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February 26 – March 4, 2025

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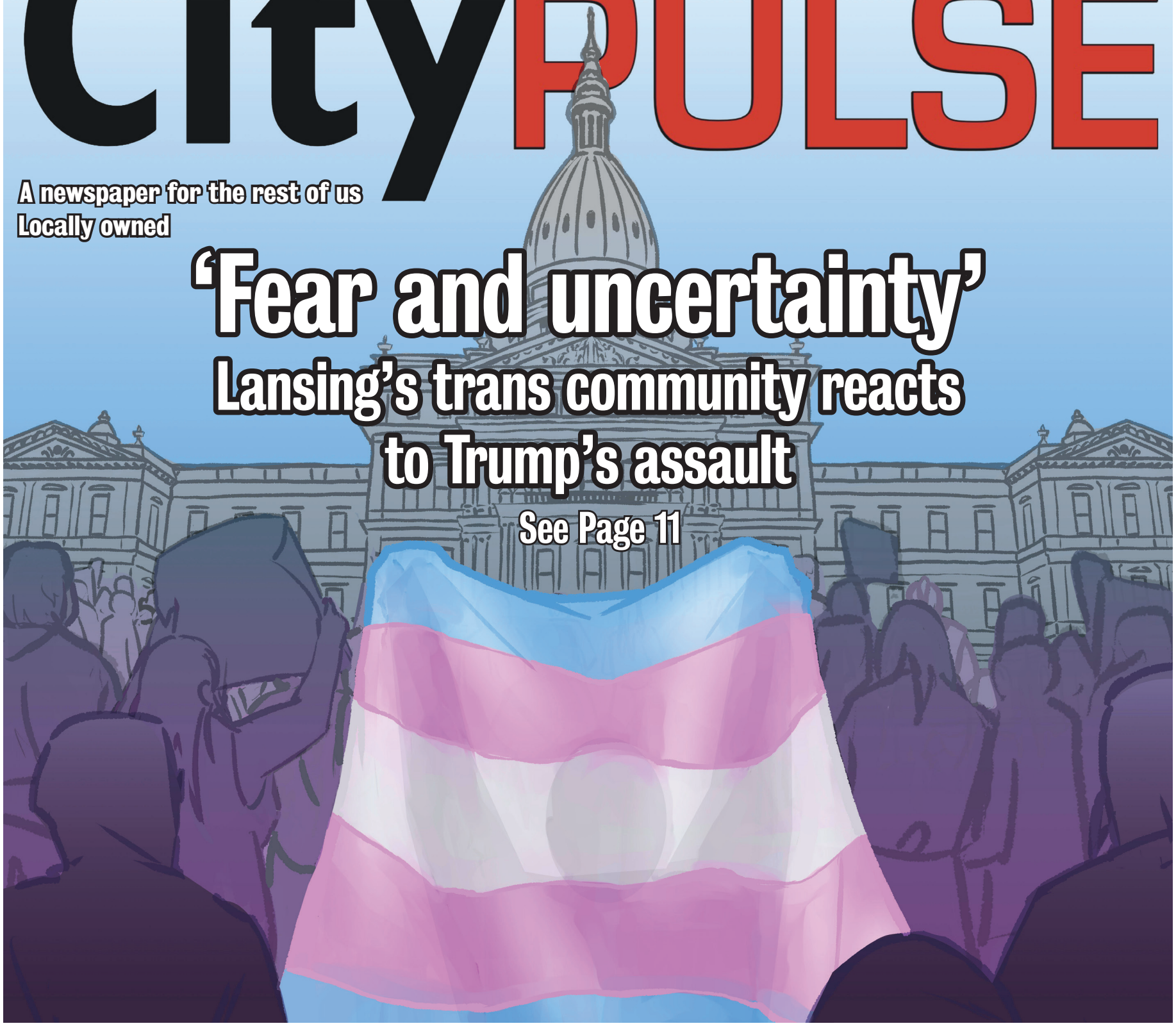

‘Fear and uncertainty’

Lansing’s trans community reacts to Trump’s assault

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Folk community comes together to celebrate major birthday

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Peppermint Creek and LCC offer up boundary-pushing shows

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Hannah Plaza's worldly cuisine bolstered by new eatery

Cover illustration by Aiden Siobhan

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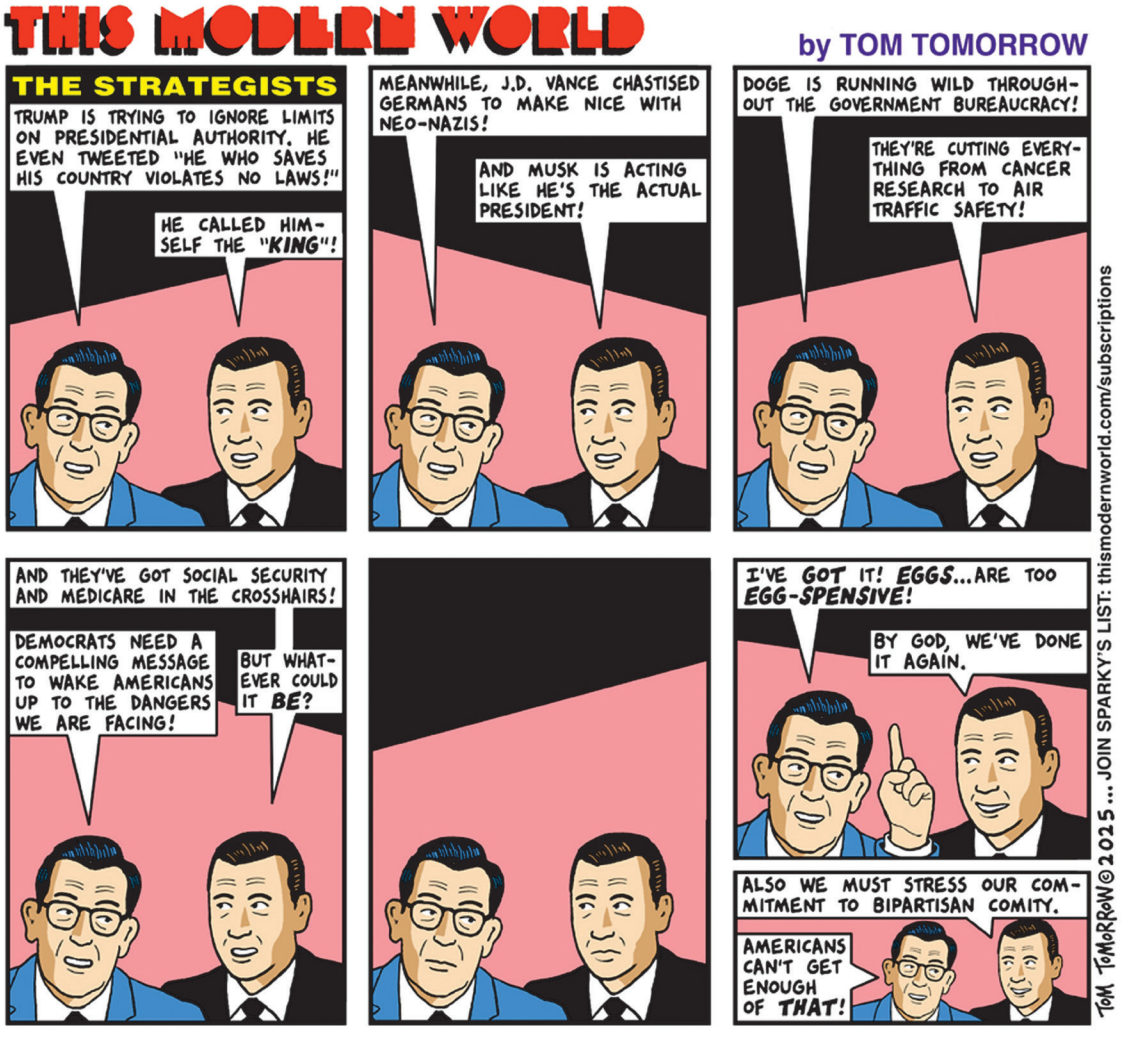

CityPULSE

“Musk or us”: Protesters demand U.S. Rep. Barrett’s attention

Now more than ever

With many in Greater Lansing bristling at those who abuse power in the new administration and those who fail to stop it, grassroots protests have been flaring up. City Pulse has been there to listen, take note and amplify your voices.

It’s only with your support that we can continue to report on these stories. We need your donations now more than ever before as we chronicle the fight for justice.

Please donate using the QR code, by visiting lansingcitypulse.com/donate, mailing your check to 1905 E. Michigan, Lansing, MI 48912 or calling 517-999-6704. Thank you!

PULSE NEWS & OPINION

UM-Sparrow seeks city permission to demolish Eastern

University of Michigan Health-Sparrow has submitted a request to the city of Lansing to permit it to demolish old Eastern High School to make room for the construction of a psychiatric facility, Schor administration spokesperson Scott Bean confirmed Tuesday.

Approval may come yet this week, Bean said. He said Rawley Van Fossen, the city economic planning and development director, has to sign off on the request. Bean said it usually takes a couple of days to check on technical issues, such as whether UM-Sparrow's choice for a demolition company is licensed. Bean cited no grounds for denying the request because of opposition.

(For more information on the city's demolition process, see https://www.lansingmi.gov/759/Demolition.)

Old Eastern, was sold to Sparrow Health System in 2015 and closed in 2019. U of M Health acquired it as part of taking over Sparrow in 2023. Old Eastern is on Pennsylvania Avenue north of Michigan Avenue, adjacent to Sparrow Hospital.

Demolition opponents organized the Coalition to Preserve Eastern High School and Promote Mental Health last year after UM-Sparrow revealed its plan to build a $97 million psychiatric facility on the site, on Pennsylvania Avenue near Jerome Street, adjacent to Sparrow Hospital.

In a statement Tuesday, coalition member Andrew Muylle said, "The coalition is disappointed that request for total demolition of Eastern has come after many months of attempted collaboration, and without any public notice.

"The coalition is still working to preserve the historically significant west wing and auditorium, which do not touch the

See Eastern, Page 9

Barrett stays silent as pressure mounts for a town hall

Staff tell protesters an open meeting would be unproductive

"Town hall now," chanted a crowd of nearly 250 Monday outside the office of U.S. Rep. Tom Barrett R-Charlotte. Five representatives from the Livingston County Democrats were allowed in the office to speak with staff

But Barrett's staff insisted that a conversation between the congressman and the disgruntled constituents would be unproductive.

The decision followed a surge of angry voters attending Republican-led town halls across the country. Town halls have grown increasingly charged as backlash mounts against the Trump administration's budget cuts, which have been fueled by senior presidential adviser Elon Musk and his so-called Department of Government Efficiency.

On Saturday, for instance, a woman was handcuffed and dragged out of a Republican-led town hall in Idaho after repeatedly interrupting speakers. On Thursday, a crowd chanted "shame!" at U.S. Rep. Rich McCormick, R-Georgia, at a town hall.

Judy Daubenmier, chair of the Livingston County Democrats and an organizer of Monday's protest, said constituents' anger did not excuse Barrett's silence.

"I guess talking to constituents who are mad at him isn't on his radar or something he thinks is part of his job," Daubenmier said. "People all over the country are having town halls, so we think we deserve one here."

Barrett's press secretary, Michael Gordon, insisted Barrett "is not hiding."

Gordon said a representative from Barrett's office had declined to organize a town hall after jeering protesters convinced him a public dialogue was pointless.

"They asked him about a town hall, and he said that if all everyone wanted to do was yell and not discuss, then it wouldn't be productive," Gordon said. "He walked outside, and somebody screamed in his face about being a traitor to the nation, and he said, 'See, how is this productive?'"

Gordon did not name the staffer in question. Barrett was flying back to Washington at the time.

Photo by Raymond Hall

Hundreds gathered Friday outside the downtown Lansing office of U.S. Rep. Tom Barrett. Hundreds more showed up Monday asking for a town hall with the Charlotte Republican who was elected last November to replace Democrat Elissa Slotkin.

"The congressman is very much willing to meet with constituents," Gordon continued. "That's what he was doing all last week."

Daubenmeier said she recalls a protester heckling staff through the window during the group's meeting with Ron Kendall, Barrett's district director. But she said an organizer stepped between the protester and told her not to behave that way and that Kendall complimented the constituents' civility.

Organizers voiced concerns about the impacts of Trump administration budget cuts on federal staff, veterans, education and research grants for Michigan universities.

Janice Foster, a small business owner, told the crowd after the meeting that she had "spoken with Representative Barrett's staff about how tariffs are going to kill small business."

Monday's protest came on the heels of another protest outside Barrett's office on Friday, organized by Indivisible Michigan 7. The protests were uncoordinated, but they shared common goals.

Friday's "Musk or us" protest came after leaders of Indivisible Michigan 7 requested a meeting with Barrett and received no answer. Organizers came with a list of demands for Barrett, including voting against budgets that give power to Trump and Musk and holding public town halls. Barrett, who was in Michigan at the time, did not appear to be present.

Both protests follow other high-profile grassroots protests in Lansing. Hundreds gathered at the Capitol Feb. 5 as part of the decentralized, nationwide 50501 Protest. The event, which came together in just four days, garnered national coverage. And when the 50501 organizers called off a planned "Not my President's Day" protest on Monday because of severe winter weather, another new group called MI Resist jumped in to stage a demonstration anyway, with hundreds turning out. Much of the leadership behind both protests were first-time organizers.

Grassroots organizations also protested outside Barrett's Lansing office and met with Kendall on Feb. 10, urging Barrett to curb Musk's power.

Shelley Cichy, an organizer of Friday's protest, attributed the uptick in new grassroots movements to a lack of leadership from the Democratic Party.

"It's like the Civil Rights Movement or the Vietnam protests," Cichy said. "If your leadership isn't doing anything about it, it's up to us."

Fears about Elon Musk's role in the Trump administration motivated Cichy to organize: "We don't know what DOGE is or how much power it has. And Musk immediately took over the funding arm that Congress is supposed to have, so we're concerned about that."

"When a multi-billionaire takes over the reins of government and funding and decisions over hiring and firing, that's going to cause some problems," she added. "He has so much power and wealth. It feels like the oligarchy is taking over."

Another Indivisible organizer, David

See Barrett, Page 5

Barrett

from page 4

Hopkinson, echoed Cichy's concern that Musk and DOGE have superseded the congressional power of the purse.

"Traditionally, the U.S. House of Representatives has a role in our representative government, and they are not currently performing it," he said. "We would like our representative to act like a U.S. House member."

Indivisible Michigan 7, which organized Friday's protest, is part of Indivisible, a national network of organizations that implement the techniques of the Indivisible Guide. The 2017 online handbook by congressional staffers offers methods for getting congressional members' attention. When local groups organized to try those methods, the first Indivisible groups were formed.

"Originally in Lansing, there were probably five groups that formed and were active in those years," Cichy said in reference to the first Trump presidency. "Now in this area we're just one group, with a pretty big email list and active people."

"Everybody's looking for a way to fight back," said one protester.

Another protester on Friday was David Castro, 75. Castro is worried about the Trump administration's cuts to National Institutes of Health research grants and diversity, equity and inclusion programs, both of which helped his Mexican-American daughter succeed as a clinician treating multiple sclerosis.

"The hospital she is working with, where she started the clinic, had been on a three-year search to find someone who could treat multiple sclerosis," Castro said. "There's already a shortage, and it's just going to get worse."

Castro fears that the Trump administration's budget cuts will exacerbate such shortages by decreasing access to medical education.

"We are all recipients of the kinds of programs that are being cut right now," Castro said. "These are the benefits we get when our money is spent well. This is what we're going to lose when it's taken away."

— LEO V. KAPLAN

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY
LEGAL AD NOTICE: NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS, CHILL GRANT

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN LEGAL NOTICE
Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds,
CDBG Housing Improving Local Livability (CHILL) Grant, For Tiered Projects and Programs

Date of Publication: February 26, 2025 Charter Township of Meridian

5151 Marsh Road
Okemos, MI 48864
517.853.4000

On or after March 6, 2025, **the** Charter Township of Meridian **will submit a request to the** Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) **for the release** of CDBG Housing Improving Local Livability (CHILL) **funds under** Title 1 **of the** Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Public Law 93-383 as amended 42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq., **to undertake the following project:**

Tier 1 Broad Review Project/Program Title: Meridian Charter Township's CDBG Housing Increasing Local Livability Grant

Purpose: The primary goal is to assist low- and moderate-income households within Meridian Township with their housing repair and improvement needs. Housing assisted through this program will be restored to a good, and safe condition. Eligible renovation activities may include correction of code compliance violations, major housing components that may need replacement within five (5) years, items to make the house energy efficient and less costly to the participant, and necessary accessibility improvements.

Rather than build out an internal team and stand up a new program, the Township intends to contract implementation of the program to Capital Area Housing Partnership (CAHP). CAHP is very experienced in this field and will oversee administrative aspects of program implementation including participant outreach, eligibility determination, creation of work specification and necessary bid documentation, contractor selection and oversight, and program reporting as necessary. The Township will be responsible for oversight of the program parameters.

The Township is targeting areas that we know have more persons of low to moderate income means, neighborhoods that have older housing, and areas that have a higher-than-average number of code enforcement issues, which can lead towards degradation in the quality of housing. We will leverage a portion of the Township ARPA allocation to pay for the third party administration of the grant, ensuring that all of the MSHDA funding will be put towards actual construction costs for homeowners.

The purpose of this project is to bring 12 single-family homes up to code within Meridian Township, utilizing the $480,000 we were awarded and an additional $86,400 in local funding for grant administration. The project scope will not include any new construction or change the footprints of the existing homes.

Location: The project location is Meridian Township. Specific addresses will be assessed in the site specific reviews.

Project/Program Description: After applications from homeowners are received (first come, first served basis), project sites will be selected based off eligibility. The funding will allow selected homeowners to make critical repairs that meet code standards, resulting in safer and more secure homes for residents. **Tier 2 site specific reviews will be completed for those laws and authorities not addressed in the tier 1 broad review for each address under this program when addresses become known.**

Level of Environmental Review Citation: 24 CFR Part 58.35(a)(3)(i)

The Tier I broad assessment of the project area revealed no serious environmental adverse impacts for: Airport Hazards, Coastal Barrier Resources, Clean Air, Coastal Zone Management, Endangered Species, Farmlands Protection, Sole Source Aquifers, Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Tier 2 Site Specific Review: The site specific reviews will cover the following laws and authorities not addressed in the Tier 1 broad review: Flood Insurance, Floodplain Management, Wetlands Protection, Contamination and Toxic Substances, Historic Preservation – SHPO, THPO, Noise Abatement and Control, Environmental Justice, Asbestos, Lead Based Paint and Radon, Explosive and Flammable Hazards, Historic Preservation, Native American Tribes.

Mitigation Measures/Conditions/Permits (if any): Each site will be reviewed and tested as necessary and when applicable. Any findings of these reports will be addressed in accordance with MSHDA, EPA, OSHA and HUD requirements.

Estimated Project Cost: $480,000 in HUD CDBG funds, $86,400 in local match

The activity/activities proposed are categorically excluded under HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58 from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements per 24 CFR Part 58.35(a)(3)(i). **An Environmental Review Record (ERR) that documents the environmental determinations for this project is on file at** the Charter Township of Meridian, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 **and may be examined or copied weekdays 8 A.M to 5 P.M.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to the Charter Township of Meridian's Clerk's Office. All comments received by Tuesday, March 5, 2025 **will be considered by the** Charter Township of Meridian **prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds.**

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION
The Charter Township of Meridian **certifies to** MSHDA **that** Timothy Dempsey, **Certifying Officer, in** his **capacity as** Township Manager **consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied.** MSHDA's **approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the** Charter Township of Meridian **to use HUD program funds.**

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS
MSHDA **will accept objections to its release of funds and the** Charter Township of Meridian's **certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the** Charter Township of Meridian; **(b) the** Charter Township of Meridian **has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by** MSHDA; **or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to** MSHDA **at** 735 E. Michigan Ave, PO Box 30044, Lansing, MI 48909. **Potential objectors should contact MSHDA to verify the actual last day of the objection period.**

Timothy Dempsey, Township Manger, **Certifying Officer**

Materials related to the request are available for viewing in the Department of Community Planning and Development office (5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, 48864), Monday-Friday, 8am- 5pm, or on the Township website at the following location: www.meridian.mi.us/about- us/departments/community-planning-development. Written comments may be sent prior to March 5 to Charter Township of Meridian, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, Michigan, 48864, or by email to massie@meridian.mi.us.

Angela Demas

Township Clerk

CP#25-064

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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY
LEGAL AD NOTICE: NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS, CHILL GRANT

REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS

COMPILED BY STEVE UNDERWOOD FROM LOCAL NEWS SOURCES

Lansing Police Lt. Ryan Wilcox has been charged by the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office with one count of False Pretenses with Intent to Defraud, over $1,000 but less than $20,000, a felony, and was arraigned Tuesday in the Ingham County 55th Judicial District Court. Wilcox has been on paid administrative leave since May 30 while under investigation by the Michigan State Police for allegations of fraud. "Ryan Wilcox has been put on unpaid administrative leave and the department has opened an internal investigation," said Lansing Police Chief Robert Backus. "These allegations are deeply disturbing and do not reflect the values of this department or the standards we uphold." A judge set a probable cause conference for Tuesday.

The Lansing City Council is looking to revoke the cabaret license of the Centerfolds strip club at 5910 S. Pennsylvania Ave. after Christopher Bonilla Sr. was shot and killed inside the club on Feb. 16. Patrons also shot two people in the club in 2016, as well as shooting and killing a 21-year-old man in 2013. City Council member Ryan Kost is working with City Attorney Greg Venker to compile a list of problems at the club ahead of a hearing process. Centerfolds has a liquor license, governed by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, and a cabaret license, governed by the city, allowing performances.

Research for two Feed the Future initiatives at MSU, designed to fight global hunger and food insecurity, has been halted after President Donald Trump decided to freeze funding for the U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID provides funds for international public health and human rights efforts and funds research at land-grant universities. MSU had two USAID-funded laboratories: the Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research and the Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research, Capacity and Influence. The latter aims to transform food policy in countries across Africa, Asia and Central America. The labs work alongside other organizations and universities across the country and the world. MSU received $190 million from USAID for its Food Security Group from 1983 to 2023. On Jan. 24, the Trump administration sent a stop-work order to all recipients of USAID grants and contracts.

MSU has ordered its deans and other university leaders to review all programs and activities to ensure they comply with anti-discrimination laws in the wake of President Trump's executive order terminating diversity, equity and inclusion for organizations that receive federal funding. An email to university leaders from General Counsel Brian Quinn and Interim Provost Thomas Jeitschko stated that government agencies are looking into MSU's policies and programs and have begun requesting certification from MSU as a condition of receiving federal funding. Any universities with endowments larger than $1 billion, including MSU and the University of Michigan, could be investigated for their DEI programs and policies. Noncompliance with the order could mean MSU loses hundreds of millions of dollars from federal grants and contracts. In 2024, the university received $528 million from the federal government to support research.

The Ingham County Board of Commissioners has approved a comprehensive spending plan for opioid settlement funds, allocating $2,132,523 over the next two years, aiming to address the ongoing opioid crisis and support recovery efforts in the community. The county participated in national litigation against opioid manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies and will receive over $14.7 million over 18 years to fund opioid remediation efforts. Recipients include local organizations that play a vital role in addressing opioid use disorder and supporting affected individuals and families, such as Pinnacle, the Eastside Community Action Center, Women's Center of Greater Lansing, the Ingham County Health Department and Sheriff's Office, U of M Health Sparrow and several others.

Due to staffing shortages, Eaton County has announced that a dozen of its offices, including the county clerk and treasurer's, will be open only four days a week. All administrative offices at the Eaton County Governmental Complex in Charlotte will remain staffed from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, even if they are closed to the public on Fridays. The changes will take place starting the week of March 17. Other Eaton County offices that will be closed to the public on Fridays will be register of deeds, equalization, drain commissioner, construction codes and planning and zoning, resource recovery, veterans' services, housing, facilities management and technology services. Court operations and public meetings will continue as usual.

Toyota Motor Corp. announced it will transfer its $1.5 billion order for LG Energy Solution vehicle batteries to the Ultium Cells plant in Delta Township. The order will help keep the $2.6 billion plant afloat after General Motors said in December that it planned to sell back its investment in the battery maker. LG and GM already have U.S. battery plants operating in Ohio and Tennessee. LG plans to complete acquiring the Delta plant this spring. Manufacturers could use the batteries purchased by Toyota under this deal in hybrids or electric vehicles, and LG is also seeking some energy-storage business there.

SORE OF THE WEEK

229 S Detroit St., Lansing

This 812-square-foot home in Lansing Township, between Michigan Avenue and Prospect Street, is in foreclosure with $47,284 owed for 2022 and 2023 taxes. Most of that is from 2022, when the township replaced the home's roof by court order for $31,543. Township Community Development Director Daniel Richards said that while an original estimate by Exteriors of Lansing to remove the roof and replace shingles was about $10,500, "The whole roof had to be replaced, with new rafters and everything, and that gets expensive." Speaking for owner Sharon Boonyasith, John Hall said estimates he received on the roof were $8,000 to $11,000. He added that he and Boonyasith did not received notice of the show cause or judicial foreclosure hearings in February but hoped to speak to a judge regarding "who would approve a $30,000 roof with trusses." The value of the two-bedroom, one-bath home, built in 1920, is estimated at $75,851 on homes.com. Ingham County Treasurer Alan Fox told City Pulse in December that Boonyasith is the type of owner his office tries to prioritize when it comes time to helping the county's most vulnerable owners stay in their homes.

STEVE UNDERWOOD

"Eyesore of the Week" is our weekly look at some of the seedier properties in Lansing. It rotates with Public Art, by Bill Castanier. Have a suggestion? Email eye@lansingcitypulse.com or call in a nomination at 517-999-5061.

Beware the coupling of government and business

By DEDRIA HUMPHRIES BARKER

Opinion

As an African American, I get uneasy when government and business are in bed together because of history. Here's a new bit from the 19th century just published in 2019 by a British professor of sociology, Mark Harvey. His research shows that even though England outlawed slavery in 1834, in 1860 "A flagship of the industrial revolution, the Lancashire mills, and 465,000 textile workers, were entirely reliant on the labour of three million cotton slaves in the American Deep South."

That means it took more than six enslaved Black Americans to keep one white person working in a factory in England. And the whole scheme enriched people in two countries: in America, where the government still allowed the enslavement of Black people, and in England, where a few people, no doubt those close to royalty, owned the means of production.

My people were the Blacks. The rest of the people were capitalists.

I write history, but when I taught writing, every semester at least one of my students — always a young white guy — wanted to argue that because the U.S. government spends money (an estimated $6.75 trillion in fiscal year 2024), it is a business. Therefore, his argument went, it makes sense to run government as a business, i.e. elect businesspeople to be in charge, especially as president.

In 2024, many of the 49.8% of American voters who elected Donald Trump as president, again, agreed. They loved his tough business rep, and I imagine the title of his book "The Art of the Deal." That despite the stories that sounded like Trump's business philosophy was a recipe for an omelet: break some eggs.

Again, my people being enslaved were the eggs. We are braced against being that again. And are telling friends, take care it's not you.

As for government being a business, just look to the U.S. Constitution. It says the U.S. government's purpose is to establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty.

That is far from the purpose of business in a capitalism system which is marked by a doctrine of laissez faire (French for free market): offer goods and services and see what the market will bear. Responding, the market says, caveat emptor: Latin for "let the buyer beware."

So, how is Trump the capitalist businessman governing? The one-month report: causing worry, distress and terror. New bosses come to the office all the time, but never one who fired 10% of the staff on day one. That's good for productivity, and morale? Never.

Ensure domestic tranquility.

U.S. government often frustrates, but eventually it returns to its purpose. Big business, however, needs to get slapped down. Take Rite Aid Corp., for instance.

Rite Aid's business purpose was to provide pharmaceuticals according to the law to help ill and injured people. The purpose was not to get them strung out on addictive drugs, making them into fiends and junkies, ruining lives, families and communities. Its purpose was not to make money.

Promote the general welfare.

The drugstore chain illegally filled opioid prescriptions, USA Today newspaper reported, fueling a drug epidemic. The lawsuits that followed helped force the business into bankruptcy. The result was it no longer was able to operate, and that deprived the whole entire state of Michigan, and other states, of its services. The courts of law started making Rite Aid's opioid victims whole. Government's job is to call business on its crap.

Establish justice.

There is nothing wrong with a business dream. Most people have one. Mine is to spend $2, win the lottery and help build a mass transit system in Michigan.

Most people's capital is their body. And finally with the Civil War and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, African Americans got theirs.

Men can turn their bodies into opportunity and wealth. Jalen Hurts, Black man quarterback of the Philadelphia Eagles, Omega Psi Phi member, used his strong body and his quick mind to win Super Bowl LIX, respect and a $51 million annual contract. Fifty-two years ago, the 1972 federal law Title IX, helped women athletes.

Secure the blessings of liberty.

Today though, compared to their male counterparts, 99% of professional women athletes are underpaid.

In this Trump era, will money be the only way to fulfill our country's purpose? Will that be the mark of effective government?

In 2020, at the outbreak of COVID, Donald Trump was also the president. Just last week, the National Bureau of Economic Research reported the Social Security trust fund increased by $205 billion because the estimated 1.7 million people in the U.S. 25 years and older who died from COVID won't be alive to collect benefits.

Trump didn't kill them outright. His administration just dismantled an epidemic response program designed to deal with such a situation. It was set up by Barak Obama.

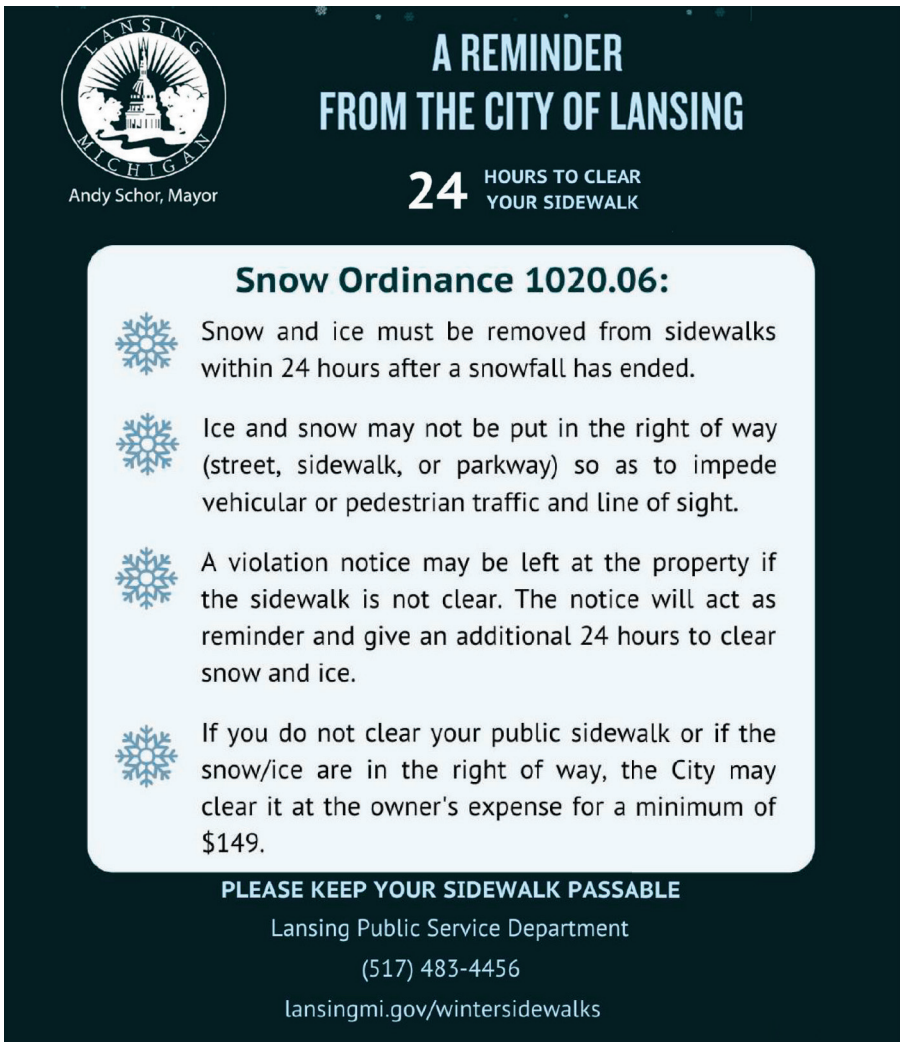
Secure the blessings of liberty.

Most of us survived Trump's first term, but in his second term some of us will go out of business. From measles. Yes. Measles are back. Trump's health and human services secretary, Robert Kennedy Jr., doesn't believe in vaccines. Though our government's research developed a measles vaccine in 1963, 61 years ago.

Promote the general welfare.

Business knows what's best for the people? Or, for short-term profits? No matter who is president, the federal government should stick to its purpose, do its job.

(Dedria Humphries Barker is the author of "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.)



Williamstown Township
March 2025 Board of Review Notice

Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 11:00 am (Organizational Meeting)
The Williamstown Township Board of Review for 2025 will be hearing assessment appeals at the Williamstown Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Rd, Williamston, MI on the following dates by appointment:

Monday, March 10, 2025
9:00 am-12:00 pm, 1:00-4:00 pm, & 6:00-9:00 pm (Assessment Appeals)
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm (Assessment Appeals)
Contact Kerri Danstrom at 655-3193 for an appointment.

Residents unable to attend may protest by letter, *provided protest letter is received at the Williamstown Township office by **4:00 pm Tuesday, March 11, 2025***.
Board of Review Members: Brian Johnston-Chairperson, Gerald Eidt, Mike Rice, and Lisa Fletcher, alternate.

Williamstown TWP Tentative Ratios 2025

Agriculture	Commercial	Industrial	Residential
50.25	46.72	49.68	46.88

The Williamstown Township Board of Review will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon five a (5) day notice to the Williamstown Township Board of Review. Individuals with disabilities requiring these services should contact the Township Clerk at (517) 655-3193 or clerk@williamstowntownship.com to request assistance.

Robin A. Cleveland, MiPMC
Clerk, Williamstown Township
clerk@williamstowntownship.com

CP#25-051

CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED STATE AND FEDERAL APPLICATIONS FOR OPERATING, CAPITAL ASSISTANCE AND PUBLIC HEARING

All citizens are advised that CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY ("CATA") has prepared an application for State of Michigan financial assistance for fiscal 2026 as required under Act 51 of the Public Acts of 1951, as amended, and for federal assistance as required under the federal transit laws, as amended, as follows:

State Operating Assistance	$	17,150,294
FTA/State Urban Capital Program (Section 5307)	$	10,124,606
State Specialized Services	$	40,000
FTA Rural Operating Assistance (Section 5311)	$	1,286,889
FTA/State Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339)	$	1,625,749
FTA/State Enhanced Mobility (Section 5310)	$	227,681
TOTAL	**$**	**30,455,219**

Operating and capital funds listed above include both urban and rural funds. Capital projects to be funded include the purchase of large and small buses, paratransit vehicles for transporting customers, support vehicles, preventive maintenance, technology systems, planning, maintenance equipment, bus replacement parts, safety and security equipment, customer enhancements and facility improvements. This notice meets the Federal Transit Administration 5307 public notification requirement. The above program will be the final program, unless amended.

CATA ensures that the level and quality of transportation service are provided without regard to race, color or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For more information regarding our Title VI program and the procedure for filing a complaint, contact CATA Customer Experience at 517-394-1100. You may also complete the CATA Title VI complaint form online at cata.org, email titlevi@cata.org or visit our administrative offices at 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing, MI 48910.

The proposed application is on file at CATA, 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing, MI, and may be reviewed during a 30-day period (Feb. 16, 2025 – March 18, 2025), Monday-Friday, between the hours of
8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Written comments regarding the application and/or written requests for a public hearing to review the application must be received by 5 p.m. March 18, 2025. If a hearing is requested, notice of the scheduled date, time and location will be provided at least 10 days in advance.

Submittals should be sent to CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY, FY 2026 Grant Application, Attn: Planning and Development Department, 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing, MI 48910, or via email to marketing@cata.org.

CP#25-063

Parties go in different directions in their choices of new leaders

Michigan's two major political parties took two entirely different roads to get to their new chairs, whom delegates elected last week in Detroit.

The Democrats took the traditional path. Labor leaders pinpointed someone they thought would do the job. They got the other stakeholders on board. Viola! It literally wasn't even a race.

POLITICS

KYLE MELINN

For Republicans, the new chair came in through the back door. State Sen. Jim Runestad quietly bottled up enough support over the last few months so that by the time Donald Trump and the powers that be realized he was a serious threat, it was too late.

But let's start with the Dems. East Lansing's own Curtis Hertel Jr. is the new chair, and that's not great news for Republicans.

Folks shouldn't remember the former state senator and Ingham County register of deeds for last year's awkward congressional campaign. That was Hertel falling captive to the top-down, one-size-fits-all playbook the D.C. mothership beamed down to his out-of-town consultants.

This time, Hertel's free to do things his way, and his way typically works out.

Hertel masterminded the Democrats' taking the Michigan Senate for the first time in 40 years in 2022. As the governor's lobbyist, he helped broker deals on the budget, economic development incentives and tax cuts that seemed out of reach.

In short, the guy makes stuff happen.

Here's what I mean: Before Hertel was even an official candidate, Keith Williams, the MDP's Black Caucus chair, said he felt like a Hertel candidacy was being "shoved down our throat."

With the departure of MDP Chair Lavora Barnes, who happens to be Black, and Kamala Harris' loss, Williams said on Nov. 25:

"What is even more insulting after all of this, white women (and) white progressives abandoned a qualified Black woman — my friend Kamala Harris ... . (Now) we've been asked to cave in again. This time to support a white male, someone who lost a bid for Congress, (as our) next party chair. My response is simple: Hell no."

A month later, the MDP Black Caucus stated it was "proudly" getting behind Hertel. Williams issued a quote reading that Hertel "is the best choice to move our Party forward and has committed to advancing our policy agenda," which includes promoting the interests of African Americans.

Keep in mind that one of the other candidates in the race was a Black male, Al Williams.

The race was over at this point.

Over on the Republican side, the dynamics were much different.

The delegates who select the state party chair are proudly independent. They DO NOT like anyone telling them what to do. At all.

If they meet a candidate they like, they'll go to the wall for that person, regardless of what anyone says. That includes Donald Trump.

Trump parachuted into this race at the last minute to help a long-time ally, Meshawn Maddock, who had ridden the "outsider" label for so long that she crossed the line into being ... ESTABLISHMENT.

You don't want that title in a Republican caucus race.Maddock had a few other things working against her, too, however. She and millionaire Ron Weiser ran the party to a convincing across-the-board defeat in 2022. Her husband, Rep. Matt Maddock, also ran primaries against some conservative House incumbents that year. People didn't like that.

This year's victor was Runestad, an undisputed conservative who isn't in Lansing to make friends.

The guy's top job has been to advance a conservative agenda, and he's been pretty effective at it. He's won competitive elections before. He stayed away from going negative on Maddock and his other opponent. He left no stone unturned to drum up votes. He's actually the Maddocks' state senator, FWIW.

The Republicans delegates couldn't find anything bad to say about him. They kept going back to him doing two full-time jobs.

Now, it'll be up to him to prove it can be done.

(Kyle Melinn is the editor of the Capitol news service MIRS. You can email him at melinnky@gmail.com.)

Eastern

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proposed footprint of the new mental health facility. Please visit easternfacts.com ASAP to sign a petition to save the west wing and aud."

Muylle said 553 people have signed it.

Added Muylle, "Ask the mayor and officials who can help us to ensure that the west wing and aud. remain standing for preservation analysis, while allowing the demolition of the remainder of Eastern and construction of the new facility, to please do so."

Opponents are still organizing themselves in an effort to block demolition. One organizer, Rebecca Stimson, said that a picketing team will meet today and that she expected it will be at City Hall Thursday.

Asked for comment, UM-Sparrow declined to confirm it had submitted a demolition request. But it issued a statement Tuesday that said in part:

"The old Eastern High School was constructed nearly a century ago to serve students and teachers, but years of deterioration, including extensive water damage, mold and asbestos, have left it beyond repair and unsuitable for safe, effective clinical care.

"Given these challenges, the building is being thoughtfully removed to make way for a modern facility designed specifically to meet the community's behavioral health needs.

"To honor the history and legacy of Eastern High School, we are working with alumni to preserve meaningful artifacts and establish a memorial garden on the site."

The U of M Board of Regents must still approve the psychiatric facility. Its next meeting is March 20.

Its statement reiterated its contention that the facility must be close to Sparrow Hospital, particularly the emergency room.

"To ensure the new facility meets the needs of both patients and care teams, it must be in proximity to the UM Health-Sparrow Emergency Department, have sufficient acreage for a calming outdoor clinical environment and an internal layout that complies with regulatory requirements for clinical services and supports safety," today's statement said.

The demolition-approval process does not require input from either the mayor or the City Council. Mayor Andy Schor initially sought a path to avoid demolition but has long indicated that he was not optimistic. Last year under pressure from both UM-Sparrow and trade unions, the City Council rejected an attempt to have old Eastern declared a historic site, which would have preserved at least the façade.

BERL SCHWARTZ

WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP
Board Meeting February 19, 2025 Synopsis

The Williamstown Township Board held a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 (previously scheduled for February 12, 2025) at 7:00 PM with Supervisor Poth, Clerk Cleveland, Treasurer VanErp, Trustee Brinker, Trustee Creagh, Trustee Duffy, and Trustee Steinberg present. The Board approved the following:

- Consent Agenda
- Harvest Festival date for October 4, 2025
- Budget Amendments
- Park Committee expansion to seven seats
- Quarterly newsletter printing and postage up to $2800 each quarter
- Bid from Secure Lock & Door for lock replacements up to $620
- Budget and Police Assessment Roll Public Hearing for March 5, 2025 at 7:00 PM
- Seeking consultation/bids for Township Park and Branch School projects
- Supervisor expenditure limits
- Adoption of Policy 15 to comply with Earned Sick Time Act
- Compensation Commission recommendations as written

The Budget Public Hearing for FY2025/2026 will be held Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 7:00 PM and the next regular Board meeting will be at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, March 12, 2025 in the Community Room of the Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Rd., Williamston. Visit williamstownmi.gov for the latest agenda, documents, and updates. Phone (517) 655-3193.

Robin A. Cleveland, MiPMC
Township Clerk

CP#25-065

CITY OF GRAND LEDGE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City Council will hold a public hearing during its regular meeting at 7:30 p.m., on Monday, 10 March 2025, to consider and receive public input on Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant to support the development of a universally designed, We-Go-Swing at Jaycee Park. The grant application is available for review on the City's website at www.cityofgrandledge.com and at the City Clerk's office, 310 Greenwood St., Grand Ledge, Michigan, between 8:00 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The meeting will be held in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 310 Greenwood St., Grand Ledge MI 48837, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, as amended, and will also be livestreamed via Zoom for informational purposes only. The online stream can be accessed at https://www.zoom.us with the Meeting ID: 848 1641 3109, or by calling +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), +1 646 876 9923 US (New York), +1 646 931 3860 US, +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC), +1 305 224 1968 US, +1 309 205 3325 US, +1 360 209 5623 US, +1 386 347 5053 US, +1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose), +1 507 473 4847 US, +1 564 217 2000 US, +1 669 444 9171 US, +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose), +1 689 278 1000 US, +1 719 359 4580 US, +1 253 205 0468 US, +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma), +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston) with Meeting ID: 848 1641 3109.

The City Council invites anyone interested to attend in person and offer comments at the public hearing. Written comments can be mailed or delivered to Elected or Appointed Officials at 310 Greenwood St., Grand Ledge, MI 48837, placed in the drop box in front of City Hall, or emailed to cityhall@cityofgrandledge.com. All written comments will be considered if received by 5:00 p.m. the day of the hearing. Please call (517) 627-2149 or email cityhall@cityofgrandledge.com for further information or to request accommodations for disabilities.

Gregory Newman, City Clerk

CP#25-066

PUBLIC NOTICE
Budget Public Hearing (Truth in Taxation) Notice
Williamstown Township 2025-2026 Budget Public Hearing

The Williamstown Township Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on the Williamstown Township **Cemetery, Police, and Capital Project Budgets** and the **Police Assessment Roll** proposed for fiscal year 2025-2026 at a meeting on **Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.**

Location
Williamstown Township Hall
4990 Zimmer Rd., Williamston, MI

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing. A copy of the proposed budget is available for public inspection at the Township Hall during regular business hours and on the Township website at www.williamstownmi.gov.

A copy of the Police Assessment Roll is available for public inspection at the Township Hall, 4990 Zimmer Rd., Williamston, MI, during regular business hours.

The Williamstown Township Board will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon five a (5) day notice to the Williamstown Township Board. Individuals with disabilities requiring special aids or services to fully participate in the meeting should contact the Township Clerk at (517) 655-3193 or clerk@williamstowntownship.com to request assistance.

Robin A. Cleveland, MiPMC
Clerk, Williamstown Township
clerk@williamstowntownship.com

CP#25-067

ARTS & CULTURE ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

Bob Stein's 90th: Still dancing, still bringing people together

By AJ GLAUB

Bob Stein isn't the type to sit still. At nearly 90 years old — his birthday is Tuesday (March 4) — he's still tearing up dance floors across the country. And when it comes to celebrating this milestone birthday, he's doing what he's always done: bringing people together to dance.

On Saturday (March 1), Lansing's Central United Methodist Church will host a full day of English country and contra dancing that's as much about celebrating Stein as it is about the generations of dancers he's inspired. For those who know him, this is no surprise.

"In the past, my parents have put on big dances for special birthdays and anniversaries," Stein's daughter Mara said. "An English country dance in the afternoon, a contra dance in the evening. They'd bring in callers they loved, bands they loved. It's a tradition."

But Stein's impact goes beyond just being a dancer or a caller.

"He's such a bedrock of the dance community here, and he's still a very active and vigorous dancer," Mara said. "He drives around the Midwest and the East Coast to go to dance weekends. He'll take off by himself and go do that still."

The celebration, like Stein's life, extends beyond the dance floor.

"We needed to do more than just two dances," Mara said. "So, I worked with Stuart Kenney from the Stringrays — we've known each other since we were kids — and we started cooking up ideas. Then I talked to Karen Axelrod from Alchemy, and she wanted to do something in Ann Arbor. So, there's a whole weekend of events: dances in East Lansing, a special English country dance in Ann Arbor and a party on Sunday (March 2) for the friends who aren't dancers but still want to celebrate with him."

Stein's history with dance goes back to his childhood.

"He started contra and square dancing when he was 8," Mara said. "My mom started when she was a preteen or early teen. It was always part of their lives."

Courtesy Mara Stein

Bob Stein (right) is most at home on the dance floor. At nearly 90 years old, he still travels across the Midwest and East Coast for events such as the annual Winter WarmUp contra dance in Columbus, Ohio.

Bob Stein's 90th birthday dance

2–10 p.m. Saturday, March 1
Central United Methodist Church
215 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing
(517) 614-5858
tenpoundfiddle.org

When the family moved to Lansing in the '70s, that didn't change.

"The story in my family is that my dad moved out here in '75 to work at Michigan State University, but my mom, my sister and I stayed outside Boston because my parents didn't want to move us until he had tenure," Mara said. "My mom told him, 'I won't move out there unless there's good dancing.'"

There wasn't, so Stein made it happen.

"He hired Sandy Bradley to call the first dance and found local musicians through Elderly Instruments," Mara said. "But after a couple of dances, he realized he wanted to bring the New England style of dancing here. The moves and calls were the same, but the music was different, more Celtic based than old time. That's when he decided to become a caller and told my mom she had to start a band."

Laura, Stein's late wife, asked around at Elderly Instruments for the best musicians; everyone pointed to Joel Mabus.

"That's how the Top Drawer String Band started," Mara said. "Dudley Laufman, a well-known fiddler and dance caller from New Hampshire, named the band when he came out to call a dance. The band didn't have a name yet, and he turned to my mom and said, 'Top Drawer, Laura. Top Drawer.' And it stuck."

Mabus remembers it well.

"Bob has been a good friend for 40 years," he said. "A seriously kind and brilliant man who has visited every corner of the world, with his head literally in the stars and his feet on the dance floor."

The band played at dances in Lansing for more than 25 years, growing the community and spreading contra dance throughout Michigan.

Bonnie Wheeler, a longtime dance organizer, met Stein through those early dances.

"He was very friendly. I have to say, he became a better caller. He started out not being particularly experienced, but he sought out criticism so he could improve. And he did," she said.

Beyond the dances, the Steins' home became a gathering place.

"They had a March birthday party every year," Wheeler said. "A lot of folk community members had March birthdays, so they'd throw a party at the house. Bob cooked all day. They had a kitchen in the basement, so someone else was cooking downstairs. It was a potluck, with people coming and going and music all day long.

"And then there was Thanksgiving," she continued. "If you didn't have anywhere else to go, you went to the Steins'."

Banjoist and Ten Pound Fiddle booking manager Sally Potter remembers that hospitality well.

"He had jam sessions at his house after concerts for 50 years. He's a friend to all the performers who come through. That house is really one of the social pillars of the folk music community."

Elderly Instruments stalwart Cynthia Bridge also recalls the warmth of the Stein home.

"I was working with Laura at Elderly, and my boyfriend at the time needed a place to live. The Steins had this room, and they figured they could rent it out. So, he became their first tenant," she said.

That same warmth extends to Stein's approach to dance.

"He always asks new people to dance," Mara said. "That's part of his legacy. He brought dancing here, but he also mentored new callers. He makes sure everyone has a good time. Even when he's just dancing, he's making sure new people and kids feel welcome so that this continues, generation after generation."

Wheeler said Saturday's dance will be "a packed house."

"People are coming in from all over: Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, maybe even Chicago and Indianapolis. Other callers will be there because most of them started as dancers, just like Bob. The energy will be amazing.

"Gaye Fifer, the caller, knows how to keep it rolling," she continued. "The band, they've been dancing all their lives, too. They get the energy exchange that happens between dancers and musicians. It's going to be a kickass time."

And Stein? He'll be right where he belongs: on the dance floor.

"He's never been afraid of getting older," Mara said. "He just grabs life and lives it."

LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Job and Internship Fair
2 – 5 p.m. · March 19 · Downtown Campus · Register at lcc.edu/jobfair

Photo by Jon King, Michigan Advance. https://michiganadvance.com

Demonstrators gather at the state Capitol Jan. 31 for a protest organized by the Michigan-based Transgender Unity Coalition. It inspired coordinated protests in other states.

Trump's anti-trans orders hit home

Local community faces slew of attacks on its civil rights

By LEO V. KAPLAN

Alex was 14 when his father kicked him out.

Shortly beforehand, he had asked the teachers and faculty at his high school in Arizona to refer to him as a man.

"I wasn't out in public as trans, but I wanted to be called 'Alex' by the teachers and the faculty and the other students," Alex said. "One of the faculty members set me aside and said, 'You should come out to your family soon.'"

Alex explained that his father would not support him, but the faculty member still changed his online profile and records against his will. His father kicked him out shortly after. Luckily, Alex's mother, Lansing resident Monica Haladyna, took him in. But not all trans youth are so lucky.

Now 22 and residing in Lansing, Alex is contending with the reality that what happened to him at school will soon become the law of the land.

Since taking office, President Donald Trump has signed over 70 executive orders. Five of them target transgender people. One such order removed Title IX protections for transgender people in schools. Another mandates the forced outing of trans students to their parents.

Supportive parents may want to know if their child is trans. Haladyna even said she wishes she had known in time to put Alex on puberty blockers. However, transgender people and advocacy groups argue the risk of parental retaliation is too great.

"I'm extremely scared for the safety of many LGBT youth, many trans youth in particular," Alex said. "For some people, school is their only haven where they can be themselves. They still face a lot of bullying and discrimination, but they do have some semblance of support through either clubs or friends they meet in school."

That bullying will likely intensify as Title IX protections are stripped away from trans students — and even weaponized against them.

State Rep. Emily Dievendorf, D-Lansing, who is Michigan's first openly nonbinary representative, says Title IX protections are more important than ever.

"Trans and nonbinary children already struggle in our educational systems and greater society," said Dievendorf, who has been speaking with the parents of trans children. "I have witnessed an uptick in the bullying of trans and nonbinary students, not just within the last several weeks, but over the last few years as hateful rhetoric has become more acceptable."

For now, Michigan civil rights law still protects transgender students. However, many are concerned that state laws are not enough.

Uncertainty and (un)precedent

Heather Johnson, an adjunct law professor at MSU who studies the intersection between law and gender, says these orders "fly in the face of the purpose of Title IX."

"Title IX is the only mechanism by which sexual orientation and gender identity can be protected in a public education," Johnson said. "Without that inclusion, students are wholly unprotected in an educational setting."

However, Title IX protections are far from the only protections these executive orders seek to undo. The Trump administration has also removed legal recognition for transgender people, revoked the ability to change gender markers on federal documentation, banned trans people from the military, banned gender-affirming care for minors from being covered under federal employees' insurance and far more.

Federal courts have blocked attempts to ban gender-affirming medical care for those under 19 and to remove Prison Rape Elimination Act protections for transgender women. However, with a conservative majority in Congress, many are wondering when, not if, those injunctions will be struck down.

Professor Johnson believes some of

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these executive orders contradict the judicial precedent set by Bostock v. Clayton County. This landmark U.S. Supreme Court case held that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protected employees from discrimination based on sexuality and gender identity.

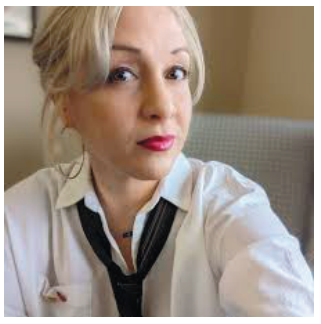
Johnson said the military ban is "a violation of Title VII and the legal rule upheld in Bostock." Additionally, Johnson argued that the order "violates equal protection, the due process of the Fifth Amendment, and arguably the free speech provision of the First Amendment."

But Johnson was particularly concerned by the executive order "Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling," which includes a provision directing the attorney general to criminally prosecute teachers who "facilitate" a minor's gender transition, even indirectly. The order dubs such affirmation of a student's trans identity "sexual exploitation."

Photo by Abdelafatah Mukhtar

Monica Haladyna speaks at Central Michigan United Methodist Church during Lansing's Jan. 18 People's March, which she co-organized. Her son Alex is trans.

Pat Arnold, who works in the Women's and Gender Studies department at MSU, watched U.S. Centers for Disease Control websites go down in real time.



Emily Dievendorf

Mason Hanks, a secondary English education student at MSU, fears he could be vulnerable to such accusations.

"It's a really rough time to be a trans person and a future educator right now," Hanks said. "I'm worried that I will be accused of indoctrinating or brain washing queer kids who find themselves in my classroom solely because I have the humanity to validate their identities."

Without Title VII protections, Hanks was worried public schools could fire him for being trans or not hire him at all: "There's so much that I worry I won't be able to give my students out of fear of losing my job if I'm able to get one in the first place."

Johnson echoed these concerns. "We're going to implement something that violates several constitutional principles, and we see this harken back to the Briggs Initiative," Johnson said, referencing a failed initiative to ban gay men and lesbians from working in California public schools.

Johnson stressed that executive orders cannot overturn a Supreme Court ruling.

"If a religious school doesn't want to employ LGBTQ people, that's well within their rights," Johnson said. "But public schools have to follow Title VII, and until Bostock is overturned, Title VII includes sexual orientation and gender identity."

Further confusing Title IX guidance is the executive order targeting trans women in sports, which asserts that allowing trans women to compete on women's sports teams violates Title IX. The order argues transgender women's participation denies cisgender women "equal opportunity" to participate.

However, in Michigan, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act protects against gender identity discrimination. The Michigan High School Athletic Association, which allows trans women to compete on a case-by-case basis, has not altered its regulations while officials review how the laws interact.

No trans girls are competing on women's teams, the MHSAA said. Two did in the fall.

The issue is hotly disputed, with many arguing trans women's participation violates the principle of fair competition. There is no unifying framework for determining eligibility, and a New York Times/Ipsos poll in January showed widespread opposition: 94% of Republicans and 67% of Democrats opposed allowing trans women to compete on women's teams.

Eligibility is often restricted to those who did not undergo male puberty or whose testosterone levels and muscle mass have been reduced to the levels of cisgender women. The American Medical Association holds that barring transgender women from school sports aggravates their gender dysphoria.

Legal concerns also filter into the attempts to ban transgender healthcare. On Feb. 7, Michigan's Corewell Health system announced it would no longer begin new hormone replacement therapy regimens for transgender patients under 19. The same day, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel wrote healthcare providers that "the availability of federal funding has no bearing on Michiganders' right to seek and receive healthcare services without discrimination."

Five days later, Corewell Health resumed hormone replacement therapy.

Dievendorf said in an interview that they urge providers not to comply prematurely with the orders.

"Temper your response when you are told that it is a mandate for you to harm another person and one of your neighbors," they said.

Dievendorf supports Nessel's assertions: "She knows that our intent and conviction to protect our trans and nonbinary neighbors and youth is rooted in solid law. It's rooted in case law, it's rooted in Supreme Court decisions and the very core values of our Constitution."

However, this lack of clarity has sometimes increased confusion among healthcare and insurance providers. Some employees are unsure where their employers stand on the matter, creating misinformation among trans patients.

One such patient is Rowan, a 29-year-old Lansing resident. After Rowan had his testosterone prescription denied by a pharmacy, his insurance agency mistakenly told him that Medicaid plans no longer covered the prescription.

Michigan Medicaid still covers hormone replacement therapy for patients with gender dysphoria.

"The lady on the phone had no more information than any of us did," Rowan said. "I presume ignorance rather than malice. Instead of saying, 'I don't know, let me find out,' she just said, 'Oh, I guess we're not covering it anymore.'"

It turned out Rowan's doctor had simply sent his prescription refill late. But the few days of uncertainty were "hectic and stressful," he said.

"I was left sitting there thinking, 'Does Michigan suddenly not have money for Medicaid? Do we no longer have access to any of my prescriptions? Is it just the testosterone that I don't have access to?'"

Rowan said a similar uncertainty has impacted his work with harm reduction agencies.

"None of us know what we're supposed to be doing at all," he said. "Nobody knows anything."

Disappearing documents

Exacerbating confusion in the medical sector is the mandated deletion of cornerstone medical guidance on LGBTQ+ healthcare.

The Trump administration ordered federal agencies to rescind or amend all policies relying on guidance from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, which the order calls "junk science." Another order mandates all federal agencies remove "all outward facing media (websites, social media accounts, etc.) that inculcate or promote gender ideology."

Federal agencies have interpreted this liberally. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control deleted AtlasPlus, which provided surveillance data on sexually transmitted infections, from its website. The Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System, commonly used by public health professionals, was also deleted.

Pat Arnold, who works in the Women's and Gender Studies Department at Michigan State and is finishing a master's degree in public health, watched the websites go down in real time.

"Two weeks ago, I had all the data sets open on tabs on my computer," Arnold said. "I was refreshing each of them and being taken to a 404 error."

Arnold said the impact on the transgender population will be severe. "The Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System is one of the largest health surveys that asks about people's gender identity," they said. "If we don't know if there are trans people in the datasets, we can't estimate anything or use it in research."

Ashlea Phenicie, chief advocacy officer at Planned Parenthood of Michigan, said the deletions impacted providers at Planned Parenthood clinics.

"Many websites our providers relied on for the best courses of care and data were wiped from the internet," she said. "Our physicians were scrambling to save the information they had."

Planned Parenthood of Michigan is continuing to provide gender-affirming care for 18-year-olds despite the executive order. It also hosts data on gender-affirming care on its website, which Phenicie said was "built by and for trans people."

The removed data has been temporarily restored per court order, though with a disclaimer alleging the pages do not "reflect biological reality." Some medical organizations have also begun hosting some data to preserve its availability.

Identity and ideology

These efforts have been successful in part through the orders' reframing of transgender identities as "gender ideology." The first order defines this ideology as "permitting the false claim that males can identify as and thus become women and vice versa."

Will Verchereau, a Salus Center board member.

Heather Johnson

The term's immediate roots are in the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025, which the Trump administration has used as a blueprint for a second term. Professor Johnson calls it a "dog whistle," referencing radical anti-feminists in South America and Europe who have used the term for years. In 2013, for instance, former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa alleged that "gender ideology" was being pushed on children and destroying family units.

By banning any material that may "promote or otherwise inculcate gender ideology," the administration has effectively banned any mention of transgender people

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from the federal government. The State Department's travel advisories now only reference "LGB travelers," and the Social Security Administration's website states that Social Security benefits include "members of the LGBQ community."

A memo from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management also ordered U.S. government employees to remove their pronouns from email signatures, citing the "gender ideology" ban.

"Basic recognition of the existence of trans and nonbinary folks is being strategically eliminated," Deivendorf said. "The word 'transgender' is being removed from historic sites, websites and really basic information related to healthcare."

References to transgender people have also been scrubbed from some National Park Service websites, including the Stonewall monument in New York. The memorial commemorates the 1969 Stonewall riots, which began after police raided the Stonewall Inn to arrest trans women and crossdressers.

"We all know who started Stonewall," Dievendorf said.

In reframing trans identities as an ideology, anti-trans policies have also become more openly biased. When Trump banned transgender people from the military during his first term, he did so under the justification that the military could not be "burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption" of having trans people in the military, according to a 2017 Trump tweet.

The new military ban, meanwhile, calls transgender people inherently dishonorable, asserting that "adoption of a gender identity inconsistent with an individual's sex conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle."

It continues, "A man's assertion that he is a woman, and his requirement that others honor this falsehood, is not consistent with the humility and selflessness required of a member."

Arnold said these biases are evident in the orders targeting gender-affirming care because the treatments banned for trans children remain legal for cis children.

"These practices are not exclusive to the transgender community," Arnold said. "Cisgender people, adults and children, at times need them as well."

Puberty blockers, usually the first medical step for transgender children, are also used to treat precocious puberty in cisgender children. Precocious puberty affects about 20 out of every 10,000 female children, according to the Cleveland Clinic, and five out of every 10,000 male children.

A JAMA Pediatrics study of U.S. private insurance claims from 2018 to 2022 found that fewer than 18,000 out of 5 million adolescents were diagnosed with gender dysphoria, and under 1,000 of them were treated with puberty blockers.

An executive order calls puberty blockers "chemical mutilation" to justify the ban.

Delaying the onset of puberty also delays bone development, though subsequent replacement regimens act as puberty and facilitate bone growth. Some studies suggest transgender women may not fully regain bone density. No concerns have been raised about transgender men.

Puberty blockers remain legal to treat precocious puberty in cisgender children.

"When you see that it's applied to one community but not to another, for no medically sound reason, you really get a sense of what is motivating these bans," Arnold said. "It's very clearly a desire to erase transgender people."

Identification

Federal websites are not the only documentation in turmoil from the new guidelines. An order signed on Inauguration Day rescinded the ability to modify gender markers on federal identification, including passports. The decision created confusion among those who had already changed their gender markers, such as M, F and X for nonbinary, intersex or gender nonconforming.

For weeks after Trump signed the order, confusion abounded regarding the implications. Those who had changed their gender markers already worried their passports might become invalid, while trans people with pending applications feared rejection.

Emme Zanotti, the director of advocacy and civic engagement at the civil rights organization Equality Michigan, has been working with U.S. officials to clarify this information.

Zanotti said passports with a changed gender marker will remain valid until expiration but under current law will have the marker changed back upon renewal. Some have already had their markers changed back, including those who have been transitioned for a long time and whose other identification reflects their gender accurately.

But transgender people whose applications were being processed during the transition of power were hit the hardest. Zanotti said many have been left hanging as their passports and vital supporting documentation are stuck indefinitely in processing. Some have called Equality Michigan for help, and Zanotti said Equality Michigan has been facilitating conversations with U.S. officials to get trans Michiganders their documentation back — though without their preferred gender marker.

In lieu of executive guidance, Equality Michigan has compiled a guide for trans Michiganders seeking a passport.

The Trump administration has discontinued the X gender marker, which was introduced following a lawsuit from intersex activist Dana Zzyym. Per an executive order, the federal government now recognizes only two sexes: male and female. Intersex people, whose bodies cannot be medically categorized as male or female, are not acknowledged.

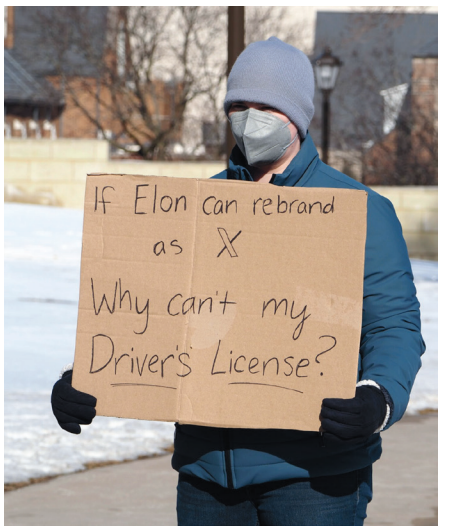
Hope for tomorrow

The federal government's attack on transgender rights has been swift and sweeping, but so has resistance. Many provisions have already been blocked, and some officials have vowed not to enforce others.

On Feb. 21, Maine Gov. Janet Mills publicly clashed with Trump at the White House over the executive order targeting trans women in sports.

"See you in court," she said after Trump threatened to revoke Maine's federal funding. Mills has refused to comply with the ban, arguing it contradicts "state and federal laws."

In Michigan, trans healthcare currently remains legal for all ages, and



Jon King, Michigan Advance. https://michiganadvance.com

A protester's sign at the Trans Unity rally at the Capitol Jan. 30. The "X" refers to the marker used on passports and other government documents to indicate gender other than male or female.

transgender women meeting certain requirements are still allowed to compete in women's sports. Laws protecting queer and trans people in Michigan have not been altered, including prohibitions on conversion therapy, the gay panic defense, and discrimination based on gender identity or sexual preference.

Lansing has seen a distinct uptick in community organization. A Jan. 30 protest at the Michigan Capitol by the Michigan-based Transgender Unity Coalition inspired coordinated protests in other states. Grassroots activists have organized to lead broader anti-Trump protests, creating the newly formed organizations 50501 Michigan and MI Resist.

Dievendorf finds the surge of grassroots activism both inspiring and effective.

"I've been in social justice and organizing for 25, 30 years, and I don't think I've ever seen a moment quite like this," Dievendorf said. "This is a pivotal moment in history; it is having an impact and will continue to have an impact and perhaps be what saves this democracy."

Dievendorf also described an increase in community support programs: "All over the state and all over the country, we are coming together and setting up community mutual aid programs, setting up systems of sharing information to make sure we know what is true and what action steps we can take next."

Haladyna was a first-time organizer when she helped assemble the Lansing iteration of the Jan. 18 People's March. Over 700 people showed up.

"I realized that we're going to need each other to survive, that we're going to stick to each other and form little clusters of people," Haladyna said. "I think transgender people and immigrants are the most vulnerable in the country — and I'm an immigrant, too."

Will Verchereau, a board member of Lansing LGBTQ+ organization the Salus Center, has seen similar adversity bring people together before. In 2024, a DeWitt elementary school teacher planned an optional, age-appropriate lesson on pronouns to support a nonbinary student who had been bullied. Controversy ensued, leading anti-trans advocates both in DeWitt and elsewhere to call school officials and decry the lesson. The superintendent eventually canceled it.

However, the controversy brought pro-trans advocates together. "There actually were far more people showing up to DeWitt schools in support of the lesson and in support of the child," Verchereau said. "They didn't even know this kid, but they showed up to support queer people across the district."

The same year, that child's mother co-founded the first-ever DeWitt Pride, which will return in 2025 with support from Salus.

Verchereau also stressed that the Salus Center is diversifying its funding resources so that it can stay open without federal funding and continue serving Lansing's queer community. The center offers resource groups, clothing drives and care packages that were recently expanded to include needles for hormone injections.

On the medical side, Phenicie stressed Planned Parenthood's commitment to trans healthcare: "We will continue to fight for transgender people's right to access healthcare, whether that's by keeping our doors open, by fighting in the courts or by going out into the streets and being loud in support of trans rights."

Planned Parenthood of Michigan does not have the clinical expertise to provide hormone replacement therapy for minors, Phenicie said, but it advocates for the practice.

Shock and awe

Even as politicians, advocates and community organizers stand up to the federal government, transgender people on the ground are feeling scared.

Zanotti and Dievendorf believe that is intentional.

"The administration's goals appear to be chaos, confusion and to make Americans distrust one another," Zanotti said.

"The cruelty is the point," Dievendorf said. "The purpose of all these executive orders is to create chaos, to unravel our government and democracy, and to attack our most vulnerable community members. And perhaps the long-term goal is not to deny these things permanently but to push us to a place of instability and fear."

But even temporary instability could cost lives, some argue. A 2024 peer-reviewed study from The Trevor Project found that anti-transgender laws lead to a 72% increase in past-year suicide attempts among trans and nonbinary minors.

Lixy, a transgender woman and Lansing resident, called the slew of executive orders a "shock and awe" tactic — a military strategy that uses overwhelming displays of power to destroy enemy morale.

"It's just horrifying," she said. "Just the uncertainty. I actually called the national suicide hotline for the first time in over a decade.

"So often people say, 'It doesn't matter who gets elected because nothing ever changes for me,'" she continued. "What I don't think those people realize is they maybe think that because they're cis, or because they're white. They never learn the empathy to think, 'What if this happened to me?'"

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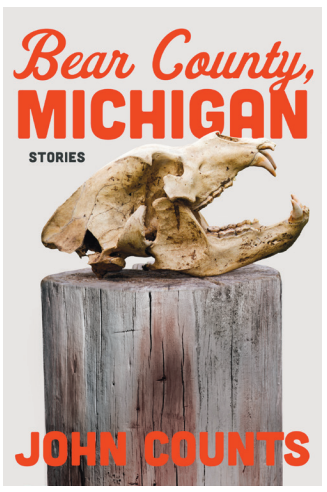
Michigan police reporter turns stories into darkly comic fiction

By BILL CASTANIER

Before "rural noir" became a popular literary term, there were writers like Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner and Raymond Carver who plumbed those depths. More recently, Michigan's own Bonnie Jo Campbell has helped fill that void.



Now, John Counts' new book, "Bear County, Michigan: Stories," grabs you by the throat and shakes you with the collection of interconnected short stories.

It's not all you need to know about his new book, but the opening line from the story "Compensation" provides a directional sign: "Jimmy Blizzard ran out of pills." And he's not talking about vitamins or ibuprofen here but Oxy.

Counts' 11 interconnected short stories and a novella emerged from his career as a newspaper writer covering rural crime, plus his lifetime avocation as a punk rocker.

Inspiration for writers comes from many places, but Counts points to those days of responding to police calls for a small-town daily newspaper in Manistee County and a weekly in suburban Detroit. These are fictionalized accounts of those stories.

One story, "Lady of Comfort," comes from the time he covered a rural fire. After waiting for hours at the yellow police line, a police officer told him a man who lived in the cabin died in the fire along with a woman.

Counts said he asked the state trooper, "Oh, he had a girlfriend? And his answer was no. It was a 'lady of comfort.'"

That line became the beginning of a tender relationship between a Vietnam veteran and the woman. The story offers many twists and turns, which fill Counts' short stories.

Counts doesn't look down on the rural residents who populate his stories.

"I love all my characters. I care about them and have empathy and compassion for them," he said.

"People everywhere are living interesting lives," he continued.

This philosophy appears in one of his early stories about how rural women survive with jobs at EZ Mart and Burger King and how their fertility has become an issue, with a growing number of suicides as a symptom. He writes: "Even in catastrophe and ruin, there was some kind of life."

Writing fiction is not new for Counts, 47, who lives in Whitmore Lake.

"I wanted to write since I was 14. I tried to write a novel when I was 14," he said. He attributes many of his stories to the punk band still plays with, The Suburban Delinquents, which was founded in 1994.

Counts' love of writing comes from his family background. His father was a veteran reporter for the Bay City Times. After graduating from Wayne State University in English and creative writing and a couple of diversions, Counts began working at the Lake Orion Review in 2009 before moving to the Manistee News Advocate, where he worked for a couple of years with his ear attached to a police scanner.

Counts felt at home Up North, where he had often gone on trout fishing trips with his dad.

"I knew a lot about small towns as a boy," he said.

Counts now leads a team of investigative reporters for MLive, a newspaper conglomerate that previously was known for newspapers in mid-size cities like Saginaw and Kalamazoo.

According to the author, his next writing project is a novel set at a newspaper in a city like Flint. He worked at the Flint Journal during the horrendous water crisis.

"I always wanted to be a novelist at heart — I thought of myself as a novelist. My collected short stories are all interconnected," he said.

The author said working the police beat puts you "close to stuff." "You write what you know."

Counts' advice to young writers is to "immerse yourself in sentences and words; read as much as you can; write as much as you can; do crazy shit and live in a lot of different places."

The author finds it "exciting to be on the other side" rather than doing the interview. "I've done about a dozen interviews," he said.

Many interviewers asked about the bleakness of his stories. He admitted they are "bleak at times and present a darker view, viewing life through a police scanner."

But he hopes his readers "will find hope, compassion and love" in them. They will also find some dark comic humor, like the story about a conservative politician trying to extricate her mother from a Northern Michigan nudist camp before she derails her reelection campaign.

Counts is visiting some of the settings for his stories on a current trip to Northern Michigan, but when spring breaks, watch for some visits near Lansing. His book is published by TriQuarterly, an imprint of Northwestern University Press, and is available at bookstores and online in paperback for $24.

Courtesy photo

John Counts' new collection of short stories emerged from his days of responding to police calls for a small-town daily newspaper in Manistee County and a weekly in suburban Detroit, plus his lifetime avocation as a punk rocker.

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Deliberation pays off in 'Crime and Punishment' at LCC

By CHELSEA LAKE ROBERTS

If you're a theater nerd like me — and let's face it, here you are — I hope you'll agree that few things are better than watching young talents find their voice under the care of expert guidance. In Lansing Community College's production of "Crime and Punishment," adapted by Marilyn Campbell-Lowe and Curt Columbus from Fyodor Dostoevsky's sprawling novel, we're invited to witness the beautiful deliberateness of young artists mastering their craft.

Review

"Crime and Punishment"
7 p.m. Feb. 28–March 1
LCC Black Box Theatre
411 N. Grand Ave., Lansing
lcc.edu/showinfo

In case you haven't read one of the most enduring pieces of world literature, here are the CliffsNotes: Destitute student Raskolnikov commits murder to prove his philosophical theories about moral superiority. As he grapples with guilt and faces interrogation from clever inspector Porfiry Petrovitch, he finds unexpected redemption through Sonia, a sex worker. This psychological thriller asks timeless and timely questions that every generation must answer: When is violence justified? How far is the criminal mind from our own? How much can a young person bear before something breaks?

Under Andy Callis' very capable direction, this production embraced a measured pace, which paid off brilliantly. Slowing down a bit and committing to the fundamentals resulted in a play where at every turn, at every moment, the actors truly understood what their characters were doing and why. That was what drew me in and kept me on the edge of my seat until the very end.

Simon Rebeck delivered a phenomenal performance as Raskolnikov, demonstrating range and control as the tortured protagonist. His show-stopping monologue moved me to tears with its immediacy and power. Camilla Trudell and Will Milstein excelled in multiple roles, helping us track the evolution of different characters with subtle distinction rather than broad caricature.

Photo by Kevin Fowler

Simon Rebeck as Raskolnikov in Lansing Community College's production of "Crime and Punishment," adapted from the novel by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

The technical elements of the show occasionally reminded me that we were in a learning environment due to some minor whirring of lighting equipment and the HVAC system. These distractions didn't detract from the performance but rather made me wish that these promising students had access to quieter equipment.

The most surprising triumph of this production was that I frequently forgot that I was watching student theater and began critiquing the show by professional standards. For a front-row seat to the thrilling moments when study transforms into artistry, LCC's "Crime and Punishment" offers a masterclass in theater education done right.

Peppermint Creek's 'Mankind' dares to imagine a world that's already here

By CHELSEA LAKE ROBERTS

When my theater companion asked me, "If men could reproduce, would they exterminate women?" I realized that Robert O'Hara's "Mankind" isn't the speculative work of fiction it might've been pre-Dobbs. In a present where abortion rights have been terminated and a fetal personhood bill has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives, this provocative production from Peppermint Creek Theatre Co. feels less like satire and more like prophecy, even bordering on an idiocracy.

Review

"Mankind"
Feb. 27–March 2
7 p.m. Thursday–Saturday
2 p.m. Saturday–Sunday
Stage One at Sycamore Creek Eastwood
2200 Lake Lansing Road, Lansing
peppermintcreek.org

In a future where women have gone extinct and men can bear children, Mark and Jason face an unplanned pregnancy in a world where abortion is illegal. What follows is a strange, raw exploration of power, especially religion, that simultaneously unsettles and entertains.

As Sara Holdren noted in her 2018 review of the show for the entertainment website Vulture, the playwright gives us "rich soil," but the harvest remains complex. The script presents challenges in character development that leave the story feeling more like an extended premise than an exploration of humanity. But that doesn't change my appreciation of Peppermint Creek's courage in staging such challenging material. I truly love to watch weird stuff go down in Lansing. The weirder the better, in my opinion.

Unlike a typical "straight play," this show's blocking prioritizes spectacle over intimacy, but it's possible that this direction was an intentional reflection of the world — a masculine dystopia where emotional connection has become foreign territory. I loved listening as John Lepard's interpretation of the show extended into the sound design, from loud, slamming jail cells and roaring crowds to the final curtain song.

Peppermint Creek's production, while not flawless (how could it be? Only men are involved! Cue gendered humor, ha, ha, ha), represents exactly the kind of provocative, boundary-pushing theater our community needs. It demands more from the audience than a willingness to be entertained. And it's infuriating, of course! While "Mankind" tries to be about more than a moment, I've been waiting three decades now for men to realize this is also *their* moment. We could be doing so much more, I fear.

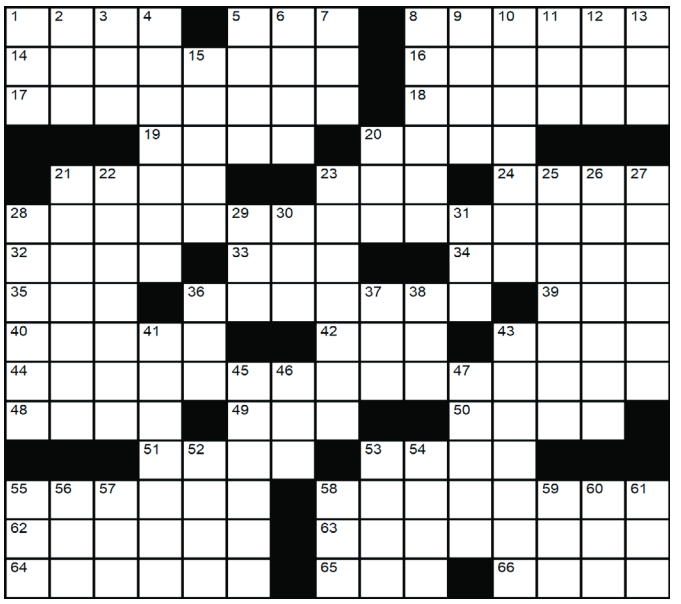
Photo by Trumpie Photography

Connor Kelly (left) as Mark and Steve Lee as Jason in Peppermint Creek Theatre Co.'s production of "Mankind," by Robert O'Hara.

The director's note hopes that women will lead us out of our current crisis, but I want to ask a different question: What responsibility does each man in mankind bear in dismantling our current system?

Jonesin' Crossword

By Matt Jones



"Pizza and a Movie"--watch for these slices.
by Matt Jones
© 2025 Matt Jones

ACROSS
1. En ___ (with full attendance, as a court)
5. Fundamental end?
8. Blew a gasket
14. The whole A to Z
16. Cynthia's costar
17. With "The," 1987 Michael Cimino epic adapted from a Mario Puzo novel
18. Fairly new
19. Yacht post
20. Coin-op opening
21. "Carpe ___!"
23. Pasty luau dish
24. Airport counter name
28. 1999 comedy about kids trying to get to a KISS concert
32. Tabula ___ (blank slate)
33. ___ Lanka
34. "Dune" star Isaac
35. City renamed Tokyo in 1868
36. First musical to win Best Picture since "Oliver!" in 1968
39. "I Like ___" ('50s campaign slogan)
40. Gp. running Sarah McLachlan-backed ads since 2007
42. More than vexation
43. "Fargo" family name
44. 1944 musical starring Judy Garland
48. Without
49. Cleaning cloth
50. Part of MIT, for short
51. Ocean Spray name starter
53. "___ Stop the Music" (1980 movie)
55. Channel Tunnel terminus
58. Classic Disney cartoon with some questionable depictions of Native Americans
62. On the double
63. Culinary knife cut that's finer than julienne
64. Chem lab vessels
65. Punch from Pacquiao
66. Geneva, for one

DOWN
1. ___-relief (sculpture style)
2. Frazier foe
3. Video game figure not controlled by the gamer (abbr.)
4. Mythical hybrid
5. Sacred bird, to ancient Egyptians
6. Airline assignment
7. ___ Dew (brand with a Baja Blast flavor)
8. Breadstick seasoning
9. Cookie brand
10. Mints in a little case
11. "___ Martin: SAP" (2023 Netflix standup special)
12. Columnist Landers
13. "Who ___?" (New Orleans Saints chant)
15. San Antonio mission, with "the"
20. Phillipa of "Hamilton" and "Doctor Odyssey"
21. Global low point
22. "Come on in"
23. Market strategy
25. Like some circles?
26. "Seems to me ..."
27. U.K. ambulance toppers (that probably go "wee-oo-wee-oo")
28. Freud concern
29. "Sorta"
30. Prefix meaning "three"
31. "Rock and Roll, Hoochie ___"
36. Video taker, briefly
37. "___ Poetica"
38. Understand
41. Some diagnostic tests
43. Word before freak or group
45. Removes data from
46. Ziering of "Beverly Hills, 90210"
47. Bed sheet material
52. Soap star Springfield
53. "Arrested Development" star Michael
54. "... three men in ___"
55. Half-___ macchiato
56. 1996 Olympics host city, for short
57. Mauna ___ (Hawaiian peak)
58. Simple sandwich, casually
59. "Hairspray" actress Zadora
60. Request
61. Word before a maiden name

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Answers on page 21

SUDOKU

Intermediate

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

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezsny

Feb. 26-March 4, 2025

ARIES (March 21–April 19): Aries author Anne Lamott articulated a thought that's perfect for you to hear right now: "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." I might amend her wisdom a bit to say "for a few hours" or "a couple of days." Now is a rare time when a purposeful disconnection can lead you to deeper synchronization. A project or relationship will improve after a gentle reset. Your power mantra: "Renew yourself with quiet inaction."

TAURUS (April 20–May 20): Beavers are the engineers of the natural world. The dams they fabricate not only create shelters for them but also benefit their entire ecosystem. The ponds and marshes they help shape provide rich habitats for many other species. Boosting biodiversity is their specialty. Their constructions also serve as natural filters, enhancing water quality downstream. Let's make beavers your inspirational symbol for the coming weeks, Taurus. In their spirit, build what's good for you with the intention of making it good for everyone whose life you touch. Ensure that your efforts will generate ripples that nourish your tribe and community.

GEMINI (May 21–June 20): I predict that you will soon have reason to celebrate a resounding success. You will claim a well-deserved reward. You may even shiver with amazement and gratification as you marvel at how many challenges you overcame to emerge triumphant. In my view, you will have every right to exude extra pride and radiance. I won't complain if you flirt with a burst of egotism. In accordance with my spirituality, I will tell you, "Remember that this wonder you have spawned will live for a very long time."

CANCER (June 21–July 22): When you see the stars in the night sky, you're looking at the ancient past. Light from those heavenly bodies may have taken as long as 4,000 years to reach us. So, we are beholding them as they used to be, not as they are now. With that as your inspiration, I invite you to spend quality time gazing into your own personal past. Meditate on how your history is alive in you today, making its imprint on all you do and say. Say prayers and write messages to yourself in which you express your awe and appreciation for the epic myth that is your destiny.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22): I mourn the growing climate calamity that is heating up our beloved planet. Among many other distortions, it has triggered yellow forsythias and blue gentians to blossom during winters in the Austrian Alps — an unprecedented event. At the same time, I am also able to marvel at the strange beauty of gorgeous flowers growing on the winter hills of ski resorts. So, my feelings are mixed — paradoxical and confusing — and that's fine with me. I regard it as a sign of soulfulness. May you be so blessed, Leo: full of appreciation for your capacity to hold conflicting ideas, perspectives and feelings.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): The quietest place on earth is a room at Microsoft's headquarters near Seattle. It's made of six layers of steel and concrete, and its foundation includes vibration-dampening springs. Within it, you can hear your heartbeat, the swishing of your clothes and the hum of air molecules colliding. The silence is so eerily profound that many people become flummoxed while visiting. Here's the moral of the story: While you Virgos are naturally inclined to favor order and precision, a modicum of noise and commotion in your life is often beneficial. Like background sounds that keep you oriented, minor wriggles and perturbations ensure you remain grounded. This will be extra important for you to acknowledge in the coming weeks.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): To make a Mobius strip, you give a half twist to a strip of paper and attach the ends. You have then created a surface with just one side and one edge. It's a fun curiosity, but it also has practical applications. Using Mobius strips, engineers can design more efficient gears. Machinists make mechanical belts that are Mobius strips because they wear out less quickly. There are at least eight other concrete functions as well. Let's extrapolate from this to suggest that a similar theme might be arising in your life. What may seem like an interesting but impractical element could reveal its real-world value. You may find unexpected uses for playful features. One of your capacities has dimensions you have not yet explored but are ready to.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): Sandra Cisneros is a visionary writer with Sun and Mercury in Sagittarius. She is always in quest of the next big lesson and the next exciting adventure. But she also has the Moon, Venus and Saturn in Scorpio. Her sensitive attunement to the hidden and secret aspects of reality is substantial. She thrives on cultivating a profound understanding of her inner world. It took her years to master the art of fully expressing both these sides of her character. I bring this to your attention, Scorpio, because you're primed to go in quest for experiences that will open your heart to novel amazements — even as you connect with previously unknown aspects of your deep self that resonate with those experiences.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): The Moeraki Boulders are spread along a beach in New Zealand. Many of the 50 big rocks are nearly perfect spheres and up to 6 feet in diameter, so they provide a stunning visual feast. Scientists know that they have steadily grown for the last 4 million years, accumulating ever-new layers of minerals. I propose we make them your symbols of power until July 1. In my astrological estimation, you are in a phase of laying long-term groundwork. What may seem to be a tedious accumulation of small, gradual victories is part of a grander undertaking. Like the Moeraki Boulders, your efforts will crystallize into an enduring foundation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): A Japanese proverb says, "The bamboo that bends with the wind is stronger and more resilient than the oak tree that resists." That's true. When storms bluster, oak branches get broken and blown away. Bamboo may look delicate, but it is actually strong and capable of withstanding high winds. It flourishes by being flexible instead of rigid. That's the approach I recommend to you, Capricorn. Challenges may emerge that inspire you to stay grounded by adapting. Your plans will become optimal as you adjust them. By trusting your natural resilience, you could find unexpected chances for interesting transformation. Your potency will lie in your ability to bend without breaking.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): Seattle's Space Needle serves as an observation tower. It's 605 feet high. For years, there was a restaurant with a rotating floor at the top. In its early days, the movement was so brisk that some visitors got dizzy and nauseous. Engineers had to recalibrate the equipment so it was sufficiently leisurely to keep everyone comfortable. Your current situation resembles this story. The right elements are in place, but you need to adjust the timing and rhythm. If there are frustrating glitches, they are clues to the fine tuning that needs to be done.

PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20): Octopuses have three hearts, each with a different function. Every one of their eight limbs contains a mini brain, giving them nine in total. Is there any doubt, then, that they are the patron creature for you Pisceans? No other zodiac sign is more multifaceted than you. No other can operate with grace on so many different levels. I celebrate your complexity, dear Pisces, which enables you to draw such rich experiences into your life and manage such diverse challenges. These qualities will be working at a peak in the coming weeks. For inspiration, consider putting an image of an octopus in your environment.

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

OUT on the TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

Events must be entered through the calendar at lansingcitypulse.com. Deadline is 4 p.m. Wednesday for the upcoming Wednesday edition. Charges may apply for paid events to appear in print. If you need assistance, please call Nicole at (517) 999-5066.

Wednesday, Feb. 26

18th Annual MSUFCU Student Art Exhibit - Artists from mid-Michigan high schools showcase their work, hoping to earn votes from the public and a group of judges. 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. MSUFCU Headquarters Building 1, 3777 West Road, East Lansing. msufcuart.com.

"A Course of Love" Zoom Discussion Group, with Lucille Olson and Bill Dietrich - Group reads a section of the book each week and discusses the insightful ideas. 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

Acting & Glee Music Class for Kids - 15-week class. Ages 5-12. 4:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Al-Anon Meeting - 6 p.m. Okemos Community Church, 4734 Okemos Road, Okemos. cmialanon.org.

Allen Farmers Market - We'll have a craft station where you can make masks in anticipation of Mardi Gras. There will also be pączkis! 3-6:30 p.m. 1629 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing. 517-999-3911. allenneighborhoodcenter.org/market.

Beginning Ballet for Adults - 6:45 p.m. The Studio Performing Arts Center, 5015 Park Lake Road, East Lansing. 517-336-4088. dancesingact.com.

Beginning Tap Dance for Teens & Adults - 7:45 p.m. The Studio Performing Arts Center, 5015 Park Lake Road, East Lansing. 517-336-4088. dancesingact.com.

Bookend Gallery Display by Lucy Synk and Dorothy Engelman - Lucy has brought us a stellar display in oils, while Dorothy presents a zentangle perspective on the universe! Noon-4 p.m. Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Broad Underground: Afro-Iran - Join us for a program and discussion about Blackness in the Persian Gulf, featuring screenings of "Black is Beautiful, Siyah Zibast" (2021) and "Waiting" (1974). 7 p.m. Wells Hall, 619 Red Cedar Road, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Broadway Jazz Dance for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

CharLit Adult Book Club: "A Little Devil in America," by Hanif Abdurraqib - 6 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

Code Club - Learn to make websites, apps, animations and more! No coding experience necessary. Grades 3+. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. gladl.org.

Declutter Your Life - Heather, a professional decluttering expert, will discuss the decluttering process, target organizing and how to create functional spaces. Registration req. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. gladl.org.

Evan James at Dublin Square - 9 p.m. 327 Abbot Road, East Lansing. 517-351-2222. facebook.com/dublinsquare.

"Farmland: Food, Justice, and Sovereignty" - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Fitness Over 50! Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall food court through April. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Ignite Talks MSU - The MSU Museum CoLab Studio presents the fourth edition of Ignite Talks MSU, featuring the fast-paced stories of 10 student research rockstars. 7 p.m. 311 Abbot Road, East Lansing. facebook.com/MSUMuseum.

Improv Acting for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 8:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Karaoke at Lansing Shuffle, hosted by Starlight Entertainment - 7-11 p.m. 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. lansingshuffle.com.

Lansing Live Open Stage Night - Whether you're experienced or just starting out, the stage is open to all. Not a performer? Enjoy dinner, drinks and live music. No cover, all ages welcome. 6 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. urbanbeatevents.com.

Meridian Historical Village Speaker Series - Bill Struck of the Steam Railroading Institute will speak on the Pere Marquette 1225, one of the largest steam locomotives ever to operate in Michigan. 7 p.m. Village Chapel, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos. meridianhistoricalvillage.org.

Mindfulness Meditation in the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition - All are welcome to join our weekly practice! 7-9 p.m. Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing. lamcsangha.wordpress.com.

The Natural World Through Poetry & Prose: A Reading - Through poetry and prose, writers Laura Apol, Jan Shoemaker and Mary Anna Kruch will share their ideas about and interactions with the natural world. 6:30 p.m. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing. elpl.org.

Rollin Brummette Live at Williamston Roadhouse - Fresh off the boat from Nashville, Tennessee, Rollin brings you a wide variety of acoustic tunes and original music! 7 p.m. 3700 E. Grand River Ave., Williamston. facebook.com/williamston-roadhouse1.

Tap II for Teens & Adults - 15-week class. 6 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Weaving the Web: Invocation - Join us online or in person every Wednesday for discussions, rituals, meditations and more! 6 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St., Lansing. weaversoftheweb.org.

Thursday, Feb. 27

18th Annual MSUFCU Student Art Exhibit - Artists from mid-Michigan high schools showcase their work, hoping to earn votes from the public and a group of judges. 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. MSUFCU Headquarters Building 1, 3777 West Road, East Lansing. msufcuart.com.

Lake Michigan Film Festival

6-10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28
1-10 p.m. Saturday, March 1-Sunday, March 2
Studio C!
1999 Central Park Drive, Okemos

Running Friday (Feb. 28) through Sunday (March 2) at the Meridian Mall's Studio C! theater, the annual Lake Michigan Film Festival will showcase independent films made in or by filmmakers from the states surrounding Lake Michigan: Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

Friday's schedule includes "I Agree with You," a comedy about two friends who "begin a game of role play that threatens to undo their relationship," at 6 p.m. and "An Autumn Summer," a coming-of-age love story following a group of friends vacationing in a Michigan lake town during their final month before college, at 8:30 p.m.

Saturday (March 1) begins with a block of short documentaries at 1 p.m., followed by a 3:30 p.m. double feature of "Un Dia Normal," a drama about a teenage immigrant who is detained by ICE officers, and "Decoupling," a documentary following a Chinese American filmmaker who travels to Beijing to retrieve his stranded 3-year-old daughter in the wake of the "decoupling" of the two countries. The evening will offer a block of student short films at 6 p.m. and non-student short films at 8:30 p.m.

The festival wraps up on Sunday with a block of student short documentaries at 1 p.m. and additional short film blocks at 6 and 8:30 p.m., as well as a screening of the full-length documentary "Fire Department Inc.," about a firefighters' union battling to keep the mayor from privatizing the department, at 3:30 p.m.

Members of the cast and crew will be in attendance for all the feature-length screenings and many of the shorts. Tickets for each screening are $10, with a $2 discount for college students, seniors and members of the military. They can be purchased at celebrationcinema.com/cinemas/studio-c-meridian-mall. For more information on the films, visit elff.com/festival.

"A Case for the Existence of God" - A sweet, thoughtful story about fatherhood, family and friendship. 2 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. williamstontheatre.org.

Absolute Music Chamber Series: "Dynamic Dvořák" - Enjoy Mozart's String Quartet No. 15 and Antonín Dvořák's Piano Quintet No. 2, performed by the Cercis Quartet and pianist Mai Mizuno. 7:30 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. absolutemusiclansing.org.

Acting 101 for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Acting Ensemble Class for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 8 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Al-Anon Meeting - 6:45 p.m. Mason Sparrow Urgent Care, 800 E. Columbia St., Mason. cmialanon.org.

Al-Anon Meeting - 8 p.m. Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 1315 Abbot Road, East Lansing. cmialanon.org.

Alexandria McMath at the Graduate Rock Bar - 8 p.m. 133 Evergreen Ave., East Lansing. 517-348-0900. facebook.com/graduaterockbar.

Blood Drive: Delta Township Admin Building - Schedule your appointment at redcrossblood.org (sponsor code: Service) or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Noon-5:45 p.m. 7710 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing. facebook.com/delta-township.

Bookend Gallery Display by Lucy Synk and Dorothy Engelman - Lucy has brought us a stellar display in oils, while Dorothy presents a zentangle perspective on the universe! Noon-6 p.m. Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

College Night at Lansing Shuffle - Free shuffleboard with student ID, half off well drinks, $5 pitchers. 7-11 p.m. 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. lansingshuffle.com.

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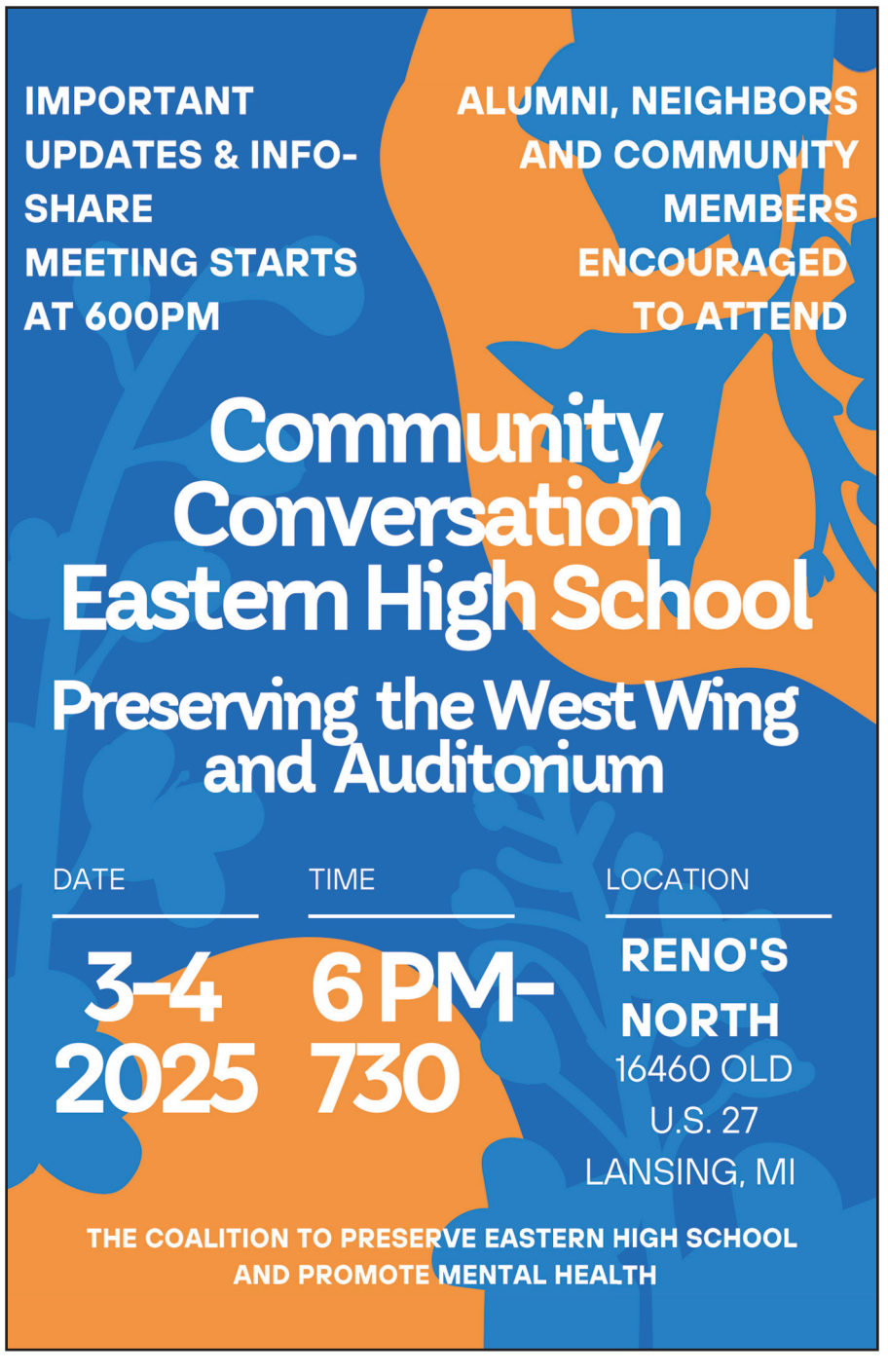
Quiet Adventures Symposium

9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday, March 1
MSU Pavilion
4301 Farm Lane, Lansing

The Quiet Adventures Society, a nonprofit that seeks to encourage participation in non-motorized forms of outdoor recreation, will hold its 30th annual Quiet Adventures Symposium 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday (March 1) at Michigan State University's Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education. Geared toward all ages, the event will offer speakers, demonstrations, an exhibition hall, a children's activity area, raffles and more.

This year's theme is "Bridging the Gap," which promotes community and connection between the various outdoor activities, such as paddling, biking and camping. "We all use and care for the same outdoor spaces, be it directly or indirectly," the event website reads. "By bridging the gaps between all of the different recreators enjoying these spaces, we can in turn strengthen our ties to the land and water we use."

Advance tickets are $13 for adults, while tickets at the door will be one for $20 or two for $30. Advance tickets must be purchased online by 11:59 p.m. tonight (Feb. 26). Student tickets are $5, while children under 12 receive free admission. For more information, including schedules of speakers and demonstrations, visit quietadventures.org.



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Crafty Vibes - Bring your knitting, crochet or any other portable craft project and immerse yourself in an evening of creativity, conversation and community. 5 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St., Lansing. weaversoftheweb.org.

"Farmland: Food, Justice, and Sovereignty" - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Hay Production 101 - Virtual course aimed at first-time and beginner hay growers, plus anyone looking to increase their knowledge. Topic will be "Managing Pests: Weeds, Insects and Disease." 7 p.m. Register at canr.msu.edu/events/2025-hay-production-101.

Henry Herig at Dublin Square - 9 p.m. 327 Abbot Road, East Lansing. 517-351-2222. facebook.com/dublinsquare.

LRCC Annual Dinner - The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce will present several awards during a special evening dedicated to business excellence and community pride. 5-8 p.m. Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. facebook.com/LansingChamber.

Ladies Silver Blades Skating Club - Join other adult women for fun, exercise, friendship and skating practice. 9:30-11:30 a.m. Ice Cube, 2810 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. ladiessilverblades.org.

LSO at the Robin Theatre - Join musicians of the Lansing Symphony for a unique, intimate concert of contemporary chamber music. 7:30 p.m. 1105 S. Washington Ave., Lansing. lansingsymphony.org.

Michigan Birding 101: Spring 2025 - Join Michigan Sea Grant as we explore the wonderful hobby of birding in four FREE and FUN classes. 7-8 p.m. Virtual — register at bit.ly/MIBIRDS25.

Parkinson's Exercise: Rock-Steady Boxing - Free exercise class for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers. 1 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. To register, call 517-364-8800. lapsg.org.

Pink Martini - With the combined power of a dozen musicians, fronted by dynamic vocalist China Forbes, this ensemble joins humor with incredible artistry for a rollicking mix of vintage jazz, cabaret, Brazilian samba and old-fashioned pop. 7:30 p.m. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. whartoncenter.com.

Ruhala Broadway Ensemble for All Ages - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 5:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Siren Eaton Shelter Informational Event- Learn about the services Siren Eaton Shelter provides to the community and volunteer opportunities. 1-3 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

Spirit of Michigan Chorus Rehearsal - We're an inclusive community of women who sing a cappella in the barbershop style. We welcome all levels of musical experience. 6:45 p.m. Church of the Nazarene, 4851 Holt Road, Holt. spiritofmichiganchorus.com.

Theo Von: "Return of the Rat" - An evening with stand-up comedian, podcaster, television personality and actor Theo Von. 7:30 p.m. Breslin Center, 534 Birch Road, East Lansing. breslincenter.com/event/theo-von-return-rat.

Thursday Night Open Forge - Try your hand at blacksmithing and create your own metal masterpieces! 6-9 p.m. Artfire Michigan, 4567 Churchill Road, Leslie. artfiremichigan.com.

Take Off Pounds Sensibly - Weight-loss support group. Weigh-in 5:30 p.m., meeting 6-7 p.m. Haslett Middle School, 1535 Franklin St., Haslett. 800-932-8677. facebook.com/HaslettTops.

Friday, Feb. 28

18th Annual MSUFCU Student Art Exhibit - Artists from mid-Michigan high schools showcase their work, hoping to earn votes from the public and a group of judges. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. MSUFCU Headquarters Building 1, 3777 West Road, East Lansing. msufcuart.com.

"A Case for the Existence of God" - A sweet, thoughtful story about fatherhood, family and friendship. 7:30 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. williamstontheatre.org.

Afro Beat in Town - Dance to Afrobeat, amapiano, Afrocongo, bongo, reggae and dancehall. 10 p.m.-1:30 a.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. urbanbeatevents.com.

An Evening with Randy Blythe - Blythe brings his "Just Beyond the Light" spoken-word book tour to Grewal Hall. 7 p.m. 224 S. Washington Square, Lansing. hall224.com.

Block Rock 201, featuring the Black Rock Sextet - A further exploration of the contributions of Black musicians to the genre of rock 'n' roll. 9 p.m. The Green Door, 2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. br201.brownpapertickets.com.

Bookend Gallery Display by Lucy Synk and Dorothy Engelman - Lucy has brought us a stellar display in oils, while Dorothy presents a zentangle perspective on the universe! Noon-4 p.m. Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Carl Pawluk at the Peanut Barrel - 8 p.m. 521 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. 517-351-0608. peanutbarrel.com.

Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

Country Night at Lansing Shuffle - Enjoy line dance instruction from 8-9 p.m., followed by modern country music playing until midnight! We'll have drink specials all night. No cover! 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. lansingshuffle.com.

Craft Club - Create mosaic bean art! Grades 4-12. Registration req. 4 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

"Crime and Punishment" - Free. 7 p.m. LCC Black Box Theatre, 411 N. Grand Ave., Lansing. lcc.edu/showinfo.

"Fables" - Happendance Professional Company presents an interactive dance performance for all ages! Experience the magic of storytelling as dancers bring to life five captivating tales from around the world. 7 p.m. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. whartoncenter.com.

"Farmland: Food, Justice, and Sovereignty" - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Fitness Over 50! Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall food court through April. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

JP & the Energy at Mash Bar - 9 p.m. 212 Albert Ave., East Lansing. 517-858-2100. mashbar.net.

Lansing Parks and Recreation Travelogue: Tanzania - Ian Broughton has led three trips to Tanzania, with another scheduled in June. 7 p.m. Foster Community Center, 200 N. Foster Ave. Lansing. lansingmi.gov/985/Travelogue.

North of Five at Summerlands Brewing Co. - 7:30 p.m. 1957 Cedar St., Holt. facebook.com/summerlandsbrewing.

The Stringrays at Elderly Instruments - A threesome of musicians with a shared interest in exploring great fiddle tunes. 6-8 p.m. University Lutheran Church, 1020 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

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TGIF Dance Party - Music by DJ Pat Johnson. Complimentary line-dance lesson and buffet included. 7 p.m.-midnight. Eagle Eye Banquet Center, 15500 Chandler Road, Bath. tgifdance.com.

Saturday, March 1

18th Annual MSUFCU Student Art Exhibit - Artists from mid-Michigan high schools showcase their work, hoping to earn votes from the public and a group of judges. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. MSUFCU Headquarters Building 1, 3777 West Road, East Lansing. msufcuart.com.

"A Case for the Existence of God" - A sweet, thoughtful story about fatherhood, family and friendship. 2 and 7:30 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. williamstontheatre.org.

Black Barn Band at the Irish Pub - 8 p.m. 1910 W. Saginaw St., Lansing. 517-253-8713. facebook.com/IrishPubLansing.

"Blood and Lipstick" Presentation - Author Tobin T. Buhk takes us inside the minds of Michigan's most lethal women. Intended for adults. 11 a.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 South Bostwick Street, Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

Bob Stein's 90th Birthday All-Day Dance - English country dance at 2 p.m., potluck at 5 p.m., evening contra dance at 7 p.m. All dances taught – no partner needed. Central United Methodist Church, 215 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

Bookend Gallery Display by Lucy Synk and Dorothy Engelman - Lucy has brought us a stellar display in oils, while Dorothy presents a zentangle perspective on the universe! Noon-4 p.m. Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. 9 a.m.-7 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

Children's Cultural Concert Series- Learn about south Indian culture with a performance by Yamini Kalluri, an internationally acclaimed south Indian Kuchipudi dancer. 11 a.m. Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing. cityofeastlansing.com.

Citrus Sunrise Arrangement Workshop - Create an arrangement using colorful and scent-sational citrus! 1 p.m. Van Atta's Greenhouse, 9008 Old M-78, Haslett. vanattas.com/news-events.

"Crime and Punishment" - Free. 7 p.m. LCC Black Box Theatre, 411 N. Grand Ave., Lansing. lcc.edu/showinfo.

Dine-in or Carryout Sauerkraut Dinner and Dance - You may pre-order by calling Darlene Komm at 517-290-8624. 5 p.m. dinner, 6:30 p.m. dance. Liederkranz Club, 5828 S. Pennsylvania St., Lansing. facebook.com/LansingLiederkranzClub.

Family Day: Nourish - What foods are special to you? This month, we're making sculptures inspired by the diversity of foods in our lives. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

"Farmland: Food, Justice, and Sovereignty" - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Intermediate Ballet for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 11 a.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

LEGO-Palooza - This exciting annual fundraiser will offer more than 20 LEGO-themed activities for individuals and families to enjoy together. 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Drive, Lansing. impression5.org.

Mason Symphony Concert - Conductor David Schultz and guitar soloist Onur Alakavuklar lead a Spanish-themed concert featuring the music of de Falla, Granados, Chabrier and Rodrigo. 7-9 p.m. MacDonald Middle School, 1601 Burcham Drive, East Lansing. masonorchestras.org.

Meridian Township Farmers Market - 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Meridian Mall, 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian.mi.us/FarmersMarket.

MSU Women's Basketball vs. University of Minnesota - 2 p.m. Breslin Center, 534 Birch Road, East Lansing. msuspartans.com/sports/womens-basketball.

Red Cedar Festival of Community Bands - A day of music performed by community bands from the Lansing area and around the state. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Okemos High School, 2800 Jolly Road, Okemos. meridiancommunityband.org/red-cedar-festival.

River Walk Trash Cleanup - Monthly trash cleanup on the Lansing River Trail. 11 a.m. Meet at Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St., Lansing. weaversoftheweb.org.

Tiger and Dragon Kenpo Martial Arts Training - Based on a variety of martial arts systems, tiger and dragon kenpo is designed to develop self-confidence in the warrior. 1 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Lansing. weaversoftheweb.org.

Tumbao Bravo - Award-winning Cuban jazz and world music combo returns to Lansing. 7 p.m. UrbanBeat, 1213 Turner St., Lansing. urbanbeatevents.com.

"World Soul" Book Signing - Catherine Carr, author of "World Soul: Healing Ourselves and the Earth Through Pagan Theology," visits for a book signing, talk and community discussion about how Pagan theology can help us during these trying times. 2:30 p.m. Keys to Manifestation, 809 Center St., Lansing. manifestlansing.org.

Sunday, March 2

"A Case for the Existence of God" - A sweet, thoughtful story about fatherhood, family and friendship. 2 p.m. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. williamstontheatre.org.

"A Course in Miracles" Study Group, with Dan and Carol Maynard - Noon. Unity Spiritual Center, 2395 Washington Road, Lansing. unityl-ansing.org.

Bottle and Can Collection for Eastern Ingham Farmers Market - We collect your Michigan-returnable bottles and cans from your trunk while you stay warm in your vehicle. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. McCormick Park, 123 High St., Williamston. easterninghamfarmersmarket.org.

The Celts at Grewal Hall - Australian folk band comes to Lansing. 7 p.m. 224 S. Washington Square, Lansing. hall224.com

Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. Noon-6 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

GLAD Drum Circle - Join the Greater Lansing Area Drummers for a fun and energetic afternoon of rhythm and drumming. All ages and experience levels welcome. 2-4 p.m. Bath Community Center, 5959 Park Lake Road, Bath. facebook.com/GreaterLansingAreaDrummers.

Family Brunch & Lunch at Lansing Shuffle - Featuring free shuffleboard for kids, video game tournaments, cornhole, giant Jenga and two-for-$10 mimosas. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. lansingshuffle.com.

"Farmland: Food, Justice, and Sovereignty" - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

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Red Cedar Festival of Community Bands

9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, March 1
Okemos High School
2800 Jolly Road, Okemos

The Meridian Community Band invites music enthusiasts of all ages to its 28th annual Red Cedar Festival of Community Bands, running 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday (March 1) at Okemos High School. Eleven wind ensembles hailing from across the state will perform throughout the day, including five from Greater Lansing: the DeWitt Community Concert Band, the Lansing Concert Band, the Grand Ledge Community Band, the Charlotte Community band and, of course, the Meridian band itself. Each group will also participate in a clinic following its performance, part of the festival's mission to grow the level of musicianship in Michigan's community bands. A full schedule of performances is available at meridiancommunityband.org/redcedarfestival. Admission is free, though donations to benefit the festival will be accepted.

Lansing Music Instrument Swap

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, March 2
Causeway Bay Hotel
6820 S. Cedar St., Lansing

Delta Township music store Music Instrument Swap will host its 12th annual instrument swap meet 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday (March 2) at the Causeway Bay Hotel in south Lansing. With more than 70 vendors covering more than 8,000 square feet of space, attendees are invited to buy, sell and trade new, used, vintage and custom-built instruments as well as amplifiers, accessories, records, memorabilia and more.

"The best part about these swap meets are the people," Music Instrument Swap co-owner Shawn VanSteeland said. "We've got such a robust, diverse and incredibly talented and knowledgeable music community here in Michigan. The swaps bring those people together, and the room comes alive."

VanSteeland also noted that the event is "a chance to score an incredible deal on player-condition gear," or used equipment with "plenty of life left in it."

Attendees will have the chance to win free concert tickets from sponsor Q106. Admission is $10 at the door. VIP tickets granting early access are available at musicinstrumentswap.com.

Events

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First Start Sunday - Monthly blacksmithing workshop for beginners, featuring a shop tour, lessons on safety and technique, and a take-home project. 1-4 p.m. Artfire Michigan, 4567 Churchill Road, Leslie. artfiremichigan.com.

Harmony Sundays - Weekly DJ event featuring Aura the Brave and special guests. 9 p.m. Mac's Bar, 2700 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. 517-484-6795. instagram.com/macsbarmsu.

Ingham Festival Chorale Rehearsal - The chorale invites you to sing. Membership fee is $60 and includes all music. No audition necessary. 2-3:30 p.m. University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. facebook.com/inghamfestivalchoralemi.

The Jeremiahs - One of the premier acoustic bands of Ireland, the Jeremiahs are as adept at singing classic Irish ballads as they are at revving up with room with jigs and reels. 3 p.m. University Lutheran Church, 1020 S Harrison Road, East Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.

Jugglers and Would-Be Jugglers - Jugglers meet at the Orchard Street Pump House 2 p.m. Sundays. 368 Orchard St., East Lansing. mikemarhanka@gmail.com.

Lansing Roller Derby Adult Boot Camp - Four-month roller derby training course focused on developing skaters to their full potential, regardless of prior skill or experience. 2-4 p.m. Court One Training Center, 7868 Old M-78, East Lansing. lansingrollerderby.com.

LEGO-Palooza - This exciting annual fundraiser will offer more than 20 LEGO-themed activities designed for individuals and families to enjoy together. 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Drive, Lansing. impression5.org.

MSUFCU Student Art Exhibit Awards Ceremony - This event for teachers, parents, students and art fans will recognize the winners of juried, people's choice, social and school spirit awards. 1 p.m. MSUFCU Headquarters Building 1, 3777 West Road, East Lansing. msufcuart.com.

MSU Men's Basketball vs. University of Wisconsin - 1:30 p.m. Breslin Center, 534 Birch Road, East Lansing. msuspartans.com/sports/mens-basketball.

Quaker Meeting for Worship - 10:30 a.m. Red Cedar Friends Meeting House, 1400 Turner St., Lansing. redcedarfriends.org.

Summerlands Sunday Brunch - Noon-4 p.m. Summerlands Brewing Co., 1957 Cedar St., Holt. facebook.com/summerlandsbrewing.

Monday, March 3

Al-Anon Meeting - 8 p.m. St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 6500 Amwood Drive, Lansing. cmialanon.org.

Big 10 Collegiate Mental Health Center Conference - Theme is "Multiple Ways of Knowing, Doing and Being in Collegiate Mental Health: A collective call for social justice through integrated, holistic and multicultural responsive care." Noon. Kellogg Hotel, 219 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. eventbrite.com/o/michigan-state-university-17719520422.

Bingo Night at Summerlands Brewing Co. - Free to play, with fun prizes every game! 8-9:30 p.m. 1957 Cedar St., Holt. facebook.com/summerlandsbrewing.

Exit Strategies – Expert Painting Services! Commercial & Residential, Interior & Exterior. 20+ Years of Experience. Insured. Call 616-284-1623 for a Free Estimate!

Bookend Gallery Display by Lucy Synk and Dorothy Engelman - Lucy has brought us a stellar display in oils, while Dorothy presents a zentangle perspective on the universe! Noon-4 p.m. Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Broadway Jazz Dance for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

Crafty Story Time - Preschool-aged children and their caregivers can enjoy fun activities, stories and a craft. 11 a.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 South Bostwick St., Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

Delta Township Mother-Son Dance - 7-9 p.m. The Venue by Eleven 11 Events, 5660 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing. 517-323-8555. deltami.gov/registration.

Fiber Circle - Knitters, crocheters and stitchers of all ages and skill levels welcome. Although formal instruction isn't provided, attendees assist each other with techniques and skills. 6 p.m. 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

Fitness Over 50! Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall food court through April. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Improv Acting for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 8:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Jazz/Ballet II for Kids - 15-week class. Ages 9-13. 4 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Parkinson's Exercise: Yoga - Free exercise class for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers. 1 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. To register, call 517-364-8800. lapsg.org.

Ruhala Broadway Ensemble for All Ages - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 5:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Work It Out Wombats: Step It Out - Join us for some problem-solving fun with the Work It Out Wombats. Over the three-week program, we'll do hands-on activities, watch "Wombats" videos and listen to stories to learn computational thinking skills. Ages 4-6. 6 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge. gladl.org.

Tuesday, March 4

"A Course in Miracles" Discussion Group, with Lisa Schmidt - 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

Acting 101 for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 7 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Acting Ensemble Class for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 8 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Al-Anon Meeting - 9 a.m. Alano Club South, 3500 S. Cedar St., Lansing. cmialanon.org.

Al-Anon Meeting - 7 p.m. St. Jude Church, 801 N. Bridge St., DeWitt. cmialanon.org.

Beginning West Coast Swing Group Dance Class - Eight-week class. 8 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. To register, call 517-364-8800. uofmhealthsparrow.org/our-hospitals-services/michigan-athletic-club.

See Events, Page 21

Brewitt Cafe & Bakery expands into Allen Neighborhood Center

By LEO V. KAPLAN

At 6 years old, Erin Witt loved mixing up homemade concoctions and offering them to her neighbors.

Now 23, she's running her own cafe and bakery — and she's still having fun with it.

Brewitt Cafe & Bakery

1615 E. Kalamazoo St., Lansing
3–7 p.m. Wednesday
9 a.m.–4 p.m. Thursday–Sunday
(989) 838-9068
brewittcafebakery.com

Brewitt Cafe & Bakery opened Jan. 15 in the Allen Neighborhood Center's accelerator kitchen. The eatery features loaded waffles and savory waffle sandwiches, plus cold brew coffee and house-made cookies.

Brewitt was previously run out of a food truck, which Witt intends to continue operating this spring and summer, after she finds some more employees. For now, it's just Witt and her mother, Donna.

Witt said she's dreamt of owning a cafe and bakery since she was in high school, after binging "The Great British Baking Show" sparked an obsession with baking.

"I really started to get into it and realized I would love to own a bakery in the future," she said. "But at that point it was just a dream."

She was studying to be a therapist at Lansing Community College when she started working at Good Eats Diva, a now-defunct local bakery. The experience and mentorship made her dream feel tangible, so when Good Eats Diva shut down around the time of the COVID lockdown, she seized the opportunity to start making custom cakes from home. From there, the seeds of Brewitt slowly sprouted.

"I did custom cakes for a year or so," Witt said. "Then I transitioned into a farmers market where I made custom cakes and an array of baked goods. That's where I met someone who persuaded me into purchasing a food truck.

"I basically just took the leap," she continued.

That food truck went through multiple iterations as Witt defined her vision. Its first lasted only a month.

"At the very beginning, the menu was paninis," she said. "We made homemade focaccia and our own sandwiches. But that wasn't inspiring.

"That was during the winter, and the winter and food trucks don't mix well," she added. "Especially for someone who doesn't know how to operate a food truck."

While working a different job, Witt had the idea to sell loaded waffles. Then, when she needed a savory option for a National Nurses Week event in Owosso, she created a Southwest turkey waffle sandwich, which is still on the menu.

"That was the start of it all," she said.

After multiple customers encouraged Witt to look into the Allen Neighborhood Center, she decided to pursue the lead.

"We had so much momentum going toward the end of our season," she said. "I loved this job, and I didn't want it to end. I thought I was ready to expand into something bigger than a food truck."

Now situated at the Allen Center, Witt is excited to see the menu evolve further. In addition to Brewitt's rotating specials, like a Dubai chocolate waffle, she aims to expand the menu's permanent selections with items such as a fried chicken waffle sandwich. She also hopes to buy an espresso machine.

Courtesy Erin Witt

Erin Witt (left) and her mother, Donna, hold the new sign for their Allen Neighborhood Center location.

As she looks to the future, Witt doesn't expect the accelerator kitchen to be her final stop. But she's certainly not rushing to get out.

"I love the kitchen, and I love the community," she said. "There are so many great resources here."

Events

from page 20

Big 10 Collegiate Mental Health Center Conference - Theme is "Multiple Ways of Knowing, Doing and Being in Collegiate Mental Health: A collective call for social justice through integrated, holistic and multicultural responsive care." 7 a.m. Kellogg Hotel, 219 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. eventbrite.com/o/michigan-state-university-17719520422.

Bookend Gallery Display by Lucy Synk and Dorothy Engelman - Lucy has brought us a stellar display in oils, while Dorothy presents a zentangle perspective on the universe! Noon-4 p.m. Haslett Library, 1590 Franklin St., Haslett. cadl.org/about/our-locations/haslett.

Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

Hay Production 101 - Virtual course aimed at first-time and beginner hay growers, plus anyone looking to increase their knowledge. Topic will be "Cost of Production & Marketing." 7 p.m. Register at canr.msu.edu/events/2025-hay-production-101.

Intermediate Ballet for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 11 a.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Level I Dance for Kids - 15-week class. Ages 5-8. 4 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Parkinson's Exercise: Balance, Conditioning and Strength - Free exercise class for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers. 1 p.m. Michigan Athletic Club, 2900 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. To register, call 517-364-8800. lapsg.org.

Preteen Reads Book Club - Each participant reads the same book beforehand and comes to the meeting ready to chat, eat snacks and have book-related fun. Grades 4-6. Registration req. 6 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

Trivia at Lansing Shuffle - 7:30-9 p.m. 325 Riverfront Drive, Lansing. 517-940-4365. lansingshuffle.com.

Wednesday, March 5

"A Course of Love" Zoom Discussion Group, with Lucille Olson and Bill Dietrich - Group reads a section of the book each week and discusses the insightful ideas. 7 p.m. Zoom ID: 177 417 886. Passcode: 601744. unitylansing.org.

Acting & Glee Music Class for Kids - 15-week class. Ages 5-12. 4:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

Al-Anon Meeting - 6 p.m. Okemos Community Church, 4734 Okemos Road, Okemos. cmialanon.org.

Beginning Tap Dance for Teens & Adults - 7:45 p.m. The Studio Performing Arts Center, 5015 Park Lake Road, East Lansing. 517-336-4088. dancesingact.com.

Beginning Ballet for Adults - 6:45 p.m. The Studio Performing Arts Center, 5015 Park Lake Road, East Lansing. 517-336-4088. dancesingact.com.

Big 10 Collegiate Mental Health Center Conference - Theme is "Multiple Ways of Knowing, Doing and Being in Collegiate Mental Health: A collective call for social justice through integrated, holistic and multicultural responsive care." 7 a.m. Kellogg Hotel, 219 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing. eventbrite.com/o/michigan-state-university-17719520422.

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Check Out the Art! - Beat the winter blues with a visit to Okemos Library's Event Room to see unique and interesting artwork by members of the Lansing Women Artists Collective. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos. cadl.org/about/our-locations/okemos.

"Farmland: Food, Justice, and Sovereignty" - 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Drive, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.

Fitness Over 50! Exercise Group - The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Stretch and Flex Exercise group exercises at the Meridian Mall food court through April. 9-10 a.m. 1982 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos. meridian50plus.com.

Improv Acting for Teens & Adults - 15-week class, meets biweekly. 8:30 p.m. Ruhala Performing Arts Center, 1846 Haslett Road, East Lansing. 517-337-0464. ruhalacenter.com.

It's Elementary - Learn how to catch a leprechaun using science, then build a leprechaun trap! Grades 4-6. Registration req. 6 p.m. Charlotte Community Library, 226 S. Bostwick St., Charlotte. charlottelibrary.org.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 16

B	A	N	C	■	I	S	M	■	G	O	T	M	A	D
A	L	P	H	A	B	E	T	■	A	R	I	A	N	A
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E	D	O	■	C	H	I	C	A	G	O	■	I	K	E
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SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 16

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

FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Enjoy a Mediterranean feast at East Lansing's new Chtoura Grill

By LIZY FERGUSON

East Lansing's Hannah Plaza is home to a world of cuisines: Indian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Chinese and now Middle Eastern, with the opening of Chtoura Mediterranean Grill in the space formerly occupied by Sultan's. Specializing in Lebanese dishes, Chtoura offers the usual suspects expected of a Middle Eastern restaurant menu, as well as some less familiar choices.

I love to try new things, so I opted for the maklouba plate without knowing exactly what that was. As it turns out, maklouba is a traditional dish where meat, rice and fried vegetables are placed in a pot in layers. When it's served, the pot is turned upside down — the Arabic word for which is where the dish gets its name. Because of the layering, when it's inverted, it resembles a cake. The dish is served at large gatherings and celebrations.

THE DISH

Maklouba plate

$14.99

Chtoura Mediterranean Grill

4790 Hagadorn Road, Suite 164, East Lansing

11 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday

11 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday

11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Sunday

(517) 721-1248

chtouragrill.com

Because I received a single serving, I missed out on this effect, but I was nonetheless impressed. Chtoura's maklouba comes with yellow rice, fried eggplant and chicken, as well as a side of garlic sauce and a choice of soup or salad. I opted for the Greek salad, which, along with feta and black olives, contained ribbons of carrot that were pickled in the dressing. These bright, acidic flavors paired beautifully with the earthy, savory, cinnamon- and clove-spiced rice; the luscious fried eggplant; and the tender, shawarma-like chicken. There were also toasted slivers of almond, which were a tasty surprise every time they ended up in a bite.

All this and I haven't even mentioned the bread! Small rounds of pillow-soft pita were perfect for stuffing with a layer of garlic sauce, a healthy portion of salad and a bit of everything else, then dipping in the silky-smooth hummus, which I added to the order. Bread is a welcome accompaniment to most meals, but Chtoura's bread and maklouba were a match made in heaven.

Lizy Ferguson for City Pulse

The maklouba plate at East Lansing's new Chtoura Mediterranean Grill is loaded with luscious fried eggplant; tender, shawarma-like chicken; and fragrant, savory rice.

When ordering takeout from Chtoura, the first thing you'll notice is the heft of the bags. You could easily get another meal, if not two, out of the huge portion sizes, which is lucky because you'll immediately want to go back for more.

TOP 5 DINING GUIDE

THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN GREATER LANSING AS DECIDED BY CITY PULSE READERS

TOP 5 CUPCAKES

Based on your votes in City Pulse's 2024 Top of the Town contest. Bon appétit!

1. Cakes-A-Bloomin'

Bakery offering custom cakes as well as cookies, cupcakes and pastries
412 Elmwood Road, Lansing
(517) 321-2230
cakes-a-bloomin.com
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday
10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday

2. Flour Child Bakery

Bakery and cafe serving a variety of sweet and savory treats
323 S. Bridge St., Grand Ledge
(517) 622-4772
flourchildbakeryandcafe.com
6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday
6 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday

3. Nothing Bundt Cakes

Bakery chain offering bundt cakes in a range of sizes, from bite sized to tiered
2090 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos
(517) 220-0303
nothingbundtcakes.com
9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday
9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday
10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday

4. Sugar Shack

Sweet shop with a rotating cupcake selection, plus other treats
215 N. Clippert St., Lansing
(517) 316-2009
sugarshackshop.com
11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday-Thursday
11 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday-Saturday

5. Sweet Encounter Bakery & Cafe

Bakery and cafe specializing in gluten-free, peanut-free and vegan desserts
300 S. Washington Square, Lansing
(517) 730-5005
sweetencounterbakery.com
8 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday-Friday
9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday

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Best BBQ Sauce
Best Wings
Best Caterer/ Catering service

meat
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9 AM - 3 PM

LUNCH DINNER
TUES - FRI 9 AM - 3 PM
TUES - SAT 5 PM - 9 PM

SUNDAY DINNER SERVICE
5 PM - 8 PM

HAPPY HOUR
TUESDAY - SATURDAY
3 PM - 5 PM

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Wine Bar
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Phone: (517) 349- 8680

Tap Room
Open Monday - Saturday for dinner
Tap Room open for lunch on Tuesday - Saturday

voted #1 Top of the Town 2024 CityPULSE
Best Restaurant Wine List

CELLAR & WINE BAR
1839 W Grand River Ave. Okemos, MI 48864

THE TAP ROOM
1857 W Grand River Ave. Okemos, MI 48864

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