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June 29 - July 5, 2022

# CityPULSE

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## THE MUSIC ISSUE

### Elderly Instruments celebrates a milestone



**ALSO IN THE MUSIC ISSUE:**

- Lansing hip-hop report
- Lansing Symphony Orchestra
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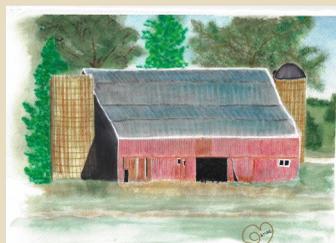
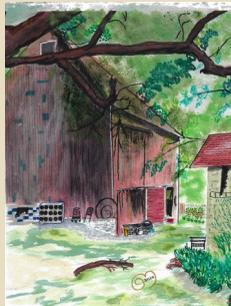
# Absolute GALLERY

AND CUSTOM FRAMING

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(aka Jeanne Kipker) and Mike Bricker

Friday, July 8, 2022 5—8



ART'S NIGHT  
OUT

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**CityPULSE**

# CityPULSE

**VOL. 21  
ISSUE 47**

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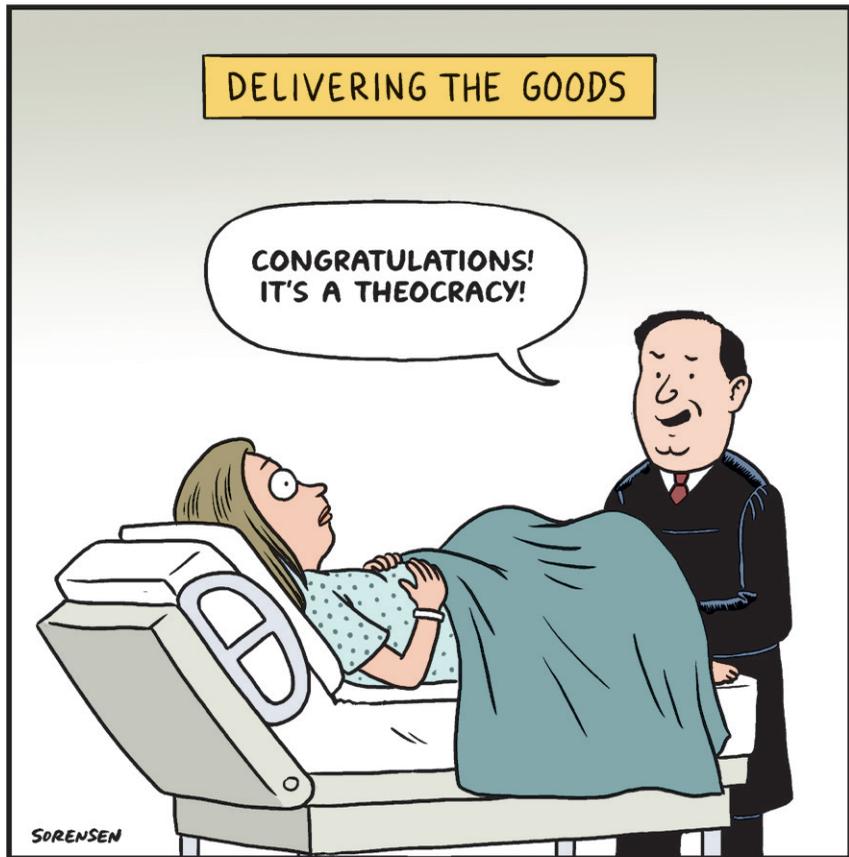
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**Cover Art**

**Cover photo by Lawrence Cosentino**

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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# PULSE

# NEWS & OPINION

## Schor gambles on public support for big building plan

One of Lansing Mayor Andy Schor's first acts in office in 2018 was to pull the plug on his predecessor's plan to move to a new city hall because it didn't include a home for the police or the courts.

His argument was it wasn't fiscally prudent.

Now, with a big reelection win under his belt, he's rolled out a proposal that would cost \$175 million and would burden residents for 30 years with a 3.9 mill property tax increase. That's \$153 more a year on the average, \$76,600 house.

Most of the money would go to build a facility to house the Police Department and lock up and the Fire Department administrative offices. The rest would be used to refurbish the city's fire stations.

And the plan is really only part one. If voters approve it, it would clear the way for finally selling the current City Hall and moving city offices elsewhere: price tag unknown.

Before that can happen, Schor first has to convince a supermajority of the City Council to put his proposal on the ballot. Schor is aiming for the General Election on Nov. 8.

Former Council President Peter Spadafore is predicting Schor can get the six votes. But he is not putting his political neck on the line to support it.

"I will vote to put it on the ballot," said Spadafore, an at-large member. "I will work, as a citizen not from the elected position, to pass it."

Councilmember Patricia Spitzley expressed caution as well, saying she'd support it "reluctantly."

"I will vote for it," she said. "But that is only because I think it is needed. But the plan leaves a lot of unknowns for the city."

First Ward Councilmember Brian Daniels said he will vote in favor as well.

Among the unknowns? What is the future of the 1958 City Hall complex, which hosts the administration, Council and courts as well as the Police Department leadership and some operations and the lock up.

In an interview with City Pulse, Schor called the combined public safety and courts building phase one in the process of exiting the current City Hall complex. It houses administrative offices and the Council offices and chambers, the City Clerk's Office, 54-A District Court and the Lansing Police Department administration and jail.

Previous Mayor Virg Bernero tried to get a deal on City Hall with a Chicago developer as he was leaving office. The Chicago developer wanted to turn City Hall into a hotel and eatery. City Hall operations were to move to the former Lansing State Journal building at Lenawee Street and Grand Avenue. But the plan lacked a home for police, fire and the courts. Particular-



Courtesy

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor explains his \$175 million plan for public safety departments and the courts at a press conference Monday (June 27)

ly problematic was what to do with the city's jail needs.

Both Schor and Bernero attempted to negotiate deals with Ingham County Sheriff Scott Wriggelsworth to send Lansing arrestees to the county jail in Mason, Bernero lobbied to place a new county jail in Lansing, which Wriggelsworth rejected. There were also discussions about combining the Lansing and East Lansing lock-up facilities. But no deal arose.

With no plan for the lock up, the Chicago deal died in 2018 after Schor took office and scuttled it.

"We had the fire chief and the police chief in, doing a presentation before," Daniels said, referring to a June 13 briefing by the mayor and his team. "They had pictures and explanations as to what was needed and why. None of that was presented last night. The voters need to see those pictures, to understand what is going on."

With the nation facing inflation and other economic woes, Steve Japinga of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce said the business group was still trying to land on a stance for the increase.

"That's something we're concerned about," he said. "Usually Lansing voters are very willing to approve millages, but I think they may be coming up against a wall and may just vote down the proposal because they don't see a reason for a tax increase. They see it as an unneeded cost."

The economic woes are not the only thing that may hamper the plan. Daniels, the First Ward Councilmember, said he was "disappointed" in the mayor's presentation at Council Monday night.

Schor said he has not had any polling done on the proposal, and acknowledged the economic woes are a concern.

But he was undaunted.

"It's time. This has been put off too long," Schor said. "If we wait, the costs are only going to increase and so will the proposed bond costs."

Schor said the current City Hall facilities, firehouses and police station on Wise Road aren't working for the city.

Spadafore concurred with that assessment, noting the city is spending \$500,000 a year on maintenance for City Hall, and that is barely keeping the building operational. This year, a large tank of water used for cooling the building burst and flooded two floors.

Also supporting the needs are two independent studies Schor commissioned to review the Fire and Police departments. Both found significant issues in their facilities, as well as policy concerns.

The September 2021 Police audit found the downtown police facilities suffered from leaking ceilings, poor heating and cooling operations in the lock up and potential fire hazards. In the Wise Road facility, the report identified a lack of security barriers. In sum, the report called conditions a "suboptimal" message to residents.

Concerns about the condition of the city's lock up date back to a space utilization study from 2016, where significant safety issues were identified.

The city learned this month that the city's Fire Department facilities are also in need of upgrades. Among the concerns: non-gender segregated bathroom and sleeping areas, workout equipment in the sleeping quarters of some firehouses, and some firehouses having garage doors too small to accommodate modern fire vehicles.

Under Schor's proposal, some of the firehouses will receive upgrades and at least one station will be replaced altogether. Fire administration, currently housed in Fire Station #1 at Shiawassee Street and Grand Avenue, would be moved to the new facility, freeing up living space there.

Spitzley, whose son is a Lansing firefighter, said she has toured the police and fire facilities and completely agrees with the need to upgrade them immediately. In fact, she said, she made updating the public safety facilities a key platform issue in her unsuccessful bid to challenge Schor for the Mayor's Office last summer.

"Would I prefer a full plan for the future of the City Hall buildings?" she asked. "Yes, I would. But I think this is just too important to pass up."

— TODD HEYWOOD AND BERL SCHWARTZ

**PUBLIC NOTICE  
CITY OF EAST LANSING  
PROPOSED PY 2022/2023  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

The PY 2022/2023 Annual Action Plan represents the second year of the City's current Consolidated Plan. The proposed projects and activities would be funded with federal government Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds awarded to the City by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City's anticipated PY 2022/2023 CDBG Entitlement Grant is \$485,069. The proposed budget was unanimously approved by City Council as part of the City's Fiscal Year 2023 budget on May 24, 2022.

This is to provide notice that the comment period on the proposed Annual Action Plan commences on Wednesday, June 29, 2022, and will conclude on Friday, July 29, 2022. During this period, copies of the Annual Action Plan may be reviewed at the City of East Lansing's Department of Planning, Building, and Development (410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823) or online at <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/320/Community-Development-Block-Grant-Program>

The proposed PY 2022/2023 CDBG Program Budget is as follows:

1. Capital Area Housing Partnership, Homeownership Opportunity Assistance Program: \$3,750.00
2. Capital Area Housing Partnership, Homeowner Rehabilitation Program: \$44,635.00
3. City of East Lansing Department of Parks, Recreation, and Arts, Stoddard Park Improvement Project: \$121,850
4. City of East Lansing Department of Parks, Recreation, and Arts, Youth Scholarship Program: \$4,850.00
5. City of East Lansing Department of Public Works, Sidewalk Improvement Project: \$145,065.00
6. End Violent Encounters (EVE) Inc, Domestic violence shelter and advocacy: \$9,700.00
7. Haven House, Emergency shelter and homeless assistance: \$41,210.00
8. MSU Safe Place, Domestic violence shelter and advocacy: \$8,055.00
9. Tri-County Office on Aging, Meals on Wheels program: \$8,940.00
10. Program Planning and Administration: \$97,010.00

Anticipated Program Income During PY 2022/2023: Program income from the repayment of second mortgages through the Homeownership Opportunity Assistance Program or Homeowner Rehabilitation Program is estimated at \$20,000.

Proposed Use of Program Income: Program income typically returns to the program which generated the income, i.e., recapture of second mortgage proceeds, through the Homeownership Opportunity Assistance Program (HOAP) and Homeowner Rehabilitation program, will be budgeted for additional homebuyer or homeowner assistance subsidy.

Beneficiaries: Activities under Projects 3 and 5 each serve an area benefit to East Lansing's low-to moderate-income Bailey Neighborhood. Projects 1 and 2 each serve a housing benefit to low-to moderate-income households. Projects 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 serve limited clientele benefits, meaning that households and individuals assisted with these activities must meet the low-to moderate-income guidelines established by HUD or be considered by HUD to be members of a clientele generally presumed to be low-to moderate-income. Project 10 is for planning and/or administrative activities.

Displacement: As required by HUD regulations, the City will follow the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended and all applicable minimized to the greatest extent possible.

Range of Activities Eligible for CDBG Funding: Activities which may be undertaken with CDBG funds include, but are not limited to: acquisition, disposition, public facilities and improvements, clearance, public services, homeownership assistance, housing rehabilitation and preservation, renovation of closed buildings, lead-based paint hazard evaluation and reduction, special economic development activities, microenterprise development, technical assistance, and planning and administration. For additional information on eligible activities, refer to 24 CFR 570, Subpart C.

Further Information and Comments: If you wish to obtain further information regarding anything contained in this public notice, please contact East Lansing's Department of Planning, Building, and Development at 517-319-6859 between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM, Monday through Friday. Comments may be submitted to the East Lansing Department of Planning, Building, and Development at City Hall, C/O Matt Apostle, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 or emailed to [mapostle@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:mapostle@cityofeastlansing.com)

Dated June 29, 2022  
Jennifer Shuster, City Clerk  
City of East Lansing  
Ingham and Clinton Counties

**CP#22-142**

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

**Proposed Flood Hazard Determinations for the City of Lansing, City of East Lansing, and Charter Township of Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan, and Case No. 22-05-1554P.** The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) solicits technical information or comments on proposed flood hazard determinations for the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), and where applicable, the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report for your community. These flood hazard determinations may include the addition or modification of Base Flood Elevations, base flood depths, Special Flood Hazard Area boundaries or zone designations, or the regulatory floodway. The FIRM and, if applicable, the FIS report have been revised to reflect these flood hazard determinations through issuance of a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR), in accordance with Title 44, Part 65 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These determinations are the basis for the floodplain management measures that your community is required to adopt or show evidence of having in effect to qualify or remain qualified for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. For more information on the proposed flood hazard determinations and information on the statutory 90-day period provided for appeals, please visit FEMA's website at [https://www.floodmaps.fema.gov/fhm/BFE\\_Status/bfe\\_main.asp](https://www.floodmaps.fema.gov/fhm/BFE_Status/bfe_main.asp), or call the FEMA Mapping and Insurance eXchange (FMIX) toll free at 1-877-FEMA MAP (1-877-336-2627).

**CP#22-133**

**CITY OF EAST LANSING  
NOTICE OF REGISTRATION  
FOR THE AUGUST 2, 2022 STATE PRIMARY ELECTION**

To the qualified electors of the City of East Lansing:

Please take notice that the City of East Lansing will hold a State Primary Election on August 2, 2022.

**For the purposes of nominating candidates of the Democratic and Republican Parties for the following partisan offices:**

Governor  
Representative in Congress  
State Senator  
State Representative  
County Commissioner  
Ingham County: Treasurer

**Also, to elect Delegates to the County Convention of the Democratic and Republican Parties.**

**Also, to vote on the following proposals:**

Ingham County: Animal Control Program Operations and Services Funding Question  
Ingham County: Juvenile Justice Millage Renewal and Restoration Question  
Clinton County: Separate Tax Limitation Proposal  
Bath Community Schools: Operating Millage Renewal Proposal

Full text of the ballot proposals may be obtained at the East Lansing City Clerk's Office, 410 Abbot Road, Room 100, East Lansing, MI 48823. Sample ballots can also be found at [www.mi.gov/vote](http://www.mi.gov/vote).

Any qualified elector who is not already registered, may register to vote at the office of the East Lansing City Clerk; the office of their County Clerk; a Secretary of State Branch Office, or other designated state agency. Qualified electors who have a valid Michigan driver's license or state ID, may register online at <https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/>. Registration forms may be obtained at [mi.gov/vote](http://mi.gov/vote) and mailed or dropped off at the office of the East Lansing City Clerk. Voters who are already registered may update their registration at [www.expressSOS.com](http://www.expressSOS.com).

**The last day to register in any manner other than in-person with the East Lansing City Clerk's Office is July 18, 2022. After this date, anyone who qualifies as an elector must register to vote in person with proof of residency (MCL 168.492) at the following locations and times:**

East Lansing City Clerk – City Hall      Regular Business Hours: Monday-Friday from 8 am-5 pm  
410 Abbot Road, Room 100              Additional Hours:              July 30 & 31 from 8 am-4 pm  
East Lansing, MI 48823

**ABSENT VOTER BALLOTS:**

Any registered voter may request an Absent Voter Ballot. No reason required.

The East Lansing City Clerk's Office must have a signed application to issue an Absent Voter Ballot. You may apply online at [www.mi.gov/vote](http://www.mi.gov/vote) or at the East Lansing City Clerk's Office.

August 1, 2022 at 4:00 pm is the deadline to request an absentee ballot except for those who register to vote on Election Day. Ballots issued on August 1, 2022 must be requested and voted in person at the East Lansing City Clerk's Office.

Those registering to vote on Election Day, August 2, 2022, are eligible to receive an Absent Voter Ballot at the East Lansing City Clerk's Office.

Jennifer Shuster  
East Lansing City Clerk

**CP#22-139**

**STATE OF MICHIGAN, INGHAM COUNTY PROBATE COURT. NOTICE TO CREDITORS, Decedent's Estate. Case No. 22-000256-DE-P33.** Estate of Dale Lee Porter. Date of birth: XX-XX-1942. **TO ALL CREDITORS:** including Interested Parties; Sherry Lynn Porter and Kevin Dale Porter whose whereabouts are unknown. **NOTICE TO CREDITORS:** The decedent, Dale Lee Porter, died January 24, 2022. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Jacqueline Lynn Porter, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice. June 22, 2022. Jacqueline Lynn Porter, 239 13th St., Plainwell, MI 49080.

**CP#22-141**

The Westside Neighborhood is an urban jewel of towering trees, century-old houses and lush flowerbeds.

Residents speak fondly of the traffic islands that dot the streets, comparing them to miniature parks. They do much of the planting and maintenance themselves.

Their love for the place some have lived for decades is prompting them to speak out, fearing their beloved oases will be casualties of the city's ongoing Combined Sewer Overflow project.

"It's really just causing a lot of people to scratch their heads," resident Heidi Frei said.

City officials say they're listening to what residents want, and by no means has a final decision been reached.

A letter dated June 8 and addressed to property owners outlines the goal of the project: new water main, new roadway pavement, new concrete curb and gutter and a new sewer.

The letter goes on to discuss "minor roadway adjustments" for "improvement of traffic flow and safety." The goal is maintaining "most of the existing features and general character of the neighborhood." Greenspace would be increased through "reducing the amount of roadway pavement."

Residents also say they are concerned about the speed of traffic using the neighborhood to avoid congestion on adjacent streets.

One proposal coming from the city is to remove the traffic islands and replace them with small roundabouts and other traffic-management features.



Heidi Frei

Speeding vehicles aren't the only issue, said Chris Kolbe, a Westside Neighborhood resident of 30 years who has lived in his home for more than 20 years.

"We also have streets right now that are just full of potholes, everywhere." The city, he said, "isn't really doing much of anything about that."



Dawn Parker for City Pulse

Residents gather in a traffic circle in the Westside Neighborhood Monday evening (June 27) to discuss concerns about how the city's Combined Sewer Overflow Project might affect their beloved islands.

## As sewer project approaches, westsiders fear for their oases

If the streetscape must change, Kolbe said most residents would prefer there be minimal alteration.

"Everyone living here is aware and likes the way it looks right now. They don't feel it's necessary to make any changes. But if there are going to be changes, we would like them to be the same as they are with as little change as possible. That's the way this neighborhood was designed over 100 years ago."

The challenge now, Kolbe continued, is to influence city officials before a design is finalized.

Andy Kilpatrick, director of the city's Public Service Department, said while work must continue on the federally mandated combined sewer overflow project, which has been under way for several years already, no final decisions have been made, and Kilpatrick stressed the city is more than willing to hear residents' concerns.

City officials aren't the experts of their neighborhood, he continued — the residents are.

A final design would not be arrived at until sometime this fall, Kilpatrick said, and would only be reached through a process that would include public meetings with residents.

Work would not begin until late next year at the very earliest and would likely start on the east side of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard before jumping to the west side of the road in 2024.

Aging infrastructure doesn't make things any easier.

In the Westside Neighborhood, Kilpatrick said the sewer lines — many of which date from the 1950s or earlier — are at different depths below the street. And it's not just about going straight down, Kilpatrick added, you also must go out the same distance in each direction.

Depending on where the lines are, that could affect the entire street.

When the project is completed, according to documents on the city's website, more than 1.65 billion gallons of raw sewage will have been kept out of the Grand River and ultimately also out of Lake Michigan.

Frei looked out her window on a recent Thursday evening to see a young couple enjoying a picnic supper on one of the islands. Such sights are a common occurrence, Frei said.

The city's letter to resident mentioned "upgrades," which Frei said residents have been told would improve

traffic flow and safety and increase green space.

One proposal from the city, Frei said, takes out trees and replaces them with pavement or grass. To her, that's not an ideal solution.

City engineers "are dealing with the resources they have," Frei said. But "they are not familiar with historic design, they are not familiar with tree preservation and protection and how much people love these little green respites in our neighborhood."

Resident Hillery Glasby said while many residents support the CSO project, it's the proposed removal of the islands that has them concerned.

"We have some really old and beautiful trees that many of us look forward to seeing bloom throughout the spring. They offer us shade in the summer," she said.

"These are spaces that we look at and enjoy, and see other people, children and pets enjoying every day."

— DAWN PARKER



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# REWIND

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS

By TODD HEYWOOD



### Pride flag burning captured on video

Another Pride flag disappeared on Michigan Avenue in Lansing — but this time a secret camera captured the deed on video. It shows the perpetrator, a lanky white man, throwing a flammable liquid on the flag then igniting it. The video is available at [www.lansingcitypulse.com](http://www.lansingcitypulse.com). Five other Pride flags were stolen from the same location, near the US-127 overpass, during LGBTQ Pride month. A seventh was placed there yesterday.



### Rental where infant died in fire was uninspected

The city of Lansing had not inspected the rental house on Cavanaugh Road where a child died Monday in a house fire. City official Brian McGrain said the owner had not registered the house as a rental, so the city did not know to inspect it.



The Fire Department said the home lacked smoke detectors. The owner is listed in city records as Evolve Real Estate LLC, of DeWitt. The victim was Damian Sheshhia, 23 months old. Three others escaped.

### Schor orders LPD not to enforce abortion law

Following Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's recent executive order prohibiting state agencies from being involved in any abortion probes, Lansing Mayor Andy Schor prohibited the LPD from assisting or participating in such investigations until "further notice." The moves come as a state Appeals Court considers a temporary injunction sought by Whitmer to prevent use of the 1931 law prohibiting abortions. At least two county prosecutors — Kent and Jackson — said they will enforce the law despite an injunction.

### Local member quits Board of Canvassers

The former chair of the Ingham County Republican Party, Norm Shinkle, who heard concerns about the certification of Joe Biden's win in Michigan, has resigned his position on the Board of Canvassers. Shinkle, one of two Republican board members, abstained from the vote over Joe Biden, declaring the controversy was not about the presidency, but about the election system. "Can we trust we trust it?" he said at the time, reported WILX. Shinkle is the only Republican on the ballot for the 73rd House



District, serving eastern Ingham County. He will face Rep. Julie Brixie, a Democrat.

### Millionaire in Clinton County

A 40-year-old Clinton County resident, who chose to remain anonymous, won \$1 million in a Michigan Lottery 20X Cashword Instant Game. He told state Lottery officials he'd been having a bad day when he bought the ticket at J&H Family Stores in Owosso. Instead of being paid the full amount over 30 years, the man took a one time pay off \$634,000. He said he will use some of the money to buy a truck and bank the rest.

### Founder of Artist Umbrella dead

Brandon Navin, 50, the founder of the community artist collaborative the Artists Umbrella, died over the weekend. He was also a manager at IHOP and a leading voice in the substance use disorder recovery community. He created Artists Umbrella as a radically inclusive community to support all arts and artistic expression. He leaves behind a wife, two daughters and a son.



### NAACP says city treating Black employees respectfully

The Lansing Branch of the NAACP announced Tuesday that interviews conducted by its members with Black city of Lansing workers found "African Americans currently with the administration are being treated with respect. Their individual authority is being recognized." The organization said it did not interview any of the litigants who are suing the city for racial discrimination, saying the courts would "decide if there were any merit to the discrimination lawsuits." The agency said it was unable to ascertain conditions in the lock up for people of color. The NAACP said it would continue to monitor the Schor administration after criticizing it in April for its treatment of Black employees.

### Bill seeks better gunshop security

State Rep. Kara Hope, D-Holt, has authored the measure in light of the number of thefts from gun shops. Hope represents Mason, where four years ago a gun that was stolen from Total Firearms was used to kill a woman in a Delta Township store before the killer used it on himself. Hope said she has no illusions that the Republican-controlled legislature will advance the bill, but she said it was "important to continue these conversations." Her bill was part of a four-bill gun control package that House Democrats offered after the Ulvalde, Texas, elementary school mass shooting.

### Feline overcrowding

The Ingham County Animal Control Shelter is overwhelmed with cats. The agency said it had about 250 cats in its possession. As a result, it cannot accept more cats for the foreseeable future.



### Auto-Owners new building

This week's Eye Candy is the new Auto-Owners Insurance Co. building, which is on the company's South Campus. Tucked away near Creyts Road and I-496 in Delta Township, the 250,000-square-foot office building was completed this spring and is expected to accommodate 900 employees for the growing Lansing-based insurance company.

Each side of this building has something interesting to offer its viewers. Sleek grids of glass and steel cover most of the structure, though the scale and utilization of materials vary with each façade. In the front façade alone there are several different sizes of windows, with brickwork and concrete intermixed only in one section. The varied presentation of modern materials turns this office building into a fine piece of architecture.

People entering the building from the front are drawn to the single-story white rectangle that sits in front of the larger structure. Its modest height makes the building feel accessible and its angled walls near the main entrance guide people inside. The overall structure is asymmetrical, and this carries through to the entrance area with sporadic placement of floor-to-ceiling windows. The white rectangle itself is offset from the structure behind it, creating space for a courtyard around its west side.

This structure is striking as you zip past on the highway, but its approach from Creyts Road is even more pleasant. Small hills of well-kept lawn obscure the structure until you reach its parking lot. There, you can see the cool, sleek structure sit modestly amid young trees, green grass, and fresh pavement.

— JAMES KNARIAN

"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.

# A fair chance for felons

Our society isn't particularly fond of felons. We lock them up for a long time — deservedly so in many cases — then treat them with suspicion and mistrust when they get out of prison. Except for those serving a life sentence, inevitably the time comes when every felon has paid his or her debt to society and regains the right to live and work among us. How we treat them when they get out can make a measurable difference in reducing the chances that they end up back in prison.

That's why we're in favor of Lansing Mayor Andy Schor's proposal to get rid of the city's prohibition against allowing a felon to serve on a city board or commission. Schor's initiative stems from his desire to fill an open position on the city's Economic Development Corp. board of directors by appointing a local business owner who happens to have a criminal record. The Lansing City Charter says otherwise: Any person convicted of violating election laws or the public trust, or who commits a felony, is barred from holding any city office for 20 years following the conviction.

While many people agree that long-standing rules against a felon holding an elected office is a good idea, the notion that they should be barred from playing even a small role in civic life as a mayoral appointee seems unnecessarily punitive. Schor's proposal retains the prohibition against a convicted felon holding an elected office while it carves out a narrow exception that allows them to serve as appointees to city boards and commissions. If we have any difference with the mayor, it is that he stopped short of removing the ban altogether and leaving it to the voters to decide if former felons should serve in office. Still, we are pleased the City Council concurred with the mayor's recommendation, clearing the way for the charter amendment to appear this Nov. 8 on the General Election ballot.

We encourage city voters to approve the measure because it helps remove the stigma associated with being a felon. It's a small step but one that sets the tone for a broader dialogue about how we can remove even more barriers to success for "returning citizens," the non-stigmatizing term for felons who are reintegrating with society.

Little is gained by ostracizing returning citizens and putting obstacles in their way as they attempt to create a new life. The keys to their success include things like finding an affordable place to live and getting a job. Turning someone loose on the world after years or decades behind bars is a tricky proposition. Many returning citizens discover that they were the victim of identity theft or financial fraud while incarcerated. Their bank accounts may have been closed due to inactivity and the balance sent to the state escheats office. They may face mountains of debt from accumulated child support with no legitimate source of income to pay it back.

Clearly, it's in everyone's best interest to overcome these obstacles by investing in measures that help reduce the likelihood of a return to criminal behavior. The official measure of recidivism is whether a person re-offends or violates the terms of their parole within three years of being released from state custody. Two years ago, Michigan's recidivism rate stood at 26.7%, the lowest level in state history and one of the best in the country, according to the Michigan Department of Corrections. Thirty years ago, the rate was 47% so it seems we're doing something right.

Schor's move to open the doors to civic participation for returning citizens complements the work the city is already doing to facilitate their reintegration with society. Since 2017, Lansing's Office of Financial Empowerment has partnered with the Michigan Department of Corrections to manage an array of integrated support services in the Lansing area, including financial counseling, that help form a foundation of stability for returning citizens as they travel the bumpy road back to being productive members of society. The Offender Success program continues to be so impactful that the city earned a \$22,000 bonus last year for achieving key performance measures in its administration of the program.

But there is more work to do. City leaders also should consider adopting a policy that prohibits asking job applicants if they have a criminal record. Widely known as "ban the box" policies, the idea is to eliminate some of the systemic biases against people with a felony conviction when they look for work. It doesn't prohibit an employer from conducting a background check on a job applicant or using that information to make a hiring decision, but it gives the applicant a better chance to be considered for employment. East Lansing adopted a "ban the box" ordinance in 2014 and the State of Michigan stopped asking job applicants about criminal convictions in 2018 at the direction of then-Gov. Rick Snyder.

Of course, there are a number of circumstances where the nature of the applicant's conviction is inconsistent with the prospective job duties. It's for good reason, for example, that a person convicted of child sexual abuse is prohibited from being employed in a position that involves children. Someone who has been convicted of financial fraud may not be a good fit in the accounting department. But as Mayor Schor rightly points out, it's about allowing public officials and employers to use their discretion to determine on a case-by-case basis whether a criminal conviction is a problem.

Easing the path back to civil society for returning citizens is good public policy. We encourage city and state officials to continue adopting policies and investing in programs and services that help the formerly incarcerated maximize their chances of turning their newfound freedom into lifelong success.



## 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.**

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

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

# Can we stop with comments on physical appearance?

Emily Stivers had had enough.

After taking comments for months about her toothy smile, the state House candidate in the new 75th House District went to Facebook to vent about those who have called her slight overbite "horse teeth," "white trash teeth," etc.

Stivers wrote that resetting her jaw would be expensive, painful and, frankly, unnecessary.

"Thank you for your concern for my dental problem! I'm sure you can spare a few hundred dollars to help me correct it so I can stop offending you with my horse teeth ... Assholes."

Her comment received a couple of hundred "thumbs up" and more than a 100 supportive comments.

Personal insults come with the territory of running for public office. Always have. Always will. In today's overly contentious and divisive political environment, it's unavoidable.

Running for public office requires some thick skin.

That's said, publicly ripping on a political candidate's physical appearance has no place in the debate.

Let's knock it off. It's rude. It's not relevant. It's likely sexist. And it's hurtful.

Objectifying another isn't OK, but political candidates are seeking to work for the public to advance ideas he or she feels are important to the jurisdiction they are running for.

You want to rip on their prior work in a different office? Fair game. You want to pick apart their platform of ideas? Discussion and debate should be encouraged.

I would even argue that those seeking to run for public office should be cognizant about their attire. I'm not talking about when a candidate wears shorts, short sleeves and tennis shoes when knocking doors.

In public settings, presenting yourself as a professional comes with the turf of serving in a professional position, regardless of the job. If a candidate looks like a slob or is too revealing, it can be distracting or a sign that you're not taking a job or a position seriously.

Someone's physical appearance? Keep it to yourself.

We all aren't supermodels, nor should we be. These political candi-

dates are running to serve the public, not grace the cover of GQ.

Some of us are carrying a little more weight than wanted. Others have skin spots. Unique hair. Receding hair. No hair. A lazy eye. A tooth that sticks out a little bit. I've heard the attorney general ripped up for allegedly having a "resting bitch face," which I still don't completely understand.

Too many times, it falls back on women, and it's not fair.

It's hard enough to attract quality candidates. Contrary to public opinion, the pay isn't great if you're already successful in any type of white-collar or skilled trades profession. The much-ballyhooed benefits don't exist anymore.

The work is hard (if you're doing it right). Staffing isn't what it was before the Great Recession. Severe cutbacks to state government, local government and school districts have everyone operating with less.

We've got more death threats. You're having to dispel conspiracy theories to skeptical, under-informed members of the public.

Add on top of that some faceless, nameless troll picking apart a crooked double-chin? A larger nose? A smile?

In today's disturbing addiction to social media, such base comments are so easy to make because there's no accountability. Sometimes, they're even "liked."

We know such insults speak more to the insecurities of the people who hurl them than of the directed targeted.

Still, it doesn't justify them. Let's be better.

\*\*

I wanted to publicly recognize WILS 1320-AM radio host Dave Akerly, who will be leaving his "Morning Wake Up" program July 7 after seven-plus years to be a senior strategist for DTE Energy.

Dave has not only kept the Lansing area informed, but provided the region with a forum to discuss issues important to us. I'm confident the good folks at WILS will find a capable successor, but as a weekly guest on his program I wanted to recognize his fine work and wish him the best going forward.

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



POLITICS

## Corrections

Because of an editor's error, an incorrect photo ran in the primary election preview. The photo that that was identified as D. Taft, a candidate for the Lansing City Council, was a former candidate, Coretta Duckett Freeman.

The same story also incorrectly stated how long Penelope Tsernoglou served as an Ingham County commissioner, which was 6 and a half years. It also gave the wrong first name of Alan Fox. And it should have said a portion of Clinton County and not Clinton Township is in the new 75th state House District.

In a different story on gun violence in Lansing as summer approaches, a reporting error gave the incorrect number of homicides in Lansing last year. The correct number is 25.

City Pulse apologizes for all the errors.

## CITY OF LANSING NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Lansing City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, July 11, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers, Tenth Floor, Lansing City Hall, 124 West Michigan Ave. Lansing, MI 48933, for the purpose stated below:

To afford an opportunity for all residents, taxpayers of the City of Lansing, other interested persons and ad valorem taxing units to appear and be heard on the approval of Brownfield Plan #81 – NEOGEN Expansion Brownfield Redevelopment Project pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act, Public Act 381 of 1996, as amended, for property commonly referred to as 703 E. Michigan Avenue located in the City of Lansing, but more particularly described as:

PARCEL NO. 33-01-01-15-151-004 WHICH IS THE NORTHERN 2.568 ACRES OF THE PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED AT 703 E. MICHIGAN AVENUE, LANSING, MICHIGAN BEGINNING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 10 ASSESSOR'S PLAT NO. 5, BEING A SUBDIVISION ON PART OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF THE NORTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 15, TOWN 4 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST, CITY OF LANSING, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, THENCE S89°46'25"E ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF LOTS 8, 9, AND 10 OF SAID ASSESSOR'S PLAT NO. 5, ALSO BEING THE SOUTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF SHIAWASSE STREET 206.25 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 8, THENCE S0°24'35"W ALONG SAID EAST LINE OF LOT 8 A DISTANCE OF 155.75 FEET, THENCE N89°46'25"W 6.45 FEET, THENCE S0°24'35"W PARALLEL WITH THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT 8 A DISTANCE OF 100.00 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID LOT 8, THENCE S1°13'20"E 123.30 FEET, THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY 130.83 FEET ALONG THE ARC OF A 239 FOOT RADIUS CURVE TO THE RIGHT THE LONG CHORD OF SAID CURVE BEARING S16°27'14"E 129.2 FEET, THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY 102.96 FEET ALONG THE ARC OF A 258 FOOT RADIUS CURVE TO THE LEFT, THE LONG CHORD OF SAID CURVE BEARING S20°43'01"E 102.29 FEET, THENCE N89°35'10"W 228.05 FEET TO THE EASTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF THE CSX RAIL ROAD, THENCE N0°24'35"W ALONG SAID EASTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE 341.75 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID ASSESSOR'S PLAT NO. 5, THENCE N89°46'25"W ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID ASSESSOR'S PLAT NO. 5 A DISTANCE OF 46.5 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF SAID SECTION 15, THENCE N0°24'35"W ALONG SAID WEST LINE OF SECTION 15 A DISTANCE OF 255.75 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, CONTAINING 2.568 ACRES MORE OR LESS INCLUSIVE OF THE LANDS CONTAINED WITH THE EASEMENT TO CSX RAILROAD AS RECORDED IN LBER 1668 PAGES 727-753. AREA OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED EASEMENT IS 0.242 OF AN ACRE NET AREA WITH OUT RAILROAD EASEMENT 2.326 ACRES SUBJECT TO ALL EASEMENTS BOTH OF RECORD AND UNRECORDED. THE BASIS OF BEARING FOR THIS SURVEY ASSUMES THE WEST LINE OF SECTION 15 TO BEAR N0°24'35"W FROM MICHIGAN STATE PLAN COORDINATES DERIVED FROM GPS FIELD OBSERVATIONS.

Approval of this Brownfield Plan will enable the Lansing Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to capture incremental tax increases which result from the redevelopment of the property to pay for costs associated therewith. Further information regarding this issue, including maps, plats, and a description of the brownfield plan will be available for public inspection and may be obtained from Kris Klein – Director of Economic Development, Lansing Economic Area Partnership, 1000 South Washington, Suite 201, Lansing, MI 48910, (517) 599-1136.

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

**Chris Swope, Lansing City Clerk**  
www.lansingmi.gov/Clerk  
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CP#22-144

**STATE OF MICHIGAN, INGHAM COUNTY PROBATE COURT. NOTICE TO CREDITORS, Decedent's Estate. Case No. 22-331-DE.** Estate of Betty Gertrude Soffin, deceased. Date of birth: 7-17-1925. **TO ALL CREDITORS: NOTICE TO CREDITORS:** The decedent, Betty Gertrude Soffin, died 2-19-2022. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Alan J. Bloomfield, 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. June 22, 2022. Alan J. Bloomfield P34168, 5419 Blue Haven Dr., East Lansing, MI 48823. 517-332-1321. Alan J. Bloomfield, 5419 Blue Haven Dr., East Lansing, MI 48823. 517-332-1321.

CP#22-143

# Women's reproductive rights come up snake eyes at Supreme Court

By **DEDRIA HUMPHRIES BARKER**

People get excited about luck. They chalk up their outcomes to luck. Good or bad. When it's good luck, everyone is smiling, including, some people think, God. The stars have aligned in their favor. I got lucky, they might boast like a teenage boy. However, people in need whisper or shout, I need some luck. Then try to rub a bald-headed baby's skull. Or a pregnant woman's belly.

Some people don't need luck. They make their own. People like Mitch McConnell.



Barker

The lottery. That's where you need luck. That's why I have never understood why Michigan ever thought the lottery was a good way to help fund public education. Education is valuable. Worth the investment. It helps uphold our democracy. Protects the U.S. from going down like so many other countries.

The lottery school aid fund connection has been going 50 years now. Basically, the same number of years that the Supreme Court decision on Roe v. Wade had been in place. That's 49 years; 1973. On Friday (June 24) that was reversed.

You'd think that lottery players — people like me — would come to our senses. We are getting taxed twice. Our taxes go for public education, and then we buy lottery tickets with after-tax dollars that go to public education. My husband says playing the lottery is also a tax on people who didn't learn math. He's talking about the long odds of winning.

For the big lottery games, the odds are 1 in more than 12 million chances.

But rational thinking like that is no fun. Fun is playing the lottery when jackpots soar. Last week, Mega Millions and PowerBall jackpots were \$312 million. It was high stakes. The lottery is like sex: exciting, pleasant, uncontrollable. You're going with a moment that is full of promise. The lottery impregnates a person's mind, unlike sex with a man, which impregnates a woman's actual body.

Thirty-seven percent of Americans think they know what is best for the pregnant woman. It's a moralistic position, which is what Justice Samuel A. Alito wrote in the 6-3 Supreme Court decision. He used the word, "wrong." "Roe was egregiously wrong from the start." Wrong is a moral judgment word.

Back in the day, judgy people thought a child was a price to pay. A price paid

See Primary, Page 12



A dream book is as close as many women will get to their goals for their life.

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**I can't pretend like everything is ok. Gun fetishes are being prioritized, women are no longer in control of their own bodies. The earth is heating up. Black and Brown people are still being killed, brutalized, or otherwise harassed. Honestly, at this point, who gives a SH\*T about HVAC. But if you're hot, give us a call.**

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# Barker

from page 11

by women who have sex. We're here for someone else's pleasure and to be kept in check by a legal responsibility to care and provide for any resulting children. Seventy-four percent of people under age 30 and 62 percent of people age 30 to 49 want abortion to be legal, according to Pew Research Center Public Opinion Fact Sheet (May 2022).

These people try not to judge; they try to help. And if they can't help, they don't get in the way. Like Mitch McConnell.

This is a rough street game McConnell is playing. Getting the right number of votes was more like what Michigan State University football coach George Perles said about winning games: "They all count one."

With Clarence Thomas. A Black man attorney accused, with good evidence, by Black woman attorney Anita Hill of not being justice material. She testified at Thomas' confirmation hearing about sexual abuse by him. When he was her boss. And her testimony was dismissed; The Senate said she was too late. She should have reported him before.

With Brett Kavanaugh. In late 2018,

Mitch McConnell said that the Supreme Court appointment was coming too late in Barak Obama's second term — even though Obama had more than one full year left in his term. McConnell refused to hold a confirmation hearing for Obama's appointee, betting that Donald Trump would beat Hillary Clinton to the White House. And he did.

Kavanaugh was confirmed despite the testimony by three women — one from their days at Yale University, two from high school — at his confirmation hearing of sexual abuse by him. The women were accused of being too late. That's misogyny in action.

With Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The notorious RBG waited too late to retire. She wanted Hillary Clinton to be president, but Trump won instead. RBG tried to outlive his presidency but did not survive a recurrence of cancer. Trump was the last man standing.

He appointed Amy Coney Barrett. A white woman attorney, married with seven children, one disabled. The push back to American women was, she can mother a brood and still be nominated to the Supreme Court. Why can't you? Have that baby. It's no inconvenience to your life.

Fact is, Ketenji Brown Jackson, an

exemplary Black woman attorney who this year was appointed and confirmed with much nastiness to be the next justice, is more like the rest of us: college-educated, juggling husband, two children and a full-time job.

Timing was everything. Barrett was McConnell's lucky number 3. Adding these three justices to justices Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Chief Justice John G. Roberts and the lucky number of votes to overturn Roe v. Wade came to 6.

The majority of the Court is now not only blind, but deaf and dumb.

A Pew Research Center survey found in March that 61 percent of polled Americans agree abortion should be legal. And just 37 percent disagreed. So now we are ruled by a minority position. The antithesis of democracy. But when you have the lucky number of voters, the decisions go your way. No matter your side, the key is to vote. Every. Time.

*(Dedria Humphries Barker, a Lansing resident is the author of a book about education for girls, "Mother of Orphans: The True and Curious Story of Irish Alice, A Colored Man's Widow." Her opinion column appears on the last Wednesday of each month.)*

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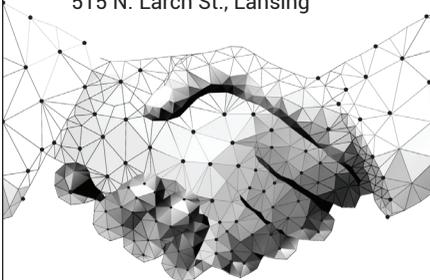
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*“There needs to be a lot more emphasis on what a child can do instead of what he cannot do.”* —Dr. Temple Grandin



Andy Schor, Mayor



# 4TH OF JULY

## Celebration



JULY 4TH, 2022

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# ARTS & CULTURE THE MUSIC ISSUE ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

## Major works, world premieres burst from Lansing Symphony in 2022-'23

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

A benevolent hippo just sat on your creeping dread of next year. Exciting young soloists at the top of their game, bucket-list musical experiences like Stravinsky's explosive "Firebird" and Brahms' epic Piano Concerto No. 2, two visionary world premieres from composer-in-residence Patrick Harlin and many other delights await local music lovers in the Lansing Symphony Orchestra's 2022-'23 season, announced today.

The orchestra proved its ability in the past year to mount a full schedule and retain its high standards, despite the lingering pandemic. LSO Music Director Timothy Muffitt credited thorough protocols such as masking everyone except wind players on stage, masking all players offstage and testing wind players for COVID "on a regular basis."

The potential to lose a crucial player on very short notice adds a zest to the process that Muffitt doesn't relish, but things are much more hopeful than they were in the vaporized season of 2020-'21.

"We did have to make some last-minute substitutions in the middle of the week, when someone would test positive before rehearsal," Muffitt said. "But that's why we didn't have to cancel any concerts, and that's why we were able to produce the way we produced."

The protocols will likely continue, barring unforeseen pandemic developments, through 2022-'23, Muffitt said.

"We are at the level of pre-pandemic activity, but with the activity comes a lot of extra support structure to keep people safe," he said. "I don't see next season being much different from this season, frankly."

The season kicks off Oct. 7 with brilliant Chicago area violinist Adé Williams, playing the achingly gorgeous violin concerto of Samuel Barber.

Williams has played with orchestras in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit and London and does a lot of mighty outreach work, organizing benefit concerts for music education on Chicago's south side.

She is also the epitome of the engaging, accomplished solo artist Muffitt loves to showcase.

"I've known Ade for a long time," he said. "We've done quite a bit together,



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

Pianist Clayton Stephenson played a concerto by Florence Price with the LSO at the Wharton Center May 13 and will return June 2, 2023, to premiere a new work by LSO composer-in-residence Patrick Harlin.

and I'm really thrilled to share her with our audience, especially in the Barber concerto."

The Oct. 7 program includes the world premiere of a new work by LSO's resident composer Harlin (there is no title yet) and will be anchored by Tchaikovsky's effusive Fifth Symphony.

"For people coming for the first time, you want a program of maximum impact," Muffitt said. "The opening concert is a welcoming to the season. I try to make sure the repertoire is in that tone."

A rainbow of rich, decadent, turn-of-the-20th-century delights is on the table for Nov. 5, with music by Ottorino Respighi, Paul Hindemith and Claude Debussy, climaxing with Igor Stravinsky's crashing Firebird Suite. The concert catches orchestral music at a turning point, when it was pulsating with forbidden impulses, just before the musical world blew into fragments. "It's a kaleidoscope," Muffitt said. "Every piece has a different color palette, and it's all rich and vivid."

The Jan. 13 concert is a monster, climaxing with one of the greatest of all symphonic works, the epic Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2. The soloist is one of the most exciting ever to appear with the LSO: Jon Nakamatsu, winner of the

Tenth Van Cliburn International Piano Concert. A personal connection helped Lansing snag a pianist that has commanded stages around the world. Muffitt has worked with Nakamatsu before, though not in Lansing, and Nakamatsu teaches at the Chautauqua Summer Music Festival school, where Muffitt is artistic and music director.

"Jon is one of the great pianists in the world, and he's in his prime right now," Muffitt said. The concert also features the rock-solid Symphony No. 1 of MSU alumnus Adolphus Hailstork and Richard Strauss' Serenade for Winds, a chance for the LSO's virtuoso wind section to swirl, twirl and soar to its heart's content.

Each year, the LSO sets aside one concert to shine a spotlight on an outstanding local musician. How about two for the price of one? The March 4 concert will feature the husband-and-wife violin team of Ara Gregorian and Hye-Jin Kim. Gregorian is an East Lansing native

and the son of longtime LSO violist Linda Gregorian and former MSU orchestra conductor Leon Gregorian.

The featured work, Mozart's brilliant Sinfonia Concertante, will be paired with a deceptively nimble, tuneful 20th century work by heavyweight Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich, his Symphony No. 9.

The June 2 season closer will feature Harlin's big, visionary swan song as LSO composer in residence: the world premiere of "The Fourth Pedal," a high-tech electro-acoustic odyssey with pianist Clayton Stephenson as soloist.

The work is not just a culmination, but an extension of the close ties that have developed between Harlin and the orchestra in his three years as resident composer.

From the start, Muffitt and the musicians hoped that bringing in a composer-in-residence would conjure up a unique synergy among composer, orchestra and audience, and that's just how it worked out. Harlin's most recent piece, "Earthrise," got a thunderous standing ovation when it premiered at the Wharton Center May 13.

"For our inaugural composer-in-residence, we hit a grand slam with this guy," Muffitt said. "Not only is he an extraordinary composer, his voice reflects our times. His music is uncompromisingly powerful, but he has found a voice the listener can embrace immediately."

Harlin wrote "Earthrise" with LSO musicians in mind. "The Fourth Pedal" will take the idea a step further. Harlin and soloist Clayton Stephenson got to know one another when Stephenson came to Lansing May 13 to play a concerto by Florence Price.

"This is a relationship between composer and soloist that began after the music was conceived, but before it will be written," Muffitt said. "It's a unique set of circumstances and I can't wait to hear what happens."

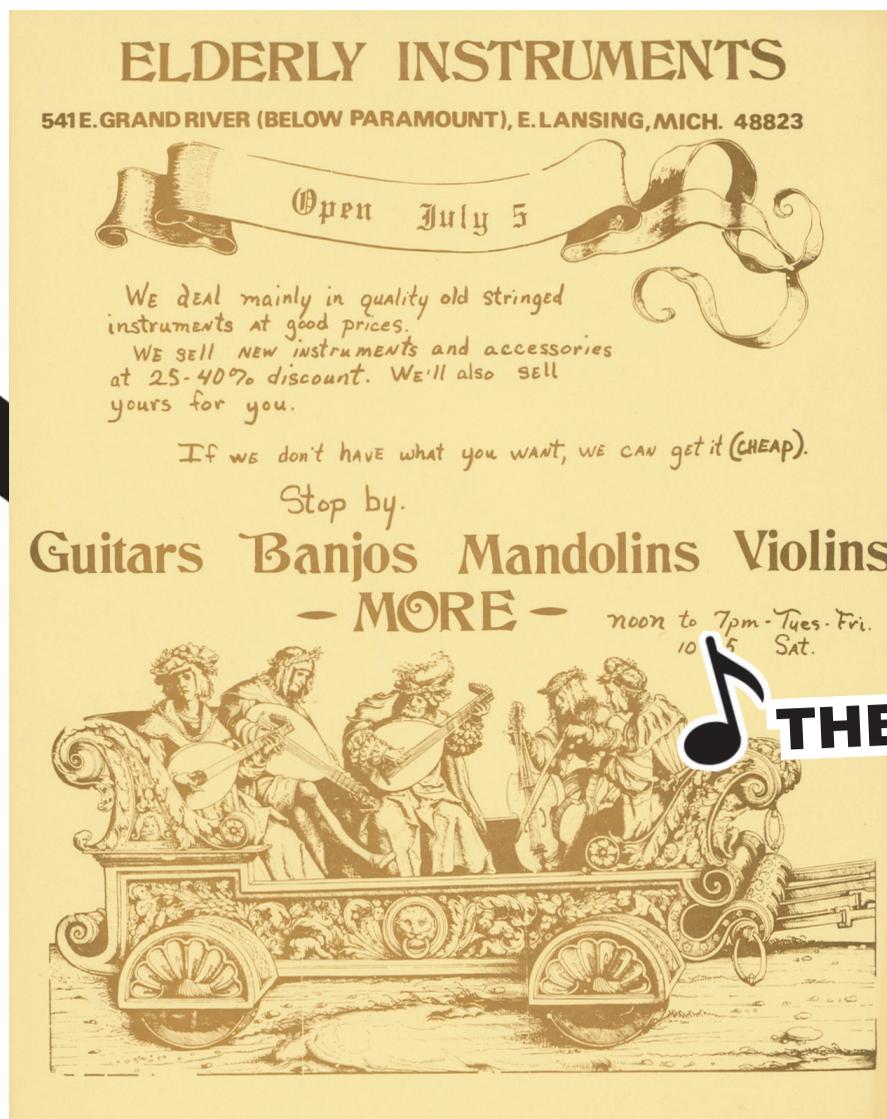
To whet local appetites for what is to come, the LSO has revived its pandemic-inspired Concerts on the Lawn series

See LSO, Page 21



Courtesy photo

Chicago area violinist Adé Williams comes to Lansing Oct. 7 to play Samuel Barber's violin concerto.



## THE MUSIC ISSUE

Elderly Instruments opened its tiny East Lansing store July 5, 1972, with a few picks and a handful of vintage instruments.

# Strings and roots

## Elderly Instruments keeps the music going at 50 years old

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

The tune was pretty shaky at first, but it's lasted 50 years now.

When Elderly Instruments opened July 5, 1972, in a basement in East Lansing, it was a 10-foot by 12-foot cubicle with a few picks and a handful of used string instruments and a battered leather pouch for a cash register.

"I really had no plans," co-founder Stan Werbin said. "It was something to do. How many 25-year-olds know what they want to do with the rest of their lives?"

Now pilgrims from around the world take a pass on Michigan's State Capitol — a mixed blessing, at best — to smile, tune up (or not) and pick happily at Elderly's ear candy counter of vintage and new guitars, mandolins, banjos and ukuleles.

In a research station in Antarctica, stacked in a cabinet or stuffed next to a toilet, are mail order catalogs from Elderly. In its heyday, the Elderly catalog went out to all seven continents and was recognized as a global resource by the Whole Earth Catalog.

Online sales have supplanted the catalog in the 21st century, but the creaky, wooden-floored store abides, nexus of an enduring local folk and acoustic music scene.

Elderly's shaky song has outlasted countless economic lurches and musical cycles, only to reach new heights of cultural vindication. Mandolins have gone mainstream. Ukuleles are red-hot. With heir apparent Lillian Werbin, Stan's daughter, on deck to take over the store, Elderly's time has come. To tell the truth, it never went away.

### Elderly baby

Elderly folklore often begins with a young Stan Werbin, haunting coffee shops and clubs in Greenwich Village in the folk revival heyday of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell.



Lawrence Cosentino/City Pulse

"Fortunately, I found a very good successor whose musical interests extend far beyond mine," Elderly Instruments co-founder Stan Werbin said of his daughter, Lillian.

Werbin, 75, said that's not quite accurate.

"I grew up in Queens. I was too young to be going off to Greenwich Village coffee houses," he said. He followed the music scene mostly on FM radio.

He started on the "road to ruin," as he puts it, when his brother snagged tickets to a 1961 Clancy Brothers concert at New York's Town Hall, with special guest Pete Seeger on banjo. Werbin was so impressed with Seeger he took up the banjo right away, at age 14, and still considers himself a "lapsed" banjo player.

He was a full-fledged folkie when he came to the University of Michigan in the late 1960s to pursue a degree in biochemistry. He passed his preliminary

exams, but 50 years later, a lot of people are glad he took it no further.

"Me too, believe me," he said.

He burned off his musical energy as a songwriter, guitar and banjo player, playing weekly open mic nights at the Ark.

It wasn't New York, but in many ways, it was better.

"The Ark exposed me to a lot of other, less mainstream folk musicians I wasn't hearing about," he said. "It turns out, there's a whole world out there, like there is now. Nowadays you'd call it an indie scene."

He recognized a fellow music lover in Washtenaw Community College student Sharon McInturff.

"I discovered the Ark Dec. 5, 1970, and for the next year and a half, I went to the Ark every night it was open," McInturff, now Sharon Burton, recalled.

Burton was editor of the college newspaper at Washtenaw, where the only place to get a meal on campus

was an Automat. She was working on an article about the food desert problem when she heard Werbin sing a song about the Automat at the Ark.

The line "we're living in a world of machines" made an impression on her. She asked him for the lyrics. Within a few weeks, they were dating.

On an early, cheap date — a bike ride through

### Elderly Instruments 50th Birthday Block Party

Noon-9 p.m. Tuesday, July 5  
1100 N. Washington Ave., Lansing  
(517) 372-7880  
www.elderly.com

See Elderly, Page 17

# Elderly

from page 16

Ann Arbor — Werbin's bike broke down near a yard sale, where they spotted a Sears Supertone guitar from the 1940s.

"It wasn't too expensive," Werbin said.

It dawned on them that buying and selling used instruments was a thing one could do.

"We didn't have real jobs," Burton said.

They set up a table at a flea market in Ann Arbor, but it was slow going. They spent most of the day shooting the breeze with another vendor, vintage book dealer Ray Walsh, still the owner of Curious Book Shop in Lansing.

Walsh was selling books out of the basement of the unglamorous 541 building in East Lansing, then and now the home of the Flat, Black and Circular record store. He told Werbin there was

an open slot in the building.

Ann Arbor didn't need another music store, and Werbin didn't want to compete with his friends who owned stores there.

They drove to East Lansing in Burton's Volkswagen, with \$120 in cash and a few instruments to sell. They rented a 10-foot by 12-foot space from Synergy, across the hall from Walsh's used bookshop. Synergy was a social hub "where people would go and talk and relate to each other," according to Burton. Hey, it was the '70s. Family of Man, a natural foods store, was another basement neighbor.

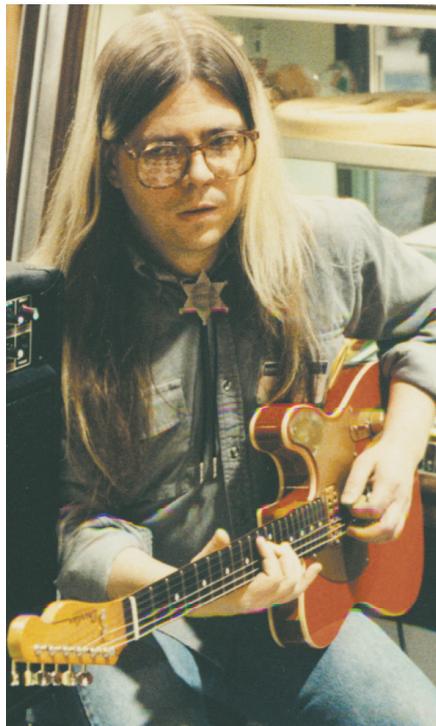
"Rent at the store was \$120, and rent at our room on MAC was \$120," Burton recalled. They convinced both landlords to let them pay half the rent and promised that at the beginning of the next month, they'd have enough to pay the whole amount.

They made the rent, but only after selling their Victrola to the guys at Flat, Black and Circular.

"We lived low on the hog and customers took us home for dinner," Burton said.



The Elderly Instruments sales floor as it looked in the early 1990s.



S.J. "Frog" Forgey, veteran bluesman and appraiser at Elderly Instruments, takes a guitar for a quick ride in 1986.



A mourning dove inspects the sales slips in the repair shop, date unknown.

Werbin got the idea for the name Elderly Instruments from a classified ad in the Ann Arbor News touting a Gibson Les Paul guitar as a "nice, elderly instrument."

"We couldn't afford the guitar, but we stole the name," he said.

## Going global

The 1972 movie "Deliverance," with its famous "Dueling Banjos" scene, sent nationwide interest in bluegrass banjo and guitar through the roof.

"That movie came out when we were opening the store, and we sold hundreds of little Harmony banjos and guitars," Burton said.

It wasn't the last time pop culture gave Elderly a sales boost. Lansing ukulele guru Ben Hassenger was working at Elderly in the mid-1980s, when Eddie Van Halen started playing his famous red Kramer guitar, criss-crossed with white and black stripes.

"We were a Kramer dealer and we

went through a bunch of those," Hassenger said.

As sales ticked up in the 1970s, Elderly bought more space in the basement of 541 E. Grand River Ave. and set up a coffee house with open mic nights on Wednesdays.

After a few years, they saw the need to keep in touch with customers who graduated from MSU or moved out of Lansing. Burton applied her newspaper and high school yearbook skills to put a catalog together, laying it all out in the pre-digital era of paper and rubber cement.

"It was going to be 16 pages, but six months later, it was 116 pages," she said.

Hassenger coordinated many of the spectacular covers for the electric catalog, by the likes of Dennis Preston and Kate Darnell.

"People would keep it in their bathroom and keep on looking at it," he said.

In its '80s and '90s heyday, up to

See Elderly, Page 18



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## Elderly

from page 17

10,000 catalogs went out to all seven continents, including Antarctica.

Singer-songwriter Jen Sygit learned of Elderly through its catalog before working there in the early 2000s.

“They were one of the first reputable, trustworthy mail-order companies,” she said.

One day, Werbin and Burton tried to close the store to install carpeting, only to find two visitors from Japan at the door.

“They wanted to buy a guitar. We



The Elderly baseball club, named after blues icon B.B. King, took time out for a photo in 1993.

Elderly co-founder Stan Werbin, seen here in 1963, caught the banjo bug from seeing Pete Seeger play at Town Hall in New York two years earlier.

could not be closed,” Burton said. “People came from all over the world once the catalog was out.”

“For such a mom-and-pop operation

to have such a large impact is really amazing,” Sygit said.

The catalog helped Elderly grow out of its hardscrabble early years, build a

national reputation and move smoothly into internet sales in the 21st century.

The culture surrounding the catalog See Elderly, Page 20

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***Let's make music this summer!***



Renowned Canadian luthier (maker of stringed instruments) and inlay artist William "Grit" Laskin demonstrates his art for Elderly employees and customers, circa 1995.

## Elderly

from page 18

grew such deep roots it lasted until 2014 — a decade longer than it needed to in the era of online business, Werbin said. It generated big sales in spite of a paragraph that urged customers to support their local stores, if possible, and only use mail order as a last resort.

### More Bulgarian music, please

When Cynthia Bridge dropped out of college and applied to work at Elderly in 1978, she thought a Marine Band was just a Marine band, and not a Hohner harmonica.

"But I did know what a crumhorn is, because I was into early music," she said. The heyday of the crumhorn, a wooden

double-reed instrument that tootles like a high-end kazoo, was the 16th century.

Despite botching the job application, Bridge has racked up 44 years at Elderly. It didn't require arcane knowledge to unpack boxes, price merchandise and put things away. Before long, she was ordering accessories, instruments and other merchandise.

"In the process, I got to know the breadth of instruments and learn about musical styles I'd never heard, of or didn't understand — Celtic music, Cajun music, bluegrass, old time music," she said. "I felt like my ears and my world were getting huge."

One day, a customer told Bridge the store needed "more Bulgarian music."

See Elderly, Page 21

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# LSO

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at the MSU Federal Credit Union campus with selected sub-units of musicians, with remaining performances on July 26 and Aug. 23. The 2022-'23 Pops series will feature a holiday-themed concert Dec. 11 with vocalist Lakisha Jones, a night of '80s music by the likes of The Bangles, Cyndi Lauper and Tears for Fears Feb. 11; and a night of Harry Potter music to celebrate finishing your income tax returns April 15.

Four chamber series entries (Nov. 13 and Jan. 29, March 19 and May 21) will feature a piano quartet, a string quartet, a piano trio and a wind quintet, in that order. Schumann, Haydn, Beethoven, Grieg and other stalwarts will all be represented, but the May 21 concert is an outlier, a wild bouquet of music by Paquito D'Rivera, Georgi Ligeti and others, with none of the usual suspects on hand.

Finally, the sellout experiment of deploying LSO musicians in REO Town's Robin Theatre to play new music, mostly by local composers, last year will be doubled, with dates scheduled for Jan. 19, and Feb. 16, March 16 and April 20.

Don't tell the stodgier season subscribers, but the wintry mix of four Robin Theatre concerts in four successive months amounts to a slightly stretched out new music festival.

"The Robin Theatre is such a wonderful and interesting place to see and hear music," Muffitt said. You can pop in with a drink from the bar next door and the vibe is casual and friendly. The music is a very wide spectrum of styles, all of it from our time, which is very interesting." Several of the composers came to last season's concerts.

"A lot of visitors came in, just out of curiosity, never having heard live classical music," Muffitt said. "They wanted more, and that's exactly what we were going for."

# Elderly

from page 20

"I thought, 'Yeah, right,'" she said.

But she dug into the subject and discovered that Bulgarian choral music is a thrill like no other, an icy wind through a burning forest in your mind. She learned how to play the Bulgarian gadulka, a kind of folk fiddle with sympathetic vibrating strings, and played in "an occasional Bulgarian dance band" around Lansing.

Sygit underwent a similar expansion as an MSU student and budding songwriter when she discovered Elderly.

"I came from Maryville and Port Huron, where they only had band instruments and guitars," Sygit said. "Elderly

exposed me to a whole new world of genres, instruments and ideas. I like to fancy myself an eclectic songwriter and I partly credit Elderly for that."

Sygit is one of many Elderly employees who have gone on to build lasting musical careers. Marcy Marxer, a former Elderly employee, became half of a multi-Grammy-winning folk duo, with Cathy Fink, racking up 36 recordings and 60 "Wammie" awards from the Washington Area Musical Association.

Elderly's repair shop has spawned its own national superstars. Oregon guitar maker Jeffrey Elliott, Haslett banjo maker Bart Reiter and Massachusetts guitar maker and restorer T.J. Thompson all did stints at Elderly.

"They've always had a well-respected repair department, and that always brings people in," Ben Hassenger said.

"If someone has a really, really nice old pre-war Martin guitar, they don't want just anybody to work on it."

## Ukulele redux

In the 1980s and 1990s, Elderly settled into a fine-tuned mix of new and vintage instruments, both electric and acoustic. In contrast to other stores, walk-in customers can try out any instrument they please, no matter how valuable. Nobody is on commission, so pressure sales tactics are unheard of.

"For quite some time, it was about 50-50 used and new," Cynthia Bridge said. "But as eBay and Reverb.com and other platforms became more user friendly, we've had fewer used things."

"We sold a lot of electric guitars," Hassenger said, "but it was still a mecca for  
See Elderly, Page 22

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# Elderly

from page 21

acoustic instruments — guitars, fiddles, mandolins, off-the-wall, weird things like a harp guitar.” (Harp guitars have additional, “floating” strings and look like the unholy offspring of a guitar, a harp and a Picasso painting.)

The store reveled in its hip un-hipness. Early catalogs contained the catchphrase “the ukulele — instrument of the ‘70s.”

“It was a joke at first,” Werbin said. Every 10 years, it was updated to “instrument of the 80s,” and so on.

Now, according to Hassenger, the ukulele really is the instrument of the 21st century. As Michigan’s official Ukulele Ambassador and the chief investigator of last weekend’s wild Mighty Uke Day in Old Town, “the largest ukulele festival in the Midwest,” Hassenger should know.

“Now Elderly is one of the major ukulele stores in the country,” he said.

In the 1960s, most Americans knew the ukulele as an odd fetish clutched by greasy-haired falsetto warbler Tiny Tim. Now, on the wings of world-wide hits like Amanda Palmer’s “Ukulele Anthem,” Paul McCartney’s “Dance Tonight” and Israel Kamakawiwo’ole’s “Somewhere Over the Rainbow/It’s a Wonderful World” medley, the ukulele is embedded permanently in pop culture.

“It’s easy to get into, but if you have the capability, you can also become a virtuoso on it,” Werbin said.

This April of this year, several members of the Ukulele Orchestra of Britain stopped into Elderly, prior to a date at the Wharton Center, and broke into a lengthy jam session.

## Playing the changes

As mail-order and in-person business grew, Elderly moved out of its East Lansing basement into a foursquare brick pile near Lansing’s Old Town, the former home of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, in 1982. (Staffers enjoy working across the street from the Robert Johnson building, even though it’s not named for the iconic bluesman.)

A dozen years later, the store oozed into the building next door, a former post office and National Cash Register building, now graced with a magnificent mural (and selfie spot for visitors from around the world) by Los Angeles artist Jennifer Springman.

Sharon Burton left the store in 1986. Werbin and Burton had already broken up after nine years “as a couple,” Burton said, but they stuck it out together at

Elderly for 14 years. They are still good friends, and Burton plans to come to next week’s 50th anniversary bash.

In 1987, Werbin married Sandy Dykins, a bookkeeper at the Social Security Administration. They adopted a seven-week-old daughter, Lillian, in October 1990.

Dykins became Elderly’s bookkeeper, payroll administrator and employee benefits manager until about two years ago, and still plays a consulting role in the store.

Lillian Werbin has been swaddled in the warm and tuneful Elderly culture all her life, and now stands to inherit the operation.

Both father and daughter find it significant that Lillian started working at Elderly at 25 — the same age her dad was when he started the business.

“I’m doing my best to fill these shoes, right down to the timeline,” she said.

As musical trends and economic cycles swirl around them, the Werbins carry on with a unique combination of canny adaptation and stubborn rootedness.

“We live in a world of instant gratification, but we also live in a world of banjos and stringed instruments,” Lillian Werbin said. “Instant gratification is a bit slower to acquire.”

The COVID pandemic emptied the sales floor for nearly two years, but it also froze the whole world into an Antarctic isolation perfectly suited to move Elderly’s wares.

“After the pandemic hit, our sales of entry ukes, mandolins and guitars was astounding,” Cynthia Bridge said. “The low-end instruments nearly doubled. People would grab on to things like a Cordoba ukulele or a Kentucky mandolin — more sales than we’d ever seen.”

That dividend has played out, but Lillian Werbin is pleased by the growing diversity of the folk, roots, Americana and twang community. In a recent interview with roots music scholar Michael Eck for the MandolinCafe website, she noted a surge in younger people, LGBTQ+ people and people of color at trade gatherings and banjo summits.

The acoustic instrument industry, she told Eck, “is opening its arms and starting to accept that it’s not about a certain type of person. It’s about a certain type of love for this community.”

Meanwhile, Stan Werbin is easing gradually toward retirement, but it may take a while.

“We’ve already scheduled the 100th anniversary,” he said. “That’ll be July 5, 2072. Put it on your calendar now.”

Lillian Werbin intends to be there.

“I’ll be sitting there like Dad, realizing I’ve done this for 50 years and being very confused about how I got where I am.”



Lillian Werbin has seen the acoustic music world grow younger and more diverse in recent years. “I was raised with all sorts of good music from every decade,” she said. “I’m happy to listen to almost anything.”

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4 **Chelsea House Orchestra** Celtic SPONSORS: Ray & Ann Lemmen

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## Greater Lansing Music Scene Directory

No matter if you're a Lansing-area musician looking to perform and record locally, or just a music buff in search of live shows and vinyl records, Mid-Michigan is stacked with both resources and fun. Here's a quick beginner's guide of what to keep on your radar.

### MUSIC VENUES

#### The Avenue Cafe

2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing  
(517) 492-7403  
avenuecafelansing.com

#### Charlotte Performing Arts Center

378 State St., Charlotte  
(517) 541-5690  
charlotteperformingartscenter.com

#### The Exchange

314 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing  
(517) 319-4500  
lansingexhchange.com

#### The Green Door Bar and Grill

2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing  
(517) 482-6376  
greendoorlive.com

#### Moriarty's Pub

802 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing  
(517) 485-5287  
moriartyspublansing.com

#### Pump House Concerts

368 Orchard St., East Lansing  
(517) 927-2100  
facebook.com/PumpHouseConcerts

#### The Robin Theatre

1105 S. Washington Ave., Lansing  
(989) 878-1810  
therobintheatre.com

#### Sirens Bar

119 E. Walker St., Saint Johns  
(989) 292-4600  
facebook.com/sirensbar

#### Urban Beat

1213 Turner St., Lansing  
(517) 331-8440  
urbanbeatevents.com

#### Wharton Center

750 E. Shaw Ln., East Lansing  
(517) 432-2000  
whartoncenter.com

#### Wilson Center Auditorium

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wilsoncenterauditorium.org

#### Windwalker Underground Gallery

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### MUSICAL INSTRUMENT STORES

#### Elderly Instruments

1100 N. Washington Ave., Lansing  
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#### Guitar Center

517 Mall Ct., Lansing  
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#### Meridian Winds

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#### Music Manor

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(517) 886-9447  
reederpianos.com

#### Six String Place

125 E. Grand River Ave., Williamston  
(517) 996-6095  
sixstringplace.com

#### Vintage Sound at Great Lakes Trader

132 S. Putnam St., Williamston  
(517) 881-1269  
facebook.com/greatlakestrader

#### White Bros. Music

13630 Main St., Bath  
(517) 903-6040  
whitebrosmusic.com

### RECORD STORES

#### Flat, Black & Circular

541 E. Grand River Ave #204,  
East Lansing  
(517) 351-0838  
flatblackandcircular.com

#### Lansing Record & CD Show

(EVENT)  
Quality Inn University  
3121 E. Grand River Ave., Lansing  
Saturday, July 16  
\$1 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
\$7 for early admission, 8 a.m.-10 a.m.  
facebook.com/lansingrecordshow

#### The Record Lounge

1027 S. Washington Ave., Lansing  
(517) 862-1976  
therecordloungeowntown.com

#### 'Round Midnight Records

822 W. Main St., Owosso  
(989) 723-6448  
tinyurl.com/roundmidnightrecords

### RECORDING STUDIOS

#### Crack House Recording Studios

2722 E. Michigan Ave. #26, Lansing  
(517) 224-2068  
crackhouserecordingstudio.com

#### Elm Street Recording

218 E. Elm St., Lansing  
facebook.com/elmstreetrecording

#### Glenn Brown Productions

2858 E. Grand River Ave.,  
East Lansing  
(517) 332-0990  
gbp-studio-acoustics.com

#### Smog Moon Productions

Lansing  
(remote mixing and mastering)  
(517) 862-6787  
nate@smogmoonrecordings.com

#### Troubadour Recording Studios

1133 May St., Lansing  
(517) 802-8404  
troubadourrecording.com

### MUSIC FESTS

#### The Dam Jam Music Festival

Brenke Fish Ladder  
216 E. Grand River Ave., Lansing  
July 14-16  
\$10 July 14, FREE July 15-16  
lansing501.com/events

#### Eastside Summer Fest

Lansing's Eastside  
Along Michigan Ave.  
from Hayford to Marshall  
Saturday, Aug. 27  
11 a.m.-10 p.m., FREE  
tinyurl.com/eastidesummerfest

#### Michigan JazzFest

Aug. 4-6  
Old Town, Lansing  
micharts.org

#### The Smokers Ball

Adado Riverfront Park  
201 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing  
Saturday, Aug. 13  
Noon-11 p.m., Tickets starting  
at \$40  
ceppresents.com

#### Sun Dried Music Festival

Mason Courthouse Square  
315 S. Jefferson St., Mason  
Aug. 26-28, FREE  
sundriedfestival.org

### FREE OUTDOOR SUMMER CONCERTS

#### Charlotte Summer Concerts on the Square

100 W. Lawrence Ave., Charlotte  
Thursdays through Aug. 18  
6:30 p.m., FREE  
micharlotte.org

#### Concerts in the Park

Wednesdays through Aug. 3  
Lansing area Parks  
7-9 p.m., FREE  
lansingmi.gov

#### Friday Night Concert Series

Lake Lansing Park South  
Band Shell  
1621 Pike St., Haslett  
Fridays through Aug. 26  
7-9 p.m., FREE  
pk.ingham.org

#### Grand Ledge Music in the Park

525 E. River St., Grand Ledge  
Thursdays through Aug. 18  
7-9 p.m., FREE  
grandledgechamber.com

#### Meridian Township Summer Concert Series

Marketplace on the Green  
1995 Central Park Dr., Okemos  
Wednesdays through Aug. 31  
6 p.m., FREE  
meridian.mi.us

#### Muelder Summer Carillon Concert Series

Beaumont Tower  
375 W. Circle Dr., East Lansing  
Wednesdays: July 6- Aug. 10  
6 p.m., FREE  
music.msu.edu/event-listing

#### Music In the Garden

W.J. Beal Botanical Garden  
W. Circle Dr., East Lansing  
Sundays: June 26, July 17,  
Aug. 14 and Sep. 11  
Activities at 1 p.m.,  
music at 2 p.m., FREE  
music.msu.edu/event-listing

#### Music in the Park

Sharp Park  
1401 Elmwood Rd., Lansing  
July 19 & Aug. 16  
7 p.m., FREE  
deltami.gov

#### Summer Concert Series

Ann Street Plaza, East Lansing  
Corner of Albert and M.A.C.  
Avenues  
Fridays: July 8- Aug. 12  
7 p.m., FREE  
cityofeastlansing.com/  
summerconcertseries

#### Williamston Summer Concert Series

McCormick Park  
300 N. Putnam St., Williamston  
Thursdays: June 5- Aug. 21  
7 p.m.- 9 p.m., FREE  
facebook.com/  
williamstonconcerts

### SCHOOLING

#### MSU Community Music School

4930 Hagadorn Rd.,  
East Lansing  
(517) 355-7661  
cms.msu.edu

#### Okemos Music Academy

2220 University Park Dr.,  
Okemos  
(517) 664-1110  
lansingmusiclessons.com

#### The Roth Academy of Music

820 Charlevoix Dr. Ste. 240.,  
Grand Ledge  
(517) 626-1168  
rothacademy.com

#### School Of Rock

2037 W. Grand River Rd.,  
Okemos  
(517) 220-7625  
schoolofrock.com/locations/  
eastlansing

#### Sigh Studio of Music

1000 N. Washington Ave.,  
Lansing  
www.sighstudio

## Local emcee Jahshua Smith weighs in on the state of hip-hop in Lansing

By JAHSHUA SMITH

As far as hip-hop goes in the state of Michigan and throughout the country, I wholeheartedly believe that a collection of the greatest voices to ever represent the genre were born in Lansing, or have called the Capital City home. Those who know me personally are aware of the depths to which my hometown of Detroit rests in my heart and soul, but I often say that I owe my life and career to the 517, in large part due to the movement the city has had in supporting young rappers looking to hone their craft.

I was blessed to be a part of the youth movement in Lansing since the late aughts — going from performing open mics alongside James Gardin at Mac's Bar, when F.O.S. had the monthly Respiration showcase, to eventually having a chart-topping album, taking part in nationwide tours and rocking festivals all off the strength of walking through doors that Lansing opened up for me. It's part of the reason I bristle at the idea that this city isn't enough for an artist with ambition — anyone with enough hustle could make it happen, especially with a revolving door of college students just a town away, looking for entertainment and appreciative of good music.

When I think of the MSU of what makes Lansing such a great hip-hop city, I think about my dear friend and legend, the late Cameron Doyle (known as Big Perm). As a pillar of the rap scene, he was always looking to innovate and put himself out there while also promoting the next generation of great lyricists and performers. So while I aligned with the BLAT! Pack, a group of MSU students from various parts of the state and country, it was linking up with Doyle, and various trusted friends who were representing Lansing, that really paved the way for the presence I have in the community to this day.

At the age of 36, I look at the legacy we collectively paved years ago, and how in 2022 the scene is beginning to reinvigorate itself as it continues to bounce back from the COVID years. I still make music with James, but we both are instructors with All of the Above Hip-Hop

Academy (founded by West Coast native, yet longtime Lansing staple, Ozay Moore), helping young students directly from Lansing Public Schools create their own Lansing anthems and pursue music education beyond High School.

I see a new protege in MikeyyAustin, who's fusion of hip-hop, chillwave, jazz and gospel not only makes him one of



Photo by Emily Nagle

For more than a decade, Jahshua Smith has been a fixture in Michigan's hip-hop scene.

the preminent rappers in the scene, but also watching him emerge as possibly the most crucial community organizer we have in the scene right now. He just pulled off an excellent celebration in the 517 Juneteenth Weekend, for the second year straight.

I see the legacy of Ward Skillz, whom I consider a brother since the day Big Perm introduced us, who through various platforms — Power 96.5, his Mitten Mayhem Radio imprint, and most recently an Open Mic every Wednesday at Urban Beat Dance Studio in Old Town — is finding a way to showcase up and coming talent and connect them with more resources.

There's not a hip-hop show of importance that you can attend where you will not see K.C. of Hood Illustrated, the hardest working journalist in the Michigan rap scene, networking and connecting artists to each other, regardless of their genre or content.

There are many artists from Lansing whose music I listen to like Tugg, Diamond Jones, AON NoSleep Milli and the late Von J, each of whom may have never been aware that I've been a fan. One of the most beautiful things about

See Hip-Hop, Page 24

List compiled by Caleb Woloszyn-Duffy

# Hip-hop

from page 23

the Lansing scene — past, present, future — is that we're all connected to each other's music. If you make a buzz, we take notice of each other. While it's definitely competitive, there's also a lot of love and support.

That said, there are far too many names I haven't listed that are on my mind, but I can't turn City Pulse into my shoutout section. The important thing is that the scene is thriving, even as we've seen two of our most prominent venues — the aforementioned Mac's Bar, plus The Loft — become unavailable in the wake of a global pandemic. The Loft is permanently closed

while Mac's Bar remains on a remodeling hiatus. However, we can look at some of these changes as a blessing in disguise, because now more than ever I'm seeing rap find a home not just in local nightclubs, but prominently in parks, auditoriums, classrooms and some of the biggest stages Mid-Michigan has to offer.

Rap is synonymous with resilience and our scene's past is a testament to that. Beyond that, Lansing's future is even brighter, mainly because the community has been able to support its growth. Here's to the next 15 years of rap excellence to come out of our city.

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# Live & Local CityPULSE

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Fri., July 1, 9 p.m.



## B&I Bar

5247 Old Lansing Rd., Lansing

**Keith Minaya**

Thurs., June 30, 7:30-10:30 p.m.



## Blue Owl

1149 S Washington, Lansing

**Elden Kelly and Gregg Hill**

Thurs., June 30, 6-8 p.m.



## Lansing Brewing Company

518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing

**Great Scott!**

Fri., July 1, 8-11p.m.



## One North

5001 W. Saginaw, Lansing

**Darin Larner Jr.**

Fri., July 1, 6:30 p.m.



## Peanut Barrel

521 East Grand River, East Lansing

**Dan Dan of the Swift Brothers**

Fri., July 1, 8 p.m.



## Urban Beat

11213 Turner Rd., Lansing

**Walter White**

Thurs., June 30, 7-10 p.m.



**Kevan Brown & i.am.james**

Fri., July 1, 7-10 p.m.



# Michigan Made Treats finds sweet spot

By SARAH SPOHN

Holly McDermitt and Sarah Stratton have been friends for several decades. A few years ago, they decided to become business partners, with their bakery, Michigan Made Treats. Last week, they celebrated their grand opening at Rathbun Accelerator Kitchen in the Allen Neighborhood Center on Lansing's east side.

The duo, which had been whipping up desserts for family and friends for years, decided to share their love of baked goods with everybody. Initially, they were planning on operating under the Cottage Food Law, which allows people to make and sell specific foods in their home without being subject to inspections or obtaining a food license.

Once requests started piling up for specific items like cheesecakes, which require a food license, the pair decided to take their business to the next level. "We found the Allen Neighborhood Incubator Kitchen program and got licensed through them," McDermitt said. "This program has been extremely helpful. This is a really good startup program." After renting out hourly kitchen time in the incubator program, an opening to join other startup businesses in the accelerator kitchen became available about two months ago. Michigan Made Treats jumped at the opportunity.

"We got to a point where hourly rent was killing us financially, because we needed so many hours in the kitchen every morning," Stratton said. "We were up to five or six hours a day, so when it opened up, and we had a set rent, it was much easier. It's kind of like a stepping stone, so you don't have to take out



Photo by Leta O'Connor

Michigan Made Treats Co-Owners Holly McDermitt and Sarah Stratton want to share their love of baked goods with everybody.

loans to get a brick and mortar." The full-service bakery's popular items are cinnamon rolls, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, donuts and cheesecakes. It also prepares special orders for large catering events, like weddings and graduations. Michigan Made Treats products are also available at local retailers, including Capital City Meijer in downtown Lansing, 517 Coffee in Lansing and Donuts to Dogtreats & More in Charlotte. They're hoping to add breakfast menu items in the near future.

"We love baked goods, we like to share and we like to feed people," Stratton said. "We're never satisfied with the status quo, we want to make things better, try new things and provide the best products to people — not just settle for mediocre or the same."

Both co-owners still have day jobs, which makes for long days — but they said it's worth it.

"It's not the easiest, and we don't get a lot of sleep," Stratton said. "We typically bake from midnight to 6 a.m., go to our day jobs until about 2:30 p.m., and then when we get home it's just about bedtime. We didn't really expect it to be easy, but we're willing to work hard to make our business a success."

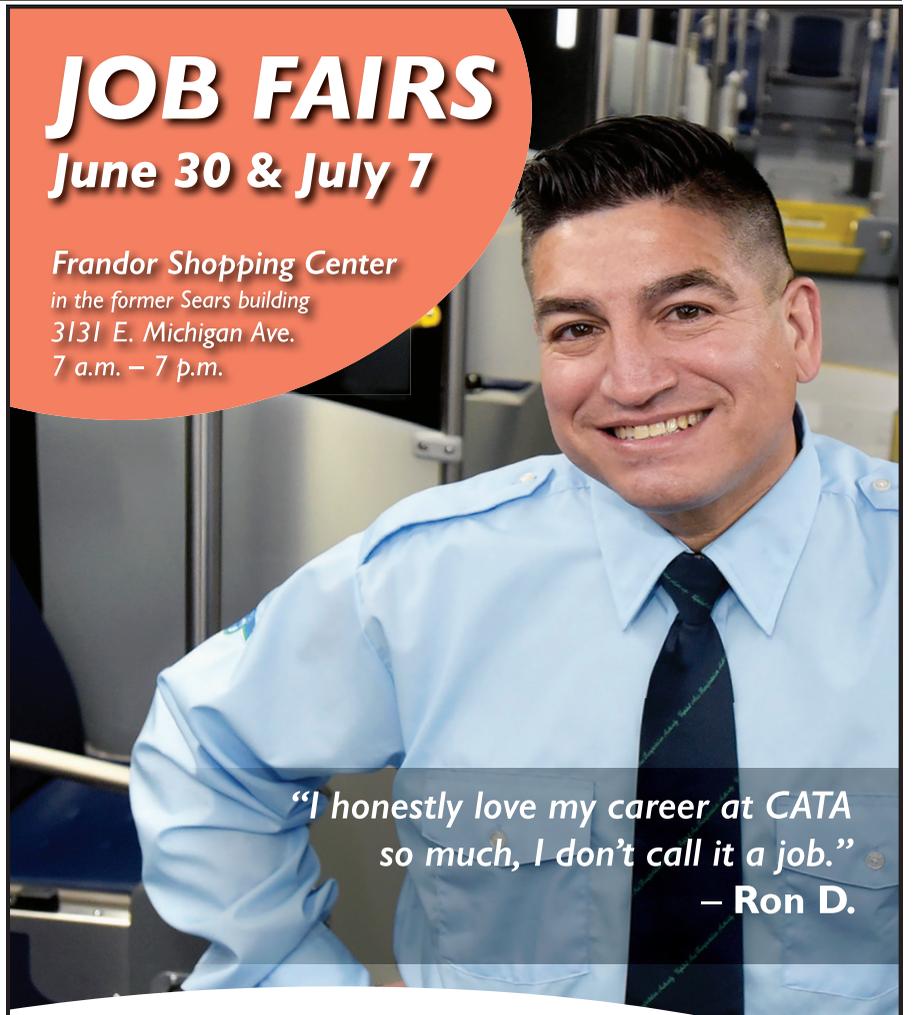


## Michigan Made Treats

Rathbun Accelerator Kitchen  
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Lansing  
(810) 309-9448  
facebook.com/  
michiganmadetreats

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# Pot shop takes over old credit union — drive-thru window and all

By KYLE KAMINSKI

Lansing is on the fast track to regaining its title as the Cannabis Capital of Michigan this summer with yet another dispensary opening its doors here this month — this time with a shop called Herbana, which opened June 17 without much fanfare on Saginaw Street, just west of Famous Taco. Its arrival got a bit louder with a grand opening cele-



bration over the weekend.

By my count, Herbana marks at least 21 dispensaries in the city, just shy of the 24 pot shops in Ann Arbor. But with seven more set to open over the next few months, we're well on our way to putting ourselves on the map for something other than Quality Dairy chip dip. (Though, we're still going to need plenty of that too.)

I caught wind late last year of Herbana's plans to move into Lansing and in December took a drive over to Ann Arbor to check out its flagship store for a live-action sneak preview. City officials told me they expected the shop to open in January, but there were a few

delays. As it turns out, a giant cement dome that used to be a credit union isn't the easiest of renovations.

Last week, regional manager Al Moroz invited me over for a tour and to explain exactly what sets his newly opened shop apart from all the others in the city — aside from the echo.

"We've been in the industry since the beginning here in Michigan. We know what we're doing. It's a clean, friendly place to be. It's that vibe, along with our commitment to treat our staff well," he said. "Happy people sell happy weed to happy customers, and that's what we're all about."

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

Moroz correlates Herbana's above-average budtender retention rate with an ability to build deeper connections (along with better product recommendations) for customers. It's not uncommon for regular shoppers to drop by the Ann Arbor location twice daily, he said.

The bargain prices don't hurt either: Herbana ounces are as low as \$100. Most eighters are \$20 to \$30. Only a few hit their top shelf for \$50; They'll learn soon enough how slowly those sell.

"It wasn't the best time to open a store with the price of cannabis dropping so dramatically, but we've been in the industry long enough, we knew this kind of thing was coming," Moroz said.

"Plus, it's the Capital City. It's a thoroughfare. Even if we have a lot of competition, we feel we can generate business and continue to expand the idea of Lansing as a cannabis destination."

The dome is an old Michigan Catholic Credit Union — also the former home of Walk In Truth Ministries. You can find its twin on North East Street at Chen's



Photo by Kyle Kaminski

The iconic domed structure (which has a twin in Chen's Chinese Restaurant on Larch Street) used to be a Michigan Catholic Credit Union branch. It even kept the drive-thru window.

Chinese Restaurant.

The vast rotunda has been painted black and trimmed with the company's signature shade of aquamarine. The walls are surrounded by typical pot shop goodies — cases of gummies, tinctures and other snacks, bags of pre-packaged bud, vaporizer cartridges galore. They haven't quite figured out what to do with the empty echo chamber in the middle, but it sure is unique.

And one of the best features: Herbana is still using the original drive-thru window from the old credit union, so you can order online and quickly snag a bag on the way home from work. That makes it the second shop with a drive-thru window after Bazonzoes recently opened a location on the south side.

Moroz steered me toward Herbana's in-house brands, grown by Arbor Farm and packaged in-house by Arbor Kitchen brand. The company has developed a reputation for putting out sincerely mind-rattling sativa strains. The best of my haul was a \$40 eighter of Golden Goat and a \$30 eighter of Green Crack — both of which I haven't seen at other stores across Lansing.

*Kyle Kaminski is a journalist and cannabis enthusiast. Editor & Publisher magazine has labeled him "arguably, the state's authority on everything you need to know about cannabis." Have a suggestion for a dank new product or a feature idea? Email lansterdam@lansingcitypulse.com.*



Photo by Kyle Kaminski

Herbana celebrated the grand opening of its third location last weekend at 2001 W. Saginaw St.

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# Papa and me: A writer's obsession with Hemingway

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Mark Kurlansky, who has written nearly three dozen books, some about mundane topics with titles such as “Salt” “Paper” and “Cod,” and is working on a book about onions, recently authored a book on his intersection with Ernest Hemingway. In “The Importance of Not Being Ernest,” Kurlansky writes about his own life and how he found himself decades later later visiting some of Hemingway’s stomping grounds.

In his career as a journalist, Kurlansky covered world events and wars, taking him to such Hemingway playgrounds as Spain, Key West, Havana, and Ketchum, Idaho. Unfortunately for readers who live in Michigan, they didn’t include Horton Bay, Petoskey or Walloon Lake.

Kurlansky said the idea for the book came to him more than a decade ago when he was fishing the Big Wood River in Idaho.

“I thought to myself, I was fishing the same place Hemingway had but I was already older than he was,” Kurlansky said.

Kurlansky realized that in some ways he had become a traveling doppelgänger for Hemingway, and as he aged, Kurlansky even began looking more like the older bearded Hemingway to the point that folks in Cuba and Spain began calling him “Hem” or “Hemingway.”

“Some guy near my home on West 86th Street in Manhattan recently yelled out, ‘Hey, you look like Hemingway.’”

Kurlansky said that in writing the book he “had to strike a delicate balance between writing about himself and Hemingway.”

Kurlansky peppers the book with interesting, often quirky tidbits about Hemingway, bringing him to life in ways we don’t expect. For example, “Hemingwayphiles” as Kurlansky calls them, have heard the stories about nude swimming at Finca Vigia, Hemingway’s Havana home. But it is seldom mentioned that Hemingway had the first television in Havana and enjoyed watching the “Friday Night Fights”

with his friends.

“It was fascinating to talk with people who knew and remembered Hemingway,” he said — with one caveat: “except in Cuba where Hemingway lived for more than half his writing career.” Kurlansky said by the time he got to Cuba, the only people alive who knew of Hemingway were little kids at the time he was there. The author described a number of “Santiago” wannabes who for a price would tell you about Hemingway.

Santiago was the protagonist in Hemingway’s “The Old Man and the Sea,” which helped him land his biggest literary award, the Nobel Prize for Literature.

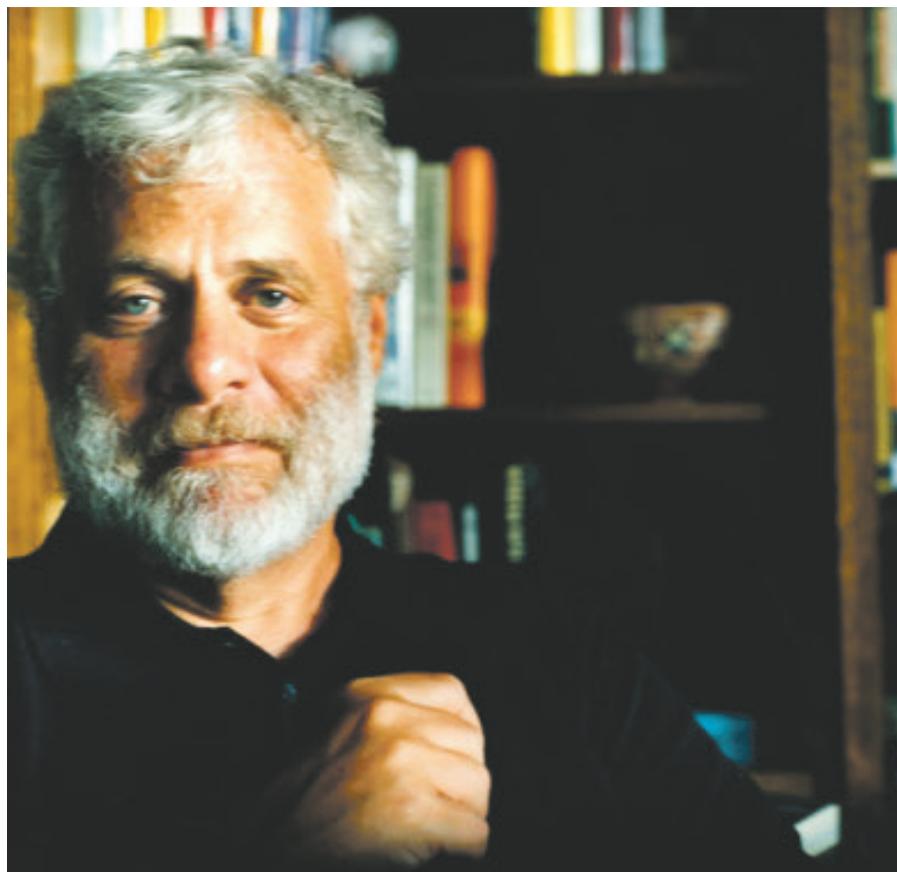
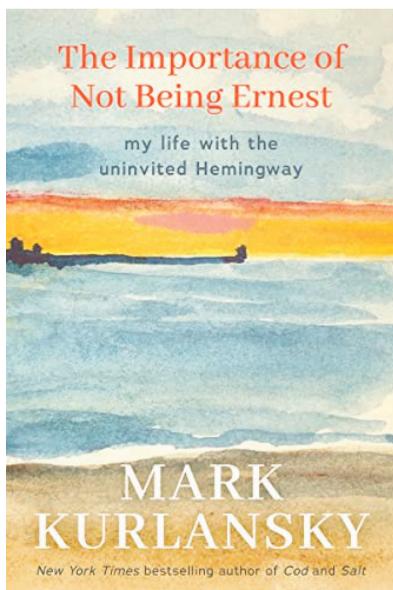
During his travels, Kurlansky filled 29 journals with sketches and watercolors. The watercolors, which illustrate his new book, were his way of tickling his memory. “I discovered later ... that I did not forget anything I drew and that my drawings

were more lasting in my memory than anything I wrote.”

In his book, Kurlansky points out Hemingway’s fabulous memory. “He took no notes,” he said. He also points out that Hemingway “made stuff up — a lot” and not just in his seven books of fiction. Although Hemingway did not take notes, much of his life can be traced through the thousands of letters he wrote to family, friends and literary acquaintances. Those letters, which tell an intimate story, are being issued in what is expected to be a 17-volume set. “They helped a lot in writing the book,” Kurlansky said.

Literally, there are thousands of books on Hemingway, but what make Kurlansky’s so readable and frankly fun is he doesn’t worship the cult of Hemingway and goes out of his way to point out that were two Hemingway personas: the public one and the private one.

“On one level, Hemingway wanted to be the voice of his generation — he wanted to be a celebrity, and he was,” Kurlansky said. During one trip to Cuba, Kurlansky writes: “I was walking the narrow streets of Habana Vieja and people, maybe one or two per block, would call out



Mark Kurlansky

‘Papa.’ ... They were calling out to Papa as they always did in Havana when he was alive. It was my fear coming true. If you spend too much time thinking about Hemingway, you become a Hemingway clone. The next time I go to Cuba, I am shaving off my beard first.”

That said, Kurlansky also recognizes that some of Hemingway’s lean style of writing may have found its way into his own writing. At one point, Kurlansky writes about coming into Cuba: “The sea was dark and calm.” Sound like anyone you’ve read?

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# Jonesin' Crossword

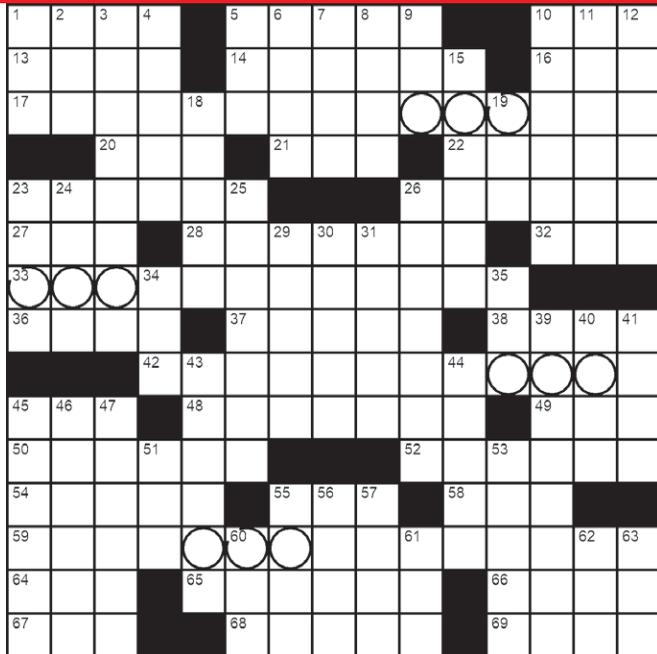
By Matt Jones

"Any Day Now"—just not that day.

by Matt Jones

### Across

- 1. "Super" campaign orgs.
- 5. Bullwinkle, for one
- 10. Dr. Zaius, e.g.
- 13. "Nope"
- 14. Gazelle relative
- 16. Palindromic sibling
- 17. French scammer's "find the potato" activity?
- 20. Olympic bike event since 2008
- 21. "Science Guy" Bill
- 22. Actress Tierney "American Rust"
- 23. Grinding tooth
- 26. Sinclair Lewis preacher Elmer
- 27. "Thrilla in Manila" boxer
- 28. Accepts, as a challenge
- 32. Some tech grads, for short
- 33. Motto of the Really Long Word Club?
- 36. Drain slowly
- 37. Like some pomades
- 38. Upcoming Billy Eichner rom-com with an almost entirely LGBTQ main cast
- 42. Result of a Benedictine losing at Battleship?
- 45. 2010s dance fad
- 48. Hindering sort
- 49. 21st-century starter
- 50. Second-smallest continent
- 52. Inflated accommodation
- 54. Wear away
- 55. Former "Great British Bake Off" host Perkins



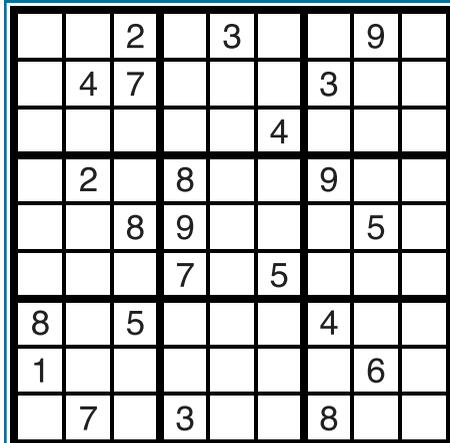
- 58. Zero, in British scores
  - 59. Prods fitness instructors?
  - 64. Poetic word for "before"
  - 65. Fairy tale finish
  - 66. "Cabaret" actor Joel
  - 67. Appeared in print
  - 68. Lhasa \_\_\_\_ (Tibetan terriers)
  - 69. Conditional suffix?
- Down**
- 1. Word with "well" or "shot"
  - 2. "That makes sense"
  - 3. Like some pandemic-era pickups
  - 4. Curly's replacement
  - 5. Rap battle prop
  - 6. U.A.E. neighbor
  - 7. "Grand Ole" venue
  - 8. "No Ordinary Love" singer
  - 9. Santa's helper
  - 10. Eagle-eyed
  - 11. Title Maurice Sendak kid whose name rhymes with his catchphrase "I don't care"
  - 12. Persuasive pieces
  - 15. Italian fashion designer Giorgio
  - 18. They're marked at the auditorium
  - 19. Actor McKellen
  - 23. Cornfield noises
  - 24. Peter Fonda's beekeeper role
  - 25. First half of a doubleheader, usually
  - 26. Travel via ship
  - 29. Liverpool football manager J\_rgen
  - 30. Secretly tie the knot
  - 31. Flavorful
  - 34. Choose
  - 35. Norah O'Donnell's network
  - 39. Tanks, based on the noise they make
  - 40. "I'm buying!"
  - 41. Road mark cause, maybe
  - 43. Best for harvesting
  - 44. "Lemon Tree" singer Lopez
  - 45. More thought-provoking
  - 46. Illinois hometown of Wayne and Garth
  - 47. Malfunctioning
  - 51. Pindaric poem
  - 53. Supergroup leader with "His All-Starr Band"
  - 55. Fitbit unit
  - 56. Sport vehicles, for short
  - 57. Rubik of puzzle cubes
  - 60. "Busted!"
  - 61. Show streaming interrupters
  - 62. Co-op retailer for campers
  - 63. Pt. of iOS

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Answers on page 30

## SUDOKU

## Advanced



### 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 30

## Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezсны

June 29 – July 5, 2022

**ARIES (March 21–April 19):** In her poem "Two Skins," Bahamian writer Lynn Sweeting writes, "There is a moment in every snake's life when she wears two skins: one you can see, about to be shed, one you cannot see, the skin under the skin, waiting." I suspect you now have metaphorical resemblances to a snake on the verge of molting, Aries. Congratulations on your imminent rebirth! Here's a tip: The snake's old skin doesn't always just fall away; she may need to take aggressive action to tear it open and strip it off, like by rubbing her head against a rock. Be ready to perform a comparable task.

**TAURUS (April 20–May 20):** "Imagine a world 300 years from now," writes Japanese novelist Minae Mizumura, "a world in which not only the best-educated people but also the brightest minds and the deepest souls express themselves only in English. Imagine the world subjected to the tyranny of a singular 'Logos.' What a narrow, pitiful, and horrid world that would be!" Even though I am primarily an English speaker, I agree with her. I don't want a world purged of diversity. Don't want a monolithic culture. Don't want everyone to think and speak the same. I hope you share my passion for multiplicity, Taurus—especially these days. In my astrological opinion, you'll thrive if you immerse yourself in a celebratory riot of variety. I hope you will seek out influences you're not usually exposed to.

**GEMINI (May 21–June 20):** Imagine you're not a person, but a medley of four magical ingredients. What would they be? A Gemini baker named Jasmine says, "ripe persimmons, green hills after a rain, a sparkling new Viking Black Glass Oven, and a prize-winning show horse." A Gemini social worker named Amarantha says she would be made of "Florence and the Machine's song 'Sky Full of Song,' a grove of birch trees, a blue cashmere knee-length sweater, and three black cats sleeping in the sun." A Gemini delivery driver named Altoona says, "freshly harvested cannabis buds, a bird-loving wetlands at twilight, Rebecca Solnit's book Hope in the Darkness, and the Haleakal shield volcano in Maui." And now, Gemini, what about you? Identify your medley of four magical ingredients. The time is right to re-imagine the poetry of YOU.

**CANCER (June 21–July 22):** Filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard believes there's only one way to find a sense of meaning, and that is to fill your life to the bursting point; to be in love with your experience; to celebrate the flow of events wherever it takes you. When you do that, Godard says, you have no need or urge to ask questions like "Why am I here?" or "What is my purpose?" The richness of your story is the ultimate response to every enigma. As I contemplate these ideas, I say: wow! That's an intensely vibrant way to live. Personally, I'm not able to sustain it all the time. But I think most of us would benefit from such an approach for brief periods now and then. And I believe you have just entered one of those phases.

**LEO (July 23–Aug. 22):** I asked Leo readers to provide their insights about the topic "How to Be a Leo." Here are responses that line up with your current astrological omens. 1. People should try to understand you're only bossing them around for their benefit. —Harlow Hunt. 2. Be alert for the intense shadows you may cast with your intense brightness. Consider the possibility that even if they seem iffy or dicey, they have value and even blessings to offer. —Cannarius Kansen. 3. Never break your own heart. Never apologize for showering yourself with kindness and adoration. —Amy Clear. 4. At the moment of orgasm, scream out your own name. —Bethany Grace

**VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22):** It's your birthright as a Virgo to become a master of capitalizing on difficulties. You have great potential to detect opportunities coalescing in the midst of trouble. You can develop a knack for spotting the order that's hiding in the chaos. Now is a time when you should wield these skills with artistry, my dear—

both for your own benefit and for the betterment of everyone whose lives you touch.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22):** One of my heroes died in 2021: the magnificent Libran author bell hooks (who didn't capitalize her name). She was the most imaginative and independent-minded activist I knew. Till her last day, she articulated one-of-a-kind truths about social justice; she maintained her uncompromising originality. But it wasn't easy. She wrote, "No insurgent intellectual, no dissenting critical voice in this society escapes the pressure to conform. We are all vulnerable. We can all be had, co-opted, bought. There is no special grace that rescues any of us. There is only a constant struggle." I bring this to your attention, Libra, because I suspect the coming weeks will require your strenuous efforts to remain true to your high standards and unique vision of reality.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21):** You now have the power to make yourself even more beautiful than you already are. You are extraordinarily open to beautifying influences, and there will be an abundance of beautifying influences coming your way. I trust you understand I'm not referring to the kinds of beauty that are worshiped by conventional wisdom. Rather, I mean the elegance, allure, charm, and grace that you behold in old trees and gorgeous architecture and enchanting music and people with soulful idiosyncrasies. PS: The coming weeks will also be a favorable time to redefine the meaning of beauty for yourself.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21):** It's the Season for Expressing Your Love—and for expanding and deepening the ways you express your love. I invite you to speak the following quotes to the right person: 1. "Your head is a living forest full of songbirds." —E. E. Cummings. 2. "Lovers continuously reach each other's boundaries." —Rainer Maria Rilke. 3. "You're my favorite unfolding story." — Ann Patchett. 4. "My lifetime listens to yours." — Muriel Rukeyser.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19):** In the coming weeks, make sure you do NOT fit this description articulated by Capricorn novelist Haruki Murakami: "You're seeking something, but at the same time, you are running away for all you're worth." If there is any goal about which you feel conflicted like that, dear Capricorn, now is a good time to clear away your confusion. If you are in some sense undercutting yourself, perhaps unconsciously, now is the time to expose your inner saboteur and seek the necessary healing. July will be Self-Unification Month.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18):** A Tweeter named Luxurybikwomn articulates one of her ongoing goals: "bridging the gap between me and my ideal self, one day at a time." I'd love it if you would adopt a similar aspiration in the coming months. You're going to be exceptionally skilled at all types of bridge-building, including the kind that connects you to the hero you'll be in the future. I mean, you are already a hero in my eyes, but I know you will ultimately become an even more fulfilled and refined version of your best self. Now is a favorable time to do the holy work of forging stronger links to that star-to-be.

**PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20):** A blogger named Lissar suggests that the cherry blossom is an apt symbol for you Pisceans. She describes you as "transient, lissome, blooming, lovely, fragile yet memorable and recurring, in tune with nature." Lissar says you "mystify yet charm," and that your "presence is a balm, yet awe-inspiring and moving." Of course, like all of us, you also have your share of less graceful qualities. And that's not a bad thing! We're all here to learn the art of growing into our ripe selves. It's part of the fun of being alive. But I suspect that in the coming weeks, you will be an extra close match for Lissar's description. You are at the peak of your power to delight and beguile us.

# 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 9 a.m. Monday for the upcoming Wednesday edition. Charges may apply for paid events to appear in print. If you need assistance, please call Suzi at (517) 999-6704.

### Wednesday, June 29

**50 over Fitness** - Meridian 50 Plus Stretch and Flex Exercise group. 9-10 a.m. Central Park Pavilion, 5151 Marsh Rd., Okemos. 517-853-4600. [meridian50plus.com](http://meridian50plus.com).

**Allen Farmers Market** - Corner Shepard/Kalamazoo. 2:30-7 p.m. Allen Market Place, 1611 E Kalamazoo, Lansing.

**Concert in the Park** - Surf Zup. 7-9 p.m. William E. Tennant Performance Shell, St Johns City Park, 801 W Park St. [clintoncountyarts.org](http://clintoncountyarts.org).

**Concerts in the Park** - 7 p.m. Jackpine Savages. 7 p.m. Hunter Park, 1400 E. Kalamazoo, Lansing.

**East Lansing Presents:** Yoga on Albert St. Free outdoor yoga class. 9:30-10:30 a.m. [cityofeastlansing.org](http://cityofeastlansing.org)

**Family Ties: Juan Coronel Rivera Talk** - Diego Rivera's grandson Juan Coronel Rivera will discuss Frida Kahlo works. 6-8 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing.

**Family Yoga** - All ages. 3-4 p.m. Playground of Dreams, 100 Howe Dr., Eaton Rapids. [eradi.org](http://eradi.org).

**Featured Trivia: Grey's Anatomy** - 7-10 p.m. Lansing Brewing Company, 518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing. 517-371-2600.

**Friendship Bracelets with Cats** - 7-8 p.m. Constellation Cat Cafe, 3320 E Lake Lansing Rd, East Lansing. [catcafe.as.me](http://catcafe.as.me).

**Intro to Redstone Logic in Minecraft** - 1-week coding camp. Live, online! Ages 11-18. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. [codewizardshq.com](http://codewizardshq.com).

**MMAG 12x12 Art Show!** - all month. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Framer's Edge, 1856 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos.

**Meditation in the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition** - All welcome! 7-9 p.m. Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S. MLK Jr Blvd., Lansing. [lamc.info](http://lamc.info).

**Meridian Township Summer Concert Series** - 6-8:30 p.m. Marketplace, 1995 Central Park Dr., Okemos. [meridian.mi.us](http://meridian.mi.us).

**Pagan Community Night** - online or in-person. 6-8 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St., #7A, Lansing. [weaversoftheweb.org](http://weaversoftheweb.org).

**Storybook Stroll** - through August. Read while you stroll the trails at Lincoln Brick Park and downtown! 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org).

**Wine Wednesday** - Wine & cheese tasting 6 p.m., wind & chocolate tasting 8:30pm. Hooked, 3142 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 517-721-1330.

**Your Art's Desire** - A new multi-media exhibit. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. The Peoples Church, 200 W. Grand River Ave., East Lansing.

### Thursday, June 30

ArtPath Artist Talk with Nevin

**Speerbrecker** - Hear from ArtPath artists as they tell us about their ArtPath installations. 6 p.m. ArtPath Site 4 on Lansing River Trail.

**Bath Farmers Market** - 3-6:30 p.m. James Couzens Memorial Park, 13753 Main St, Bath. [shopbfm.org](http://shopbfm.org).

**Dimondale Farmers Market** - 3-7 p.m. 136 N Bridge St, Dimondale. 517-230-0520.

**Family Photos: Cristina Kahlo Talk** - Frida Kahlo's grandniece Cristina Kahlo will discuss Kahlo Without Borders. 6-8 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu)

**Field of View: An Art X Science Film Series** - Human Nature. 9:20 p.m. Valley Court Park, 280 Valley Court, East Lansing. [cityofeastlansing.com](http://cityofeastlansing.com).

**Garbage Fun w/ Eaton County Resource Recovery** - garbage/recycling activity and stories. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Playground of Dreams, 100 Howe Dr., Eaton Rapids. [eradi.org](http://eradi.org).

**Music in the Park** - Food concessions available. 7-9 p.m. Jaycee Park, 525 E. River St, Grand Ledge. [grandledgechamber.com](http://grandledgechamber.com).

**Stitch 'n Bitch** - Come hang out with some fellow stitching witches! 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center St #7, Lansing. [manifestlansing.com](http://manifestlansing.com).

**Summer Concert Series** - 7-9 p.m. American Legion Bandshell, McCormick Park, 300 N. Putnam St., Williamston.

**Summer Concert Series** - Bridge Street Band. 6:30 p.m. The Courthouse Lawn, 100 W Lawrence Ave., Charlotte.

**Vision Boards** - for adults. Create a vision board! Materials supplied. 5-6 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St. [eradi.org](http://eradi.org).

### Friday, July 1

**50 over Fitness** - The Meridian 50 Plus Stretch and Flex Exercise group. 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Rd., Okemos. [meridian50plus.com](http://meridian50plus.com).

**Cruise In** - 5-8 p.m. Holt Farmers' Market, 2150 Cedar St, Holt. [delhitownship.com](http://delhitownship.com).

**Drive-In Movie** - Create a car for the City's Movie in the Park on Sunday, July 3rd! 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St. [eradi.org](http://eradi.org).

**Friday Night Concert Series** - 7 p.m. Lake Lansing Park South Band Shell, 1621 Pike St., Haslett. [pk.ingham.org](http://pk.ingham.org).

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

**TGIF Pre-July 4th Dance Party** - All welcome. 7-11:59 p.m. Hawk Hollow, 15101 Chandler Rd., Bath. 734-604-5095. [tgifdance.com](http://tgifdance.com)

### Saturday, July 2

Family Day: Stretch - 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Eli

and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing.

**The Main Drag Smoke Shop First Annual Fourth of July Auto Show** - 12-10 p.m. 1122 W Holmes Rd., Lansing.

### Sunday, July 3

**East Lansing Farmers Market** - 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Valley Court Park, 280 Valley Court, East Lansing. [cityofeastlansing.com](http://cityofeastlansing.com).

**The Main Drag Smoke Shop First Annual Fourth of July Auto Show** - 12-10 p.m. 1122 W. Holmes Rd, Lansing.

**Sunday School for Witches** - workshop series. 3-4:30 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center ST., #7A, Lansing. [manifestlansing.com](http://manifestlansing.com).

### Monday, July 4

**50 over Fitness** - Meridian 50 Plus Stretch and Flex Exercise group. 9-10 a.m. 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. [meridian50plus.com](http://meridian50plus.com).

**Concerts in the Park** - Lansing Concert Band. 8 p.m. Riverfront Park. downtown Lansing.

## Greater Lansing July 4th celebrations

### Saturday, July 2-Sunday, July 3:

#### The Main Drag Smoke Shop First Annual Fourth of July Auto Show

As a two-day celebration of its grand opening on June, the Main Drag Smoke Shop (1122 W. Holmes Rd, Lansing) invites all makes and models, cars, trucks, bikes and boats combined to roll up and relax from noon to 10 p.m. July 2-3. There will be local food trucks, \$1 entry raffles, give aways and more. Placement winners announced Sunday, July 3 at 5 p.m. Secure your two-day spot registration for \$20 per entry. Pre-registration required by Thursday (June 30).

### Sunday, July 3:

#### Delta Township Annual Fireworks

Held at Sharp Park (1401 Elmwood Rd., Lansing), the festivities start at dusk. Join thousands of other area residents for this free Independence Day celebration. Concession stands are available, or attendees can bring a cooler. Limited parking available at the park.

### Monday, July 4:

#### City of Lansing 4th of July Celebration Parade and Concert

The 4th of July parade starts at 11 a.m. around the Capitol Loop. The 4th of July concert begins at 8 p.m. at Adado Riverfront Park with fireworks to immediately follow.

**Comedy Night** - 9-11:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-2506. [crunchyseastlansing.com](http://crunchyseastlansing.com).

**Scrabble Hour** - Recreational Scrabble 6-8 p.m. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Rd., East Lansing. [elpl.bibliocommons.com](http://elpl.bibliocommons.com).

### Tuesday, July 5

**Board Game Meet Up** - ages 18 & up. 6:30 - 10:30 p.m. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Spare Time Bowling Alley, 3101 E Grand River, Lansing.

**Parent Happy Hour** - Storytime for kids and wine flight specials for parents. 5-7 p.m. Hooked, 3142 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing.

**Picnic Playdate Family Storytime** - 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. [gladl.org](http://gladl.org)

**Rock Painting** - Decorate your garden with painted rocks! Materials supplied. 2-3 p.m. Playground of Dreams, 100 Howe Dr., Eaton Rapids. [eradi.org](http://eradi.org).

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

The Lansing Concert Band will perform patriotic favorites leading up to an amazing fireworks display. For more information, visit [lansingmi.gov/julyfourth](http://lansingmi.gov/julyfourth).

### Monday, July 4:

#### 4th of July Car Show

Held at the Mason Courthouse Square (315 S. Jefferson St., Mason) from 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., this annual celebration features a car show, food trucks, kid's corner, door prizes and trophies.

### Monday, July 4:

#### Independence Day Parade 2022

The Independence Day Parade in Mason, hosted by the Mason Area Chamber of Commerce, celebrates the country's independence alongside local businesses, groups and organizations and is always a crowd-pleaser. Meet that Ingham County Courthouse lawn (315 S. Jefferson St., Mason) for the 4:30 p.m.- 5:30 p.m. procession.

### Monday, July 4:

#### Potter Park Zoo 4th of July

From 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Potter Park Zoo (1301 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing) will open for all to celebrate independence. This year, as a "thank you," the zoo is offering free admission to all United States Military. Standard admission rates for non-military attendees.

# Three-cheese grilled cheese delivers at Black Cat ...And save room for the carrot cake

By SARAH SPOHN

Look who's back for another edition of my unofficial #comfortfoodcrawl. This time, I ventured out to downtown East Lansing's Black Cat Bistro. During the height of the pandemic, I saw many posts in the Lansing Foodies Facebook page (join if you haven't yet!) raving about their takeout specials.

The restaurant, which describes its atmosphere as contemporary, elegant and relaxing, serves up quality dishes at an affordable price. I spent a nice Friday afternoon on the outdoor patio, adorned with black metal bistro tables and pink umbrellas. With nicely spaced tables, and charming string lights, the patio has a pretty locale, next to the Bill Sharp Park's colorful flowers and fountain.

## Black Cat Bistro

115 Albert Ave., East Lansing  
 Monday–Tuesday: 4 p.m.–9 p.m.  
 Wednesday–Friday: Noon–9 p.m.  
 Saturday: 10 a.m.–9 p.m.  
 Sunday: 10 a.m.–7 p.m.  
 (517) 580-3821  
 blackcatbistroel.com

The lunch menu includes lighter options like soups, salads, bruschetta, parmesan truffle fries, black cat poutine, bistro mussels, burgers, wraps and mac and cheese. The dinner menu includes heartier options like tilapia, salmon, French coulotte, jerk chicken, pastas, and petite sirloin.



Photos by Sarah Spohn

The grilled cheese and carrot cake at Black Cat Bistro are quite the combo

I ordered the three-cheese grilled cheese, with sourdough bread, provolone, Swiss and cheddar cheese. The sandwich came with bistro fries, which were perfectly seasoned, lightly breaded and came with the delightful surprise of a few sweet potato fries mixed in. The bread was a soft, chewy, toasted base, with a trio of blended cheeses. The consistency was good: not too stringy, not too thick. The sandwich was a decent sized portion that I was able to finish entirely. I did save room for dessert, though.

For a sweet finish, I had the carrot cake, a layered cake slice, topped with

white chocolate mousse, cream cheese layers and a caramel glaze. The dessert might have been my favorite part of the whole meal. The single slice was moist, and the caramel glaze was not too rich. There was a nice crunch in there, with walnuts. This version was less spice-based and sweeter. My only recommendation would have been to serve it with a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream on the side.

Black Cat Bistro also has a nice list of seasonal cocktails. I ordered the apple fizz, with New Amsterdam Apple, Berentzen



Pear Liqueur, pineapple juice, sweet & sour and Sprite. It tasted like a mix of a Capri Sun and a Jolly Rancher. If you're into super sweet drinks, add this to your list.

I'm always a fan of an outdoor patio, but they can get loud and crowded. I dined Friday afternoon, during JazzFest weekend, and it wasn't too busy. The atmosphere felt more like garden dining than a boisterous college town. I'm also adding this destination onto my brunch list too, as the crème brûlée French toast is calling my name.

## Appetizers



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 eastsidefishfry.com

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 caskandcompany.com

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 From Pg. 28

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**SUDOKU SOLUTION**  
 From Pg. 28

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2	7	4	3	5	6	8	1	9

# Potato salad perfection

By ARI LEVAUX

Potato salad isn't supposed to be a main event. Its humble job is to support other dishes as a kind of chunky mayonnaise — a creamy and tangy mortar between the important dishes. But the other day while I was enjoying some BBQ, the potato salad next to my epic piece of brisket almost stole the show.

At first, those creamy bites were a refuge. They were light as the breeze compared to the rich and heavy glory of the succulent meat I was there for. The potato salad was like another flavor of BBQ sauce, as the dill, onion and pickles gave tangy and aromatic balance to the brisket. When I finally ran out of potato salad, I decided to stop eating and bring home the meat.

This was at Jesse Peppers' BBQ, a restaurant in a small town called White Sulphur Springs, a small town in the middle of Montana. The potato salad, according to owner Mel Redding, is a collaboration among three generations of her family. It combines elements of her mom's potato salad with some tricks from her son's recipe, along with her own.

Many families have a special potato salad recipe, but when each family member has their own specific potato salad recipe, we know we're dealing with a serious crew of baller chefs. But tragically, this team is like the 1992/93 Chicago Bulls, which remained dominant even after losing Michael Jordan. The restaurant exists, Mel explained, because of her son, Chef Jesse Peppers, who died in a car crash nearly two years ago.

After Jesse died, he left a larger-than-life hole. The family left Vermont and bought an old restaurant in White Sulphur Springs, Montana and set to work bringing his idea to life.

Part of what makes this potato salad so satisfying is its protein content. It's got large pieces of hard-boiled eggs, and crumbled bacon. On some days at the restaurant, they make it with leftover BBQ, such as brisket burnt ends. It's also wonderful with browned burger meat. Whatever meat you use will get lathered in the creamy sauce to the point where you can lose track of its identity, but you always know it's there. Unless you don't want meat, of course. The dish can be as vegetarian or vegan as you want it to be.

The recipe calls for blending pickles with mayo and sour cream, but the first time I made it I forgot to buy pickles. Instead, I used some homemade pickled cherry bomb peppers and a jar of relish. It wasn't the same, but when you make small tweaks to an amazing recipe you sometimes achieve dazzling results. I en-

joyed the heat of the pickled peppers, and the coupling of "relish" and "peppers" in the same sentence seemed appropriate.

## Jesse Peppers Potato Salad

Serve it alongside rich and delicious main dishes. And if you have no main dish, add more meat. Makes a whole picnic load.

12 large russet potatoes

12 eggs

1 large white onion, minced

1 large red onion, minced

3 large dill pickles

2 cups celery, diced

3 cups sour cream

(use normal not cultured sour cream, which is too thick)

3 cups mayo (They used Best Foods aka Hellmann's, with which one can't go wrong)

1/2 cup mustard

1/4 cup of minced fresh dill (not to be a

troublemaker here but I use a LOT more)  
2 cups chopped pork belly, bacon, burned ends, or other succulent meat  
2 tablespoons salt  
2 tablespoons black pepper

Peel the potatoes and cut them small — 3/8 x 3/8 ideally — and put them in a large pot. Add water to cover the potatoes and cook on high heat until they are tender but not mushy. There is nothing mushy about this recipe. Strain and set aside.

In a small pot, boil six cups of water and a half cup of vinegar. Add the eggs, return to a boil and boil for 10 minutes and then move the pot to the sink with the cold water on. Pour out the hot water and flush with cold water. Add ice and let them cool.

Start chopping all the other vegetables into a medium dice, by which point your eggs will be ready to be peeled and cut into 8 pieces each. Store these in the fridge until the end. Wash off your egggy knife and cutting board.



photo courtesy Mel Redding

Jesse Peppers Potato Salad

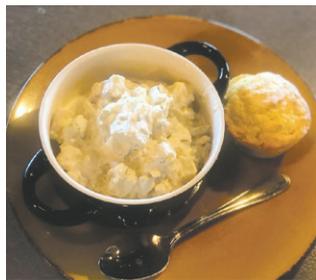


photo courtesy Mel Redding



Add the mayo, sour cream and pickles to a food processor or blender, and whizz for about 90 seconds — until the pickles are atomized.

Add the onion, celery, mustard, dill, meat, salt and pepper to a large mixing bowl and thoroughly combine. Add the pickle mayo and mix again. Add the potatoes, and gently mix, lifting from the bottom and carefully folding it over, so nothing gets mushed.

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