

**A Hunter's Tale:  
THE COMIC BOOK POEM  
SEE PAGE 10**

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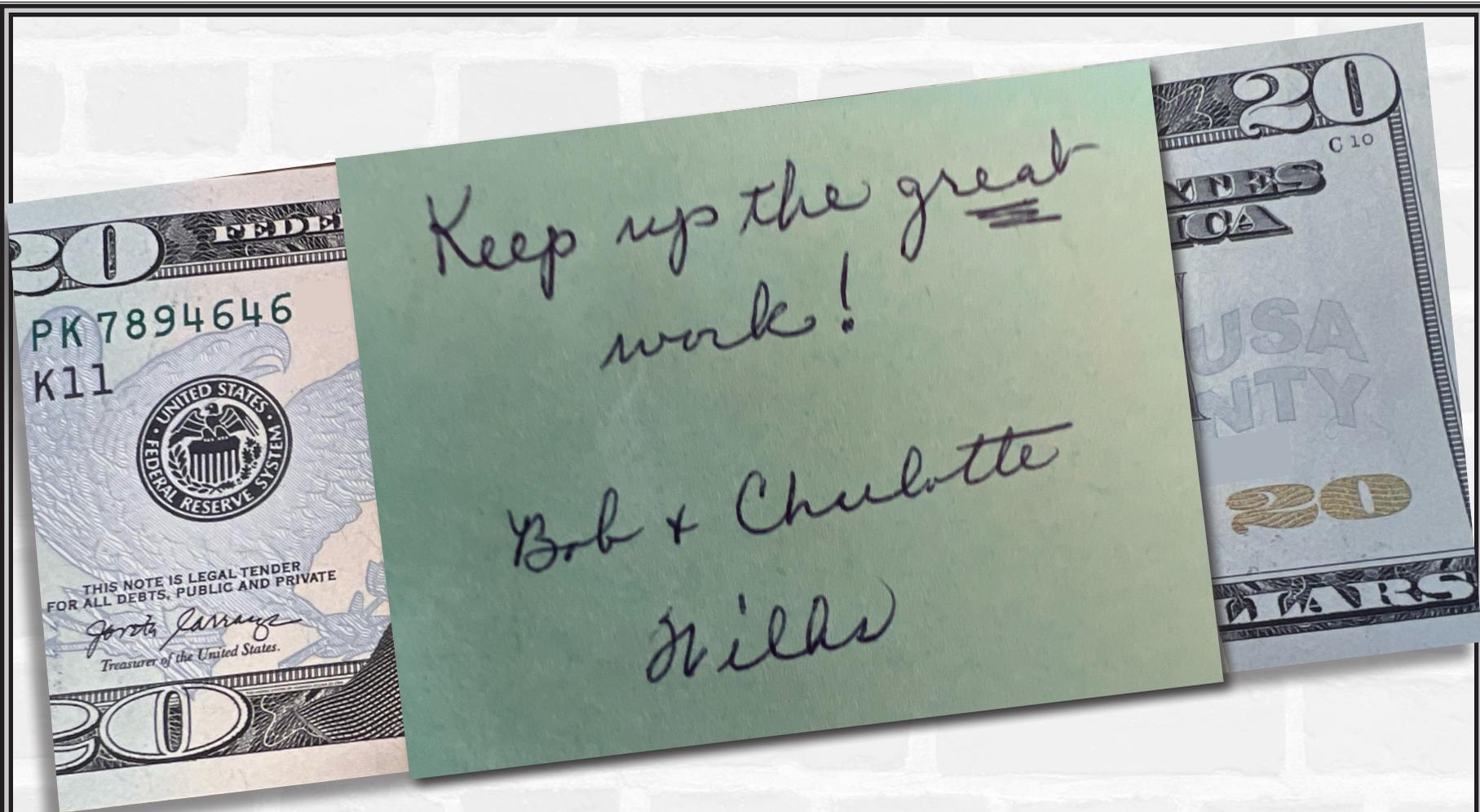


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DAMN ARBITRATION CLAUSES!

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# CityPULSE

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Flash in the Pan: Moqueca



Cover Art

By Ryan Claytor

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CITY PULSE

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IMPACT

88.9FM

## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

PANDEMIC REAL TALK WITH THE INVISIBLE HAND OF THE FREE MARKET! I'M NOT A DOCTOR, BUT I SOMETIMES DRESS LIKE ONE, SO AS TO APPEAR IMPLICITLY TRUSTWORTHY!

AND YES, YOU CAN SEE ME. HAVE YOU PEOPLE HEARD OF METAPHORS?

SO WE'RE TWO YEARS INTO THE PANDEMIC, AND IF YOU ASK ME, THINGS ARE GOING GREAT!

BILLIONAIRES HAVE INCREASED THEIR NET WORTH BY \$1.6 TRILLION! THEY CAN BUILD MORE SPACE TOURIST ROCKETS OR SOMETHING!

IT'S GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE!

MEANWHILE, THE C.E.O. OF DELTA AIRLINES ASKED THE C.D.C. TO REDUCE RECOMMENDED QUARANTINE TIMES--AND IN AN AMAZING, UNRELATED COINCIDENCE, THE C.D.C. DID EXACTLY THAT!

SO DON'T WORRY--IF YOU GET SICK, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET BACK TO WORK THAT MUCH SOONER!

SPEAKING OF WORK, OFFICES ARE RE-OPENING AT FULL CAPACITY, DESPITE THE WILDLY CONTAGIOUS NEW VARIANT! AMERICA IS BACK IN BUSINESS, BABY!

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IT'S JUST SCIENCE!

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WE'RE NOT FALLING FOR ANY OF THAT COMMIE CRAP IN THIS COUNTRY!

SO IF YOU GET COVID, REST ASSURED--THE ECONOMY WILL BE JUST FINE!

REMEMBER, WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER, FOR SOME UNSPECIFIED VALUE OF "TOGETHER"!

EXCEPT, YOU KNOW, WHEN WE'RE NOT.

IN CONCLUSION, COVID IS A DISEASE OF MANY CONTRASTS!

Tom Tomorrow © 2022 ... www.thismodernworld.com ... twitter.com/tomtomorrow

# PULSE NEWS & OPINION

## Did this driver take CATA's mask mandate too far?

Driver fired, rehired, refired after fight with passenger at the Lansing Mall

Craig Nieman admits that he doesn't take the COVID-19 pandemic too seriously. But as a driver for the Capital Area Transportation Authority, it was part of his job to ensure that passengers wore face coverings.

So, when a local man decided to climb on Nieman's bus at the Lansing Mall without a mask last summer, it became a problem — and, as it turned out, not just for the maskless passenger.

Nieman, 61, ended his shift that day with a badly bruised eye after a confrontation with Michael Peterson, 28, of Lansing, escalated into violence. Peterson faces a warrant for assault charges. And the incident helped cost Nieman his job.

"If we're being honest, I really don't give a shit about face masks. I think masks are freaking crazy, but I also had to worry about keeping my job," Nieman said last week. "If I had noticed that a passenger was not wearing a mask, I had to tell them to wear one, or it was my job as a driver that was on the line. I just never thought it would ever lead to me being fired."

Nieman was waiting to drive his usual route from downtown Lansing to the Lansing Mall about 2:30 p.m. July 5 when Peterson boarded at the CATA station on Grand Avenue, he said.

Peterson wasn't wearing a face mask, but Nieman said he didn't notice until he was already headed west on



Former Lansing bus driver Craig Nieman shows his injuries in July following a violent encounter with a passenger. He said he was punched in the face after he tried to enforce a mask mandate.



Courtesy

Saginaw Highway. Peterson hopped off at the next stop at the Lansing Mall — at first, avoiding the need for Nieman to confront him over CATA's policies on face masks.

But then Peterson returned. And police reports indicate that the situation quickly turned violent.

"I told him that he needed a mask but he walked right past me," Nieman recounted. "He told me: 'Fuck it. I'm riding.' Then, he started to threaten me, and he was cursing from the back of the bus, talking about how he would kick my ass. I got my microphone keyed up to let dispatch know what was going on, and I couldn't believe how quickly he got up to the front of the bus."

Nieman added: "He told me: 'If you call the police, I'm going to punch you.' So, I keyed up my microphone and then he took a swing and hit me, big-time hard in the face. It was a big one."

Police reports indicate that Peterson mistakenly got off at the wrong bus stop and instantly became frustrated after Nieman attempted to refuse him service for not wearing a mask. And Peterson reportedly became enraged at the thought of law enforcement becoming involved — perhaps because he also had at least two active warrants

at that time, court records showed.

Witnesses told deputies that Peterson darted to the front of the bus, reached behind the driver's plastic glass protector and punched Nieman square in the face. Police reports and CATA officials also described a violent confrontation that spilled into the parking lot. At least one person called 911.

After Peterson threw a punch, Nieman said that he tried to physically kick him away from the driver's seat before getting up and shoving Peterson out of the bus and onto the sidewalk.

"I'm thinking: I'm a 61-year-old obese man. I cannot stand here at the door and play kick-the-nitwit for a half-hour or until someone intervenes and calls the police," Nieman said.

Nieman said the tussle continued for several minutes after both men tripped over a curb and struggled for several minutes to gain the upper hand while they rolled around on the pavement.

Eventually, Nieman said he was able to "escape" and retreat to his bus — but only after sinking his teeth into Peterson's back for several seconds. Another passenger left the bus and had also pepper-sprayed Peterson — which caused him to run into the park-

ing lot before Eaton County Sheriff's deputies could make their way to the scene to investigate, police reports noted. Deputies caught up with Peterson in the parking lot, where he denied throwing the first punch. Police reports, however, still listed Nieman as the victim. Prosecutors authorized a misdemeanor assault charge against Peterson, though deputies still allowed him to leave the mall. A warrant was still active this week. A spokeswoman for the Eaton County Sheriff's Office indicated that the case was delayed while Peterson deals with an unrelated criminal case in Lenawee County.

The Lenawee County jail confirmed that Peterson was booked July 24 and was released Sept. 13. The Lenawee County Prosecutor's Office didn't respond to questions about the status of his latest criminal charges. Online records were unavailable.

"I was a driver, otherwise I would've beaten the hell out of him," Nieman said. "So, all I really did was push this guy off the bus and then defend myself. I really did absolutely nothing wrong. In fact, I did less than what I should've done — and I ended up paying the price for all of it."

CATA officials, however, saw the situation differently than the police. Nieman was immediately suspended. Three days later, he was fired for a "serious violation" of multiple work rules, as well as a violation of "professional standards and expectations," CATA officials wrote to Nieman.

"From CATA's investigation, it is not clear who started the physical altercation — you or the passenger," according to a letter to Nieman from CATA operations manager Todd Brooks. "However, it is clear that after the passenger had disengaged from the situation, you continued the altercation by leaving your bus and actively pursuing physical violence against the passenger, ending with you physically tackling the passenger to the ground, punching him repeatedly and, from your statement, biting him on the back for ten to fifteen seconds."

CATA also defended those findings



Courtesy

Peterson

# CATA

from page 5

this week.

“While the police report may have exonerated Mr. Nieman of criminal charges, his actions were troublingly excessive, resulting in unnecessary injuries to the rider, in violation of CATA work rules and procedural requirements. Operators are required to mitigate and de-escalate, not exacerbate,” a CATA spokeswoman told City Pulse. “Operators are encouraged to politely remind all to mask up or deny boarding those who refuse to comply. However, in supporting the mandate, CATA advises operators to

avoid confrontation.”

Less than a month later, however, CATA reversed Nieman’s termination under what he described as a “last chance” agreement — a deal that he said he negotiated with top executives.



Courtesy

CATA requires passengers to wear face masks on its buses in accordance with a federal order. Drivers, however, have been instructed to “avoid confrontation” with riders, CATA officials said.

The terms were simple: come back to work. Make another mistake and get fired.

CATA officials said the reversal was offered at the direct request of labor union officials, who sought to “boost employee morale regarding the mandate.” The return-to-work agreement allowed Nieman to return with a “clean slate,” officials said.

“I was sitting here without a job for weeks. It wasn’t a good deal, but it was either take this last-chance agreement or be shit-out-of-luck,” Nieman said. “I thought, I need a job so I’ll sign the contract — even though I hadn’t done anything wrong. But that all backfired on me too.”

Less than two months later, Nieman said that he found himself back in CATA’s hot seat after he scraped the roof of his bus on a church soffit, caus-

ing “very minor” damage. CATA fired him again in October. He has been unemployed since.

“At that point, I think they were just looking for some reason to fire my ass,” Nieman contended. “I was the victim all the way around here, and I think I just deserve to be treated better than this. I wouldn’t treat your child like this, so I don’t expect you to treat my mother’s child like this.”

Nieman contended that CATA bus drivers wouldn’t normally be fired for a “minor incident” like his accidental collision with the church. He also argued that his latest firing was a result of veiled, retroactive punishment for his encounter with Peterson.

CATA officials, however, have denied that Nieman’s last firing was at all related to the fight.

“That agreement allowed him to return to work with a clean slate. His Oct. 10 chargeable accident violated the terms of said agreement,” CATA said. “CATA emphatically maintains that this was a routine and justifiable employee discharge.”

Additionally, Nieman was involved in a crash with his personal vehicle in April in Lansing Township that he did not report to CATA, which officials have also labeled an offense.

Nieman also described a suspension he received in early 2020 over a verbal argument with another driver. He also said that the Michigan State University Police Department had briefly investigated allegations from last year that he was “hitting on” one of his passengers.

In that situation, Nieman said a teenage girl fell and ripped her jeans while boarding his bus on campus. After taking down her cell phone number to write a report over the incident, Nieman said that he had sent her text

messages offering to replace the ripped pants later that evening.

“Apparently, she thought I was hitting on her. I wasn’t. She called the MSU Police Department like I had done something wrong by offering to buy her a pair of pants,” Nieman said. “I met with a supervisor over that incident too. I told him it was wrong and that I shouldn’t have done it.”

Nieman also sent emails to City Pulse in which he referred to female drivers as “baby girls.”

Meaning “they,” he wrote: “If there ever get lonely they can call me and I will make them feel all better.”

CATA officials said they were unaware of those sexualized remarks, but they also declined to provide a full overview of Nieman’s employment history. City Pulse has since filed a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act for more details.

A CATA spokeswoman also noted that the company has fielded multiple allegations of “concerning behaviors and activities” exhibited by Nieman since he was fired. Those complaints have since sent to at least three local law enforcement agencies across Greater Lansing.

Among those concerns: Nieman has taken several pictures of his former colleagues’ personal vehicles and sent them to CATA management, alleging that his old supervisors were having extramarital affairs. He also said he likes to “drive around” near CATA facilities in his free time.

Said Nieman: “I may not get my job back, but I’m going to be in their faces for the rest of their lives.”

— KYLE KAMINSKI

**STATE OF MICHIGAN  
PROBATE COURT  
INGHAM COUNTY  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS  
Decedent's Estate  
FILE NO 21-1604-DE**  
Estate of Ronald K. Foster.  
Date of birth: 10/30/39.  
**TO ALL CREDITORS:  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:**  
The decedent, Ronald K. Foster, died 11/12/2021. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the state will be forever barred unless presented to Terry Foster, personal representative or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.  
12/28/2021  
Terry Foster  
402 Elizabeth St.  
Eaton Rapids, MI 48827  
517-214-5587 CP#22-002



## PUBLIC NOTICE

Regular meetings of the Board of Water and Light Commissioners of the City of Lansing, Michigan, are scheduled to be held at 5:30 p.m., at the Board of Water and Light Executive Office Depot Facility, 1201 S. Washington Ave, Lansing, Michigan on the following dates:

### 2022 Lansing Board of Water & Light Board of Commissioners Regular Board Meeting Schedule

Tuesday January 25  
Tuesday March 22  
Tuesday May 24  
Tuesday July 26  
Tuesday September 27  
Tuesday November 15

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

Posted by order of the Board of Water and Light Commissioners in conformity with Act 267, PA 1976.

BOARD OF WATER AND LIGHT  
M. Denise Griffin, Corporate Secretary  
(517) 702-6033

CP#22-001

### CITY OF LANSING 2022 Meeting Schedule

Monday, January 10, 2022	Monday, July 11, 2022
Monday, January 24, 2022	Monday, July 18, 2022
Monday, February 7, 2022	Monday, August 8, 2022
Monday, February 21, 2022	Monday, August 22, 2022
Monday, March 7, 2022	Monday, September 12, 2022
Monday, March 21, 2022	Monday, September 19, 2022
Monday, April 11, 2022	Monday, October 10, 2022
Monday, April 25, 2022	Monday, October 17, 2022
Monday, May 02, 2022	Monday, November 7, 2022
Monday, May 09, 2022	Monday, November 14, 2022
Monday, May 16, 2022	Monday, December 5, 2022
Monday, June 06, 2022	Monday, December 12, 2022
Monday, June 20, 2022	

Except as otherwise noted, all meetings will be on Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the Lansing City Council Chambers, 10th Floor City Hall.

To be added to the email list to receive alerts when the City Council Agendas and approved minutes are available on the web, please visit [www.lansingmi.gov/clerk](http://www.lansingmi.gov/clerk) or contact the City Clerk's Office at 517-483-4131

Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk, MMC/CMMC  
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CP#22-003

# REWIND

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI

### Former bball star running for state House seat

Former NBA player Jon Horford plans to run for the state House of Representatives in Lansing. The Horford family, of Grand Ledge, claims three ex-pro players. Horford, 30, who also played at the University of Michigan, bought a home within walking distance of the House Office Building. He is a Democrat.



### COVID-19 surge pushes schools online

Both the Lansing School District and Michigan State University have decided to kick off their spring semesters with most classes online amid a continued rise in coronavirus cases nationwide. Proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test will also be required for all on-campus sporting events, as well as on-campus theatrical and musical performances at MSU. The Lansing School District has decided to close its sporting events to spectators altogether.

### Sparrow celebrates first baby of 2022

Shamaria Roby gave birth to her fifth child (and third daughter) at 2:48 a.m. New Year's Day — marking the first baby in 2022 to have been delivered at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, multiple sources reported. Roby has yet to decide on a name; it's reportedly between Gianna and Piper.

### Lansing leaders kick off fresh terms

Mayor Andy Schor was sworn in for a second term after his landslide victory against Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar in November. City Clerk Chris Swope and Councilmen Peter Spadafore, Brian Jackson and Jeremy Garza were also sworn in for another four-year term. Newly elected At-Large Councilman Jeffrey Brown also attended his first meeting Monday. As expected, Spadafore passed the presidential gavel to Councilman Adam Hussain, who was elected to serve as Council president in 2022 with Councilwoman Carol Wood as vice president.



### Report: Lansing drags feet on racial equity

A scathing report in the Lansing State Journal declared that Mayor Andy Schor's administration has made "little

visible progress" in 2021 on its stated goals tied to diversity and racial justice. Schor's Racial Justice and Equity Alliance released a report in August with several dozen goals — with specific deadlines or milestones that its creators wanted to meet before January. Few of those goals have been met, though officials said residents can expect more progress in 2022.

### CATA downsizes buses for longer drives

The 40-foot buses assigned to CATA Route 46 to Mason and Route 48 to Webberville will soon be replaced with 25-foot buses that can only accommodate 15 passengers — a cost-saving move designed to better allocate fleet resources following a trend of fewer commuters traveling into downtown Lansing.



### Grants open for Lansing businesses

Applications from Lansing-area businesses in "highly visible and critical areas of the city" will be accepted through March 1, offering them a chance to nab thousands of dollars in city grant funding designed to improve the appearance and structural condition of their façades. Applications will be judged based on aesthetics, need, impact, financial capacity and location. Eligible improvements include new windows, signage, lighting and entryway improvements.

Visit [purelansing.com/facadeprogram](http://purelansing.com/facadeprogram) for more details.

### Police: Holt teacher sexually assaulted child

Brian Hannon, a transitional kindergarten teacher at Elliott Elementary School in Holt, was charged with second-degree criminal sexual conduct after authorities said he sexually assaulted a child Dec. 6. Hannon has been placed on paid leave. The district does not believe any Holt students are involved, the Lansing State Journal reported.

### Nonprofit fears rescued deer will be killed

The Nottingham Nature Nook, an East Lansing nonprofit organization dedicated to rehabilitating injured and abandoned wildlife, voiced concerns about the city's plans to kill deer in public parks this winter — specifically at a park area less than a half-mile from its rescue release point. Still, city officials have no plans to call off the hunt, citing a rise in car crashes tied to overpopulation.

Read more at [lansingcitypulse.com](http://lansingcitypulse.com).



### Lansing pastor killed in car crash

The Rev. David Hudgins, the judicial vicar of the Diocese of Lansing and a pastor at Saint Joseph Shrine in Brooklyn, died at 53 years old in a car crash on U.S. 127 in Jackson County, multiple sources reported. Hudgins was reportedly the only person in his car and no other vehicles were involved.



### Nelson Gallery

113 S. Washington Square, Lansing

The Nelson Gallery is in the long-underutilized former home of Liebermann's Department Store, one of Lansing's gems. The building has been a notable structure in the area since the 1960s when then-owner Betty Price commissioned George Nelson to revamp the existing century-old building as the home of her family department store business. Nelson, whose name is synonymous with midcentury modern design, was the design director for Herman Miller, creating the lamps, clocks, and furnishings that still bear his name. Nelson's design is a midcentury modern marvel of stone and glass. He set the entrance back by approximately 4 feet from the buildings on either side of it and clad the sidewalls with multicolored pieces of slate. By continuing the tile on the walls inside the store, Nelson blurred the line between the indoors and out, a fact that is made clear by the large expanse of glass on the front of the building. In her book "Mid-Michigan Modern: From Frank Lloyd Wright to Googie," Susan Bandes writes that there are four panels of 22-foot-high windows and an offset front door. Since Liebermann's closed 30 years ago, the building has been occupied by other businesses, including the Lansing Art Gallery for several years. It is now the home of Redhead Design Studio and its appropriately named Nelson Gallery.

"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](mailto:eye@lansingcitypulse.com) or call Berl Schwartz at 999-5061.

# City Pulse predicts big news in '22

After nearly two years on the COVID roller coaster, let's start this next one by imagining what a return to some semblance of sanity might look like. We've unleashed our inner prognosticator to bring you the top developments we hope to see in 2022 and beyond:

## Hospitals, politicians launch COVID crackdown

Sparrow and McLaren start the new year with a bang by finally requiring their employees to get vaccinated or get fired. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Mayor Andy Schor also locate their spines and jump on the bandwagon with vaccination mandates for all state and city employees. Responding to critical capacity shortages affecting patients with non-COVID-related illnesses, both hospital systems also announce a major change in treatment priorities: Vaccinated patients to the front of the line; unvaccinated to the back. Tents are set up in the parking lot to serve unvaxed COVID patients, staffed by unvaxed former hospital employees. Ivermectin is the treatment of choice. Area funeral homes set up information booths nearby.

## Public safety gets back to business

Mayor Schor announces the hiring of 15 new police officers, half of them Black men and women. Chief Ellery Sosebee signals the end of pandemic policing, directing his officers to get out of their patrol cars and get back into the neighborhoods. Murders drop precipitously. County commissioners bend to public pressure and launch a comprehensive racial equity review of the Ingham County Sheriff's Office, including an annual study of traffic stops and a close look at the department's hiring practices. Commissioners require Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth to complete racial sensitivity and implicit bias training.

## Big moves resuscitate downtown Lansing

The State of Michigan finally recognizes its obligation to support the economy of the Capital City, announcing a plan to relocate state workers from around the region and refill empty offices in downtown Lansing, including reopening the secretary of state branch office. At MSU, President Samuel Stanley Jr. acknowledges the university's compelling interest in a thriving urban core. In a surprise move, he announces that the MSU College of Law will relocate to downtown Lansing, taking over space left behind after Cooley Law School moved to the WMU campus in Kalamazoo. Meanwhile, Mayor Schor negotiates a deal with county leaders to solve the city jail riddle. Under the plan, the

lockup in the basement of the downtown county courthouse will be expanded, clearing the way for the transformation of the old City Hall into a new hotel and the former LSJ headquarters into the new home of municipal government.

## Performing arts get powered up

After months of secret negotiations, the Lansing Economic Area Partnership and the Lansing Board of Water & Light announce the redevelopment of the decommissioned Eckert Power Station. The ground floor will become the city's new performing arts center. The floors above will feature affordable studio and living space for artists, luxury condominiums, and a rooftop vegan restaurant with panoramic views of the Lansing region.

## Blue wave puts Michigan Dems in driver's seat

Thanks to non-gerrymandered district lines approved by Michigan's new independent redistricting commission, Democrats win control of the state Senate for the first time since 1982 on the strength of victories by new Lansing area state Sen. Sarah Anthony and Sam Singh. Democrats also surprise pundits by narrowly capturing the state House. Gov. Whitmer easily wins reelection after the James Craig campaign collapses. Republicans take another blow when their "Secure MI Vote" ballot campaign falls short. Despite all manner of fraudulent representations by petition circulators, insufficient signatures are obtained to put the Republican voter suppression plan on the statewide ballot.

## Trump goes to jail

New York state prosecutors bring dozens of felony corruption and tax fraud charges against Donald Trump, his family and key advisers. After a surprisingly speedy trial, Trump is convicted and taken into custody to start serving a 10-year prison term. He begins to write his memoir — "Mein Covfefe" — and announces he will run for president from jail with cellmate Rudy Giuliani as his veep.



## Surprise defections shock DC, put Dems in charge

The expected Republican wave in the midterm elections fails to materialize, but West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin and Arizona Sen. Kyrsten Sinema shock the nation by defecting to the Republican Party. Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski and Maine Sen. Susan Collins counterpunch by announcing that their conscience no longer allows them to remain in the party of Trump, handing Senate control back to the Democrats and re-establishing one-party rule in Washington. Ahead of the fall election — with Vice President Kamala Harris breaking the Senate tie — united Democrats push through President Biden's Build Back Better plan, increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, remove marijuana from the Schedule 1 list of controlled substances, add sexual orientation to the nation's civil rights law, pass new legislation to require equal pay, reaffirm abortion rights, restore the marginal tax rate on billionaires to 70%, and enact universal health care.

## Docs to CP: 'You're really high.'

Fully vaccinated and boosted City Pulse editorial staff sought urgent medical attention in an effort to diagnose the cause of a series of wild hallucinations predicting peace, progress and prosperity in the new year. Preliminary test results indicate the likely consumption of excessive amounts of Platinum OG Kush.

## The CP Edit

### Opinion

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

#### 1.) Write a letter to the editor.

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# Democrats like pick-up state House seat with redistricting

Who was a winner in the 2021 Michigan legislative redistricting sweepstakes? We can start with Lansing area Democrats.



KYLE MELINN

POLITICS

As part of the new commission's drive to

**Opinion** draw maps that basically give both Republicans and Democrats a puncher's chance of winning a majority every two years, urban areas like Lansing, Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor were carved up like a pie instead of packed together like a can of pumpkin.

This means Greater Lansing has five state House districts that are winnable for Democrats as opposed to the current four.

Here's what we know about these five House districts and the candidates most likely to run in them:

**73rd House District** — Rep. Julie Brixie gets a lot of new territory in a district that starts in Okemos and runs south along Grand River Avenue to Williamston. In terms of land mass, Brixie's district is the largest in the region, making up most of rural

Ingham County.

The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission has this district as 55% Democratic. And while Brixie is fairly progressive, she has an agriculture background that earned her the Michigan Farm Bureau endorsement as a first-time legislative candidate in 2018. If the farmers in Stockbridge want to talk soil, Brixie can nerd out with them.

**74th House District** — Delhi Township and the city of Lansing south of the Grand and Red Cedar rivers are put in a district with a 68% Democratic base. Rep. Kara Hope shouldn't have many sleepless nights running for reelection in this district unless she has a one-on-one primary challenge from a prominent South Lansing figure.

Could a former Lansing mayoral candidate be interested? Or will she wait a couple years when Hope is term-limited?

**75th House District** — Half of East Lansing, Haslett and Okemos north of Grand River were put in a district with Bath, Laingsburg and St. Johns in a district that runs along the Clinton-Shiawassee county line. Sen. Curtis

Hertel, D-East Lansing, would be seem to be a natural fit here and he tells me that he's considering it.

If he were not to run, Meridian Township Trustee Dan Opsommer is also a possibility. The district has a 59% Democratic base, which takes any realistic hope from a Republican off the table. One Democrat, Graham David Diedrich, a Haslett High School graduate and master's student at Michigan State University, has already announced for the district.

**76th House District** — Delta Township and much of Eaton County make up this new district that Rep. Angela Witwer likely will run for reelection in. Unlike past years, she won't have Grand Ledge in this district and some other rural areas like Mulliken or Sunfield. The district is slightly Democratic — 51.7% to 48.3% — creating the Republicans' best chance of the five Lansing seats. No Republican has announced, but that'll change.

**77th House District** — The city of Lansing north of the Grand River was put into a new district with DeWitt and southwestern Clinton County up to

Westphalia. Rep. Sarah Anthony likely would run here, but she's going for the Senate.

Rep. Graham, R-DeWitt, would run here except the Democratic base number is 61.5% and he likely wouldn't win. The chances are better that Filler will move closer to where he grew up in Ovid and run in a sprawling, five-county district north of Lansing that butts up against Saginaw.

Former professional basketball player Jon Horford told me he's planning to file for this seat as soon as this week, so he's in. The Grand Ledge native just bought a house downtown with his wife. He's excited around the prospects of his first political race.

He won't be alone. DeWitt attorney Logan Byrne, who clerked for Judge Rosemarie, is an announced candidate and has to like how this district shaped up with much of Clinton County likely to be represented by a Democrat.

With no incumbent serving here, expect the field to grow as we all get used to these new districts.

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

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# The complex empathy between the hunter and his prey

How  
'A Hunter's Tale'  
tells a story  
of understanding

By SKYLER ASHLEY

As comic artist Ryan Claytor sat down to begin work on his latest graphic novel, "A Hunter's Tale," he revisited the poetry of his late grandfather. The poems lifted Claytor off into a nostalgic trance and in his mind's eye he sees his grandfather. He's trudging through woodlands — rifle in tow; his loyal dog by his side. The calm November air is as crisp as the freshly fallen leaves on the ground and the wind's bittersweet bite heightens his senses.

"A Hunter's Tale" is a story driven by a powerful connection between a grandson and his grandfather, the respect mother nature commands of us all and the eternal conflict and reluctant bond of the hunter and the hunted.

"I feel like I've been able to see this poem for a long time. This is a very visual, narrative-driven poem about

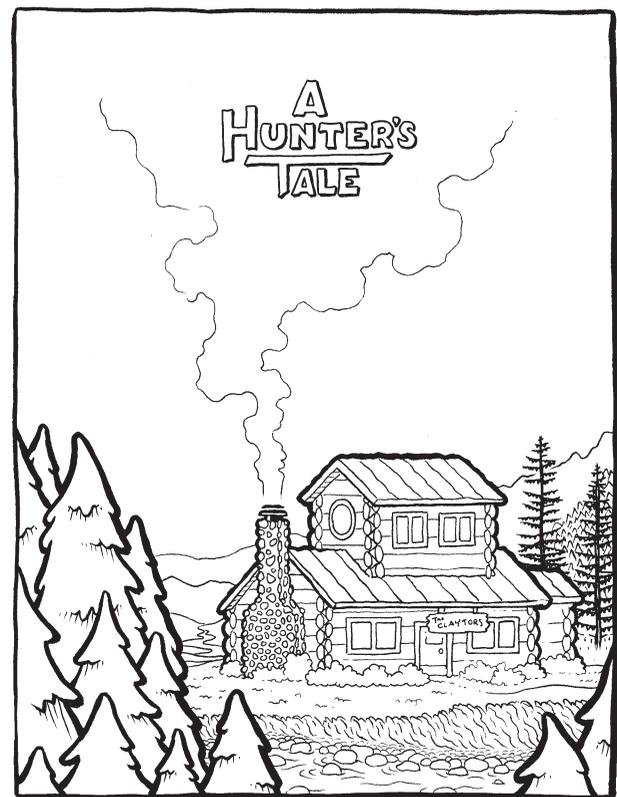
**"A Hunter's Tale,"**  
by Ryan Claytor, is being  
serialized in its entirety  
in City Pulse, beginning  
today. Look for an excerpt  
in every issue of City Pulse  
in January. To learn more  
about how to  
support Claytor and  
"A Hunter's Tale,"  
visit [ahunterstale.com](http://ahunterstale.com)



Artist Ryan Claytor

two seemingly disparate subjects: a hunter and his prey. Over the course of the poem, they form an unlikely understanding of one another," Claytor said.

Claytor, 42, is an adept illustrator and an expert in the vast world of comic books. He coordinates Michigan State University's comic art and graphic novel minor and is the college's first ever professor to teach comic studio courses. In 2009, Claytor's work was exhibited by the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco. In 2019, he co-authored "Coin-Op Carnival," a four-volume comic series that takes readers on a deep dive into



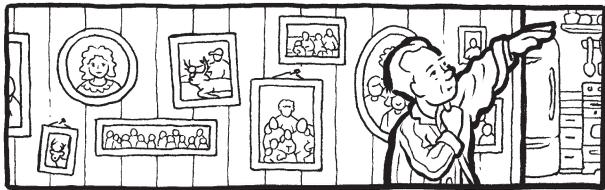
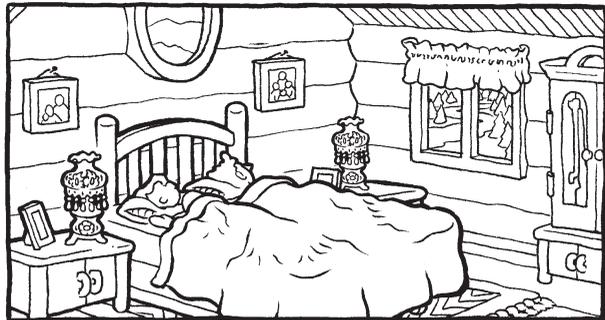
See Claytor, Page 12

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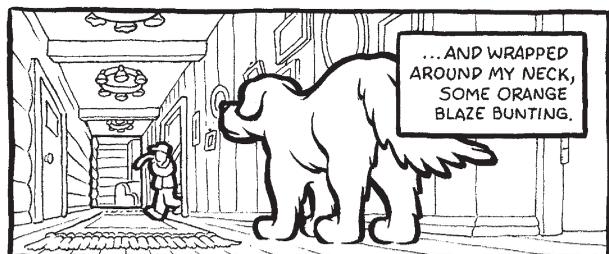
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2



3



4



5

For the next installment of "A Hunter's Tale," pick up the Jan. 12 issue of City Pulse.

# Claytor

from page 10

the world of pinball.

“Comics are made of words and images, and together they can create literally anything. There is no budget — you have a pencil and paper, and you can make whatever you want,” Claytor said.

Claytor began work on “A Hunter’s Tale” — serialized in City Pulse for four weeks, beginning today — last year, with the full book scheduled for release this month. While the illustrations are

wholly original, the narration and dialogue are taken directly from an old poem written by his late grandfather, Charles Kermit Claytor.

“It’s been with me for as long as I can remember,” Claytor said of the poem. “It was written in 1983, and it’s been a part of my life for a long time. He wrote a number of poems, but whenever I got to this one, I stopped dead in my tracks. It’s my absolute favorite.”

The elder Claytor was born in the Midwest, growing up in the small town of Alma, Illinois. But he didn’t learn to hunt until he moved to the outlands of Arizona. He developed a wickedly accurate shot with his rifle, as each piece

of game he came across had to be taken out with just one hit. For if he fired more than a single round at a time, the game warden would be able to quickly locate and charge Charles Claytor, who was living off the land illegally.

“My grandfather lived an interesting life. He was born in the early 1900s and was diagnosed with tuberculosis and a young age,” Claytor said. “From my understanding, at that time, tuberculosis was essentially a death sentence. He was told to go out to the deserts of Arizona in hope that the dry desert air would cure him of the disease. That’s what he did, he moved to Arizona and lived off the land. Because I’m here, you

can surmise he made it through.”

Claytor is not a hunter. He details that he lacks the fortitude to even place a worm on a hook. But contemplating his grandfather’s predicament — far from home and penniless, resorting to killing and catching game in order to feed himself — forced Claytor to think emphatically. Claytor ultimately reached the conclusion that if his hand was forced, he would follow the same path as his grandfather. This approach to reaching an understanding with something unfamiliar is one of the major themes Claytor hopes to get across in “A Hunter’s Tale.”

“I think if I were in that situation, I would have done the same thing. This poem has taught me empathy on a number of different levels as well. I am so excited to share that with more people,” Claytor said.

After his time as a wild man in Arizona, Charles Claytor eventually moved to Colorado, where he lived in a riverside log cabin. In his childhood, Claytor would visit his grandfather during the summer. He has vivid memories of walking alongside the river that appears on the first page of “A Hunter’s Tale.” Charles Claytor died in 1999 at age 93.

“Looking back, I think it’s really to inspiring to know what he went through and how well he came out after all that,” Claytor said.

The genesis of “A Hunter’s Tale” was further driven by the convergence of major watershed moments in American society that took place in the past two tumultuous years — including the failed insurrection at the Capitol Building and the murder of George Floyd. Claytor cites his growing sense of visceral division across the United States as further inspiration to pen a graphic novel that explores themes of empathetic understanding and coming together in spite of differences.

“We’ve all been through the past two years together; I don’t have to explain it all. With each passing day, it seems like we become more separated from one another,” Claytor said. “In this day and age, it’s so easy to click ‘defriend’ and cut people out of your life and surround yourself with people who think very similarly to you. I feel that is dangerous. We should be open to listening and trying to understand people who are different from us.”

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# ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## Grit, light and shade

Randy Napoleon explores his 'Rust Belt Roots'

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Guitarist Randy Napoleon wanted his latest album, "Rust Belt Roots," to conjure up a world before the Internet and satellite radio, when each region of the country had its own jazz sound.

Close your eyes and you feel the pulse of Midwest dynamism — breezing along on the freeway, taking in the glimmering lights of a steel plant or an oil refinery, people watching on a bustling riverfront.

The music's subtle moods don't announce themselves or knock you over the head. They blossom organically from the grit, light and shade of the rust belt terroir, like a regional wine.

"My favorite jazz works on a lot of levels," Napoleon said. "You can reflect on it, think about it for years and hear different levels of subtlety, but you tap your foot, bob your head and hum along."

It's a truism that you don't notice your accent until you move away from home. The jazz greats Napoleon celebrates in "Rust Belt Roots" fused musical sophistication with danceable, bone-warming grooves.

Napoleon moved to New York in 1999, after years of training with masters like Ann Arbor trumpeter Louis Smith and Detroit saxophonist Donald Walden and a long journeyman period playing gigs in Ann Arbor and Detroit.

"I didn't realize until I moved to New York how much my musical values and identity were forged by the scene that raised me," he said.

The album showcases the work of three guitar icons: Indianapolis-born Wes Montgomery, who worked as a welder in his lean years and forged a muscular, ductile guitar sound that influenced generations of jazz artists; Grant Green, born in St. Louis, hard bop and soul jazz and early forays into what was later called "acid jazz"; and Detroit's Kenny Burrell, a master guitarist and arranger who performed with jazz greats from Billie Holiday and Tony Bennett to John Coltrane and Jimmy Smith.

Napoleon has absorbed the music of all three guitarists nearly all his life.

"Their influence as guitar stylists is talked about the most, but all three of them are beautiful writers as well, and I wanted to celebrate them as composers," he said.

Although Napoleon feels more kinship to jazz of the 1940s and 1950s, the past several years in political and cultural life have reminded Napoleon of the 1960s, and he feels that it was reflected in his playing on the CD.

"I played a little wilder on this record than any of my other records," he said. "These last few years, everything feels so intense, so wild."



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

MSU guitarist Randy Napoleon played at Red Cedar Spirits in 2019. His new CD, "Rust Belt Roots," was released in December.

There are impressive bursts of speed and intensity in "Rust Belt Roots," but they are camouflaged by Napoleon's innate sense of balance and refinement.

"It's important to hit extreme different moods and tempos," he said "I've never felt I was really great at playing fast tempos, but I work on it a lot because it keeps it interesting. It's part of the whole emotional landscape."

Napoleon performs with two ensembles on the CD.

One group includes his colleagues from the stellar MSU Jazz Studies faculty, including bassist Rodney Whitaker and pianist Xavier Davis. The other combo features veteran Ann Arbor bassist Paul Keller, pianist Rick Roe and drummer Sean Dobbins.

All the sidemen are longtime friends and musical soul mates, especially the two bassists.

"Those two guys raised me," Napoleon said. "It's like being raised

by wolves. I was raised by bass players."

Napoleon has played with Dobbins for over 30 years, and with everyone else on "Rust Belt Roots" for nearly as long.

"We've been playing together for a quarter century, we all share the same geographical background and I wanted to document the home team," he said.

The musicians are profoundly simpatico with the material. They wring every conceivable shade of sound and silence out of Kenny Burrell's limpid "Listen to the Dawn," a deceptively simple composition that Napoleon holds in awe.

"It's really direct and minimalist, but it has harmonic depth and a really amazing emotional arc," he said. "It takes a great mind to boil it down to the essence of a song like that."

Whitaker contributed a meditative bass solo that captures every lingering dust mote of a pink and gray Rust Belt dawn. It doesn't hurt that Whitaker

has played with Kenny Burrell many times.

"Rodney has that similar kind of poetry in his playing that Kenny has," Napoleon said. "I don't take it for granted that he's one of my best friends, but he's also a one-of-a-kind musician."

Napoleon's own tune, "The Man Who Sells Flowers," sprang from his New York years, when he lived across the street from a man who spent all night selling flowers in front of a corner bodega.

"I would always see him and smile and wave," Napoleon recalled. "He would never talk but he always waved back. I thought it must be a lonely and quiet job, with people in desperation buying flowers at 2 o'clock in the morning."

He reprises the tune at the end of the disc, as a tender and moving solo track.

"I had plenty of time to practice solo during the pandemic," he said. "I wanted to put a little of that in the record."

# 2022 resolution: Stop caring so much about THC content in your weed

Experts: Check out terpenes — not THC percentages — for the best high

By **KYLE KAMINSKI**

I owe our Lansterdam readers an apology as we head into the New Year. I've been fooled.

The product reviews featured in this column over the last year have placed way too much of an emphasis on the THC content of any given cannabis product, which I've recently learned plays far less of a role in determining the dankness of your bud and the richness of the resulting high.

That's why this year, I've resolved to stop caring about THC percentages. I'll still list them in my product reviews, but don't expect that detail to be the star of the show — because it's not.

And here's why:

For the uninitiated, THC and CBD, or tetrahydrocannabinol and cannabidiol, are the two most common cannabinoids in weed, and the only ones required by state regulators to be printed on labels of both medical and recreational products. In fact, under state law, the presence of THC is the only defining characteristic that actually identifies marijuana as marijuana in Michigan. It's often said that THC brings the high, while non-intoxicating CBD offers therapeutic benefits.

As a result, it's common to see retailers marketing their products exclusively on THC content — and shopping around at the testing laboratories that have given them the most desirable results.

In turn, it's also not totally uncommon to hear customers march up to the counter and order whatever bag of weed has the highest number printed on its label, often online and without ever having actually seen or smelled the product at all before it's back home and rolled into a joint.

An hour later, those same customers are often at a loss to explain why their expensive, high-end 32% THC Supercalifragilistic Kush offered an underwhelming and short-lasting high.

And this is the exact point where industry experts, including those in Lansing, think pot smokers — even longtime stoners like me — are getting it all wrong. It's not just THC that runs the show.

Jamie Lowell launched Michigan's first medical marijuana dispensary in 2009, helped write the ballot language that legalized recreational weed and works as a director at The Botanical Co. He's also widely regarded as one of the state's leading (and most vocal) experts on the topic.

"There is no good reason to believe that the THC percentage in flower or concentrate is an indicator of how 'affected' the user will get, or the quality of the product," Lowell explained to me last week. "The point is that THC is a part of a totality of components that are all working synergistically to produce an effect in conjunction with the individual user's unique system."

In addition to THC and CBD, different strains of different marijuana plants carry unique scents, flavors and effect profiles consisting of hundreds of combinations of cannabinoids and terpenes. The most common terps are myrcene,



**Lansterdam in Review:**  
Do THC percentages even matter?

caryophyllene, limonene, pinene, linalool, terpinolene, humulene and ocimene — which, when combined with THC, create a symphony of different physical and psychoactive effects that dictate how you feel after you smoke any given strain.

The staff at Pure Options explained: "Consumers who are looking to reduce anxiety might seek out a strain that has a greater percentage of terpenes like linalool or myrcene, whereas someone wanting an energetic buzz would want a strain higher in limonene. Plus, terpenes help determine the aroma and flavor of a strain, which can be major factors in a person's enjoyment."

That synergistic experience is referred to as the "Ensemble Effect," a term reportedly first coined by the late Dr. Lester Grinspoon, of Harvard University, which refers to the way in which the body's endocannabinoid system interacts with all of the hundreds of different cannabinoids and terpenes in weed — not just THC. And it's about time that smokers learn how this stuff works.

"Smell, taste, terpenes, harvest and curing processes, overall cannabinoid profile — these all make each flower strains especially different," said Jeff Hank, owner of Edgewood Wellness.



So, how do you pick the best weed? Rick Thompson, the executive director of NORML of Michigan, described the decision of how to choose the right strain as a "sensory experience."

"You have to smell it and see it prior to purchase in order for you to accurately gauge the amount of terpene content the cannabis has. THC doesn't make cannabis smell good. The ensemble chemicals do," he said. "If the cannabis you're considering for purchase looks identical to four other cannabis samples, all of which carry no recognizable scent, find out which manufacturer crafted that cannabis and never buy from that company ever. The nose knows."

Thompson suggests that customers do some research on various cannabis terpenes to determine which of them carry their desired effects — whether that be to produce a cerebral, energetic and uplifting kick in the morning or a sleeper, pain-relieving body buzz at night.

Roy Liskey, an owner of Local Roots Cannabis Co. in Laingsburg, said he

constantly tries to steer his customers away toward finding a dominant terpene in any given strain that works for them. Still, a lot of his customers tend to avoid strains that test below 20%. And they're missing out.

"If the terpene information is unavailable, you may have to go old school," he said. "Inspect the smell jar, and if the buds are visibly coated with trichomes and it smells pungent, it's probably great cannabis. Decide which terpenes are your favorite, or maybe more importantly, which terpenes don't agree with your body. Everyone's endocannabinoid systems are different."

Thompson added: "Unfortunately, many regulated cannabis companies prepackage their cannabis and there is no opportunity for you to use your senses. At that point, one must rely on the company's reputation and the recommendation of your friends to determine what to buy."

(Don't worry friends: I have 51 more columns coming this year with plenty of recommendations.)

*Kyle Kaminski is City Pulse's managing 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](mailto:kyle@lansingcitypulse.com).*

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# Check out the 2021 Michigan Notable Book Awards

By **BILL CASTANIER**

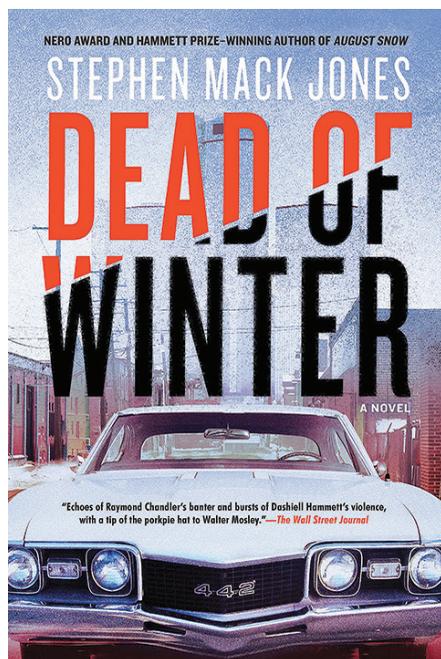
Lansing native Stephen Mack Jones' newest thriller, "Dead of Winter," which is set in Detroit's Mexican Town neighborhood, was selected as a 2021 Michigan Notable Book. It's the second time Jones has won the award. Jones, who graduated from Sexton High School and Michigan State University, was a late bloomer in terms of being a highly respected novelist.

It wasn't until after he retired from a career in advertising that he began his second career as a novelist. His three books feature ex-Detroit cop August Snow, who is using the money from his wrongful dismissal suit to redevelop an almost abandoned Detroit neighborhood. Snow is a no-nonsense vigilante of sorts, who rights wrongs for average Detroiters — he's not afraid to pull the trigger to help them when necessary.

Several other Michigan Notable Book Award winners have their books set in Detroit — including "Miles from Motown," by Lisa Sukenic, a fictional story of a young Detroit in the '60s; "From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry: The Killing of Vincent Chin and the Trial that Galvanized the Asian American Community," by Paula Yoo, and "Call Me Athena: Girl from Detroit," by Colby Cedar Smith, a generational historical fiction work.

In the nonfiction genre, there is "Getting to the Heart of the Matter: My 36 Years in the Senate," the memoir of Carl Levin, one of Michigan's longest serving U.S. Senators, who died shortly after the book's release.

The scales of award winners have also tipped toward authors who write about the Upper Peninsula and northern Michigan. Three fictional books with strong ties to the Upper Peninsula



made the list this year: "Firekeeper's Daughter," by Angeline Boulley, a modern coming-of-age thriller set on an Upper Peninsula reservation, and "Tin Camp Road," by Ellen Airgood, who explores rural poverty in the Upper Peninsula through the life of a young single mother.

The novel "Never Saw You Coming," by Erin Hahn, is also set in the Upper Peninsula. It tells the tale of an 18-year-old who moves up north in search of her lost family.

Other award-winning books set in rural northern Michigan include the hilarious "Early Morning Riser," by Katherine Heiny, which uses Boyne City as the backdrop for a complex love story between a young teacher and an older handyman.

Another fictional account of life in northern Michigan is "The Cut,"

by John Wemlinger. Set in Manistee during the late 19th century, "The Cut" explores how a monumental storm threatens the very existence of two young lovers.

Anyone whose made the trip to Mackinac Island will love "The Dockporter: A Mackinac Island Novel," by two former suitcase movers, Dave McVeigh and Jim Balone.

Nature lovers and trout fisherman will gravitate toward "Trout Water: A Year on the Au Sable," by Josh Greenberg, who operates a legendary fishing tackle store on one of America's most historical trout fishing streams. They will also love "Up North in Michigan: A Portrait of Place in Four Seasons," by Jerry Dennis, who is at his best in this series of essays.

Author David Harden delivered the precious resource of water during the darkest days of the Flint water crisis, and his memoir, "Standpipe: Delivering Water in Flint," helps define the struggles of those suffering through one of the nation's worst environmental disasters.

At least eight of the winning books are targeted toward young adult readers.

"Long Road to the Circus," by Betsy Bird, is set in Burr Oak, is a delightful novel inspired by the real-life story of a young girl who chased her dreams by learning to ride and race an ostrich.

Young readers will also enjoy "Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories of Kids," edited by Cynthia Leitich Smith. This collection of stories enlivens Native American culture, especially as it revolves around an Ann Arbor pow wow.

A number of the young adult award winners are crossovers, which can be

enjoyed by readers of all ages. In that vein is John Smolens' "Day of Days," which is a tender coming-of-age tale set against one of the nation's worst school disasters, the Bath School bombing. Smolens, a master of historical fiction, draws on the observations of several young children and how they navigated the aftermath of the bombing.

One science fiction thriller, "The Other Me," by Sarah Zachrich Jeng, is based on the popular conceit of an alternate world. Closer to reality is "Private Love, Public School: Gay Teacher Under Fire," by Christine A. Yared, which a shockingly honest consideration of what happens when a popular high school teacher is discovered to be gay.

Finally, there is a bitter-sweet selection that recognizes the life work of author Thomas W. Brunk, who died before seeing his encyclopedic guide to Pewabic pottery published. The book, "Pewabic Pottery: The American Arts & Crafts Movement Expressed in Clay," stands as the definitive text on the highly collectible Detroit pottery, and his work will live long after him.



Okay my sister and brother-in-law are anti-vax and I live across the world but I just found out today that for Christmas, his parents gave him his childhood vaccine records and I AM HOWLING!!! I can hardly breathe. What a move on behalf of his parents.

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f B i

# Favorite Things

## James Friend Hays and his Felix Gonzalez-Torres poster



James Friend Hays, a self-described queer and disabled multimedia artist from Lansing, finds inspiration from long day trips to museums. Hays, who posts his art on his Instagram page @half-gallonofwater, said his favorite thing is a piece of interactive art he took home from the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago by artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

My favorite thing is a poster I got from an art exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. It's a piece by Felix Gonzalez-Torres called "Untitled (The End)." In the museum, it's a big stack of paper and you can take one of the papers with you — it's like a poster. It talks about how art is different to different people, and how the public response changes the meaning of art. It also comments on the museum's responsibility with the artwork itself.

I visited the museum during a day trip to Chicago. I really like museums, so I went to the art institute while visiting the city. My goal for this year was to visit three new art museums, but that ended up being impossible because of the pandemic. I love seeing art and I love art history. It's different

to see art in a museum than it is to see it on a computer or on a TV. You go there specifically to look at the art; it's easier to absorb it without any distractions. I really like the Art Institute of Phoenix and the Detroit Institute of Art.

This was my first exposure to the work of Gonzalez-Torres, but I've since gotten really familiar with them and I enjoy reading about them. They died of AIDS in 1996 and a lot of their artwork reflects upon losing their partner to that disease and what it's like living with it. There's a particular piece they did that features two clocks next to each other. They are two things that are almost the same, even though they are mass-produced, but eventually their times will get out of sync with each other. It's about losing people. I recently did a series inspired by dreams. I would dream the dream and wake up and paint the painting. In general, I try to capture specific emotions even if I can't put words to them.

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

## Strange Matter announces major renovations, new location

By SKYLER ASHLEY

If you love Strange Matter Coffee, you're going to be overjoyed about two major recent announcements: its downtown Lansing coffee shop is getting much bigger and a whole new location is coming to Old Town.

Thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corp.'s Match on Main program, Strange Matter's downtown Lansing location has ambitious plans to expand its space by occupying its two vacant neighboring buildings. Strange Matter's downtown spot has been closed since March 2020 and owner Cara Nader announced in a social media post that the goal for its grand reopening is late summer.

Strange Matter is one of 41 businesses to receive the grant, and Nader said the renovated downtown coffee shop's offerings will also grow in scope to incorporate more bakery items and a small food menu that has a diverse helping of breakfast and lunch dishes.

Also in the pipeline for this souped-up Strange Matter is a tavern license, which will allow the café to also serve alcoholic beverages into the later evening hours.

But that's not all. Nader followed up that big announcement with another social media post that details Strange Matter's plans for an additional location set to open up at the historic Bethlehem Temple Building in Old Town once its renovations are complete. The Temple Building spot will offer all the same coffee and doughnuts as the other Strange Matter locations and will also have an expanded menu that includes breakfast and lunch items, as well as alcoholic bev-



Courtesy

Strange Matter owner Cara Nader announced that the coffee shop has plans to overhaul its downtown location and open up a new location in Old Town.

erages.

The historic site, last open to the public as music venue called the Temple Club, is undergoing major construction to become a mixed-use development with apartments and first-floor retail space. The hopeful opening date for this location is also late summer.

"We've been planning these announcements for some time, so it's sort of like revealing a big secret we've been keeping. We're thrilled to have the info out there, finally," Nader said. "Especially the Temple Building location, because that one we've been talking about internally since the fall of 2019 — basically 100 years ago at this point. But now the real work starts. Opening a new location has so many facets and I truly love the whole process."

Keep up with updates on Strange Matter Coffee by visiting its social media at [facebook.com/strangematterco](https://facebook.com/strangematterco) and [Instagram.com/strangematterco](https://instagram.com/strangematterco)



**Strange Matter**  
2010 E. Michigan Ave.  
#103  
Lansing  
(517) 224-5495  
[strangemattercoffee.com](https://strangemattercoffee.com)

# Willow Tree Family Center helps new mothers learn and network

By **CHELSEA PHILLIPS**

Willow Tree Family Center is a community space that hosts a variety of groups in Greater Lansing. It serves families through the pregnancy process and provides birthing, baby, and holistic services in one location. Willow Tree primarily houses peer-to-peer support groups for parents and connects families to professional services. Its space also houses a free store for baby and maternity items and is home to Molly Massage.

Expecting mothers can connect to other pregnant moms through its Expectant Moms Facebook group. The group provides the opportunity to remotely network with other parents, get questions about motherhood answered and chat with local doulas.

Parents of newborns up to 6 months old can receive peer support through the Newborn group at Willow Tree, and for parents of children older than 6 months, the center offers its Parenting and Play group. Both groups meet twice a month to talk about transitions, strat-

## Nonprofit News



This occasional feature highlights events and milestones at local nonprofits. If you would like to

submit a suggestion please email [sklyer@lansingcitypulse.com](mailto:sklyer@lansingcitypulse.com)



*Willow Tree Family Center*

**To learn more about Willow Tree Family Center and the services it provides, visit [willowtreefamily.com](http://willowtreefamily.com)**

egies and stories of parenting young children, as well as give an opportunity for the children to interact with their peers.

Parents experiencing feelings of sadness, depression or anxiety are welcome to attend Shades of Perinatal Wellness. This group connects parents having emotional distress during pregnancy or after birth. The group meets via Zoom each Thursday. It is facilitated by a licensed clinical social worker and is free of charge.

For parents who have experienced loss through miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death, the HOPING, helping other parents in normal grieving, group meets the second Thursday of each month.

Black mothers who are or were breastfeeding are welcome in the Black Breastfeeding Sisterhood group. The group is also open to Black mothers who have turned to formula due to lack of support. The group meets the first Monday of each month for lunch and has a Facebook page to follow.

Another group for parents is Raising Black and Biracial Children meets the first Saturday of each month. The group strives to promote pride and healthy

racial identities in children while building a community.

Working moms can connect with other working moms in the Working Mamas group. Through this group, moms have the ability to network and talk about the struggles of parenting while working. The group meets the second Saturday of each month and has an online Facebook group.

Parents that are looking for opportunities to be outdoors and connect with nature are welcome to join the Boots and Roots group. The group meets outside for hikes at various locations. A page for information on event times and locations is available to follow on Facebook.

The organization also helps families navigate questions about prenatal care, outline birthing preferences and plan postpartum care. For parents seeking services beyond support groups, the center connects them to in-person and virtual services for birthing, breastfeeding and postpartum care.

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

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**ABSOLUTE Music Chamber Series**

*Duo Sonidos*

Featuring **William Knuth, Violin** and **Adam Levin, Guitar**  
**Thursday, January 13th 7:30 p.m.**  
 UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner, Lansing, MI

**Sonata D Major** George Frideric Handel\*  
**Homenajes** Eduardo Morales-Caso  
**Three American Pieces** Lukas Foss  
**Porgy & Bess** George Gershwin  
**Selection from Silvery Suite** Clarice Assad  
**L'histoire du Tango** Astor Piazzola  
*\*Please visit our website for detailed play list.*

Made possible by the generosity of FAM members & concert sponsors:  
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**\*\*See our website [absolutemusiclansing.org](http://absolutemusiclansing.org) for playlist, tickets, and our safety plan. Concert will be live and live-streamed. Seating limited to 70 and masks required.**

# Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones

"Time to Start Over"

by Matt Jones

**Across**

- 1 George Eliot's "\_\_\_ Mamer"
- 6 Intellect
- 9 Window framework
- 13 Opposite of obtuse
- 14 Turn towards
- 15 Nickname for the president of Mexico (based on his monogram)
- 16 Get gone, colloquially
- 19 Fiji-to-Samoa dir.
- 20 Voicemail noise
- 21 Capital of French Flanders (and birthplace of de Gaulle)
- 22 Burger King offering on the smaller side
- 26 Laundry challenges
- 28 First-string athletic groups
- 29 "The Christmas Song" composer Mel
- 30 "Gently worn," really
- 33 30-Down, e.g.
- 34 Onetime seller of onesies
- 37 Electric guitar hookup
- 40 Jay who hosts a new revival of "You Bet Your Life"
- 41 Very slow tempo
- 43 '40s pinup Betty
- 48 Clan of hip-hop notoriety
- 49 Fast asleep
- 53 Forename in fragrances
- 54 Remove with absorbent material
- 55 "Game of Thrones" airtier

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
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53					54				55	56	57	
58					59				60	61		
62					63				64			
65					66				67			

- 58 Right about now (and a hint to the closing word of each theme answer)
- 62 Poker holding
- 63 Part of a whole
- 64 '50s White House name
- 65 Airport postings, for short
- 66 Red No. 5, e.g.
- 67 Tiffs
- Down**
- 1 Fill up
- 2 Confident affirmation
- 3 Tepid
- 4 Chewed on some cheese
- 5 Black or Red
- 6 Batman, really
- 7 More inhospitable
- 8 "Dancing With the Stars" perfection
- 9 Contacts wearer's solution
- 10 Earhart who shows up in the latter half of "American Horror Story: Double Feature"
- 11 Ski race with gates
- 12 Optimistic types
- 14 Producer's nightmare
- 17 Uploads or downloads, in obsolete internet usage
- 18 Oversupply
- 23 She & \_\_\_ (Zooey Deschanel's band)
- 24 Ground floor apartment number, perhaps
- 25 Actress Pinkett Smith
- 26 Place for a snort nap?
- 27 "Ode \_\_\_ Nightingale"
- 30 Purple base of some Filipino desserts
- 31 Roget's entry (abbr.)
- 32 One of a Freudian trio
- 35 "Madonna: Truth or Dare" director Keshishian
- 36 Bathub stopper
- 37 Object of loathing
- 38 \_\_\_ Dew
- 39 Fad disc from the '90s
- 42 It's E. of S. Sudan
- 43 "Faust" dramatist
- 44 Charge towards
- 45 Show up to
- 46 Runs over the edge, as ink
- 47 Lender's attachment
- 48 "Dances \_\_\_ Wolves"
- 50 Sister magazine of Jet
- 51 '60s role for Michael Caine
- 52 Former Senate majority leader Trent
- 56 Fishing supply
- 57 Mineral museum displays
- 59 Bomb of a bomb
- 60 Dashes longer than hyphens
- 61 Talk nonstop

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Answers on page 20

# Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsky

January 5-11, 2022

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** In the fantasy tale "The Wizard of Oz," a tornado lifts the hero Dorothy from her modest home in rural Kansas to a magical realm called Oz. There she experiences many provocative and entertaining adventures. Nonetheless, she longs to return to where she started from. A friendly witch helps her find the way back to Kansas, which requires her to click her ruby slippers together three times and say, "There's no place like home, there's no place like home." I suspect, Aries, that there'll be a different ending to your epic tale in 2022. At some point, you will decide you prefer to stay in your new world. Maybe you'll even click your ruby slippers together and say, "There's no place like Oz, there's no place like Oz." (Thanks to author David Lazar for that last line.)

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Fifty-five percent of the people who live in Toronto speak primarily English or French. But for the other 45 percent, their mother tongue is a different language, including Portuguese, Tagalog, Italian, Tamil, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin. I wish you could spend some time there in the coming months. In my astrological opinion, you would benefit from being exposed to maximum cultural diversity. You would thrive by being around a broad spectrum of influences from multiple backgrounds. If you can't manage a trip to Toronto or another richly diverse place, do your best to approximate the same experience. Give yourself the gift of splendid variety.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** One of your primary meditations throughout 2022 should be the following advice from "The Laws of Human Nature", a book by motivational author Robert Greene. He writes, "In ancient times, many great leaders felt that they were descended from gods and part divine. Such self-belief would translate into high levels of confidence that others would feed off and recognize. It became a self-fulfilling prophecy. You do not need to indulge in such grandiose thoughts, but feeling that you are destined for something great or important will give you a degree of resilience when people oppose or resist you. You will not internalize the doubts that come from such moments. You will have an enterprising spirit. You will continually try new things, even taking risks, confident in your ability to bounce back from failures and feeling destined to succeed."

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** I would love to unabashedly encourage you to travel widely and explore wildly in 2022. I would rejoice if I could brazenly authorize you to escape your comfort zone and wander in the frontiers. It's not often the planetary omens offer us Cancerians such an unambiguous mandate to engage in exhilarating adventures and intelligent risks. There's only one problem: that annoying inconvenience known as the pandemic. We really do have to exercise caution in our pursuit of expansive encounters. Luckily, you now have extra ingenuity about the project of staying safe as you enlarge your world.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** I suspect that your life in 2022 might feature themes beloved by Leo author Emily Brontë (1818-1848). "No coward soul is mine," she wrote, "No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere." I suggest making that one of your mottoes. Here's another guiding inspiration from Emily, via one of her poems: "I'll walk where my own nature would be leading; / It vexes me to choose another guide; / Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding; / Where the wild wind blows on the mountain-side." Here's one more of Brontë's thoughts especially suitable for your use in the coming months: "I'll be as dirty as I please, and I like to be dirty, and I will be dirty!"

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** What reversals and turnabouts would you like to experience in 2022, Virgo? Which situations would you like to transform dramatically? Are there imbalances of power you would like to rectify? Contradictions you'd love to dissolve? Misplaced priorities you could correct? All these things are possible in the coming months if you are creative and resourceful enough. With

your dynamic efforts, the last could be first, the low could be high, and the weak could become strong.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** "Everything good I've ever gotten in my life, I only got because I gave something else up," wrote author Elizabeth Gilbert. That has often been true for me. For example, if I hadn't given up my beloved music career, I wouldn't have had the time and energy to become a skillful astrology writer with a big audience. What about you, Libra? In my reckoning, Gilbert's observation should be a major theme for you in 2022.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Author C. S. Lewis wrote that we don't simply want to behold beauty. We "want to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it." If there were ever a time when you could get abundant tastes of that extravagant pleasure, Scorpio, it would be in the coming months. If you make it a goal, if you set an intention, you may enjoy more deep mergers and delightful interactions with beauty than you have had since 2010.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Sagittarian singer-songwriter Tom Waits began his career in 1969. He achieved modest success during the next 11 years. But his career headed in an even more successful direction after he met Kathleen Brennan, who became his wife and collaborator. In a 1988 interview, Waits said, "She's got the whole dark forest living inside of her. She pushes me into areas I would not go, and I'd say that a lot of the things I'm trying to do now, she's encouraged." In 2022, Sagittarius, I'll invite you to go looking for the deep dark forest within yourself. I'm sure it's in there somewhere. If you explore it with luxuriant curiosity, it will ultimately inspire you to generate unprecedented breakthroughs. Yes, it might sometimes be spooky—but in ways that ultimately prove lucky.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Capricorn-born Muhammad Ali was far more than a superb professional boxer. He was an activist, entertainer, and philanthropist who gathered much wisdom in his 74 years. I've chosen one of his quotes to be your guide in the coming months. I hope it will motivate you to rigorously manage the sometimes pesky and demanding details that will ultimately enable you to score a big victory. "It isn't the mountains ahead to climb that wear you down," Ali said. "It's the pebble in your shoe."

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** At a pivotal moment in his evolution, Aquarian playwright Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) swore an oath to himself. I'll tell you about it here because I hope it will inspire you to make a comparable vow to yourself about how you'll live your life in 2022. Author Robert Greene is the source of the quote. He says that Chekhov promised himself he would engage in "no more bowing and apologizing to people; no more complaining and blaming; no more disorderly living and wasting time. The answer to everything was work and love, work and love. He had to spread this message to his family and save them. He had to share it with humanity through his stories and plays."

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Here's what Piscean author Anais Nin wrote in one of her diaries: "When I first faced pain, I was shattered. When I first met failure, defeat, denial, loss, death, I died. Not today. I believe in my power, in my magic, and I do not die. I survive, I love, live, continue." According to my analysis of the astrological omens, Pisces, you could claim her triumphant declaration as your own in 2022, with special emphasis on this: "I believe in my power, in my magic. I survive, I love, live, continue." This will be a golden age, a time when you harvest the fruits of many years of labor.

# SUDOKU

# Intermediate

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## 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 20

# TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

LIFE CHANGING ALBUMS: PETER RICHARDS ON THE  
'RAGIN', FULL ON' LP BY FIREHOSE



Peter Richards, a local artist and musician known for his Stargrazer project, talks up the "Ragin', Full On" LP by FIREHOSE, an SST Records classic.

## How a classic 1986 SST Records LP shaped a Lansing area creative

For more than a decade, Peter Richards has been a fixture in Lansing's arts and music community. He once ran the (SCENE) MetroSpace gallery in East Lansing and still runs It Takes A Village to Make Records, a local imprint. Of course, he's also long recorded and performed as Stargrazer, a bass-and-vocals-centered solo musical project. Here, Richards gushes over FIREHOSE's "Ragin', Full On," a 1986 classic album pressed up by SST Records. It was 1990 or 1991 when Richards stumbled upon the disc, back when he was 16 or 17.

**How would you describe this album?**

It's funky skate-punk with a heaping spoonful of folk rock. R.E.M. meets The Big Boys.

**Where did you first discover this FIREHOSE LP?**

I was a regular at Full Moon Records in downtown Traverse City. I first started buying tons of metal on cassette before eventually making the transition to CDs and punk rock. I was already a fan of the SST records roster — Hüsker Dü, Sonic Youth and Screaming Trees were all

staples of my teen listening. I saw this album cover, a house engulfed in flames, and was drawn to it for some reason. One day, I took the plunge and bought it and also the CD single for their song "Sometimes, Almost Always." Within a few weeks, FIREHOSE replaced Iron Maiden as my favorite band.

There was that whole "shock of the new" effect with "Ragin', Full On." At first, it sounded tinny and confusing — that thin sound SST releases are infamous for. After a few spins, the jaw-dropping syncopation of the rhythm section and the clean, clanky guitar began to sound righteous to me. You just have to crank it and let it wash over.

**What other aspects of the album drew you in?**

The album has a full palette of moods, from hyper-cafeinated to downright pretty. I would learn more about Mike Watt's "jam econo" philosophy later, but at first listen FIREHOSE came off as a band that wasn't content to stand still. Every song was different. Many of them were complex, short and energetic in a way that seems looser and freer

than a lot of the commercial rock I was raised on. They did not indulge in long solos or noodling, but raised the roof anyway from the second the needle dropped. I liked that spirit of adventure and I liked the humility in their presentation: blue collar aesthetic, self-designed album covers and lack of pretense.

Beyond that, Mike Watt is one busy musician. He's constantly touring or recording with new bands — everything from The Stooges to a psych band called Anywhere, which features Cedric Bixler-Zavala from At The Drive-In. Watt has his own slang and can maybe take a little getting used to as a vocalist/lyricist, but I can't think of another bassist who throws down quite like he does.

**In what ways has this album directly affected your life?**

I wanted to be a drummer in junior high. FIREHOSE made me switch to bass. Which is a good thing, because I was an absolutely terrible drummer.

**What's up with your own music? Plan to revive Stargrazer anytime soon?**

I've had a long fallow period, but

I am getting back on the horse. Stargrazer has a couple things in the works, slowly inching their way to completion. There are two sci-fi inspired instrumental albums, as well as an EP and a full-length.

I haven't played a live show in years, but I'm starting to feel that itch. I may do some busking or hit some open mics to get my feet wet. I had a long creative slump tied to some life changes that I'm beginning to pull myself out of. It's been hard to rediscover my discipline, but it's worth it.

**Aside from "Ragin', Full On," what are some other honorable mentions?**

The mid-to-late '80s SST catalog is a lot more than just West Coast hardcore. There are some phenomenal records on that label. Try these: **Minutemen** "Double Nickels On The Dime"

**Hüsker Dü** "New Day Rising"  
**Dinosaur Jr.** "You're Living All Over Me"

To hear Peter Richards' music, visit [bandcamp.com/stargrazer](http://bandcamp.com/stargrazer) or [itavrecords.blogspot.com](http://itavrecords.blogspot.com).

# OUT on the TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

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

## LIVE + LOCAL

### B&I Bar

5247 Old Lansing Rd., Lansing

### Devyn Mitchell

Thurs., Jan. 6, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

### Joe Wright

Fri., Jan. 7, 8-11 p.m.

### Helena Lost

Sat., Jan. 8, 8-11 p.m.

### Lansing Brewing Company

518 E. Shiawassee, Lansing

### Swift Brothers

Friday, Jan. 7, 8 p.m.

### Urban Beat

1213 Turner St., Lansing

### Jackalope

Thurs., Jan. 6, 6-9 p.m.

### After Sundown 2

Saturday, Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m.

## Wednesday, January 5

**Allen Farmers Market** - 3-6 p.m. Allen Market Place, 1611 E Kalamazoo, Lansing.

**Battle of the Books Kickoff Kits** - The Grand Ledge Area District Library and Delta Twp. District Library present Battle of the Books 2022! 10 a.m.-9 p.m. 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

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

**Photography Clinic and Open House** - Mid-Michigan Photography Club - 6-9 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, 510 W Ottawa St, Lansing. [mmphotoclub.com](http://mmphotoclub.com).

**Steak Night at Reo Town Pub** - 5:30-8 p.m. Reo Town Pub, 1145 S. Washington Ave., Lansing.

## Thursday, January 6

**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.

## Friday, January 7

**Lansing 2600 Meeting** - is a monthly gathering of local hackers, phreaks, nerds, geeks, sympathizers, and others of various labelability. 6-8 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St. 517-230-7679.



## Wine About Winter

Friday, Jan. 7, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.  
Midtown Brewing Co.  
402 S. Washington Sq., Lansing  
[facebook.com/DowntownLansingMidtownBrewing](https://www.facebook.com/DowntownLansingMidtownBrewing)

Downtown Lansing Inc. is innovating ways to help get through yet another tough Michigan Winter. This Friday, you can meet up with your neighbors at Midtown Brewing Co. for a glass of red wine and a venting session about the tribulations of our hometown's freezing weather. Attendees will be able to toast one another and reconnect after the frenzy of the holidays. This event will recur throughout January and February, with each weekend offering a new location. Next week's will take place at MP Social.

**Spartan Upcycle Fridays: Junk Journals + Planners** - Kick off the new year by crafting a custom junk journal. 12-6 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

**Still, still moving.** - Explore Nelson Gallery's first exhibition: "Still, still moving" by artist Laurén Brady. Nelson Gallery, 113 S. Washington Sq, Lansing.

**Winter Take-Home Crafts @ GLADL** - Instructions on [gladl.org/curiousgladl](http://gladl.org/curiousgladl). 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge.

**XES Reunion and "Mr. Conman" Release Party** - We're not Strangers! 8 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St, Lansing. [bandsintown.com](http://bandsintown.com).

## Saturday, January 8

**Saturday Stitching** - Get knitting, knotting, cutting, and sewing! 12-3 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

## Sunday, January 9

**Print Club!** - Get inky on second Sundays! 2-6 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad

Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

**Roller Derby Basic Skills Boot Camp** - East Lansing Roller Derby. 8-10 p.m. Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing.

## Monday, January 10

**Michigan Agri-Business Association Winter Convention** - info at [thetradeshowcalendar.com](http://thetradeshowcalendar.com).

## Tuesday, January 11

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

**Minecraft Mania** - Join us for an evening of fun! 6-8 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. 517-627-7014. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

**Sporcle Live! Trivia** - We have 2 games - 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-2506. [crunchyseastlansing.com](http://crunchyseastlansing.com).

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 18

S	I	L	A	S	W	I	T	S	A	S	H			
A	C	U	T	E	F	A	C	E	A	M	L	O		
T	A	K	E	A	F	L	I	N	G	L	E	A	P	
E	N	E	T	O	N	E	L	I	L	L	E			
W	H	O	P	P	E	R	J	U	N	I	O	R		
S	T	A	I	N	S	A	T	E	A	M	S			
T	O	R	M	E	U	S	E	D						
Y	A	M	B	A	B	Y	G	A	P	A	M	P		
			L	E	N	O	L	E	N	T	O			
G	R	A	B	L	E	W	U	T	A	N	G			
O	U	T	L	I	K	E	A	L	I	G	H	T		
E	S	T	E	E	B	L	O	T	H	B	O			
T	H	E	E	N	D	O	F	T	H	E	Y	E	A	R
H	A	N	D	U	N	I	T	M	A	M	I	E		
E	T	D	S	D	Y	E	S	P	A	T	S			

## SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 18

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

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# FOOD & DRINK

## DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

### The real moqueca

By ARI LeVAUX

The smell of fried garlic hit me as soon I opened the door. It is quite possibly the most intoxicating aroma on Earth. Alas, I feared it meant Edna had not waited, and that made me sad. I was there to learn how she makes moqueca, a tomato-based seafood stew that's ubiquitous along the Brazilian coast. The dish varies



by region, and Edna's hometown of Vitoria is widely considered the birthplace of moqueca. That version of the dish, called moqueca Capixaba, is why I was there. At my mom's house in Boston, that is. I already missed my golden opportunity to go to Vitoria in real life.

When I reached the kitchen I realized, to my intense alegría, that Edna had been waiting for me all along. The amazing garlic aroma that first hit me was from when she had made the rice, which, like most Brazilian recipes, began with fried garlic.

Edna is a Capixaba (cah-pee-shah-bah), which is to say, someone — or something — from the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo, of which Vitoria is the capital. I've been on several buses that stopped in Vitoria, heading north from Rio to Salvador da Bahia. I have memories of opening my eyes as the bus slowed down to a stop. I remem-



Ari LeVaux

Moqueca, a tomato-based seafood stew that's popular along the Brazilian coast.

ber misty, forested hills on the left, above the city, and gentle coastline to the right. I never did get off the bus, but always wanted to. And should have.

Worldwide, the most famous moqueca comes from Bahia, one state to the north of Espirito Santo. Salvador, the capital, is where I was always headed when passing through sleepy Vitoria. Bahia has more people

of African descent than any place outside of Africa, and Moqueca Baiana contains coconut milk and dendê, a type of palm oil made from imported West African trees. Dendê is very rich, with a heavy aroma and a strong flavor that isn't for everyone.

Moqueca Capixaba, on the other hand, takes its cues from a different

See Flash, Page 23

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# Flash

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ancestral homeland. As European as Moqueca Baiana is African, Edna's moqueca contains olive oil instead of dendé and coconut milk. This version is lighter and just a few olives and capers away from being an Italian cioppino.

But one thing that all Brazilians can agree on, at least, is the garlic. That is where we started when it was finally time to cook dinner.

Edna had everything chopped and prepped, but for my edification she insisted that I cook it. She turned the heat to medium under a stew pot and told me to do the Brazilian thing with the garlic. It made me nervous. The last thing I wanted to do was mess up the garlic, either by burning or under-cooking it.

Brazilian garlic-frying reflects a level of brinkmanship that you need to get pretty much anything done in that place. They take it closer to the edge of burnt than most. Often the garlic is mixed with salt. Sometimes it's fried in a thin, dented aluminum pan without any oil. As long as the inevitable blackening is thwarted by moisture before it becomes too bitter, the glorious flavor gets captured by the food.

I then added a jar of sofrito, a Caribbean seasoning sauce popular throughout the Iberian diaspora. Edna used Goya brand sofrito, with a tomato base and green pepper, onions, culantro and garlic. Culantro

is a wide-leafed plant that tastes like extra-strong cilantro. Native to the Caribbean and Latin America, culantro is now cultivated worldwide. In southeast Asia it has names along the lines of "sawtooth coriander," and is considered by many to be indispensable to a good bowl of pho.

If you can't get your hands on sofrito or culantro, don't sweat it. Sofrito is essentially a condensed version of the other vegetables in the moqueca, so just use more of everything else.

The combination of cilantro and bell peppers, along with that almost-burnt garlic, is what creates the distinct flavor of moqueca. It's like an off-key jazz chord that you play until it sounds right, and then build a song around. The harmonious discord of the moqueca flavor works particularly well with fish, including the swordfish and shrimp that Edna had brought.

## Moqueca Capixaba

*If it wasn't for the cilantro, and a few shakes of Adobo spice mix, this could be a European dish.*

*Serves 6*

*Rice*

*1 clove garlic, minced or pressed*

*½ teaspoon salt*

*1 tablespoon olive oil*

*2 cups white rice. Edna used Goya jasmine*

*Water commensurate with the rice you are using*

*Stew*

*3 large cloves garlic, minced*

*1 teaspoon salt*

*4 tablespoons olive oil*

*1 tablespoon Adobe powder (A Latino spice mix with garlic powder and*

*other spices. Try to get it with either paprika or with annatto – or blend your own like I did)*

*12-ounce jar of Goya Sofrito*

*2 large spoonfuls of Ragu or similar marinara sauce*

*2 medium tomatoes, chopped*

*1 medium to large onion, chopped*

*1 pound swordfish (or another tough fish that you can stew)*

*1 pound shrimp*

*1 pound ocean fish of your choice, like rockfish or cod. If using thin filets, roll and toothpick them*

*2 large bunches fresh cilantro, trimmed and chopped*

*2 bell peppers, chopped*

*1 bunch of green onion, white part only, chopped*

*First, make the rice. Put a medium sized pot on medium heat. Add the oil, garlic and salt. Stir often, but also leave it alone as much as possible. Let the garlic turn past yellow towards brown. When the aroma smells like it's getting ready to go from irresistible to a bit questionable, add the rice. Stir it around to coat evenly. Add the water. Cook with the lid cracked on low until done.*

*For the stew, put a heavy pot on medium heat. Add the olive oil, garlic*

*and salt, and fry the garlic. Add the Adobo spices and stir. Add the sofrito sauce and marinara sauce, followed by the onions and tomatoes and a bit of water to deglaze the pot, and bring to a simmer.*

*Taste the sauce and adjust the salt. Add the swordfish, arranging the chunks in the sauce, adding water as necessary to cover. Simmer for 30 minutes.*

*Add the shrimp, along with any other similarly fast cooking seafoods. Whatever fish you use should be tough enough to not fall apart. Cook another ten minutes. Finally, add the chopped bell peppers, cilantro and green onions. Spread it around the top, stirring gingerly, but don't disturb the fish. You don't want to stir the moqueca any more than you want to stir the rice.*

*After another 10 minutes turn off the heat. Serve with the rice.*

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

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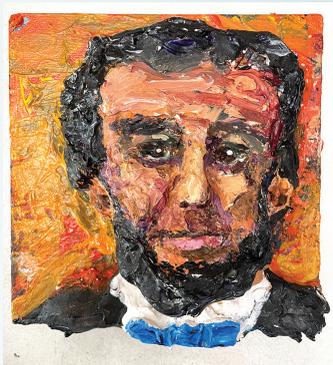
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