



# East Village

Magazine

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# East Village Magazine

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# Editorial *Is restoring trust as easy as turning a faucet?*

By Paul Rozycki

*Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships.*

—Stephen Covey

*Success has a thousand fathers. Failure is always an orphan.*

—attributed to Tacitus and Count Galezzo Ciano

**[Editor's note: While these are Paul Rozycki's personal views, they are shared by the EVM editorial board.]**

With Dr. Karen Weaver's decisive victory in Flint's recent mayoral election, most of us might hope that the water issue would be taken care of as well. Unfortunately, that won't be the case. As much as we'd like to move on to something else, this issue will be with us for some time. And we may be the first of many cities to face a serious water problem.

There are many lessons to be learned from Flint's ongoing water crisis, perhaps too many to list, but the most important lesson is that trust matters – and once lost, it's a long and difficult process to restore it.

That loss is reflected on many levels and was almost certainly a major factor in Weaver's win and Mayor Walling's defeat.

Trust in the competence of all government is called into question.

## Trust in the national government?

On the national level, trust in the ability of government to do the right thing has been slipping for decades, going back to Watergate and the Vietnam War. The most recent examples include Hurricane Katrina, the Iraq War, and Congress' inability to do much of anything at all. Today much of the appeal of a Donald Trump or a Ben Carson is that they aren't part of the government.

## Trust the governor?

On the state level, the trust in Governor Snyder and his wide use of Emergency Managers has certainly fallen to a new low. Yes, he and the state legislature finally came around with some aid, but it seemed a day late and a dollar short. It's fair to ask, as many have, that if this same crisis had happened in Republican Birmingham or upscale Ann Arbor would the state's response be as slow and half-hearted as it has been for Flint?

## Trust in the experts?

Similarly we've lost trust in the many state (and national) experts who told us that everything was just fine with the

water, and generated pages of precise, apparently scientific numbers, to back up that assertion. These were to be neutral, non-partisan authorities who were supposed to tell us when the water was good or bad. Only after months of reassuring reports, backed up with charts and numbers, did we learn that studies were flawed, designed for smaller sized cities or otherwise misleading. A few months down the road, when they come out with a new report telling us everything is now all right, will we trust them?

## Local leaders lose trust?

On the local level, there were too many leaders who went along with the experts and the powers that be, and reassured us that all was well. Much more disturbing, it appears that those assurances continued even after they knew better. Will we be able to trust them when they finally tell us that everything has been fixed and that we can drink the water?

## Failure is always an orphan

Perhaps the most damaging of all was the "blame game" where governors, emergency managers, mayors, candidates, council members, and others were quick to point the finger at someone else saying "it's the other guy's fault." (It should also be noted, that some of today's harshest critics of using Flint River water were strong advocates of the same idea a few years ago.)

## A few strong leaders

Yet, not everyone is a villain. There were at least a few individuals and groups who had the courage to stick with their convictions even against heavy pressure.

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, M.D., M.P.H. program director for the pediatric residency at the Hurley Children's Hospital at Hurley Medical Center in Flint, deserves much credit for standing up against intense pressure, when she discovered the elevated levels of lead in Flint children. Her courage should be an inspiration to all.

State Senator Jim Ananich and Congressman Dan Kildee deserve credit for pressing for a full examination of the Flint water crisis by the Environmental Protection Agency and not letting the issue die.

Finally, the Flint Coalition for Clean Water and all those groups and individuals who raised protests deserve credit as well. They may have made noise standing in the

(Continued on Page 5.)

## Cover:

Getting ready for winter on Crapo Street.



Photo of the Month

Photograph by Edwin D. Custer

## Library win means “new service focus,” modernization

By Nic Custer

The Central Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA) October meeting covered a Flint Public Library (FPL) millage ballot proposal, neighborhood blight, the Investor’s Committee and upcoming elections.

Director Kay Schwartz, Flint Public Library, shared information about a library millage on the November ballot. [Editor’s note: the millage passed by a wide margin in the Nov. 3 election].

Schwartz explained that the millage for 6/10 of a mill would last from 2015 to 2021. It would expire at the same time as the other 1.4 renewable millage, which residents already pay. The library also has two mills funding in perpetuity, which was passed in 2003 and is the maximum that can be requested by FPL according to state law.

### New model of library service

She said the FPL has just been through a planning process, funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, to develop a new model for library services. Between 2009 and 2013, FPL lost more than \$2 million, or about 50% of its budget because of declining property values.

Schwartz said the library is funded by a property tax millage. The library had to settle on a level of service it could afford so in 2013 it reduced to five days a week and only a single shift of staff to run it.

Even with those measures, there still has been a revenue gap of \$500,000. The millage is expected to raise \$450,000 to fill the gap. She said if the funding gap is filled the library will begin to invest in new service priorities. The new vision is to become Flint’s “go to” place for what she described as “learning across the lifespan.” This plan will have three priorities: digital literacy, family literacy and preserving the building as a welcoming place for the community.

“We’re ready for a transformation to really be a learning center for our community to help people get job ready,” Schwartz said.

### Library building modernization needed

Built in 1958 and expanded in 1990, the library needs to be modernized. She said she hopes to get additional C.S. Mott Foundation funding for an architect to redesign the interior space to make staffing more efficient.

She said because the library is built in rooms, it requires more staff to run it. The library just had a facilities assessment. The air handling units are from 1958 and two of three freight elevators are “old enough to draw social security.” And the building has single pane windows and not much roof insulation.

Schwartz said library staff cannot advocate for the library when there is an

issue on the ballot but only provide information about the proposal.

### Signals of support

Jack Minore, a former city council member and state representative, spoke as a member of Citizens for the Flint Public Library. He asked residents to vote yes on the millage.

He said even though the increase would equate to about \$1 per month for the average resident, the amount will be fewer tax dollars than in previous years when the property taxes were higher. He said if the community approves the millage, it will give a signal to the Mott Foundation that the community supports the library and wants it to be invested in it.

### Demolition requested

In other CPNA business, Norma Sain, Court Street Village Non Profit Housing Corp., reported that a house at 722 East Street will be added to the city’s emergency demolition list. The house’s field-stone foundation has been crumbling for the last several years. She also reported that a duplex at 801 E. Court Street is being stripped of its siding.

### Funding for house painting

In November, CPNA Investor’s Committee will present an idea to homeowners to fund exterior house painting in the neighborhood. The group will meet a second time to begin seeking funding for

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# Transformed by water and politics, Walters fights on

Interview by Ashley O'Brien

LeeAnne Walters was once a stay-at-home mother of four. But she was transformed into an advocate for water safety in Flint and across the country after her four-year-old son Gavin got sick—the numbers on his blood tests clearly in the “action” range for lead poisoning.

Walters, 37, and her whole family – husband and four kids – experienced hair loss and rashes after the water source changed to the Flint River in 2014. But it was Gavin, a twin with brother Garrett, who had the worst reaction.

At one point, she said, Gavin’s blood lead level was 6.5 micrograms/deciliter, substantially above the 5 micrograms/deciliter point where, she said, medical researchers told her the definition of lead poisoning begins.

Born with a compromised immune system that made it harder for his body to process toxins, during the worst of it

Gavin had to be bathed in bottled water. Even his clothes were washed outside the home.

Another of Walters’ children, J.D., who’s now 15, was the first to experience frightening health issues. Walters said he got sick last Thanksgiving just before the issue of TTHMs (Total Trihalomethanes) in the water came to light.

“He was in and out of the hospital and different doctors, they couldn’t figure out what was going on with him,” Walters said. They continued drinking Flint water until “the water started coming through the filter brown. It was bogging the filter down so badly.”

When the family stopped drinking the water, J.D.’s health gradually returned. And Gavin seems to be slowly improving, although the family and their medical team have been on “watch and see” mode.

## Propelled to action

Throughout the expanding crisis, Walter’s outrage drove her to action.

She found herself putting in 16 to 20 hour days on top of caring for her family. She attended meetings, she got mad, she spoke up, she researched, she formed an advocacy group with another ally.

And eventually, she and a cadre of others – citizens, journalists, physicians, researchers – started to get results.

“I am ecstatic that they [state and local officials] are finally listening, that they are doing the right thing and going back to Detroit water,” Walters said. “I am saddened and sickened that it had to get to this point. My son shouldn’t have had to be poisoned for them to listen.”

## Campaigned for Weaver

She said she is delighted about the outcome of the mayoral election. She and her family moved to Norfolk, Virginia, a month ago after her Navy husband was transferred, but she came back to Flint to work the polls for Karen Weaver and to attend a town hall meeting.

“I’m ecstatic,” she said, speaking from Flint two days after the election. “We needed a change and now we’re going to get the change we need.”

## “You can’t argue with science”

Walters, who had been a Flint resident since 1993 and graduated from Kearsley High School, has learned a lot of chemistry during the water crisis.

At meetings, she said, officials from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and emergency manager Jerry Ambrose “called me a liar and they called me stupid,” she said.

“I am neither of those things, so I

decided to go with the science. You can’t argue with science.”

## How the facts emerged

Looking back, Walters details how her family’s story progressed following J.D.’s problems.

In January, two months after her older son got sick, she received a notice about TTHMs in the water. By the time she found out about the TTHMs, it was too late to test to see if that was causing J.D.’s illness, because the family had already stopped drinking the water. “Since we didn’t know, there was no way to prove it,” she said.

But the TTHM notice also warned about complications for people with compromised immune systems. That would include Gavin, one of her four-year-old twins.

“Every time he was in contact with the water, he was breaking out in this nasty scaly rash,” Walters said. “It got to the point he was taking Benadryl before a bath because he would break out so badly.”

Walters had a lead test done on her home water and received alarming results. A test done in February said Walters’ water had 104 parts per billion (ppb).

Another test in March read 397 parts per billion. Federal guidelines warn about lead levels above 15 parts per billion.

“I knew if my numbers were that high, there had to be other places, especially with so many people throughout the city with the discolored water,” Walters said. She began attending town meetings, talking about her water problem. She said city officials never took her seriously, and she was told “for months that the problem was strictly at my home, and that it wasn’t a citywide problem.”

## Forming “Water You Fighting For”

“I wasn’t fluent when it came to the workings of water before this, the chemicals that were used,” Walters said. “It was always something that was taken for granted. You pay for a service, you expect it to be clean and healthy, and ours wasn’t.”

Walters met Melissa Mays at a public hearing at the City Hall Dome in January. The two women founded the advocacy group, Water You Fighting For. They organized rallies, marches and meetings to do something about Flint’s toxic water. The organization eventually merged with other groups like The Concerned Pastors to form the Coalition for Clean Water.

Walters said she still couldn’t get people to listen, and she decided to change tactics. That’s when she started learning the science.

## ... Trust

(Continued from Page 3.)

back of the room and waving around their bottles of dirty water, may have been disruptive, loud and perhaps even wrong on occasion, but they kept the issue alive when no one else was listening.

## Flint “the canary in the coal mine?”

If there is anything good to come out of our current crisis it might be that we are the “canary in the coal mine” and that the water problems and infrastructure problems we are facing in Flint are likely to be statewide and nationwide issues in the years to come. Let’s hope other officials will learn from our mistakes and handle the issue with more openness and trust.

Let’s also hope that Mayor Karen Weaver’s first job will be to rebuild some sense of trust in all those institutions that should have served us better. She will be facing a challenging task. Turning on the faucet to clean water may be easier than restoring the flow of trust. Restoring that trust will be a big job, much bigger than replacing pipes, turning valves and adding filters – but just as important.

Meanwhile, I’ve bought another case of bottled water to keep under the kitchen table.

*Paul Rozycki is a retired professor of political science from Mott Community College. He has lived in Flint since 1969 and has been involved with and observed Flint politics for many years. He is author of Politics and Government in Michigan (with Jim Hanley) and A Clearer Image: The History of Mott Community College. He can be reached at paul.rozycki@mcc.edu.*

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## ... Walters

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### Virginia Tech arrives on the scene

In the process, Walters reached out to the research team at Virginia Tech. Dr. Marc Edwards called to tell her that they would come to Flint.

"I cried," Walters said of the phone call. "I was happy. I was relieved. Nobody else was helping. So to figure out a way to get help, and to be taken seriously and to prove what we've been saying for months and months and months was going to be brought to light. It was a relief."

Edwards described Walters and her husband as "absolute heroes."

"From the start, they made it clear they didn't want any other children to get hurt," Edwards said. "They literally turned their lives upside down to get to the truth of Flint's water system."

### Much more to do

But Walters acknowledges there is much more work to do.

She plans to appear before the National Drinking Water Advisory Committee in Arlington, Virginia Nov. 18, a meeting Flint's Congressman Dan Kildee also will attend. She said she is scheduled to meet with him there.

Since her new home is so close to Washington, D.C., she sees an opportunity to take her fight to the national level. But she's not letting go of the local advocacy either.

"And just because I'm not [living] in Flint doesn't mean I'm stopping the fight.

"Now I am making sure that the testing they are doing is up to par. That means taking out the loopholes," Walters said. "They're not trying to find the high lead that they're supposed to."

### Loopholes on lead level testing

According to Walters, there are three main loopholes that are being taken advantage of in Michigan to hide high lead levels.

The three loopholes include pre-flushing the water before testing the sample, using small mouth bottles and capping the hours water can sit before testing.

Walters explained small mouth bottles force water to be collected slowly, much differently than how people run the water when they go to fill up a glass.

She said the mouths of the bottles used by the EPA are the size of a regular glass, so that when you turn on the water, the particulates go into the bottle the way you drink it.

Walters explains that the testing regulations is "a city fight, a state fight and a national fight." She said she is looking for loopholes other states might be using so she can get the EPA to reword the law. She wants the loopholes named as violations.

"It's my personal mission to change the

*"From the start, they made it clear they didn't want any other children to get hurt. They literally turned their lives upside down to get to the truth of Flint's water system."*

—Dr. Marc Edwards, Virginia Tech, about LeeAnne Walters and her husband

way of the testing and get rid of the loopholes," Walters said. She said she would be going to Washington D.C., in November to talk to officials at the EPA about changing testing rules.

### Flint politics played a role

"It's very obvious that the city council and the mayor (outgoing Mayor Walling) are not interested in doing what's best for the citizens. They're interested in the bottom dollar," Walters said. "The only person who heard us and stuck with us was [City Councilman] Eric Mays."

Mays described Walters as "one of the champions of the water movement."

"I give LeeAnne Walters credit. In the middle of the movement, we dealt with boil-water advisories, TTHMs, we dealt with prices, and I give her the credit for championing the lead aspect of it, and sticking with it, until the point from Virginia Tech that the medical community, and the doctors from

Hurley, apologized to the activists for taking so long."

Mays explained that his sick mother once had to wait for an important surgery because of a rash, so when Walters told him about her son's rashes, he took it very seriously.

"I don't think that many people just complain about the problems with the water just to complain. There were just too many complaints for me to not pay attention," Mays said. "When people cry out, listen close and then try to learn more about what people are saying."

Walters has been compared to Erin Brockovich, Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks.

"There's worse things in the world," Walters joked about the comparison. "On the list of things I've done in my life, I would never have thought being an activist was one of them. I wouldn't change it. Yes, I would change the fact that my son got poisoned, but I wouldn't change the fact that I'm helping people."

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# Atwood Thanksgiving: 50 years of snow, ice, sports drama

By Lawrence R. Gustin

*Editor's note: Gustin, a writer for the Flint Journal for decades and much-published historian of Flint's automotive past, agreed to contribute this reminiscence of Atwood Stadium – including the almost 50-year-long series of Thanksgiving Day contests between Flint Central and Flint Northern high schools. In a second piece coming in December, he will describe his attempts to track down and preserve game films from those peak Atwood years.*

For folks of a certain age, the recent rebirth of Atwood Stadium likely revives memories of the greatest sports tradition in Flint history – Thanksgiving games between Flint Central and Northern high schools.

The games began in 1928, the first at Central, the second at Northern and starting in 1930 at newly built Atwood. They ran through 1976, when they were finally moved from Thanksgiving. It had been a great run, but attendance was declining, two more local high schools blunted the rivalry and there was the flight to suburbia, as well as state tournament scheduling problems.

But for most of those years, especially the 1940s and '50s, the numbers were unbelievable by today's standards. Football attendance of 3,000 at Atwood today is respectable. But in earlier decades, crowds of 18,000 were routine and twice the count topped 20,000!

For many years, Atwood was one of the centers of action in Flint, rivaled only by the IMA Auditorium, also built in 1929. The stadium held campaign visits by Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, a world featherweight title fight with champ Willie Pep knocking out Flint's Jock Leslie, a national high school band concert led by John Philip Sousa, exhibitions by the Detroit Tigers and Lions, a World War II armaments demonstration for civil defense workers, rock concerts, Flint's centennial celebration featuring Dinah Shore and so much more.

But for consistent popularity, nothing rivaled Thanksgiving games between Central and Northern.

## An unforgettable 1950 game

As a child, I had been taken by my parents to a couple of the Flint games in the late 1940s. But the first I distinctly

remember was the best attended – and many say best – of them all. It was held in 1950 before a record crowd of 20,600 and had long been sold out.

An Atwood event sold out? Even with bleachers all around, the place was filled to the brim. I got in, at age 13, as a Boy Scout usher. My seat on that cold, windy and snowy day was a concrete step.

It was a great game. Northern was favored but Central scored quickly after recovering a fumble. Northern came back with two touchdowns. Very late, Central quarterback Dwight Etherington raced 38 yards to score and Lacey Bernard kicked the extra point to create a 13-13 tie. I was happy my underdog Central Indians would finish with a tie.

famous sports photo in Flint history, Bolden running all alone through snow flurries and appearing to glance at the big stadium clock displaying the 13-13 score and the sweeping minute hand.

That 1950 game continued a long series of confrontations between the two schools. Going back to the beginning, in 1928 and 1929 Northern won the first two, 7-0 at Central, then 6-0 at Northern on Frank Mitoraj's field goals.

My dad, a Northern student at the time, said it was so cold he watched through a button hole in his coat.

The action moved to Atwood in '30 and Northern won again, 18-0.

## Houston a pathfinding Northern coach

Guy Houston, the Vikings' coach, was on his way to becoming the first high school member of the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame. His use of minorities was described as putting Flint on the national map. Before he was through, he would lead Northern to 10 undefeated seasons and 12 Saginaw Valley Conference titles in 24 years.

Central finally got a score and a win, 6-0, in '31 when Sherwood Moore, 15, intercepted a pass and ran 81 yards. The Indians won 19-13 in '32, unbeaten state co-champs, but in '33 it was Northern that was unbeaten behind Fred Trosko's three TDs against Central. Northern won again in '34 and '35, extending its undefeated record to 25 in three seasons.

Northern's 32-0 win in 1940 was the final for the school's "Wonder Boys" – Len Sweet, Ed Krupa and cousins Bob and Dick Holloway – who combined in 36 straight basketball triumphs and 28 consecutive football victories.

The '41 game introduced Central's sensational junior, Lynn Chandnois, who scored twice in a stunning 13-0 victory before a record 17,460. The

Vikings retaliated in '42, winning 19-0 for their fifth undefeated, untied season. Chandnois was surprisingly outshone by Northern's versatile Bill Hamilton, who scored twice, passed for the other TD and outrushed Chandnois, 67 yards to 32. Chandnois did prove he was faster, however, catching up with Hamilton and tackling him on a 58-yard run.

Even after stellar careers at Michigan

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Here Northern's Leroy Bolden is running 79 yards for the winning touchdown in the last minutes of the 1950 Thanksgiving game won by Northern, 20-13. He appears to be looking at the clock as the minutes wind down. This famous photo was taken by the Flint Journal's Dante Levi. Used by permission of the Flint Journal, 2015.

But then something happened that to me was unbelievable. On the first play after Central's ensuing kickoff, with only 2:45 left, Northern star Leroy Bolden sprinted 79 yards to score – the longest run from scrimmage in Thanksgiving history and no doubt the most spectacular.

I felt devastated watching that run. Northern won, 20-13. The Flint Journal's Dante Levi took arguably the most

## ... Atwood

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State and in the NFL, Chandnois remembered. When I showed him a video of the play in 2009, he laughed and said, "I never told Bill, but I had the angle on him."

### Replacing cleats with tennis shoes on ice

There's room here for only a few more highlights. Central's Norm Jones raced 93 yards with the opening kickoff as the Indians won in '43. In '47, Central completed its first perfect season in 22 years as coach Howard Auer quickly replaced cleats with tennis shoes, providing his players with good footing on an icy field and a 20-6 win.

Among strong performers: Central guard Don Coleman, an All-American at Michigan State and the first player there to have his number retired. In 1975 he was named to the National Football League Foundation Hall of Fame. In 1949 11 inches of snow were dumped on Atwood, but Northern's Bolden scored twice and fellow star Ellis Duckett, who didn't score but played very well, still won the Valley scoring title.

I've mentioned Bolden's long run and the record crowd of 20,600 in 1950, but I thought the '53 game was more exciting. In the third period, Northern was awarded a controversial safety, but the Vikings trailed until, in the last minute, Art Johnson broke loose on fourth down to score (Johnson would eventually be the grandfather of 2009 Flint Heisman Trophy winner Mark Ingram). Central made a frenzied comeback attempt.

A desperation pass by Charles Thrash intended for Joe Quarles ricocheted into the hands of Larry Catlin, who fell on the Northern one as the game ended, Northern winning 15-13. In 1956 Northern won 20-8 in for another perfect season, but Central triumphed in a blowout, 51-0, in 1958 under coach Bill Doolittle. Flint Journal sports editor Doug Mintline called it "the Tribe's greatest victory in history."

### Rain, mud, astroturf, dancing

Atwood's playing surface, which often turned to mud by mid-game, was so muddy in 1967 that Journal reporter Len Hoyes called it the "worst field conditions in series history." It became known as the "Mud Bowl." That led to a drive to cover the field with AstroTurf, donated by the Mott Foundation, the following year (and this year to fund a safer synthetic playing surface).

In a 6-2 Northern victory in the Mud Bowl, William Wallace ran for the touch-down but his antics (in a more conservative period), including dancing and gesturing at Central players and fans, were criticized by some. The '68 game was played in a driving rain. Wrote Hoyes:

"Without the AstroTurf ...someone may have drowned." Central won, 26-19.

The finale in 1976 ended 7-6 for Central in the series' only overtime. Central's Frank Nagy scored a TD and Jody Smith booted the winning extra point. Northern answered with a TD but when it went for a two-point conversion, Central's David Gibson batted down a pass that looked like it might connect. That ended the Thanksgiving series.

### Many ghosts haunt Atwood

In 1977, however, a "Nostalgia Bowl" was created by the Flint Journal to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the start of the series.

As the Journal's Mintline wrote: "There are ghosts haunting Atwood Stadium, so many participants being involved in those 49 years, that a chance to hobble through it once more, just for sentimental reasons, sounds interesting."

It did for Russ Reynolds, anyway. He was a star at Northern and played in the 1928 and '29 games and then in the first contest at Atwood. In 1977, he suited up one more time for the Nostalgia Bowl.

Not only was he one of very few players ever to see Thanksgiving action in all three of the series' venues – Central, Northern, and Atwood Stadium – but he was certainly the only one to perform in Flint games on Thanksgiving 50 years apart.

*Lawrence R. Gustin's career as a writer and historian offers too many high points to count. He wrote the award-winning first biographies of General Motors founder Billy Durant and Buick founder David Buick. He created the Flint Journal Centennial Picture History of Flint in three editions for the U.S. bicentennial. He wrote the inscriptions for Joe Rundell's statues of Flint auto pioneers. He retired in 2005 as assistant director of Buick public relations after 21 years at Buick PR. That followed 23 years as a reporter and editor at the Flint Journal. He and his wife Rose Mary, both Flint natives, now live in Oakland County and have two sons and five grandchildren.*

## City water shutoffs resume, 60% delinquent

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Shutoffs for nonpayment of water bills are once again being issued by the city of Flint, according to an announcement from Jason Lorenz, the city's public relations officer.

Customers with outstanding bills due Sept. 11, 2015, will be the first to receive shutoff notices. Customers in the first cycle of overdue bills with court-ordered adjusted rates will be issued notices first.

After an injunction order issued by Circuit Court Judge Hayman in the case of Shears vs. the City of Flint, the city was required to reduce water rates and discontinue shutoffs on previously owed balances.

Lorenz explained the city then immediately stopped doing water shutoffs and began restructuring the water and sewer unit charges for all billing after the injunction. According to the orders of the injunction, the city now has the ability to resume shutoffs, Lorenz asserted.

He said the first bills reflecting the adjusted rate were mailed to customers in September. Unpaid balances prior to the new bills being mailed in September have effectively been frozen and payments made on balances due before the injunction have been applied to the new billing table.

In some cases, this has resulted in a credit being applied to customers' bills. The first bills issued with the reduced rates were due on September 11, 2015, and were 30 days past due on October 11.

In a press release, Lorenz explained that the city's policy is to issue shutoff notices when accounts are more than 30 days past

due. Customers are then given 10 days to remit payment to avoid disconnect.

Over 60% of the total accounts in the first two cycles already are delinquent (1,819 out of 2,993 accounts), he reported.

The first bills issued with the reduced rates were due Sept. 11, 2015, and were 30 days past due on Oct. 11. Due to the "unusual" events and the work necessary to perform accurate billing, Lorenz said, the payment period has been extended to Dec. 1, 2015.

This will result in all cycles being given over 80 days, Lorenz said, or 2 ½ months past their original due date to pay. Regular timelines for water and sewer shutoffs will resume with processing of notices at 30 days delinquency with 10 days to remit payment after Jan. 1, 2016, he stated.

For customers who have their water shut off in the coming weeks, Chief Financial Officer Jody Lundquist said the customer service department will work with the water service center to ensure that turn-ons for payment will be handled as quickly as possible.

She said the city also will continue to work with its partner service agencies in the Keep the Water Flowing program, including the United Way, the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities to help those eligible for assistance.

The City of Flint Division of Water Service Center is at (810) 766-7202 or online at [www.cityofflint.com](http://www.cityofflint.com).



# Bicycle culture extends new spokes in Flint

By Andrew Keast and Jan Worth-Nelson

If anybody can prove that Flint might be transforming itself – from the wheels up – into a bicycle-friendly culture, it's Danny Moilanen, 28, owner of Vehicle City Tacos and a self-described “social cyclist.”

In 2012, he and a few friends created the Thursday Night Party Ride, an easy-going summertime tour through Flint. It starts at 9 p.m. and pauses every 15 minutes or so for socializing in open spaces such as the parking lot at Kearsley Park or the ramp at Mott Community College.

While the ride is far calmer than its name might suggest, and a few of the riders are well into middle age, a raucous touch is added by rock music booming from the riders' portable devices, and the tour often ends at local

Moilanen said he's bothered when local institutions cut public transportation programs while expecting people to hold down a job. He said he believes “bikes can possibly play some role in addressing some of these deeply systemic problems our city faces.”

The taco entrepreneur also is behind Social Cycling Flint, whose members use Facebook to share cycling information, and it was Moilanen, working with the owners of Krystal Jo's Diner, who organized a recent Flint Bike Swap.

At that event, local mechanics provided free service and repairs, and bikes and parts were available for free or at minimal prices. Every one of the 39 kids who attended went home with a free bicycle, he said.

Moilanen's programs are just one spoke of several bike-promoting efforts in town.

## Flint River Trail development

Another is the Friends of the Flint River Trail, (FFRT) who have successfully advocated and raised funds since the late 1970s for user-friendly trails and bicycle lanes.

That group, propelled in the 1990s by Stephanie Diana, started by clearing glass and trash off a dirt trail along the river that had been created in the 1970s. Later the trail was blacktopped.

According to a memoir by Jack Minore, former city councilman and state representative, “Along with Mott Community College, we encouraged the writing and awarding of a grant to pave a trail through Kearsley and Dayton Parks – connecting Longway Boulevard to the existing Flint River Trail near the point where Gilkey Creek empties into the Flint River.”

The Friends sponsor The Flint River Trail Ride every Sunday from early May through the end of October. Minore, 77, still makes the ride.

The Flint River Trail ride, which leaves at 2 p.m. from the site of the old Farmers' Market on East Boulevard Drive, usually draws between 30 and 60 participants and covers 12 to 13 miles, takes about two hours, and never covers the same route two weeks in a row.

## All ages join in

The Sunday trail ride attracts cyclists of all ages.

Frankie Thompson, for example, a Flint River ride regular, is in her sixties and said she is determined to keep in shape. She said she participates for the exercise, but also values the camaraderie within the group.

“The people out here are very friendly,” she said on one of the last rides of the season. “They give you tips; they'll help you with your bike. She refers to the ride as “a wonderful experience” and recommends it to “anybody who just started riding.”

Joining her on the ride were Ben Pauli, 30, and Vivian Kao, 32. Recent arrivals to Flint for faculty positions at Kettering University, Pauli and Kao bought a house in the College Cultural neighborhood and were eager to see what the community had to offer.

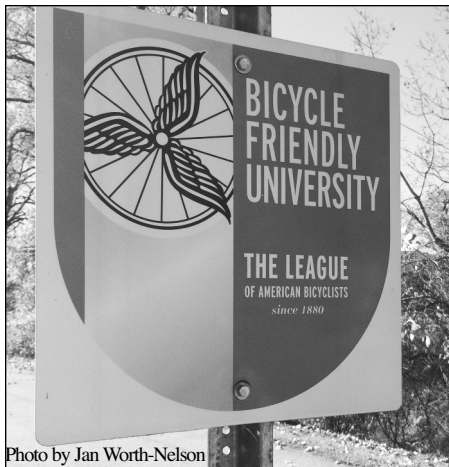
So they tried one of the Sunday Flint River Trail rides, pulling their three-year-old son Julian along in a cart.

Kao described herself as “not a bike rider at all, actually – still learning how to ride, how to get on and off the bike and how to shift gears and things like that.” Still, she said, she found the ride manageable.

Of the tour, which carried riders to Bluebell Beach and back, through both open and wooded areas, she said, “We enjoyed seeing parts of the city that we usually don't get to see.”

Pauli, whose love of mountain biking was interrupted by nine years “very immersed in academia,” said he really liked the pace of the ride.

“It was not too intense, and yet you do feel that you've had a workout,” he said. In 2009, Minore said, the Friends of the Flint River Trail became a chapter of the



watering holes such as Soggy Bottom Bar.

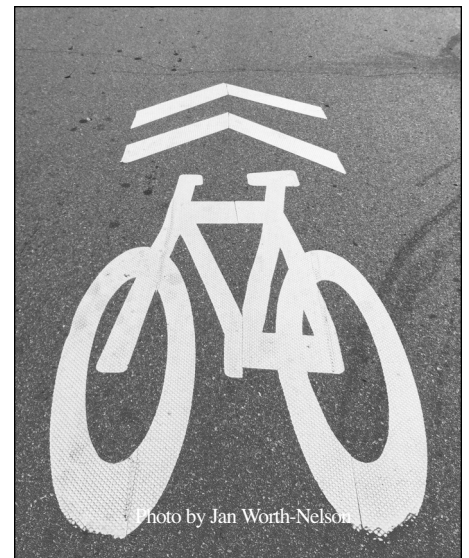
The tours began, Moilanen explained, with friends “who simply wanted to see the city by bicycle and hang out.” But more serious concerns also emerged: he and his friend actually want to change the transportation culture of Flint.

“The idea was that we could improve bicycling culture in Flint,” Moilanen said, “by simply getting more bikes on the road. With more bikes on the road, it starts to become a visible presence, and that's the basis of any important social movement.”

## Bikes could help planet, aid the poor

He said he and his friends aim to show that cycling is “a fun, realistic, reliable, healthier option for ourselves and the planet.”

But he's also interested in how particular problems might be attacked through biking, which he notes is “a necessary form of transportation for many people who don't have access to a car – that's a significant number of people in this city.”



Flint River Watershed Coalition, a partnership he said has served both organizations well. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the FFRT now can work on more grants and trail development.

## UM-Flint a “bicycle friendly” campus

Recently officials at UM-Flint have played a role in facilitating bike culture as

(Continued on Page 10.)

## ... Bicycle

(Continued from Page 9.)

well. For the past four years, students have had access to the school's "Maize Bikes," a fleet of 14 bicycles donated to the university. They can be rented out for \$2 an hour, according to Theresa Landis, UM-Flint director of auxiliary and recreations services.

She said the university offers a seven-week, one-credit course called "Health Care 113: Bicycling the Flint River Trail" and sponsors a yearly ride in memory of Stephen Landon, a theater professor and avid cycling buff who died several years ago.

In addition, the university campus shuttle is fitted out with bicycle racks and air pumps have been attached to bike racks on campus. Bike lanes have been recently marked on campus roadways and signs erected indicating UM-Flint was awarded a "bicycle friendly" designation by the League of American Bicyclists.

Moilanen points out that riders around town can get free mechanical help and learn basic skills from bike experts at Flint Steam Works, a makerspace open every Tuesday and Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m. at Red Ink Flint, 124 W. First St.

"We need to do more," Moilanen said, "but we're getting there."

The Sunday ride and the party ride both are on hiatus for the winter, but are expected to resume next spring. More information about the Friends of the Flint River Trail, Flint Steam Works, the Thursday Night Party Ride, the Flint Bike Swap and Social Cycling Flint can be found online. For further details about programs at UM-Flint, visit [www.umflint.edu/reccenter/walking-and-biking](http://www.umflint.edu/reccenter/walking-and-biking) or call the university Recreation Center at (810)762-3441.

Staff writer Andrew Keast can be reached at [akeast@umflint.edu](mailto:akeast@umflint.edu). Jan Worth-Nelson, East Village Magazine editor, can be reached at [janworth1118@gmail.com](mailto:janworth1118@gmail.com).

## Unclassified ads

**Editing Services.** Eagle Eye Editing and Proofreading Services provides top-notch copy editing and proofreading for your writing needs by a published author and *East Village Magazine* copy editor and proofreader. Prices depend on the type of project and number of pages. Contact Danielle E. Ward at [eagleeyeediting@danielleelyse.com](mailto:eagleeyeediting@danielleelyse.com).

**Large two-bedroom apartment** on E. Second Street. Three blocks to UM-F and MCC campuses, Library, Cultural Center, parks, downtown and Farmers' Market. Furnished, laundry and off-street fenced parking. \$585 a month includes water. References and credit check. Pictures available. E-mail [ecuster@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ecuster@sbcglobal.net) or write Apartment, 720 E. Second St., Flint MI 48503.

## ... Library

(Continued from Page 4.)

the project.

### Election scheduled

In other news, the group will hold elections at its November general membership meeting. Vice President Karen Tipper and President Ed Custer are willing to rotate positions. The group has no candidates to fill its vacant Secretary position.

The group meets at 7 p.m., November 12 at Court Street Village Non Profit Neighborhood House, 737 East St.

*Nic Custer, East Village Magazine managing editor, can be reached at [NicEastvillage@gmail.com](mailto:NicEastvillage@gmail.com).*

**COLLEGE CULTURAL  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
[www.ccnafllint.org](http://www.ccnafllint.org)

**Members meet Thurs., Nov. 19  
7-9 pm in MCC's RTC Auditorium**  
**Neighborhood Watch meets Thurs.,  
Dec. 17, 7-9 pm, in MCC's RTC 1301**

### Volunteer Distributors Wanted

The East Village Magazine is looking for volunteer distributors in some of the residential blocks bounded by E. Court, Franklin, Tuscola and Meade Streets. Spend less than one hour a month getting exercise and insuring your neighbors get the magazine. Contact [ecuster@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ecuster@sbcglobal.net) or write to 720 E. Second St. Flint, MI 48503



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## ... Local news

(Continued from Page 12.)

I wanted to see if there was any “newsroom” left, if there was anybody “local.” I wondered if there might be some old editor chomping on a cigar and yelling at the reporters, a half-drunk columnist with a hangover asleep in the corner, impossible piles of papers and crumpled coffee cups littering the floor.

### **Flint Journal now: a storefront**

Well, there is a there, there and a who there too. The *Flint Journal* office, now a storefront on Saginaw Street sandwiched between a packaging company and an art gallery, is shiny and modern.

Behind a reception desk are rows of uncluttered tables with people plugged in, focused on laptops.

There I found Bryn Mickle, the paper’s editor since last year. At 42, he rose through the ranks after arriving as a reporter in 1999. He took over the Flint edition after the previous editor moved into an executive role with M-Live. He lives in Grand Blanc.



**Bryn Mickle, Flint Journal editor**

The reporting staff has been sliced from about 50 in the old days to a core group of about 10. Of those, two are crime reporters, one is a court reporter who helps cover crime, and one is a sports reporter.

The hard copy is printed in Walker and Bay City. And of course most of the action now is online, where MLive, part of the Newhouse family of national publications, has an active presence and readers click on whichever city they want for local news.

Mickle remembers when the paper was printed at the corner of First and Harrison. When the presses started up, he recalls, you could feel the whole building rumble.

### **No liver sandwiches**

But as far as going back to the glory days, when the print run of the Sunday Journal was about 100,000, “Well,” he said, “there’s a reason McDonald’s does-

n’t offer liver sandwiches -- the demand isn’t there.”

He said he didn’t know up-to-date numbers on the print run, but 2012 numbers put subscriptions at about 50,000.

“We are not a newspaper with a website,” Mickle said. “We are a website with a newspaper.”

Staff cuts mean that the local crew has to be very selective. Many coverage decisions are driven by metrics – analytics that tell Mickle how many people click on what links. Despite what people might say on a survey, he said, the *Journal*’s data supports the old journalistic cliché: “If it bleeds, it leads.”

### **Backpack, phone, laptop**

Mickle doesn’t have an office, not to mention a desk. Nor do any of the reporters. When Mickle greeted me he had to find a conference room for our conversation – a pristine space with not a single pile, messy ashtray or bookshelf. The newsroom on Saginaw Street is designed around an “open concept,” and reporters pick where they want to sit.

“Everything you do is basically contained in your backpack,” he said. Each reporter gets a cell phone and a laptop and together, those three tools are their offices and their desks.

“It’s a freeing concept for me,” Mickle said. Like most journalists, he said, he was a pack rat, but has learned the liberation of traveling light. Whatever he wants to keep he scans onto his laptop.

### **Open concept: no more cubicles**

Scott Atkinson, a former *Flint Journal* reporter now teaching writing at the UM-Flint, said he loved the open format. He said it helped him grow as a reporter. “The idea that a reporter should show up to the office every day and sit in his/her cubicle was gone,” he said.

“I worked at Good Beans, the Crepe Shop, the Flint Public Library, the Flint Institute of Arts café, the passenger seat of my car.

“People and I talked about the issues of the day, our kids, our city. I probably walked at least a mile a day.”

### **Archives moved to Sloan**

The *Journal*’s archive – what used to be called the “morgue” in my day – has moved and is maintained at the Buick Gallery of the Sloan Museum. All issues since 1997 are on the *Journal*’s electronic library. Yes, it’s an extra step for reporters to dash over to Sloan, Mickle noted, but the museum helps out when immediate access is needed.

### **I’m not here myself**

Here’s the thing – I saved my kicker for the end, while I was finding out what I wanted to say. A third of the year, I’m not even “here” myself. So even though my

nostalgic craving for that old newsroom durably nestles in memory, it seems the current era offers unparalleled – and changing – ways to be “local.” It seems we can be “local” from almost anywhere. Even in town, paradoxically, the new realities of the *Flint Journal* might be good for local news, making it more likely that reporters would leave their little storefront and find Flint stories.

In fact, my husband and I put together our last edition of *East Village Magazine* – the one obsessed with Flint’s water debacle, as we all have been – from a small apartment on a San Pedro hillside. It’s our laptops, cell phones and a speedy Wi-Fi that make it possible – with the



**Worth-Nelson, Keokuk, summer 1970**

essential help, of course, of a staff of volunteer “citizen” writers who faithfully show up – in person – at neighborhood events and meetings.

So even though I myself, like the M-Live crew, rely on my backpack, cell phone and laptop to keep in touch, I confess I’m still a romantic about my journalistic sense of place.

I much prefer the sound of those CSX trains as I bang out columns, the fragrances of fireplace smoke this time of year, the actual cappuccino at Steady Eddy’s. Now, where’s my cigar and that half-full bottle of booze? It’s deadline time.

*Jan Worth-Nelson is the editor, since January, of East Village Magazine – a late in life career surprise she never asked for and never expected. In addition to her summer at the Keokuk, Iowa Daily Gate City, she worked at the Laguna Beach (CA) News-Post and the Orange Coast Daily Pilot. She can be reached at jan-worth1118@gmail.com.*

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# Village Life

## Local news still matters, even as the “how” changes

By Jan Worth-Nelson

I just lost my temper. The trigger was an early morning solicitation to subscribe to the *Flint Journal* – our hometown paper, right? I asked the young voice with a Southern accent where she was calling from. Missouri, she said.

### Missouri?

“Missouri?” I shouted, “I want nothing to do with a newspaper in my home town that outsources its business to another state!” And I hung up.

Okay, so it was an overreaction. But

you should never wake up retired geezers when we’re sleeping in. It’s a luxury we’ve waited 50 or 60 years for.

I understand that the *Flint Journal*’s survival in any form is a sad miracle of cutbacks, compromises and consolidations. While much of the business aspect has been farmed out, there still is a reporting staff in town.

### Keokuk, Iowa shaped my views

But I’m touchy on how all this plays out. I love local news. I’ve been shaped by my own history in journalism.

After the May, 1970 shootings at Kent State, where I was a journalism major, I fled by bus from Ohio to Keokuk, Iowa, where I had convinced the crusty old-school editor of the newspaper there, the *Daily Gate City*, to take me on as a summer intern.

It was a perfect destination to satisfy my quest for adventure. Perched on the bluffs of the Mississippi River, Keokuk was home to a set of locks traversed by the commerce of the whole breathtaking river.

My mentor and guide was Eleanor Waterhouse, a spirited city editor not much older than me. She was a recent graduate from the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

She curtained off a corner of her walk-up apartment in an old Victorian, installed a fold-up single bed, and there I stayed until September. That summer we were almost inseparable. She pulled me into the life of a small-town journalist, letting me cover anything I wanted. I learned to work on deadline, write an “inverted pyramid,” and ask hard questions. It was a blast.

Ellie Waterhouse dropped in to visit me recently in Flint. It has been 45 years and we’re both retired and matronly now. But we still love our memories of the *Daily Gate City* and our devotion to covering local

news.

I spent five more years at two other newsrooms before heading off to other escapades. But the imprint of those newspaper days has never left me.

### Why do I care?

If Gary Custer hadn’t died, maybe I wouldn’t care today, but now that he’s gone and I’m an old woman come back unexpectedly to a business I have loved all my life, I find myself taking seriously what journalism owes to its “place,” whatever that is.

It matters to me that reporters who cover Flint locally live among us – or at least, like *Teardown* author Gordon Young, have a sense of the place. I want to know that they worry about their water, try to decide where to send their kids to school, try to find a grocery store, negotiate down bumpy brick Saginaw Street, wait in line for the pho at MaMang.

I was a *Flint Journal* subscriber for more than 25 years. I finally cancelled when the paper shrunk to four days a week, lost most of its reporters, shut down its local presses, and moved out of its venerable 100-year-old building.

I confess I miss the plop of the paper on my porch in the early morning – an archaic comfort from a past life, the trace continuity of a slower-paced community.

### We need good local reporting

But there’s more to it than that. The recent water crisis is an important example of why we are thirsty, one might say, for thorough local coverage. As I’ve said before, the *Flint Journal*’s Ron Fonger did a great job of following the complexities. But many of us found that wasn’t enough.

People became reporters on their own – pressing politicians, digging into the minutes of local meetings and documents, researching water quality issues, lead effects, proper filters, the design and dangers of the pipes underneath us, the chemistry of corrosion.

And we shared all this with each other, sorting out the facts and lies just like a good journalist would do. Maybe that’s the way it should be. But I still crave the role of the Fourth Estate, and I worry that it’s slipping away.

### And so I went for a field trip

I decided to visit the physical *Flint Journal* – the version with doors and windows and people I could talk to face to face. I’d never been there since it moved – a sad comedown, I thought – three years ago.

(Continued on Page 11.)

## Restoring A Duck Decoy

By Grayce Scholt

I touch acrylic paint to neck, to wing  
following my father’s curve of knife, of brush;

I daub an even falser life on this that sixty years before  
bobbed Judas-like on a Lake Erie bay  
and living wings would swoop to join  
the silent flock – Bang!  
My father’s gun would spit, and  
dying wings would drop  
into that split between two worlds.

When he came home, his jacket bulging  
with his prize, he’d lay the ducks  
before my wondering eyes  
and all I felt was his immensity.

He’d grumble some about the limit, ten,  
about the ninety dollars rent he’d paid for marsh.  
He’d tell of how his father shot a hundred in one day  
when thousands darkened gray Ohio’s flyway.

And then he’d scald them, pluck them,  
sort the down, and tack the wings he liked  
high up on the coal bin door.

*You silent quacker sitting on my bench,  
you are that time long ago  
when my strong man  
would rise up out of blind,  
and god-like  
strike down living flesh for me,  
and in my innocence  
I’d cry for pride,  
not death, not pity,  
but for pride.*

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](mailto:gscholt09@comcast.net). The author’s new book of poems, *Night Song*, is available from Friesen Press ([www.friesenpress.com](http://www.friesenpress.com)) and Amazon.