that has plagued Black people in every corner of this country for generations, and for the mayor to allow them to do so, shows just how white supremacy has a stronghold, and is rooted deep in the foundations of our democracy.

PAID FOR BY A BMF

Last Minute Holiday Gift Guide



Tips

from page 25

purchasing bulk gifts like gift baskets from wholesale clubs and then breaking them down into individual gifts. This way you can gift several people on one purchase and save time in the process.

- Choose one-size-fits-all gifts. Think about a gift that can be purchased for multiple people so you can save time shopping for individualized gifts for everyone. For example, print a personalized photo calendar for sev-

eral members of your family. You also can purchase multiple subscriptions or memberships to zoos or magazines for people on your list. Streamlining gifting in this way may save money as well as time.

- Choose in-store pickup. Rather than scouring various aisles, you can shop a retailer's website and then pick up items in the store. You'll save on potential shipping fees but still benefit by avoiding crowds.

Some people wait until the last minute to do their holiday shopping. A few tricks of the procrastinator's trade can make last-minute shopping go smoothly.

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Holiday Gift Guide



6 ways to stick to a holiday budget

The holidays are an exciting, fun and joyful time of year. And for many people, the holidays also are expensive.

According to the Motley Fool Company, a financial wellness resource, the average American spent \$882.45 on Christmas gifts, food, decorations, travel, and other holiday-related expenses in 2019. Around 56 percent of gift shoppers set a bud-

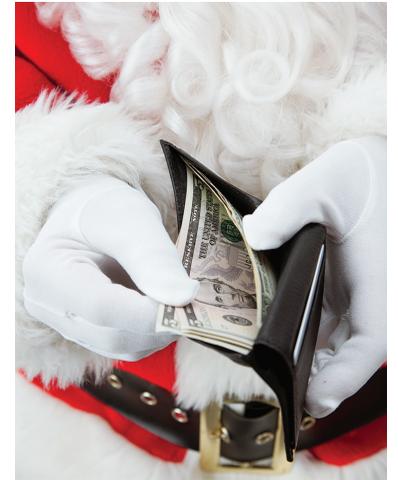
get for holiday spending, but only 64 percent stuck to it. In addition, 21.5 percent of respondents went into debt due to holiday shopping.

Who doesn't want to have a super holiday with delicious foods on the table and lots of presents to share with family and friends? While that's tempting, such a bounty should never result in financial peril. These six strategies can make it easy to estab-

lish and stick to a budget this holiday season.

1. Budget for everything. When working out holiday spending plans, factor in all of the expenses associated with the holidays — not just the most obvious, like gifts. Costs for gas, parking lot fees, greeting cards, postage, travel expenses, and much more

See Budget, Page 28




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Budget

from page 27

should be included in your final number.

2. Determine how much you can spend. Money for gifts and other holiday expenses should ideally come from your disposable income. Look at your finances in advance of the holiday season and figure out how much extra cash you have for the holidays,

and use that figure to determine how much you should spend. Find ways to make up any deficit by curtailing expenses like dining out or entertainment extras. Many people plan to use credit cards to pay now and worry about the aftermath later. Only use credit cards if you have the money in the bank and can pay off the entire bill when the balance due is in January.

3. Set a spending limit for individuals. Based on your numbers and how much you plan to spend overall, start allocating money to categories,

including gift recipients. Come up with a spending range for each person and stick to it.

4. Pay in cash as much as possible. It's easy to know what you're spending when using cash as opposed to credit. There is some risk with carrying around cash, but that risk may be offset by the benefit of spending only what you can afford to spend.

5. Track all purchases. Save the receipts and keep a running total of expenditures so you can see how your spending is measuring up to your

budget. If necessary, scale back on one category if you've tipped the scales in spending on another.

6. Shop sales and deals. High-end stores may have the impressive tag, but their prices can set you back. Instead, look for comparable gifts at discount stores and other retailers. Also, if you must use a credit card, use one that earns you a cash-back bonus for added savings.

A holiday budget is a must to avoid overspending and finding yourself in debt early next year.

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ARTS & CULTURE

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How to run a music festival out of your house

Stoop Fest returns after pandemic cancellation

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Imagine yourself walking down Clemens Steet in Lansing's eastside neighborhood and through the crisp air you hear the sound of a rowdy garage rock band pouring out of the windows of a nearby home. You check it out, and suddenly you're at a living room rock concert. Afterword, you learn of another show just a couple blocks down the way where artists ranging from rappers to folk singers will perform.

In just one afternoon, you've taken a big adventurous bite of Lansing's underground music scene. That is the experience of Stoop Fest, a DIY music festival that is hosted in an organized junction of houses, backyards, basements and venues like the Avenue Café. Thankfully for indie music lovers, it is returning in spring after a yearlong absence due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Debuting in 2016, Stoop Fest was inspired by the Lamp Light Festival in Grand Rapids, a series of concerts that were hosted entirely at private homes. Stoop Fest co-founder and organizer Dom Korzecke was charmed by the humble festival and wanted to bring that special grassroots music experience back to his hometown of Lansing.

"I was running shows out of the house I was living at. I met up with other people who also were running shows out of their homes and asked if they wanted to come together for a big joint house show. The idea was to open our doors all on the same day and have big music festival. From there, we've focused on making it bigger and better," Korzecke said.

What makes a house show enjoyable? Those unfamiliar with the concept might suspect that it would be chaotic, messy, unsafe or otherwise just a poor way to enjoy live music. For musicians and concertgoers like Emma Grrl, who helps organize Stoop Fest and leads the Lansing punk group She/Her/Hers, it's



Courtesy

Mikey Austin at Stoop Fest 2018.

all about creating a sense of intimacy and breaking down barriers between fans and artists.

"With a house show there's so much less of a barrier. There's no green room. There's no stage. You're hanging out in the living and so is the band. Then, they go to the other side of the living room and play. You're on the same level both physically and metaphorically," Grrl said.

With this informal, party-like atmosphere, it's much easier to directly interact with bands, whether you're one of performers on the lineup or an audience member. At larger concert venues, it's high impossible to get an opportunity to hang out with the artists on the marquee, but at Stoop Fest's valley of house shows you'll be bumping elbows with Lansing musicians all day long.

"Stoop Fest is a really good opportunity for bands of all different genres to interact with each other. When I first played, the band before me was a band from Lansing that I had never heard of. It's a relationship-building experience. You get to know what your scene is and who is there," Grrl said.

Just as Lansing's music scene has grown as a community over the years, so has Stoop Fest as a legitimate music festival. It's evolved from booking entirely

local acts to attracting larger national acts, which has earned Stoop Fest some seriously devoted attention from music fans not only from Michigan but across the entire Midwest. Despite the positive forward momentum, there are several hurdles when it comes to running a festival in such a non-traditional format, and Korzecke said he and his team have learned several important lessons along the way. One major consideration is that of accessibility, it's not as simple to ensure that somebody in a wheelchair can comfortably view a concert in somebody's basement as opposed to a show in a regular music venue. Some solutions implemented by Stoop Fest organizers include hosting more shows in easy to get to backyards and using digital video equipment to broadcast a livestream of what's going on in the house's basement to its living room television. Stoop Fest has also moved to ban strobe lights, which can be very harmful to people with epilepsy.

"There are always accessibility issues. A lot of house shows are just not accessible, which speaks to a much broader problem that just music and shows. A lot of buildings are not accessible if they don't have to be, which is a really big issue and we always have it in mind," Grrl said. "Something I want to move forward with is setting up cameras and live streaming every Stoop Fest show.

We have to try our best to come up with creative solutions when we can."

Another important improvement Stoop Fest's organizers are focusing on is crafting a lineup that accurately depicts the diverse range of independent artists in Lansing. While most music festivals are designed to cater only to a certain genre, Stoop Fest instead caters to the idea of Lansing music as a whole. That means booking not just guitar-based rock bands, but also including electronic artists and hip-hop groups.

"We're volunteer-run, it can be difficult to book bands if our fingers aren't on the pulse of specific scenes in Lansing. I want to speak out and say if anybody is reading this article and is interested in us helping make this festival more inclusive, we would love to have you," Grrl said.

While the Stoop Fest team works on finalizing its lineup for 2022, there is always the lingering question of COVID protocol and safety as the pandemic twists and turns. Korzecke said many of the festival's shows will be held outdoors, and those hosted indoors will have strict capacity limits and upgraded ventilation.

"We're trying to be as COVID-safe as possible. It's at the very front of our mind on how we're designing the festival, and it's going to look a little different than usual because of that," he said.

For more information including the first lineup announcement, visit:
Facebook.com/Stoopfestlansing

Is this the Cadillac of cannabis vaporizers?

High-tech vape offers futuristic smoking experience

By **KYLE KAMINSKI**

Regular readers know that I'm a bit of marijuana traditionalist. I like to keep my smoke simple.

But after a weekend sampling some of the newest vaporizer technology from DaVinci Tech, I think I may be turning a new leaf (pun intended) and truly taking this hobby into the 21st century.

Introducing the DaVinci IQ2: A dry herb and concentrate vaporizer built with sophisticated cannabis technology for sophisticated connoisseurs, with sophisticated wallets to match. Just the device alone retails for \$295. With all the accessories, it's an investment of more than \$450 — making it the most expensive and the most technologically advanced piece of smoking equipment in my personal collection. Mine was free, but I still think it's worth the investment.

With a background in manufacturing and hardware design, CEO Cortney Smith said he founded Las Vegas-based DaVinci Tech in 2011 with the desire to “change the world’s imagination of what is possible for plant-based wellness” and a goal to “innovate cannabis consumer tech.”

And over the last 10 years, the company's products have found their way to hundreds of retail shelves nationwide — including at Wild Bill's, The Haven, Su Casa and other smoke shops in Greater Lansing. Direct online orders are also available nationwide at davicivaporizer.com.

The IQ2 has been DaVinci's flagship model since 2019. It can handle up to 0.5 g of dry flower or 0.2 g of concentrate, heating a ceramic chamber up to 430° in a single seven-minute sitting for one of the most convenient, discreet and easy-to-operate vaping experiences on the market.

Here's how it works: The removable battery takes about six hours to charge and lasts for about one hour — or six sessions. Once the battery is charged, flip open the magnetically sealed underside to reveal a small ceramic chamber. Stuff it full, swing the lid shut and tap the power button five times. The IQ2 comes loaded with four presets with varying degrees of heat; I found it works best somewhere in the middle —



Lansterdam in Review:
DaVinci Tech IQ2

between 390-410° for some reasonably dry herb.

A vibration after about 60 seconds lets you know it's fully preheated. From there, you don't have to do anything but puff and the IQ2 does the rest, slowly heating up and then automatically powering off after seven minutes, usually about the time it takes to roast the full chamber.

I've tried several dry herb vaporizers and many of them tend to dull the flavor of the plant; It's part of the reason I love joints so much. But the IQ2 is different. It's glass-lined oven and all-ceramic air path ensures that no metal or plastic parts contaminate the flavor profile — leaving you with nothing but the raw terpene flavors of whatever strain you loaded inside.

Different heat levels will always create different experiences, but the airflow dial on the bottom takes it a step further, allowing for a custom experience for different preferences. Like a thinner, wispiest sort of smoke? Open it up all the way. Like a denser hit? Keep a few air holes shut.

For the more meticulous smokers, the IQ2 can also calculate how many milligrams of THC are consumed in each sitting. Simply input the potency of your strain and the number of dry herbs or extracts in the oven and the IQ2 will calculate the dosage based on the length and number of hits in each session. I didn't dabble much with this setting, but I can see how this feature would be incredibly useful for a medical marijuana patient who wants a precise amount of THC.

The best parts: The whole thing comes apart for easy cleanup. And the battery can be replaced — which is essential for a pricey piece of vaping equipment like this one.

You can also buy a separate holster of six refillable 0.2 g ceramic pods that pop right inside the chamber for accurate dosing and a much easier cleanup, which I'd strongly recommend. Even still, however, the chamber is super easy to clean with just a Q-Tip and a dab of rubbing alcohol.

And that's the real secret to smoking oils and wax with this vaporizer. It comes with a ceramic “extract tab” for supposedly easy dabbing, but it still made for a goey mess. Instead, I sand-



Courtesy

The Davinci Tech IQ2.

wiched a dollop of wax between the herbs inside the pod. It made cleanup a total breeze.

All told, this vaporizer isn't everyone — mainly because of the high cost of the initial investment. But for connoisseurs looking for the very best in vaping technology, it may be worth the splurge.

Kyle Kaminski is City Pulse's man-

aging editor and a cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Editor & Publisher Magazine has also labeled him as “arguably, the state's authority on everything you need to know about cannabis.” Have a suggestion for a cannabis product? Email kyle@lansingcitypulse.com.

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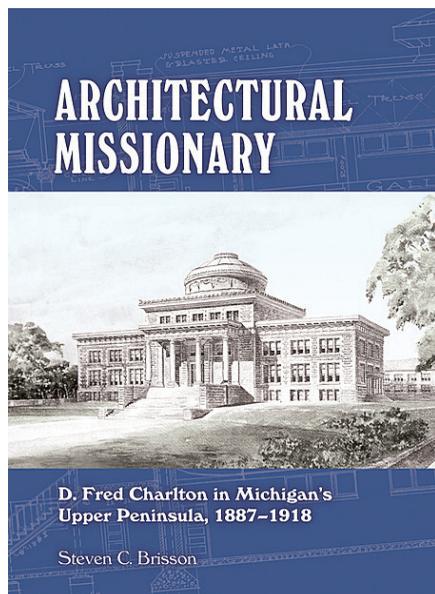
By **BILL CASTANIER**

As the director of the Mackinac State Historic Parks and a sixth-generation native of the Upper Peninsula, Steven C. Brisson is steeped in the history of Mackinac Island.

He is the author of six books on Mackinac and is an expert on the area's maritime history. His newest book, "Architectural Missionary: D. Fred Charlton in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, 1887-1918," tells the story of the Upper Peninsula's most prolific architect, who was responsible for the design of more than 400 significant public buildings, churches, schools and baronial homes in the Upper Peninsula. Among his most notable structures are the Marquette County Courthouse and Newberry State Mental Institution, along with the home of former Lansing resident John Munro Longyear, which is a story unto itself.

Brisson said he first became interested in Charlton when he was an undergraduate at Northern Michigan University, where he wrote a paper on him for a class on local history. He carried his interest with him to graduate school at Cooper Union, where he wrote his master's thesis on the noted, but not well-known architect.

His graduate work provided the basis for this autobiography, which not only tells the rise of Charlton to a prolific architect, but also weaves in the evolution of architecture, with particular focus on its professionalization in the 19th and 20th centuries. Prior to that time, architects were typically engineers who would hang out a shingle



gle calling themselves architects. At the time there were few requirements about who could call themselves architect.

Charlton, who was born in England and began his career there as a draftsman, moved to Detroit in the late 1870s to become part of the burgeoning growth in the Midwest. It was there while working for a series of prominent firms that he landed with the prestigious Scott & Co. Recognizing his talent, the company sent him to Marquette to open an outpost.

Within three years, Charlton went out on his own after buying out his contract from Scott & Co. Charlton's timing could not have been better. The Upper Peninsula was going through its largest boom, mostly due to the extraction of copper and iron ore along with harvesting timber in the area's rich forests. As we know now, much of the wealth generated by these industries was sent back East, but the structures designed by Charlton remain

until this day.

For Brisson, the research on Charlton was tedious since very few corporate records survived.

Brisson said he began his research using microfilm technology, his decades-long research bled over into the digital age when numerous professional journals were digitized, which helped provide a more detailed record of his work.

While conducting his early research, Brisson also discovered that Charlton was an avid photographer, but unfortunately none of his work has survived. After retiring as an architect, Charlton established an enlarging business in Marquette and began working with noted wildlife photographer George Shiras III, who perfected nighttime flash photography. During that time, Charlton began experimenting with color photography and appears to have printed Shiras' work, even going as far as to copyright some of the prints.

"Again, there are only passing references to his photography, and nothing survives," Brisson said. "We do know he was prolific, and it appears he was gifted designing everything from homes to mausoleums."

In the book, Brisson provides a field guide to the massive projects that Charlton designed, which includes a broad representation of the many architectural styles he worked with including Gothic, Neoclassical, Georgian Revival, Romanesque and Renaissance Classical. The guide also can serve as roadmap for those interested in digging deeper into Charlton's work. Two private dwellings, which Charlton designed for himself in Queen Anne style, still stand in downtown Marquette.

Perhaps one of the most important

designs of Charlton was the baronial home of John Munro Longyear, an Upper Peninsula businessman who made his fortune in extraction of minerals. Numerous letters between the two still exist. Longyear was one of the founders of the Huron Mountain Club, an exclusive getaway for some of the richest men in the world, and Charlton designed several of the club's buildings.

In 1890, Charlton designed the private residence for Longyear in Richardsonian Romanesque style after a competition to select a design and an architect. The house was designed with "four fronts" and occupied nearly an entire city block in downtown Marquette. The family occupied the grand castle-like home for only eight years, before a decision was made to move to the Boston area. In his book, Brisson considers a couple of alternative scenarios for the move, including the loss of son canoeing on the treacherous Lake Superior, which could easily be seen from the home. But as Brisson writes in the book, the decision was likely made when a railroad line was set to be built at the base of a bluff near the home.

Longyear's spouse would not have it and said she would not return to Marquette. After attempting to sell the home and only getting only piddling offers, he and his spouse decided to move the home in all its splendor, which if you were as rich as the Longyears was no problem. The Marquette home made its way east in more than 160 boxcars where it was rebuilt. Although the design was not the same and was 50 percent larger, the home still stands in Brookline, Massachusetts, although it is now part of large condominium project.

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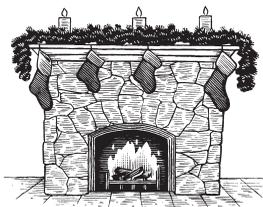
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Favorite Things



Sean Peters and his Gibson SG

I traded a tattoo for this 1978 Gibson SG 20 years ago. It's not very pretty to look at, but man I've written so many songs with this guitar and recorded so many tracks, albums — you name it. This is the guitar I choose to play when I write stuff and play at home. I play it live sometimes, but it pretty much stays at home now. I've written all the songs for my new band, Grave Moth, with it.

The tattoo was for a friend of mine, Cameron Craig. We were briefly in a band together and he knew I was a big '60s rock fan. He said, "Hey, I've got this classic SG," and offered to trade it for some sleeve work. He was going for a traditional Japanese look — a koi fish or lotus flower — something like that. He originally told me it was from 1967 and I was like, "No way!" That happens to be my favorite year of music. That's when the first Pink Floyd album — the one with Syd Barrett — came out. It's that classic era that gave us all the great psychedelic music and, of course, The Beatles. And then I actually looked up the serial numbers and discovered it's a '78. But

still, the thing is so old, the frets aged perfectly, and the action is like nothing.

I like guitars that are a little older and have a little more patina to them, because you can feel it when you play it. I could get a brand-new version of this exact same guitar and probably feel like, "Yeah, this is just OK." It wouldn't feel as special as this one right here. This guitar just feels like home when I play it.

There are some dings taken out of it. I'm sure a lot of those blemishes are products of frustration at the end of show where I chucked it across stage, which is really dumb 'cause it's a neck-through body. But the funny thing is the buckle rash from when I used to wear bullet belts and stuff like that.

It's just an absolute face-melter when it's played right, you know? I have this 2x12 cabinet combo amp with a built-in chorus effect that just sounds great, man. I don't even need distortion.

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

Upcoming Greater Lansing Holiday Events

There's still half of December to get through and several more holiday festivities in Greater Lansing. If you need some extra help deciding how to have as much as possible this winter, here's a helpful little guide we have put together.

Daily through December

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

One of downtown Lansing's new 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 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 display of glowing lights.

Dec. 18 Holiday Open House at Turner-Dodge

Noon to 5 p.m.

Turner-Dodge House

100 E. North St., Lansing

The Friends of Turner-Dodge House & Lansing Parks and Recreation are hosting a holiday-themed open house party. Several Lansing businesses, organizations and individuals will line all three floors of the historic mansion with festive decorations.

Dec. 19

Williamston Holiday Market

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

McCormick Park

123 High St., Williamston

A cavalcade of handmade gifts and locally produced food will be for sale at the annual Holiday Farmer's Market in Williamston's McCormick Park.

Dec. 23

Festivus at the Avenue Café

9 p.m.

Avenue Café

2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

Celebrate the sardonic "Seinfeld" holiday, Festivus, and enjoy a dance party and live performance by Michigan indie-pop group Krissy Booth.



Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Free Fifty"--that's 5x10x2.

by Matt Jones

Across

- 1 When they're low, insurance companies are more profitable
- 11 Trans Am that talks
- 15 Central, with "of"
- 16 "I Am Not My Hair" singer India. ____
- 17 Sap
- 18 Haynes with the documentary "The Velvet Underground"
- 19 Musical work featuring historical figures, often
- 20 Indigo dye
- 21 Second-hand, alternately
- 22 Costar of Thora and Wes in "American Beauty"
- 23 Canadian actress Cooper of Apple TV+'s "See"
- 24 Circumvents
- 26 He played Tobias Funke
- 30 Puff ____ (venomous critter)
- 35 Race a motor
- 36 Unilever laundry soap brand that's over 100 years old
- 37 Basis of the name of a short-lived, short-form streaming platform
- 40 Detach from the dock
- 41 "In ____ called malice, yeah" (The Jam lyric that's almost the proper title)
- 46 "L&O: SVU" costar
- 47 Like two structures that map out the same way
- 52 30 Seconds to Mars singer Jared
- 53 Like the pronouns he, she, and they,

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

- grammatically
- 54 Rosy assertion
- 55 St. Vincent's backup group?
- 56 Kitten's scruff
- 57 The act of not paying attention, old-style
- 58 "House" actor Omar
- 59 Ferrari model
- Down**
- 1 Cruise liner decks with pools
- 2 Head of a bowling team?
- 3 Monk known as "the Venerable"
- 4 Counties overseas
- 5 Do some boot repair
- 6 Title ship in a 1997 Spielberg movie
- 7 Solution strength, in chemistry
- 8 "Do ____ to eat a peach?" (Eliot)
- 9 Rome's port in the Punic Wars
- 10 Like some hams, at this time of year?
- 11 ____ Damacy (Playstation game with a ball that picks up everything in its path)
- 12 Like some T-shirt art
- 13 Spruce quality?
- 14 Show with the Season 1 episode "Biscuits"
- 25 "Be Kind, Rewind" device
- 27 Billy Zane's character in the Netflix miniseries "True Story"
- 28 Heeler healer?
- 29 Japanese light novel series "____ Been Killing Slimes for 300 Years and Maxed Out My Level"
- 30 Like an eagle's beak
- 31 Outdated headgear for a poor student
- 32 Children's cold medicine brand
- 33 Boundaries between biomes
- 34 "Citizen Kane" studio
- 38 "C'mon, let's do this!"
- 39 Municipality in the province of Padua (and not a Japanese send-off)
- 42 Supposed occupation of Joe Coulombe, founder of a grocery chain
- 43 Cigar brand whose name means "best" in Spanish
- 44 Gets petulant
- 45 Sue Ann ____, Betty White's role on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show"
- 48 "An Impeccable Spy: Richard ____, Stalin's Master Agent" (2019 Owen Matthews book)
- 49 Future indicators
- 50 North Dakota State Fair city
- 51 Wicker basket used in jai alai

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Answers on page 37

SUDOKU

Intermediate

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

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 37

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

December 15-21, 2021

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Key questions for you, beginning now and throughout 2022: 1. What do you need to say, but have not yet said? 2. What is crucial for you to do, but you have not yet done? 3. What dream have you neglected and shouldn't neglect any longer? 4. What sanctuary is essential for you to visit, but you have not yet visited? 5. What "sin" is it important for you to forgive yourself for, but you have not yet forgiven yourself? 6. What promise have you not yet fulfilled, even though it's getting late (but not too late!) to fulfill? 7. What secret have you hidden so well that you have mostly concealed it even from yourself?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Taurus novelist Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) took one of his manuscripts to a publishing company, hoping it would be made into a book and sold to the public. A few weeks later, he got word by mail that his masterpiece had been rejected. He took a train to the publisher's office and retrieved it. On the train ride home, he turned the manuscript over and began writing a new story on the back of each page. He spent no time moping. That's the spirit I recommend you embody in the coming weeks, dear Taurus.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "John Coltrane was an addict," wrote author Cornel West about the renowned jazz saxophonist and composer. "Billie Holiday was an addict. [Nobel Prize-winning author] Eugene O'Neill was an addict. What would America be without addicts and post-addicts who make such grand contributions to our society?" I welcome West's sympathetic views toward addicts. Many of us who aren't addicts understand how lucky we are not to have the genetic predisposition or the traumatic experiences that addicts often struggle with. We unaddicted people may also have been spared the bigotry and abuse that have contributed to and aggravated some addicts' addictions. Having acknowledged these truths, I nevertheless hope to do whatever I can to help you convert any addictive tendencies you might have into passionate obsessions. Now is an excellent time to launch a new phase of such work. Invitation: Make a list of three things you can do in the coming months to nurture the process.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Actor and model Kate Beckinsale unleashed a cryptic boast: "My best feature is unfortunately a private matter, although I'm told it is spectacular. But you can't really walk it down the red carpet. What can I say?" Are you imagining what I'm imagining? I bring this oddity to your attention in the hope that I can convince you to be more forthright and expressive about your own wonderful qualities. It's time to be less shy about your beauty, less secretive about your deep assets. Show the world why you're so lovable.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Leo-born Edna Ferber (1885-1968) was a celebrated author who won a Pulitzer Prize. She was witty and outspoken. Her stories featured strong women and characters struggling against discrimination. "I never would just open a door and walk through," she said about her career. "I had to bust it down for the hell of it. I just naturally liked doing things the hard way." At least in the coming weeks, Leo, I urge you NOT to adopt Ferber's attitude. In my view, you'll be wise to do everything possible to open doors rather than bust them down. And the best way to do that is to solicit help. Cultivate your ability to ask for what you need. Refine your practice of the arts of collaboration, synergy, and interweaving.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "No one has ever written, painted, sculpted, modeled, built, or invented except literally to get out of hell," wrote Virgo dramatist Antonin Artaud. That's a ridiculous generalization, in my opinion. For example, I occasionally generate songs, stories, and horoscopes to help me escape from a momentary hell. But most of my creations are inspired by my love of life and a desire to inspire others. I'm very sure that in the coming weeks, your own motivations to produce good things will be far closer to mine than to Artaud's. You're in a phase

when your quest for joy, generosity, blessings, and fun could be fierce and productive.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Author Barbara Sher offered this wise counsel: "Imaginary obstacles are insurmountable. Real ones aren't." I bring this to your attention because I believe the coming weeks will be an excellent time to identify the imaginary obstacles you've erected in your inner world—and then smash them or burn them or dispose of them. Once you're free of the illusory interference, I think you'll find you have at least twice as much power to neutralize the real obstacles.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Prolific author Ray Bradbury liked to give advice to those with a strong need to express their imaginative originality. Since I expect you will be a person like that in 2022, I'll convey to you one of his exhortations. He wrote, "If you want to create, you must be the most sublime fool that God ever turned out and sent rambling. I wish you a wrestling match with your Creative Muse that will last a lifetime. I wish craziness and foolishness and madness upon you." Keep in mind that Bradbury was referring to "constructive" craziness, "wise" foolishness, and "divine" madness.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The coming months will be a favorable time for you to redefine the meaning of the term "sacred" and to deepen your relationship with sacredness. To spur your imagination, I offer four quotes: 1. "Recognizing the sacred begins when we are interested in every detail of our lives." —Buddhist teacher Chogyam Trungpa 2. "When you notice something clearly and see it vividly, it then becomes sacred." —poet Allen Ginsberg 3. "Holiness begins in recognizing the face of the other." —philosopher Marc-Alain Ouaknin 4. "Modern culture, in its advertising of sex, is in a misguided fashion advertising its longing for the sacred." —teacher Sobonfu Somé

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Capricorn author E. M. Forster wrote, "The only books that influence us are those for which we are ready, and which have gone a little further down our particular path than we have yet gone ourselves." I propose we universalize that statement: "The only people, information, and experiences that influence us are those for which we are ready, and which have gone a little further down our particular path than we have yet gone ourselves." I believe this principle will be especially fruitful for you to embrace during the next three months. Prepare yourself for lessons that are vital for you to learn—and on the frontier of your understanding

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Among America's Founding Fathers was Aquarian William Whipple (1730-1785). He was one of 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776, instigating war with Great Britain. Unlike many of his colleagues, however, Whipple believed it was hypocritical to enslave human beings while fighting for freedom. That's why he emancipated the person who had been in bondage to him. The coming months will be a favorable time to make comparable corrections, Aquarius. If there are discrepancies between your ideals and your actions, fix the problem.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): According to Piscean author Ryunosuke Akutagawa, "People sometimes devote their lives to a desire that they are not sure will ever be fulfilled." So true! I can personally attest to that behavior. Is such a quest misguided? Delusional? Naive? Not in my view. I see it as glorious, brave, and heroic. Akutagawa did too. He said that those who refrain from having inspirational desires are "no more than mere spectators of life." In any case, I recommend you think big in 2022, Pisces. From an astrological angle, this could be the year you home in on and refine and upgrade the single most important desire you will ever have.

Go to RealAstrology.com to check out Rob Breznsky'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.

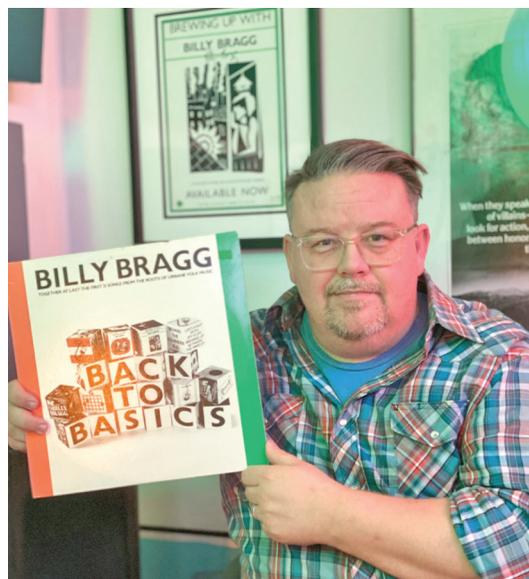
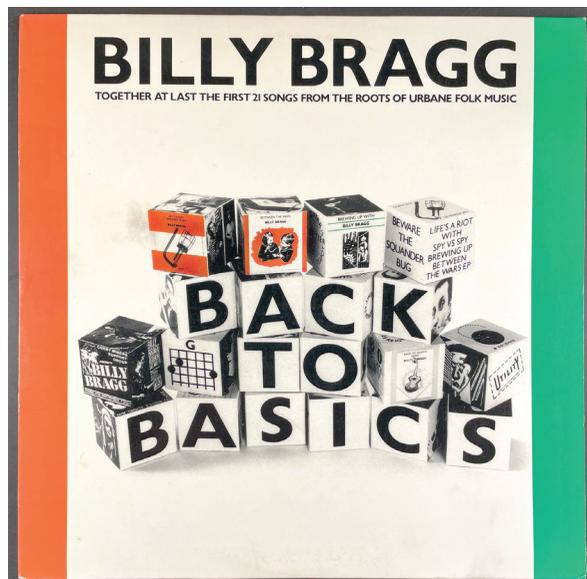
TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

LIFE CHANGING ALBUMS: MATT CARLSON OF THE STICK AROUNDS

TALKS BILLY BRAG



Local songwriter Matt Carlson, of The Stick Arounds, dishes on a pivotal sonic discovery.

Local power-pop songster reflects on 1987's 'Back to Basics' LP

Matt Carlson is a prolific local songwriter who churns out well-crafted pop songs through two avenues: Harborcoat, his solo project that just released a new LP, and with his always-gigging power-pop band The Stick Arounds. In this week's edition of "Life Changing Albums," he mines back to his teenage years — when he discovered a vital compilation of tracks. It was a Friday night in the fall of 1989, during Carlson's senior year of high school, that The Impact 88.9-FM spun "The Saturday Boy," by Billy Bragg. Sitting in his car, Carlson listened in awe and rushed out the next morning and bought the full record, 1987's "Back to Basics" LP.

How would you describe this album to someone who has never heard it before?

Bragg's voice is not exactly the picture of perfection. He sings with a sort of nasal-y Cockney swagger. There is a feeling he is almost leaning into his Britishness. The guitar is loud and jagged, and the melding of the two feels like the most urgent folk album you have ever heard. There is a great deal of truth in his self-description of being a

"One-Man Clash." It's really all there at the core of it. There is bombast, idealism, love, hooks and hope. Most musicians would struggle to hold attention as a solo performer on record for more than a few songs, but Bragg's style and storytelling make this record a wholly unique artifact.

After hearing the full LP for the first time, what were your first thoughts?

Right away, I was entranced with the whole record. It was 21 tracks clocking in at just under an hour and featured just a man and his guitar. These songs are about small moments in otherwise forgotten lives. While Bragg often traffics in big ideas, they always start in the smallest and humblest of places.

Even at the first listen I was blown away with the word play set against the seemingly simple arrangements. The chorus in "To Have and Have Not" was one I latched on to immediately: "Just because you're better than me/doesn't mean I'm lazy/Just because you're going forwards/doesn't mean I'm going backwards." I was just floored and the great songs just kept coming one after another. The cassette stayed in the tape deck of my car for weeks on end.

What aspects of the album continue to impress you to this day?

The lyrics on the album just feel masterfully written to me. Love songs like "A New England" were catchy and sweet with no sense of cynicism or posturing. The protest songs, like "Between the Wars" or "The World Turned Upside Down," were more vibrant and far less cloying than much of the '60s protest records I had heard growing up — some of which I even liked. These songs were about an individual struggle used as an example of a greater issue to be faced. Bragg was radicalized in many ways by the negative effects of Margaret Thatcher's iron-fisted rule of Britain in the late '70s and early '80s, as well as by the Miner's Strike in 1984-'85. He wrote about unions, the power of the worker, the desire for love, bread and a future. He wrote about his England and, in many ways, it seemed like his England and my America were remarkably similar.

I was also intrigued by the guitar playing. It was urgent, but not complicated. His playing suited the songs perfectly, but it was simple and without any degree of flash. In short, it felt like

anyone could do this. And for the first time in my life, I believed that maybe I could write a song too.

In what ways has this album directly affected your life, or musical style?

This record was eventually the biggest driver in me picking up a guitar and really learning how to play. In many respects, if I hadn't heard it, I don't know if I would have followed through on learning to play and writing my own tunes.

Secondly, and not of any less importance, this record began a decades-long fandom of Bragg, and that, in turn, led to a political awakening for me. Even though I grew up in the heart of the UAW and the auto industry here in Michigan, the lessons I learned from an Englishman really hammered home the importance of unions, collective bargaining and the plight for fair wages and working conditions. These songs, and his work after this record, gave me a far greater understanding of the struggle of working folks all over the world. I am, in essence, a socialist, thanks in large part to the lessons I learned from Billy Bragg.

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

B&I Bar

5247 Old Lansing Rd., Lansing

Dan Laird

Thursday, Dec. 16, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Flipside

Saturday, Dec. 18, 8-11 p.m.

Eaton Rapids Craft Co.

204 N. Main St., Eaton Rapids

Jamison Livingston

Friday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.

Scott Seth

Saturday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.

Urban Beat

1213 Turner Rd., Lansing

World Music Dance Party

Saturday, Dec. 18, 8-11 p.m.

Ritmo Patria

Sunday, Dec. 19, 3-9 p.m.



Lansing Bike Co-op Children's Bike Giveaway

Saturday, Dec. 18, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Lansing Bike Co-op

1715 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing

[Facebook.com/LansingBikeCoop](https://www.facebook.com/LansingBikeCoop)

For the fifth the year, the Lansing Bike Co-Op is giving away a free children's bicycles and helmets in the spirit of the holiday season. For those in need, this is a great opportunity. A bicycle is a timeless gift and a great way for children to experience countless hours of fun and exercise. The co-op expects to have approximately 70 to 75 bicycles on hand, which will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis. In order to accommodate as many people as possible, bikes are being limited to a maximum of three per family.

Wednesday, December 15

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

Brass Band of Battle Creek - 7-8:30 p.m. Charlotte Performing Arts Center, 378 State St, Charlotte. 517-541-5690. bbbc.net.

Diabetes Support Group - 6:30-7:30 p.m. Delta Township District Library, 5130 Davenport Dr, Lansing. 517-321-4014.

Drop In for Peace, Soup, and Bread - Enter our quiet church sanctuary and pray for peace or meditate. 4-6 p.m. St. Katherine's Episcopal Church, 4650 N. Meridian Road, Williamston. 517-349-4120.

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.

Wheel of the Year: Yule - Join us in-person or Zoom for a discussion of Yule as well as preparation for Saturday's ritual. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St, Ste 7, Lansing. 517-657-5800.

Zoo Nights (With Lights) - Bundle up and come out to our final Zoo Nights event of the year! 5-8 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing. 517-483-4222. potterparkzoo.org.

Zoom with Santa - Santa's making a Virtual visit via Zoom! Ask Santa everything about Christmas, the North Pole, and more! 7-7:30 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. gladl.org

Thursday, December 16

Jazz at the Blue Owl - Elden Kelly and Gregg Hil. 6-8 p.m. The Blue Owl in ReoTown, 1149 S. Washington, Lansing. 517-999-4695.

Mental Health Awareness and Resource Fair - 4-7 p.m. Alfreda Schmit Community Center, 5825 Wise Rd, Lansing. 517-483-6685.

Michigan Made | Holiday Art Exhibition - through Dec. 23. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center, 119 N. Washington Sq., Lansing. 917-833-9963. lansingartgallery.org.

Stitch 'N Bitch - Bring your yarn or thread and join the crowd for a casual evening of fiber arts and chit-chat. 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center Street, Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540.

Studio (in)Conversation: Parisa Ghaderi - Join us on Instagram Live! 8-9 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu

Friday, December 17

Howl at the Moon - Enjoy the full moon while taking a guided walk through the nighttime woods. Dogs must be a leash. Meet in the parking lot. 7-8 p.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd., Okemos. meridian.mi.us.

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.

Spartan Upcycle Fridays: Wintery Paper Wreaths - Adorn your door in December with a festive, upcycled paper wreath! 12-6 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

TGIF dance - everyone welcome! - 7 p.m.-11:59 p.m. Eagle Eye Golf & Banquet Center, 15500 Chandler Rd., Bath. 734-604-5095. tgifdance.com

Winter Take-Home Crafts @ GLADL - Make fun crafts or flex your science muscles! Instructions on gladl.org/curiousgladl. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge.

Saturday, December 18

Game Night - Whether you're a role-player or a card shark or a lover of board games, come on out and share your love of gaming! 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center St., Suite 7, Lansing. 517-974-5540.

Harborcoat at Horrock's Farm Market - 6 p.m. Horrocks Farm Market, 7420 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing. www.bandsintown.com.

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

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.

Tease A Gogo Presents: Season's Teasings - 8-11 p.m. Ellison Brewing Co.-Reotown, 1314 S. Washington Ave, Lansing.

Toastmasters Meeting - meeting on zoom. 9:30-11:45 a.m. MSUFCU, 4825 E Mt Hope Rd, East Lansing. 517-505-1449. 5799.toastmastersclubs.org.

Events

from page 27

Yule Ritual - Celebrate the Winter Solstice to welcome in the renewal of the light and to exchange gifts. 4-9 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St, Ste 7, Lansing. 517-657-5800. weaversoftheweb.org.

Sunday, December 19

Artist Tour: Connections, New Beginnings - Join Artists in Transition artist Scott Tompkins for a special conversation about the exhibition! Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Country Music and Dancing - Kathy Ford and friends will be performing 5-8 p.m. Williamston Fraternal Order of Eagles 4091, 835 Hgih St., Williamston. 517-655-6510.

Holiday Pops - Feel the joy of the Holiday Season with your favorite holiday tunes and traditional carols. 3 p.m. Tickets at lansingsymphony.org.

Jolly Holiday Market - Unique Holiday Shopping - 11 a.m.-5 p.m. REO Town

Marketplace, 1027 S Washington St, Lansing. reotownmarketplace.com.

Returning Citizens: Formerly Incarcerated Individuals Discuss Re-entry - Artists and advocates come together for this special program to address issues of re-entry for formerly incarcerated individuals. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Monday, December 20

Comedy Night - 9-11:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-2506. crunchyseastlansing.com.

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

Tuesday, December 21

A Very Beach Day Science - 9 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Board Game Meet Up - Ages 18 & up. 6:30 - 10:30 p.m. Spare Time Bowling Alley, 3101 E Grand River, Lansing.

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.

THE PULSIFIEDS

BACKPAGE CLASSIFIEDS

Delivery Driver

Looking for some extra income? City Pulse has an opening for a **Newspaper Delivery Driver** for Wednesday morning deliveries to businesses. No experience required. Paid same day. Must have reliable vehicle, valid driver's license, and proof of insurance.

We celebrate diversity and welcome all that would apply.

For details, call Suzi Smith at 517-999-6704 or email: suzi@lansingcitypulse.com.

CityPULSE

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Rates start at \$24 for 4 lines.
Each additional line is \$6.

EXTRAS: Boldface Type: \$7 per line •
HEADLINE: \$11 per line • Border: \$11
LOGO: Space needed

Contract rates available, all rates net. Classified ads also appear online at no extra charge. Deadline for classifieds is 5 p.m. Monday for the upcoming Wednesday's issue. You can also submit your classified ad to Suzi Smith at 517-999-6704 or at suzi@lansingcitypulse.com.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 34

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

From Pg. 34

L	O	S	S	R	A	T	I	O	S	K	I	T	T
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E	P	P	S	T	E	S	T	A	R	O	S	S	A

Appetizers

WANT YOUR RESTAURANT LISTED? CALL 517-999-5064



El Oasis
2501 E. Michigan Ave.
Lansing
(517) 648-7693
eloasisfood.com

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Art's Pub
809 E. Kalamazoo St.,
Lansing
(517) 977-1033
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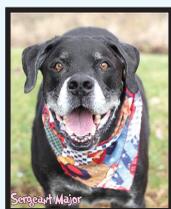
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In memory of Rodica's cats

FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Henry's Place offers delicious variety

By **GABRIELLE LAWRENCE**

Believe it or not, I have had some delicious and memorable meals in strip malls. When Mr. She Ate and I visited his father in Florida several years ago, they took me to an absolute dive that served some of the best shrimp po' boys I've ever had. The Root, before it closed, was nestled close to a Verizon store in a strip mall in White Lake, and if it was good enough to be started by a wildly talented former contestant on "Top Chef," it was good enough for me. Henry's Place is similarly situated, in Okemos close to a discount bridal boutique, a discount toy store and a discount clothing store. There is, however, nothing low-rent about Henry's.

Last week, I found myself nearly swooning over the shrimp tacos — in particular the avocado aioli, which had the perfect amount of smoothness and spice. While the tacos were delicious eaten over our dining room table, I'm sure that they would have been even better served hot and fresh in the restaurant, where I could also beg for my beloved corn tortillas instead of flour. Having just returned from a trip to New York City, the peace of mind gained from in-restaurant diners being required to show proof of vaccination is something I sorely miss here at home.

The Brussels sprouts with bacon were delicious, incredibly savory and not overcooked. While that may seem like a given, it has become truly rare to find a restaurant that is able to blast brussels with a high enough heat to get them crispy, the preparation that they need to reach peak deliciousness. The fish fry platter with French fries brought the heat just as much as everything else I ordered that night. The cod was thick and meaty, the batter light and crispy. Like everyone else in the Midwest, I love a good fish fry during Lent, and this one just shot to the top of the list.

On a previous visit, I was disappointed to learn that the parmesan garlic fries didn't travel well, because the aroma was intoxicating. I'm eager to try them when I have an opportunity to dine-in. Mr. She Ate and I shared



Lawrence

an order of steak tips and one of chicken alfredo, which I found in our bag, although I had ordered the mac and cheese. Truth be told, chicken alfredo is the single dish that my husband knocks into the stratosphere every time he prepares it and I've never had a version that compares. This version was good, but largely unremarkable.

The steak tips were one of the more unique items on the menu, which mercifully is relatively small and doesn't swerve into wet burrito and pizza territory as it seems that so many restaurants do. As an amateur diner, I can't imagine that restaurant owners make it easy on themselves by constructing these monstrous menus that attempt to scratch the culinary surface of every country in the G-20. If I want Chinese

food, I know how to find an appropriate eatery — right next to Henry's Place, as a matter of fact, and it's fantastic. If I want a pizza, I don't expect to find sushi on the same menu. That is not something that people should complain about.

There are several more menu items that I'm dying to try. I love few things more than devouring a large bowl of mussels, but oysters take a close second place. Henry's Place has both; it is one of the few local restaurants that offers oysters, and one of even fewer that I would trust to prepare them properly. Henry's has created an attractive, intimate atmosphere and they frequently post specials to their Facebook page. In an area of town filled with so many chain restaurants, Henry's is a welcome reprieve with a lot more personality.

By **BRYAN BEVERLY**

There is a good deal of attention paid to neighborhood grill and bars these days. Thanks in no small part to Walker Haye's "Fancy Like" song that gives more than a wink



Beverly

and nod to a national chain, as the chorus lauds the courting opportunities that accompany some of the usual fare in establishments across the country. The notion of a place where you can both take a date, meet up with friends, or take the family for a meal has been the recipe for the casual restaurant scene for several decades now. However, the formulaic vibe with memorabilia covering nearly every corner can also

become rather cliché and not endearing of true neighborhood places. One could be so lucky to have Henry's Place in their neighborhood.

Located in the heart of Meridian Township's shopping district, Henry's Place is a pub away from home. It features 24 beers on tap and no fewer than 200 whiskey and bourbon selections to tickle even the pickiest fancy. The ambience is cozy, pro-Spartan vibe. As it should be.

Salads, burgers and fries, oh my!

My first visit to Henry's Place included several highs and a low or two. The Michigan salad was a grilled chicken winner, with Traverse City cherries, crunchy pecans and a sharp blue cheese with a wonderful balsamic dressing. The lemon pepper dry-rubbed wings were a perfect marriage of crunchy and juicy with a suggestive tang. The olive burger was solid, but I prefer mine nearly drowning in olive sauce and this one was bit stingy. The two most disappointing bites this month? Those would be the parmesan garlic fries, which were bland and lacking any real desire to be great, and the Brussel sprouts with pork belly, which were far too charred to make any other flavor judgments.

Round two with a punch

A second trip to Henry's Place was

far better than the first. We decided to give the disappointing options a chance to redeem themselves, while also trying some new items. This time around we swapped the parmesan garlic fries for the los pollos bacon poutine. Poutine is a Canadian favorite, featuring French fries bathed in cheese and gravy. Henry's version featured cheddar cheese, sliced chicken, bacon, ranch and a lovely gravy that was rich and earthy — perfect for an early December evening. These are not to be eaten in conjunction with any true dieting effort as they are delicious, and you will want more. Next on the redemption tour were the Brussels sprouts. This time they weren't treated like victims of the Spanish Inquisition, but instead costarred with a light, but sweet balsamic and smokey, meaty bites of perfectly cooked pork belly. What a great way to bounce back.

In addition, we enjoyed the double Cubano sandwich — a double-fisted handheld packed with copious slices of chorizo, more pork belly, pickles, Swiss and mustard. Yum, yum and more yum. Lastly, the four-cheese "mac" and cheese was a peculiar choice of fettuccini instead of macaroni noodles, with a perplexing alfredo sauce. What a surprising consolation, however, when this odd remix was paired with bacon and grilled shrimp — talk about a flavor knockout.

One thing is for sure: Henry's Place is a lovely spot for gathering. On my visits, I saw families, couples and business-attired folks all connecting over good food and libations. At the end of the day — and even more so during a pandemic — we all want to be able to gather in our community and enjoy one another's company. This warm and inviting pub is a charming place to do just that, with lots of choices to offer — fancy, odd or otherwise.

Best bite

I've had my fair share of fish and chips over the years. I enjoy making them at home and have eaten them in several European countries, including the UK, where they originated. I place Henry's Place right in the mix with some of the best I've had. Its fish fry, with in-house coleslaw and tartar sauce is simply outstanding. The crisp coat on the outside of the cod, coupled with the flaky and flavorful white fish, makes me want more just writing about it now.

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Courtesy

Mussels are served at Henry's Place.

Saddleback Barbecue acquires Detroit Frankie's

By SKYLER ASHLEY

Frank Tignanelli, the pizza pie mastermind behind Detroit Frankie's Wood-fired Brick Oven, is hanging it up. Tignanelli announced via the Detroit Frankie's Facebook page that he has sold the restaurant to Saddleback Barbecue, which will absorb the eatery and rename it to Slice by Saddleback.

"It was important to me that the business didn't close, and the employees all were able to keep their jobs. When I thought about someone



Slice by Saddleback
 Opens New Year's Day
 644 Migaldi Lane,
 Lansing
 Facebook.com/
 SlicebySaddleback

Saddleback's January soft-opening. If you want to get one last taste of Detroit Frankie's, you'll have to do it by Dec. 23 — the last day the restaurant in its original format will be in business.



to purchase the business, Saddleback Barbecue was the first company to come to mind," Tignanelli said in the Dec. 10 social media post.

Saddleback Barbecue acquired both of the Detroit Frankie's locations and is keeping Tignanelli's employees onboard. The location at 644 Migaldi Lane will become a standalone Slice by Saddleback location that is due to open on New Year's Day. Meanwhile, the location at 3135 S. Pennsylvania Ave., which was originally a collaboration with Good Truckin' Diner, is scheduled to reopen soon and will once again offer pizza alongside Good Truckin's usual menu and other Michigan-made market goods.

Tignanelli's staff has been in the process of teaching the Saddleback crew how to prepare the classic Detroit-style pizza in preparation for Slice by

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