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Magazine

July 2017

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Commentary Don't forget the Aug. 8 primary: it affects the city and your life

By Paul Rozycki

In light of recent terrorist threats at Bishop Airport, criminal indictments of state water officials, continuing squabbles between the Flint City Council and the mayor over the source of Flint's water, the hype over a \$50 million election in Georgia, and endless tweets from the president, this August's election in Flint may seem of little consequence.

Perhaps by comparison it is. And I suspect that unfortunately the voter turnout will reflect that. August primaries don't usually gather much attention or many voters — especially when we are not electing a governor or a president.

However, this Aug. 8, voters in Flint will face two major questions. Who should represent each ward on the city council and should the new city charter be approved? Normally neither of those issues generate much energy or excitement, but they are both critically important for Flint and its future, especially as it continues the slow, uncertain process of emerging from emergency managers, state supervision, and the Receivership Transition Advisory Board (RTAB).

City Council primary

The city council contests have produced 29 candidates (nine incumbents and 20 challengers) — one of the largest field of office seekers in years. In three wards (the 1st, 4th, and 5th) there are only two candidates and there is no need for a primary election. However in the other six wards multiple challengers have filed, and the top two finishers in the August primary will face off in the November election. Over the next month, take the time to learn about the city council candidates in your ward. (See *Jan Worth-Nelson's overview, p.8*). Tom Sumner's radio program, WFOV on station 92.1 FM, will have interviewed nearly all of the candidates by election day and those interviews will be archived and available for anyone who want to listen to them (www.tomsumnerprogram.com). Look for community groups to sponsor forums for the candidates as well.

With the ever-changing challenge of Flint's water crisis, and the possibility of a mayoral recall, the near future seems likely to be a tumultuous

time for the city of Flint and the city council. More than ever we need level-headed leadership.

A new city charter?

The second major issue facing the voters will be the opportunity to approve a new charter for the city.

The current city charter was last revised in 1974, when Flint's population was a nearly 200,000. We had almost 80,000 well-paid GM jobs in the county, and it seemed that the city would do nothing but expand and prosper.

We are clearly in a very different time, and it's not hard to make a case that the charter created for the 1970s deserves a new look and revision.

For as important as it is, the charter commission has received relatively little public attention for their efforts. Whatever one's view of the charter, those who served on the commission deserve thanks for taking on a complex and tedious task that could only appeal to political science professors and policy geeks. The commissioners, who have worked long and hard the last two years to produce the new charter are: Cleora Magee, chair, John Cherry, vice chair, Quincy Murphy*, Victoria McKenzie, Charles Metcalf, Heidi Phaneuf, Jim Richardson, Marsha Wesley, and Barry Williams. (*Murphy replaced Brian Larkin, who resigned from the position after he was appointed to head Flint's Planning and Development Department.)

The 77-page document goes into deeper detail of the operation of the city's government. In brief, the key elements are as follows:

What hasn't changed:

In spite of earlier speculation that the commission might recommend a change from a strong-mayor to a city-manager form of government, the proposed charter retains the strong mayor form, and keeps a nine-member council, representing the nine wards of the city.

What has changed:

- The proposed new city charter would:
- Create a panel to enforce and define ethical behavior for city employees.
 - Require clear statement of qualifications expected of city employees.
 - Require both the mayor and council to be elected to four-year terms, in the same

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Cover: Patriot bikes



Photograph by Edwin D. Custer

Photo of the Month: Summer means lingering outdoors at Steady Eddy's

First Literary Festival bringing together host of writers

By Megan Ockert

The first-ever Flint Literary Festival takes flight July 21-22 with a lineup of four acclaimed writers with Flint roots, along with panel discussions, book-signing receptions and a fiction writing workshop.



The festival's featured authors, all acclaimed and much-published, are poet Sarah Carson, novelists Christopher Paul Curtis and Christine Maul Rice, and short story writer Kelsey Ronan.

A collaboration between the Flint Public Library, Gothic Funk Press and *East Village Magazine*, the event is free and open to the public. All events except one will be at the library, 1026 E. Kearsley St. in the Flint Cultural Center.



Curtis

The festival aims both to celebrate Flint's literary history and the work of contemporary writers in and from the city, according to event organizer Connor Coyne of Flint, a writer himself and publisher of Gothic Funk Press.

A five-member planning committee chose the theme Flight to represent the "gravity-defying powers of the human

creative spirit," Coyne said. "My goal is for the festival to bring together writers, readers, and publishers who can create opportunities for one another."

Readings by Rice, author of the 2016 novel *Swarm Theory*, and much-published fiction writer Ronan, a Hopwood Award winner, will kick off the event at 6 p.m. Friday.



Ronan

A moderated question-and-answer session will be followed by a light reception. The day will conclude with an open mic night and after hours party at The Golden Leaf Club, 1522 Harrison St.

Saturday's schedule begins with panel discussions from noon to 5 p.m. and guest readings from writers from Flint and farther afield between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Topics for the panels include tips on publishing, journalism and literature, telling Flint's stories from multiple perspectives, youth and literature in Flint, and the "sounds of art," an exploration of spoken word and the oral tradition.

Carson, author of several praised poetry collections including *Poems in Which You Die* and Christopher Paul Curtis,

Newberry Medal and Coretta Scott King award winner and author of *Bud, Not Buddy*, *The Watsons Go To Birmingham -1963* and other much-prized novels with Flint elements, will conclude the festival with readings at 6 p.m. Saturday.



Carson

The festival also includes a workshop for fiction writers led by Rice. The two-hour workshop will be Saturday, July 22 from 10 a.m. to noon. Admission into the free workshop is by application only and space is limited. Apply by July 7 at www.flintliteraryfestival.org/fiction-workshop-application.

An alum of the Flint Youth Theatre, Coyne grew up in Flint and graduated from Flushing High School. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago, and a Master of Fine Arts in fiction writing from the New School in New York City. In 2010, after the birth of his first daughter, Coyne and



Rice

(Continued on Page 5.)

... Festival

(Continued from Page 4.)

his wife moved to Flint to be closer to family.



Coyne

"I've always loved Flint," said Coyne, who also teaches writing to teens at the Flint Public Library. "I've kind of been all over the map, but Flint has always been home to me, and I think it always will be."

Coyne has also self-published two novels, *Shattering Glass* and *Hungry Rats*, with some of his nonfiction work appearing in *Belt Magazine* and *Vox.com* among other publications. He is currently looking to publish a novel about Flint he's been working on since 1996.

Kelsey Ronan, one of the featured authors at the literary festival has had the opportunity to share her recently finished Flint-based "novel-in-stories" in cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, and Spartanburg, S.C. This will be her first time sharing her work at home.

"I just moved back to Michigan after living in Indiana and Missouri for the last six years, and having Flint's first literary festival happen so soon after feels like the most auspicious and joyous of homecomings," said Ronan. "I'm honored to be featured among writers I love."

Coyne credits his exposure to such cities as Chicago and New York City for this inspiration behind the Flint Literary Festival, saying wherever he found communities of writers, publishers, academics, nonprofits, and other creative people, there were celebrations of art and literature.

"Flint has all of these things," said Coyne. "It occurred to me that not only could Flint mount its own successful literary festival, but that this would be enriching for readers and writers. It would bring us into closer contact with one another, teach us the value of each others' work and project out into the world the wealth of ideas here and our hunger to share them."

Ronan agrees that any city's literary history bears significance, saying she first started seeing cities similar to Flint appear in literature when she was a teenager.

"It was never Flint of course, but something in the way Carson McCullers would describe poverty and politics of small-town Georgia, for instance, or Joyce could so clearly and precisely render the streets

of Dublin from smokestacks to church spires would resonate with me."

She points to Jeffery Eugenides' *Middlesex*, a historical epic about Detroit that also mentions the city of Flint, crediting it as a defining moment.

Ronan adds, "It confirmed for me what I was beginning to suspect: that you didn't have to write about New York or Paris or whatever glittering metropolis to be an artist. Gritty places can be beautiful, too."

While Coyne argues that any time is a good time to celebrate your literary history, he believes now is an opportune time to focus on Flint's in particular, pointing to the nation-wide coverage of the water crisis. Coyne said he hopes this event will get residents involved and excited about answering the question of how Flint plans to address its decline in wealth, population, and what the city will be in the future.

"There are immediate and future concerns related to the water crisis, which has garnered a lot of coverage from outside of the city, picking apart that tragedy. A lot of that coverage has been superb, but at the same time, we haven't always heard the voices of residents."

Coyne is hoping that the Flint Literary Festival will give Flint residents a voice. "Literature is voice. Writing is voice. Readers acknowledge the voices of writers and validate their labor. So the more we write and read as a community, the more we promote and legitimize our point of view. Writing and reading is a profound act of solidarity."

After recently being sneered at for telling an acquaintance she was from Flint, Ronan is a firm believer that celebrating the city's literature can be an exercise in empathy, and says this is especially important in 2017. "Literature is a way to tell stories that are more complicated and rich than any ruin porn or crime statistic on the internet. It's a way to celebrate where we're from — even troubled and beloved Flint — and defy the narrative imposed on us."

EVM staff writer Megan Ockert can be reached at ockertma@gmail.com.

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“Flint Folks” shine through Dan White’s camera lens

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Pulitzer Prize winner Dan White, 60, has spent decades photographing Kansas City jazz musicians, cowboys, the Lost Boys of Sudan, Zapotec women of Oaxaca, and aboriginal peoples of Australia.



Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson

Dan White

In a warm gravelly voice suggesting he’s been around, White said the water crisis was the impetus for his return.

“I had to do something for the folks here, for my hometown,” he said, adding he hopes his photos will help bring the community together. He also hopes the project — 50 to

grew up in a well-known extended Vehicle City family, to fall in love again with the faces and stories of his hometown. He says he hopes his work — to be featured in the Capitol Theater at its opening in September — will make a contribution to the now-troubled city that he says nurtured him well.



Photo by Dan White

Bluesman Joel Bye in Buckham Alley

60 full-color, four-foot-by-six-foot portraits of Flint people — will be shown elsewhere, helping spread what he sees as testimony to the resilience and dignity of Flint residents to the rest of the world.

White’s work has appeared in Flint once before — a 2009 solo show of 50 of his portraits of Kansas City jazz musicians at the Flint Institute of Arts.

Because of family connections, the longtime Kansas City resident said he comes back to Flint several times a year. During a September visit last year he began to shape plans for his project called “Flint Folks: A Tribute” and has been back for extended working visits several times since. So far he’s photographed about 35 people, a little more than halfway there. He’s here this summer, expecting to put in six more weeks in mid-July through August.

Then he’ll go home to make the prints on a big Epson printer in his Kansas City studio and prepare for the September opening.

The project is documented at dan-white.com, and a Kickstarter campaign to fund it, aiming to raise \$12,000 by July 18, is accessible through his website.

His subjects so far include Lottie Reid of the Golden Leaf Club, Blue Hawaiians front man Joel Bye, spoken word artist Mama Sol, Tapology duo Cherisse and Ali Bradley, U.S. Congressman Dan Kildee, University of Michigan Regent emerita Libby Maynard, Flint sports hero Norm Bryant, artist Ryan Gregory, MaMang restaurateur Tony Vu, water activist Tony Palladeno, and many more.

He says he’s been blown away by Flint’s panoply of people and stories.

“I’ll tell you what, that’s been one of the most fun things about being here — to learn about your city that you grew up in, anew. I’m seeing things I never knew were here, meeting people I never knew — it’s really cool.”

In the narrative accompanying the online account of the project so far, White recalls “sitting on my dad’s shoulders to see President John F. Kennedy ride down the street in an open convertible.

“I made a mental picture of that moment,” he writes, “recalling the vibrancy and optimism of not only the president, but

also of that energetic and seemingly boundless Midwestern city.”

“Decades later,” he writes, “my hometown has declined in stature, health, and wealth, while being dragged into the front pages of newspapers and websites around the country.

But he said he sees a Flint not readily visible



The Bradley sisters of Tapology

Photo by Dan White

from the headlines, and he believes his photographs can make a difference.

“All my visual journeys return to my favorite subject matter,” he said, “individual people who have personal stories to

tell.”

He described his Flint subjects, many of whom have been or have become friends, as “some of the finest people I have come to know ... proud, hard-working, humble and giving.” He found his subjects by starting with a few people he knew, and then simply asking, “Who do you think would be a good candidate for this project?” And then he just asked people he saw on the street, and plans to do more of that when he returns for his last rounds of photo shoots in August.

The son of late Flint attorney Charlie White, he is the brother of filmmaker Laurie White, now of Ann Arbor. His long-distance girlfriend is Melissa Stanzler, now of Los Angeles, the daughter of the late Jack and Phoebe Stanzler, both longtime physicians and residents of the College Cultural neighborhood. After the Stanzlers divorced, Laurie White became Jack Stanzler’s second wife, so the two families are intricately entwined.

“You could say I’m dating my step-niece,” he said with a chuckle.

White’s Flint ancestry itself carries the stamp of iconic Americana. White’s grandfather’s birth name was Chimovitz, and when he and his brothers immigrated to the U.S. in the early 20th century from Lithuania, like many other immigrants eager to be accepted, the grandfather changed his name to “White.” The other five brothers didn’t, but ended up in the Southeast Michigan area, too, meaning the clan of Chimovitzes were a

(Continued on Page 7.)

... Camera

(Continued from Page 6.)

big part of White's childhood.

"I'm a Chimovitz," he states with a frank smile.

In Flint, White's grandfather started out as a haberdasher on Leith Street and had dreamed of a shop in downtown Flint, White said. But he lost his business during the Depression, and as White described it, "never quite recovered." White's father was born and raised in Flint and, as a longtime local attorney, served on the Hurley Hospital board for many years.

White, like his father, a Northern High School graduate, said he had been turned on to photography as a boy by his cousin, Jeff Chimovitz, now a Grand Blanc attorney. Chimovitz had a darkroom and let him experiment and learn.

White started out as a high school student at the Flint Journal, where he learned from the late photojournalist Barry Edmonds. He apprenticed at a series of other newspapers, eventually getting a photojournalism degree from the University of Missouri. He went to Kansas City to work at The Kansas City Star. It was there he was part of the Pulitzer Prize-winning team,

which won for its coverage of the 1981 Hyatt Hotel skywalk collapse that killed 114. Now he is a full-time commercial and portrait photographer, happy in Kansas City but also from time to time roaming the country and the globe.

He uses a Canon 5D, digital 50-megapixel big file camera and a Leica medium format model.

He has spent decades since his cousin's Flint darkroom perfecting his craft, adapting as the technology changed and digital methods emerged.

"The print has always been really, really important to me as a photographer and craftsman," he said. "I spent many years in the darkroom, years and years, and then, as digital came along, I was a very early adapter, trying to see if I could get prints that looked anything as good as a silver print out of a darkroom. The inks got better and better, the media got better and better. And now it's quite, quite good. It's a little different, but the inks and the paper now are good stuff."

"I'm very much a guy who's interested in process," he said. "The darkroom was always important to me. Even when I worked in newspapers, we had people who would develop your film, but I always did it myself — I did my own chemistry. I wanted that consistent result. I liked that part of it."

Now he uses PhotoShop as "a digital darkroom." He said he was concerned the parts he liked about the darkroom would be lost when digital came along, but he's learned he can create "a beautiful file that you can make a print of that can go 44 x 60."

In addition to the uses of the darkroom — actual or digital — White also is in love with light. He uses it in almost every shot. Whether it's the flare of bluesman Joel Bye's cigarette lighter or the bright pattern of window shadows on the floor behind Tapology's Charisse and Ali Bradley, the play of light — the photographer's metier, after all — is passionate and gorgeous.

Inevitably, a major part of his effort since September has included fundraising for the Flint project, "begging, borrowing and cobbling together," he said. Initial contributions from UM-Flint and the Hagerman Foundation have materialized so far, and the Kickstarter campaign aims to raise \$12,000 by July 18.

Funds will cover printing and design costs, travel, support for a studio assistant, and hanging the show.

EVM Editor Jan Worth-Nelson can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com. Many thanks to Dan White for allowing us to use two of his photos for this article.

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Faith community condemns acts of violence, prays for peace

By Aubrey McClain

Shortly before 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 21, the Flint community awaited word on what social media outlets and early news publications described as an “incident” at Bishop International Airport.

An airport officer, Lt. Jeff Neville, had been stabbed in the neck, allegedly by Amor F. Ftouhi, who, later investigations revealed, holds dual citizenship in Canada and Tunisia. Ftouhi reportedly entered the United States legally at Lake Champlain, New York before heading to Flint.

As news spread about the attack, Marie McLaughlin, a member of the Flint Islamic Center (FIC), recalled praying that it was just another case of workplace violence and not a Muslim who had perpetrated this crime.

Another member of the FIC, Lama Nashawi, said she had similar feelings when hearing the news and began to immediately pray for Lt. Neville.

“When I learned that it was done by someone who claims he is a Muslim! Of course I was shocked,” Nashawi said.

The Flint Islamic Center issued a press release later that night stating their outrage and condemning the act.

“What happened this morning was a despicable act of violence that cannot be justified under any circumstance,” said Dr. Mohammed Saleem, president of the Management Committee at the FIC. He also asked the community not to allow others with personal political agendas to divide us.

The FIC community held a private prayer

service that evening on what is considered the holiest night during the month of Ramadan. The focus of prayer was for a speedy recovery for Lt. Neville.

A spokesperson for the FIC, Muna Jondy, said she hopes for the Flint community to come together to show unity during this difficult time. She also urged for the event not to allow division to come between people. “It’s not who we stand for. It’s not who we are,” Jondy said.

An interfaith prayer service organized by the FIC was held at Willson Park on the UM-Flint campus at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 22. Approximately 75 people attended, from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths, including Flint Mayor Karen Weaver and leaders from each faith community.

Reflecting on the interfaith service, Marissa Lawton, a member of Woodside Church in Flint, stated the atmosphere was one of a “defiant peace.” Those in attendance were in prayer for Lt. Neville, but she said there was also underlying anger from all faiths represented that someone would do such a terrible thing.

A repeated theme from the speakers at the vigil, she said, was that as a community, Flint would not be destroyed by the actions of one person and that the people of Flint have more in common than not.

Nashawi said she wishes for more people to understand those who follow Islam, an Abrahamic faith like Judaism and Christianity.

“We lead normal lives, we have families, we have kids, we have hopes and worries like everyone else. We would like to be happy and safe like everyone else,” Nashawi said.

The FIC also launched a \$10,000 campaign on Launch Good (an Islamic fundraising website much like GoFundMe) and attained their goal within a week of the campaign’s start. A total of \$10,021 was given by 116 supporters. All funds will be given to Lt. Neville’s family to cover any expenses he may incur. The drive was slated to close to donations on July 5, but due to the success of funds raised so quickly, the Launch Good campaign closed early.

Ftouhi has been retained in the Genesee County Jail since the attack, facing a criminal complaint alleging violence at an international airport. As of a June 28 hearing, he will stay in jail through the trial.

United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions assured the public that anyone attacking law enforcement would be investigated and charged to the fullest extent of the law. Just before noon the day of the attack, Gov. Rick Snyder asked via Twitter for Lt. Neville to be in the public’s thoughts and prayers.

Lt. Neville was released from the hospital on Monday, June 26.

EVM staff writer Aubrey McClain can be reached at mccclain.aubrey@gmail.com

Aug. 8 election includes council contests, city charter approval

By Jan Worth-Nelson

On Aug. 8 Flint voters in six of the city’s nine wards will have a chance to narrow the field for city council seats from a primary slate.

The top finishers will then face each other in the Nov. 8 election, when residents from all nine wards will have a voice in the makeup of the next city council.

In addition, on Aug. 8 voters will be asked to approve a revised city charter, produced after two years of work by an elected charter commission and a series of public hearings. It is the first revision in 40 years. (see Paul Rozycki’s column in this issue, p. 3, for details).

In three of the city’s nine wards, only two candidates were certified, meaning no primary runoff is needed, so they will not appear on the Aug. 8 primary election ballot. However, all

nine wards will have candidates on the ballot in the Nov. 8 election.

All seats are for four-year terms, with the next council election scheduled for 2021.

The candidates, by ward, are as follows:

First Ward: (Nov. 8 ballot only)

Incumbent: Eric Mays

Challenger: Anita L. Brown

Second Ward:

Incumbent: Jacqueline Poplar

Challengers: Valencia Bettle, David Davenport, Maurice D. Davis, Sharmain Nixon-Gatlin.

Third Ward:

Incumbent: Kerry L. Nelson (Council Pres.)

Challengers: Linda K. Boose, Santino J. Guerra, Quincy Murphy

Fourth Ward: (Nov. 8 ballot only)

Incumbent: Kate Fields

Challenger: Michael Doan

Fifth Ward: (Nov. 8 ballot only)

Incumbent: Wantwaz Davis

Challenger: Jerri Winfrey Carter

Sixth Ward:

Incumbent: Herbert J. Winfrey

Challengers: Deltonya F. Burns, Chia C. Morgan

Seventh Ward:

Incumbent: Monica S. Galloway

Challengers: Loyce M. Driskell, Marcus Eubanks, Heather Morolla Kale, Mercedes Kinnee

Eighth Ward:

Incumbent: Vicki VanBuren

Challengers: Joyce Ellis-McNeal, Louis A. Griggs

Ninth Ward:

Incumbent: Scott Kincaid

Challengers: Erik Roebuck, Eva Worthing

Flint residents face water uncertainty amid city council chaos, MDEQ lawsuit, indictments

By Jan Worth-Nelson

The month of June delivered a series of blows to progress toward clean drinking water and restoring trust for the city's weary residents.

At a June 26 meeting, after four hours of raucous infighting, the City Council declined to sign on to Mayor Karen Weaver's proposal for a 30-year-contract with the Great Lakes Water Authority, an option for continuing water delivery to the city that had been under consideration for several months. Council members contended they had not had enough time to study the implications.

Alternate proposals left dangling

Two council members, Herbert Winfrey and Monica Galloway, presented alternative proposals but the mayor, leaping from her front row seat in a passionate rejoinder, protested the council had had plenty of time, and consideration of the alternate proposals would require an untenable process of vetting. She also reviewed details about the GLWA proposal but her comments did not change the council's resistance.

MDEQ strikes back

Two days later, in response, citing federal provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) initiated legal action to override the council's inaction and order the city into agreement with the GLWA proposal.



Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson

Activist Tony Palladeno assails council

RTAB steps in, revokes moratorium

On the same day, the Receivership Transition Advisory Board (RTAB), a state-appointed body overseeing the city's transition from its last emergency manager, struck down a moratorium on putting unpaid water bills on county tax rolls. This means that people who don't pay their water bills will see their outstanding balances on their July

17 tax bill, and nonpayment could lead to imposition of a lien on the home.

• However, the RTAB did approve a three-month extension to the current contract with the GLWA, a delay the council had demanded, voicing concerns about water rates under the long-term proposal.

Mayor orders lien transfer hold after all

While the city's finance director, David Sabuda, said lifting the moratorium might provide the city millions of dollars, the mayor herself registered an objection, and ordered Sabuda not to transfer liens to the county.

"I do not agree with the RTAB's decision," she said in a statement released June 28, though she said the council's refusal to sign on to the proposal "means the City will now have to purchase water at a much higher price."

In a separate statement, reacting to the MDEQ lawsuit, Weaver stated, "While disappointing that the state and federal government are now involved in making a decision we as City leaders should be making for Flint, I cannot say that I am surprised."

"We were notified that legal action would be a consequence of Council choosing not to meet the requirements set before them to approve a long-term water source for Flint," she said. "The recommendation I put forward months ago is the best option to protect public health and is supported by the public health community."

Speaking after the June 26 council meeting, Council president Kerry Nelson voiced exasperation at the state of affairs, suggesting the state's urgency now is an ironic twist from what he described as its lack of action in 2015 as the crisis unfolded.

Six more indicted by State AG

Finally, in June, six more players in the water crisis — bringing the total to 15 and including several top state officials — were indicted by State Attorney General Bill Schuette. Five of the six face charges of involuntary manslaughter related to 12 deaths from Legionnaire's Disease in the summer and fall of 2015.

Those indictments included Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon, former Emergency Manager Darnell Earley — who had already been indicted on other charges — and former City of Flint Water

Department Manager Howard Croft.

Also indicted for involuntary manslaughter were former Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Drinking Water Chief Liane Shekter-Smith and Water Supervisor Stephen Busch.

Dr. Eden Wells, chief medical executive of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, was charged with obstruction of justice and lying to a peace officer.

EVM Editor Jan Worth-Nelson can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com.

Pipes replaced so far in Flint: 1,871

Source: June 26 press release from Kristen Moore, public relations director, City of Flint

Lead-tainted service lines at 973 homes have been replaced so far in Phase 4 of the city's FAST Start program, which aims to replace pipes at 6,000 homes in 2017. That brings the total of residential pipe replacements so far to 1,871.

Mayor Karen Weaver said she hopes to have all of Flint's lead-tainted service lines — nearly 20,000 — replaced by 2020.

Although the water quality has been declared improved, residents still are urged to drink only filtered water and replace filters when needed.

To be eligible for service line replacements, Moore explained, residents must have an active water account. They also must have signed a consent card, being dropped off door-to-door, giving permission for the work to be done. In rental homes, both the owner and the tenant must sign consent cards. Moore urged residents to sign the consent cards as soon as possible, so crews working in their neighborhood can replace their service lines.

COLLEGE CULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION www.ccnafint.org

**Neighborhood Watch meets Thurs., July 20, 7-9 pm, in MCC's RTC 1301
Aug. 17, 7-9 pm, in MCC's RTC 1301
Membership meetings resume in Sept.**

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

"This Month" highlights a selection of interesting events available to our readers — beginning after our publication date of July 6. It is not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling of opportunities in the city.

Minecraft

For ages 10 and up, play Minecraft at the library. To register, call (810) 249 – 2569

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
Wednesdays & Saturdays July 5th through July 29, 3 p.m.	Exhibit/Game Admission: FREE	Flint Public Library 1026 E. Kearsley Street

Summer Reading Saturdays

Explore the library and a special program beginning each Saturday at 2 p.m. For more information, go to www.fpl.info.

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
SATURDAYS JULY 8 THROUGH JULY 29, 2 P.M.	Program Admission: FREE	Flint Public Library 1026 E. Kearsley Street

Teen Tech Camp

Teens can explore tech applications. For more information and to register, call (810) 249 – 2569

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
JULY 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 2-5 P.M.	Program Admission: FREE	Flint Public Library 1026 E. Kearsley Street

Euchre Tournament

Enter this euchre tournament for a chance to win cash prizes. Food will be available for purchase. For more information, call (810) 732 – 0720

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
FRIDAY, JULY 14, 6:30 P.M.	Tournament Admission: \$5	St. George Orthodox Church 5191 N. Lennon Rd.

Michigan Storytellers Festival

A day full of workshops and programs. A concert with professional tellers will go from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
SATURDAY, JULY 15, 9:00 A.M. - 9:30 P.M.	Festival Admission: FREE	Flint Public Library 1026 E. Kearsley Street

The Frog Prince

A morning performance and workshop on the lawn of the Flint Youth Theater. For ages 3 and up.

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
SATURDAY, JULY 22, 10:00 A.M.	Performance Admission: By donation	F.A. Bower Theater 1220 E. Kearsley Street

Flint Folk Music Festival

The Flint Folk Music Society presents the 18th folk music festival. Event includes a jam tent, a 50/50 raffle, and a ukulele raffle. Visit their site for more information at www.flintfolkmusic.org

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
SATURDAY, JULY 22, 11:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.	Festival, Admission: \$5 for Main Stage performances; all other events FREE	Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy

34th Ophelia Bonner Scholarship Fund Run/Walk

Founded by the late Ophelia Bonner, this race is to raise funds for a scholarship fund for students graduating high school. Bobby Crim will be a special guest. For more information, call (810) 423-1384.

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
SATURDAY, JULY 29, 8 A.M.	Admission with a t-shirt: \$15 early registration, \$20 late registration	University Pavilion, University of Michigan-Flint

Rumpelstiltskin

A morning performance and workshop on the lawn of the Flint Youth Theater. For ages three and up.

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>
SATURDAY, JULY 29, 10:00 A.M.	Performance Admission: By donation	F.A. Bower Theater 1220 E. Kearsley Street

Community Outreach and Resident Education

CALL FOR CORE

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- ✓ Faucet Replacement
- ✓ Nutrition Information
- ✓ Water Resources



**“Helping heal my community.”
Hired Flint Resident**

FLINT CARES



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... Primary

(Continued from Page 3.)

year as gubernatorial elections.

- Restructure executive departments to require a department of law, human resources, and finance, and allow the mayor to create another five departments for a total of eight. The mayor would also be allowed to appoint up to five additional members of his or her executive staff.

- “Reinvigorate, empower, and grant independence to Office of Ombudsman.” which has not been active for years. (The ombudsman is an official appointed to check government activity in the best interests of citizens and to oversee investigations involving complaints of improper government activities against citizens.)

- Clarify the role of the city council and require regular reporting from the mayor to the council.

- Eliminate raiding of water funds, require a more structured and open budgeting process, better budget monitoring, and improved estimates of city revenues.

- Create an assistance program to provide for more affordable water and sewer fees.

- Mandate a transparent accounting of water funds.

- Require voter approval before city assets are privatized.

To be sure, the above list is only a summary of the charter’s key points, and it’s worth taking the time to look at the whole document at flintcitycharter.com. For more information, Harold Ford’s article in the March edition of EVM summarizes much of the key history and background of Flint’s city charters.

The election’s importance

While the election of the city council and the approval of a new charter might seem to be separate and isolated issues, they share a common connection.

The charter is very important for Flint. Despite any debate over the pros and cons of a new charter, in the end, it is the people that matter. If we elect good, hard-working, dedicated officials, they can make most charters or organizations work reasonably well. If we elect incompetent, uninformed, self-serving officials they can foul up even the best organization and most well-written charters.

No piece of paper or document can guarantee one outcome or prevent the other.

It’s up to us.

Be sure to vote Aug. 8.

EVM political commentator Paul Rozycki can be reached at paul.rozycki@mcc.edu.

Village Life

How Flint Pride opened a community's welcoming embrace

By Meghan Christian

I have always considered myself to be an ordinary person. I did well in school, but wasn't the smartest kid. I was in theatre and choir, but never got the lead or a solo. I have always had great friends, but I wasn't one of the popular kids. I figured that I was just a square peg that fit into a square hole and that would be the end of it all. It wasn't until I was in middle school that I would start to feel a little less ordinary and it wasn't until high school that I would fully accept my uniqueness wholeheartedly. And what is it that makes me less ordinary than I thought? I'm a bisexual.

Unlike many other LGBTQ individuals, I cannot tell you about when I was six and I felt different than the other kids I was playing with. I cannot tell you about my first kiss with a member of the oppo-

site sex and say that I didn't feel anything. It wasn't until I was 13 that I began to feel less like a square peg and more like a rectangle one.

I don't even know if I was actually fully aware of it, but there was something about the idea that I could not be as normal as I thought that was difficult and I think it is for a lot of 13-year-olds. That coupled with the fact that I was vaguely aware even then of what people thought about girls who liked other girls. We've all heard it before and I bet we've even said some of those things before. "She's just looking for attention" or "She's only saying she's bi because she doesn't want to admit she's a lesbian."

Even though I am open about my sexuality, it wasn't until I was in college that I felt comfortable enough to fully embrace it. Maybe it had something to do with being around brand-new people who didn't know me beforehand that helped, but whatever it was, it felt great to be more vocal about being bisexual.

And now, being open about who I am feels more important than ever, especially as Pride Month comes to a close and our rights and humanity are being attacked and under-valued by a certain orange-skinned "politician."

While our future as a community feels uncertain, I was reminded this month of how blessed I am to be where I am, to be living during this time. I got to witness our community coming together regardless of any fear that we may be feeling. I got to watch as Grace Bacon, a 76-year-old transactivist, finally received recognition for her years of trailblazing, so people like me could openly be ourselves.

As a bisexual woman and a journalist, covering the Flint LGBTQ community has been incredibly fulfilling. Not because I am helping push some made-up agenda, but because this community, my community, is full of caring, passionate, and inspiring individuals who deserve to have their stories told. I just hope that I have done them justice so far.

Being a bisexual person comes with a lot of challenges from both the straight and

LGBTQ communities. Bisexuals are still seen as fence-sitters, sluts, people who cheat easily, and even more painfully, girls just pretending to be queer when they are really straight. Knowing this and the other stereotypes of bisexuals that are depicted in the media, I was a little nervous about attending Flint's Pride festival.

Flint's Pride in the Park event was on June 24, a beautiful Saturday afternoon, in Riverbank Park. The event featured tables from various local organizations trying to get more of us involved and other tables handing out information to help those new to the community and their loved ones to understand what it means to be LGBTQ. On the main stage, we got to watch amazing drag performances and Flint artists spread messages of love to everyone in attendance.

But none of these things were the best part of my Pride experience. For me, the greatest moment was seeing how many of us and our allies were there, laughing, dancing, and having a great time. The greatest moment was seeing a lesbian couple walk hand-in-hand without fear of harassment, seeing teens with Pride flags tied around them like capes. The greatest moment was seeing everyone there totally unafraid to just be themselves.

This month, I got to learn about the history of the Flint LGBTQ community and to hear one of the first transactivists share her story. I got to listen to speakers tell a church full of my people that we matter, that we are loved, and that we are safe here in Flint. I got to celebrate myself and others like me at Flint Pride. This month, I finally felt like a true part of the LGBTQ community.

EVM Managing Editor Meghan Christian can be reached at meghan.christian22@gmail.com.



Meghan Christian

REFUGEE By Grayce Scholt

**On the edge of everything
a cliff, perhaps, that rims a canyon
or a cradle where a newborn
looks but cannot see,**

**or the hundred, thousand stumps that
just before were forests
thick with nests, with grasses,
flowers, weeds replete with tiny feet that
blessed the in-the out of every burrow
that they knew as home.**

**Smoldering now, wide open
to the sky, the forest is a roiling sea of
corpses, men and women,
boys and girls whose hope
was only what was left of life
to cross to Lesbos, to any
shore on any island off
the coast of Greece.**

Grayce Scholt is a retired English professor from Mott College who wrote art reviews for the Flint Journal. Her book of poetry, Bang! Go All the Porch Swings, is available online from Amazon. A personal narrative of the poet's life in Europe in the early 1950s, Vienna, Only You, is available at gscholt09@comcast.net. The author's new book of poems, Night Song, is available from Friesen Press (www.friesenpress.com) and Amazon.