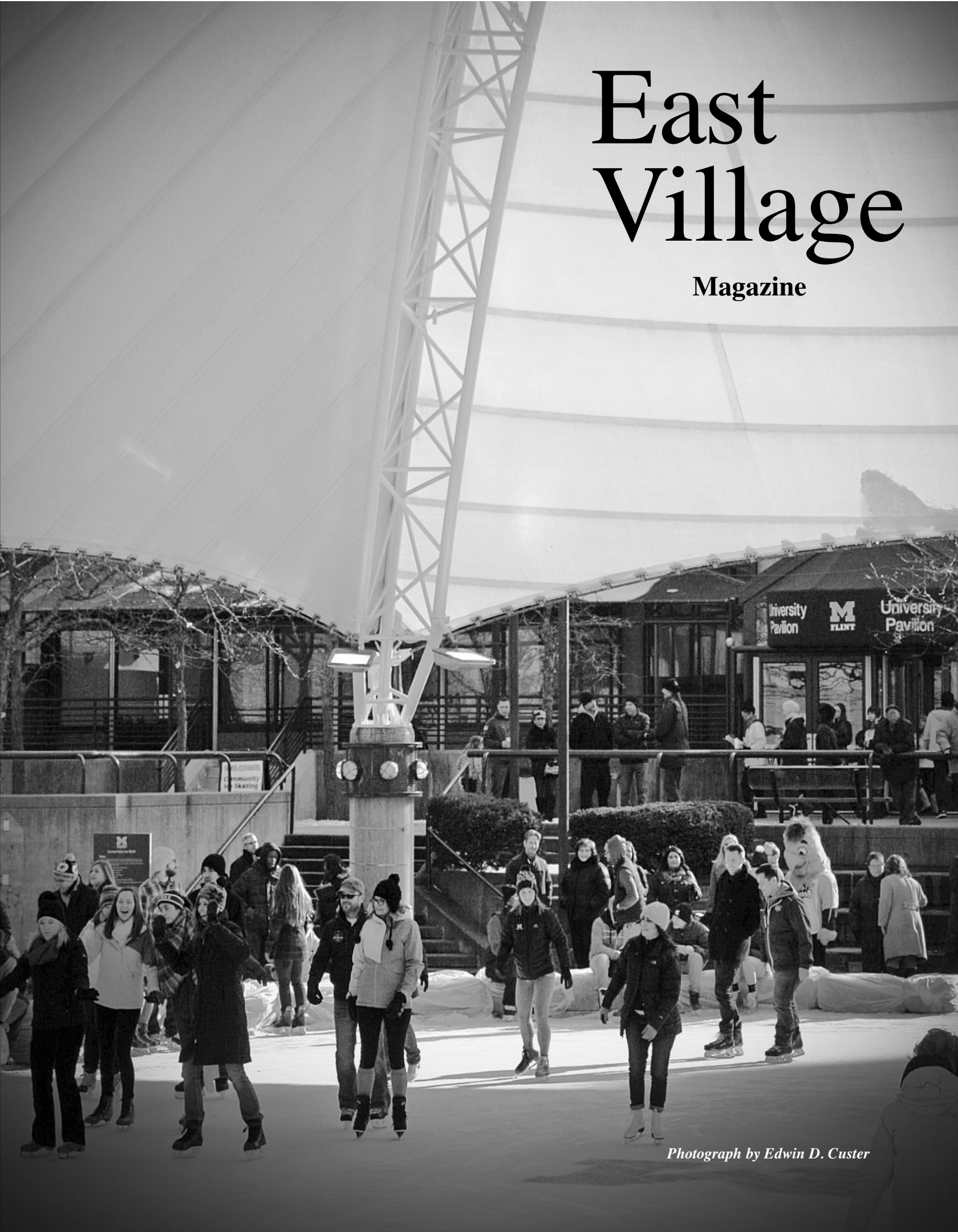


East Village


Magazine



Photograph by Edwin D. Custer

MUSIC at St. Paul's

Artistic Director G. Donald Kaye Presents
Brittany DeYoung, Harpist
"Sparkling crystals of tone fill the air"





Sunday
January 31, 2016
 3:30 PM

South Saginaw at Third Street
\$10 Friends of Music, \$5 Students
 (810) 569 - 1545

SLOAN MUSEUM

water's EXTREME journey

Presented by: **HealthPlus**

Connect with Us!  

January 23 - May 8, 2016

Explore the maze exhibit and experience an exciting quest to stay clean. Afterward, delve into Flint's water system history, learn the science of filtration, examine current issues and solutions, and investigate the Flint River today.

Sloan Museum 1221 E. Kearsley Street Flint, MI 48503 • 810.237.3450 • SloanMuseum.org

2016 CALL FOR PROPOSALS GREATER FLINT ARTS COUNCIL COMMUNITY ARTS MINI GRANTS



SHARE ART FLINT
 GREATER FLINT ARTS COUNCIL COMMUNITY ARTS MINI GRANTS

Greater Flint Arts Council is celebrating community arts and culture with the **Share Art Flint Mini Grants program**. Apply for a grant and tell us how you want to address community issues in creative new ways through the power of arts and culture. We want new ideas from individual artists, emerging organizations and creative arts and culture educators, including those who don't usually apply for grants.

Deadline for grant submission is March 15, 2016 • 5:00 pm

Get details at shareartflint.org or 810.238.ARTS (2787) and join us at one of these grant workshops:

Monday, January 18th 1:30-3:30pm Greater Flint Arts Council 816 S. Saginaw Street Flint, MI 48502	Monday, February 15th 10am-12noon Hispanic Technology Center of Greater Flint 2101 Lewis Street Flint, MI 48506	Monday, February 15th 2-4pm The New McCree Theatre 2040 W. Carpenter Road Flint, 48504
--	---	---

Greater Flint Arts Council Mini Grants are made possible by a grant from the Ruth Mott Foundation.



Ruth Mott Foundation



Free instruction in the original Biblical languages of Arabic, Aramaic, Greek, Hebrew and Latin

Contact: mr_allinger@usa.com



Lessons in Church history: Youtube- Richard Allinger Presents

In Christian Love and Prayer, Brother Richard Allinger Associate Degree in Biological Sciences (1973), C.S. Mott Community College; B.A. in Elementary Education (1978); B.R.E. (2012); and M.R.E. Candidate.

www.unitedtheologicalseminary.org, www.mtcalvaryflint.com

RE/MAX Real Estate Team
 Independently Owned and Operated

FREE Home Warranty

Flint's Resident Realtor — The Name Trusted in More Neighborhoods

(810) 234-1234



Ryan Eashoo



East Village Magazine

Vol. LIV No. 1 January 2016

Founder Gary P. Custer

Editor Jan Worth-Nelson
Managing Editor Nic Custer
Ad Manager Daniel Kienitz
Copy Editor Danielle Ward
Reporters Nic Custer
Andrew Keast
Stacie Scherman
Columnists Jan Worth-Nelson
Teddy Robertson
Paul Rozycki
Bob Thomas
Business Manager Casey Custer
Éminence Grise Ted Nelson
Photographer Edwin D. Custer
Poets Grayce Scholt
Nic Custer

Distribution Staff

Director: Edwin D. Custer. **Staff:** Kim Barge, Jane Bingham, Casey & Nic & Andy Custer, Emma Davis, Marabeth Foreman, Andrea Garrett, Charlie & Linda & Patrick & Terrance & Christan & Jillianne Goldsberry, Ingrid Halling & Bob Thomas, Robert Jewell, Andrew Keast, Carol Larzelere Kellermann, Jo Larzelere, Mary LeRoy, Bill & Carol Leix, James & Lillian & Livia Londrigan, Alan & Julie Lynch, Annette McCarthy, Ron & Mary Meeker, Robert & Nancy Meszko, John Moliassa, Keith Mullaly, Mike Neithercut, Ted Nelson, Edith & John Pendell, Dave & Becky Pettengill, Debbie Rumsey, Lori Nelson Savage & Pat Savage, Barbara & Richard Schneider, Mike Spleet, Gina Stoldt and Krista Striler.

Board of Trustees

- Jane M. Bingham • Edwin D. Custer
- Bella Kritz • Jack D. Minore
- Robert R. Thomas • Jan Worth-Nelson, xo

**720 E. Second St.
Flint, Mich. 48503
(810) 233-7459**

Web Site: eastvillagemagazine.org
E-mail: eastvillage@sbcglobal.net

Layout by Ted Nelson. Printing by Riegler Press Inc., 1282 N. Gale Rd., Davison, Mich. 48423.

The *East Village Magazine* is a program of the Village Information Center Inc., a nonprofit corporation. We welcome material from readers, but all submissions become the property of the publication and if published will be edited to conform to the editorial style and policies of the publication. All inquiries about the publication should be mailed to *East Village Magazine*, Village Information Center, 720 E. Second St., Flint, Mich. 48503. Distribution is the second Saturday of each month. Display advertising rates are \$34.00 a column-inch plus any other costs. Unclassified ads are \$2.50 a printed line or part of a printed line. Rates subject to change without notice. The deadline for advertising is 10 days before each publication date.

Editorial

Wat'er we expecting for Flint's water in 2016? The good news and the bad

By Paul Rozycki

At the beginning of every year, Lake Superior State University selects a list of the past year's least favorite phrases and words, which have been overused and misused, and should be banished. The list is fun, interesting, and they are usually on target.

In Flint, perhaps one New Year's resolution that we should all make is to stop using the endless water metaphors in discussing our water crisis. It was entertaining (for a while) to see headlines that read: "Flint Water crisis boils over," "Protestors flood into city hall," "Information drips out of Lansing," "Water crisis drowns Flint's budget," and "Taxpayers soaked for water costs." To a lesser degree we also endured sentences that urged us to "get the lead out" or were warned of "leaded and unleaded water." Enough is enough. But once you get started with this stuff it's hard to stop.

But, with or without the water-drenched phrases, 2016 should give us both good and bad water news for Flint.

First the bad news

Banishing overused words won't end Flint's water problem. The bad news will keep flooding, trickling and boiling over for much of the year. (I told you it wouldn't be easy to stop.) Every day seems to reveal some new reason to distrust those who made the decision to switch to Flint River water, those who tested the water, and those who chose not to inform the public of the high lead levels. Most likely, the next year will give us a stream of new revelations and leaks about who knew what, when they knew it, and why they didn't inform the public about Flint's problem. Restoring a modest level of trust in those agencies and individuals will be a long, slow glacier-like process.

But even as the water-logged catchphrases go down the drain, and the unsettling revelations about the unfolding of Flint's water crisis continue, there is room for some optimism and hope for the future. Our other New Year's resolution (and certainly the most important one) should be to successfully manage the water crisis.

Now the good news

A few recent events offer a small droplet of hope for 2016. In a press conference about a month ago, Mayor Karen Weaver announced her 100-day plan for the city. While much of the program needs to be fleshed out, one

key theme emerged. Because of the water crisis, "Flint should be declared an 'emergency disaster area' and be eligible for significant federal aid." The idea has more than a few detractors and skeptics, but gradually it has gained traction with both the county and the state. It's not certain that it will produce the federal disaster relief requested, but after many months of frustration, and too much silence from the city, it is a strong symbolic move. At the very least, Mayor Weaver's actions have captured the attention of state and national leaders and show her commitment to work with them to solve the problem.

We have now made the switch back to Detroit water and that should gradually improve the quality of our water in the upcoming year. (Though all the experts advise that it's not time to turn off the filters, or stop buying bottled water yet. After the experience of last year, it's better to be safe than sorry.) Also, the Karegnondi water line from Lake Huron seems to be on schedule and should be ready by mid-2016 and ought to deliver cleaner water as well.

Shortly after Mayor Weaver's press conference, Michigan Radio's "Issues and Ale," hosted by Jack Lessenberry, held a panel discussion on the water crisis, with State Senator Jim Ananich, Hurley Hospital's Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, Professor Marc Edwards of Virginia Tech and Michigan Radio reporter Steve Carmody. In the midst of a great deal of gloomy news on Flint's problems, a few hopeful signs emerged. Most significantly, Marc Edwards said that it might not be necessary to replace nearly all of the pipes in the Flint system (a huge financial burden) and that, with some time and the correct water treatment, the lead problem could be minimized as the pipes built up a scale, or coating, on the inside. Similarly, Dr. Hanna-Attisha indicated that the use of appropriate medical and dietary measures might reduce the impact of lead in children. Neither of these are a magic solution to the problem, and they won't solve everything, but at least they were a small light at the end of what has been

(Continued on Page 7.)

Cover:

Ice skating is back at University Pavilion



Photo of the Month Billy Durant (L) and Dallas Dort at Carriage Town, sculptures by Derek Wernher *Photograph by Edwin D. Custer*

Cultural Center plan: Sarvis demo, Sloan expansion, downtown links

By Nic Custer

The Flint Cultural Center Corporation (FCCC) recently updated its master plan with recommendations to demolish the Sarvis Center and several underutilized buildings, connect the street grid, renovate the Sloan Museum, and redesign public spaces between UM-Flint and Mott Community College.

The 30-acre campus, which lies just east of downtown, contains five institutions: SloanLongway (consisting of the Sloan Museum, Longway Planetarium and the Buick Automotive Gallery and Research Center), The Whiting, Flint Youth Theatre, Flint Institute of Arts, and Flint Institute of Music.

Sasaki Associates, the firm hired to develop the 2003 FCCC master plan, updated the original plan to account for implemented changes, align with the city master plan and to account for the purchase of Sarvis Conference Center and the Food Services Building from Flint Community Schools in 2013.

FCCC Chief Operating Officer Jody Blackburn said the master plan represents the priorities and goals of the member organizations. She said there is a billion dollars' worth of suggestions in the plan but their funds are limited. A group representing all organizations in the Cultural Center will prioritize what is feasible to raise funds for and what the Cultural

Center can do well.

Sasaki was brought back because they had done other projects in downtown Flint and were familiar with the area, Blackburn said. The Cultural Center's master plan committee consisted of three to four members from each institution.

The plan focuses on six main areas. They are:

- promoting expanded programming
- improving the sense of arrival and identity
- enhancing the public realm
- connecting to downtown and universities
- ensuring a safe environment, and
- creating a Flint Arts, Culture and Education District.

Sarvis Center coming down

The plan investigated alternative uses and renovation plans for the former Sarvis

Conference Center including Sloan Museum's archives, a black box theatre and removing the north and south facades for stronger visual appeal.

However, the plan concludes that demolishing the building is the better alternative, allowing for a Grand Lawn, an alternative green space, to be developed in its place, and an improved entrance to the campus from Robert T. Longway Boulevard.

"Sarvis was built to last but it is not that aesthetically pleasing," Blackburn said. "Financially, it is difficult to put more programmatic initiatives in the building because we didn't feel it would generate the revenue necessary to operate the building."

She said in the end the group agreed to

(Continued on Page 5.)



Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson

... Plan

(Continued from Page 4.)

raze Sarvis, which had been mothballed. Previously, the building's industrial kitchen was sold to the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and installed in its new Hunger Solution Center. Land surveys are being done and the demolition process is underway.

The Grand Lawn will be a sloped and terraced amphitheatre where outdoor concerts can take place and that can possibly become an ice rink in winter.

Blackburn said community feedback about the Sarvis plan has been mixed. Some people are upset, others want a new development in its place. She said she is aware they can't please everyone, but FCCC is determined to do what it thinks is best for the Cultural Center.

Sloan expansion, Buick Gallery move

Additionally, the plan recommends Sloan Museum expand its entrances and build out its inner courtyard space.



Renovations were recommended in the 2003 plan but were never implemented. The new recommendations include creating entrances facing Kearsley Street, Durant Plaza and the building's north parking lot. The renovations could include a new façade and a bus drop off at Durant Plaza. The interior expansion will also allow for the Buick Gallery archives and car collection to potentially be moved to the main building.

An expanded Sloan would allow for the Buick Gallery building on Walnut Street to be demolished. According to the plan, a previous study revealed structural problems in the building. Blackburn said the roof leaks occasionally and it is more difficult to continuously maintain such an old building. The neighboring Food Services Building, which the Flint Community Schools are still using to prepare meals, is not well suited for alternative uses. Both buildings are separated from the main campus and Blackburn said

some visitors are unsure whether they are public or private venues. The new master plan recommends both buildings and the attached tennis courts be demolished when their current uses are relocated. The space is proposed to become overflow parking or valet parking and additional green space. During events, MCC police are contracted to patrol the parking lots.

Another major change proposed in the plan is to connect Forest Street, Hunt Lane, "Library Lane" and Mathews Street to the larger street grid. A laneway separating Flint Public Library from the Flint Institute of Art would be connected to provide easier access to Kearsley Street. The laneway would include sidewalks and street trees. Hunt Lane would also be extended between Flint Institute of Music and Sloan, connecting Kearsley Street to Mathews Street in the north and Library Lane in the south. It will also link Mathews Street east to Longway Boulevard to connect all the north parking lots.

Manning Court houses in spotlight

The plan also suggests acquiring the last privately owned home on Manning Court, behind the FIM, in order to expand the parking lot. FCCC already owns one of the two remaining houses in the his-

toric district that was used for the maintenance crew before a pole barn was erected across Crapo Street. The house is in "irreparable shape," according to Blackburn. She said FCCC would want to get community support for that demolition project.

"We would like to get everyone on board," she said. "We are in the history preservation business here and we don't want to do anything that would upset historians. If there is anything we can do to salvage the homes we will try."

She said she believes there is a need for additional parking at the Cultural Center whether that is extra valet space at Walnut Street or the Manning Court location. FCCC will work with parking consultants to determine the best steps to take.

Three plaza developments are also being proposed as gathering and active spaces along Kearsley Street. Durant Plaza will be redesigned to remove the serpentine paths and flowerbeds, which the plan characterized as maintenance intensive. The trees will remain and outdoor furniture will be added. The Library Plaza near Crapo and Kearsley streets and an Arts and Sciences Plaza, south of the Durant Plaza, will be designed to allow for outdoor event and programming spaces. Entry plazas may also be located in front of each Kearsley Street institution to create distinct places.

"We like the green space but plazas in strategic locations around campus will enhance the visitor experience," Blackburn said.

The entryway designs will emphasize a "sense of arrival." She said the Cultural Center is laying out a nice welcome mat and sense of identity so visitors know they have arrived regardless of which entrance they use.

Lighting, safety enhancements

The Cultural Center will focus on unified landscape, lighting and signage. The lighting in particular will increase the per-

(Continued on Page 7.)



"Tens of thousands" damaged by Flint water crisis, class-action lawsuit contends

By Stacie Scherman

A class-action lawsuit against key figures in the State of Michigan and the City of Flint is likely to ultimately include up to 30,000 households and tens of thousands of residents seeking compensations and damages from the Flint water crisis, according to attorneys representing the plaintiffs.

Those numbers are an evolving estimate of those "who have been injured physically, psychologically, whose children have been damaged, potentially irreparably," by what has happened, according to Cary McGehee, from Pitt, McGehee, Palmer & Rivers of Royal Oak, one of three law firms involved in the case.

Lawyers from the three law firms involved in the case offered details and asked for support for the lawsuit, filed Nov. 13 with the U.S. District Court, at a recent meeting at the Northbank Center attended by about 75 people.

Four families – Melissa and Michael Mays, Keith John and Jacqueline Pemberton, Elnora Carthan, and Rhonda Kelso will act as class representatives in litigations.

Defendants include Governor Rick Snyder, the State of Michigan, seven employees of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Flint Emergency Managers Darnell Earley and Gerald Ambrose, former Flint Mayor Dayne Walling, the City of Flint, and three city employees.

The other two law firms involved are Goodman & Hurwitz, PC, of Detroit and Trachelle C. Young & Associates of Flint.

According to the lawsuit, available at the Flint Water Class Action website, if the case is certified as a class action, eligible members of the class will include any person who has been exposed to Flint drinking water since April, 2014, when the city switched from Great Lakes water pumped from Detroit to Flint River water.

Robert Pitt, of Pitt McGehee Palmer & Rivers told attendees damages from contaminated water fall into two categories: personal injury and property damage. Personal injury includes lead and other toxins in the body, rashes, hair loss, seizures, upset stomach,

"brain fog," and emotional distress. Property damage include "irreparable damage" to pipes, reduced home value, and expenses from hotel rooms and bottled water. The lawsuit claims that the four Class Representative families also experienced chemically induced

However, Hurwitz explained that the state is the "primary culprit" because it was the "catalyst that set this in motion." The city officials, under the direction and control of a state-appointed emergency manager, were "operating from a more powerless position." However, Hurwitz explained that the city and several city officials are included in the suit because they knowingly approved decisions that prolonged Flint water users' exposure to contaminated water.

Cary McGehee, of Pitt McGehee Palmer & Rivers, told attendees that the three law firms chose to file this case as a class-action lawsuit because it is the most efficient way to help those injured by contaminated Flint drinking water. McGehee explained that the court would not be able to manage all of the cases if everyone filed individual claims, and that consolidating all of the claims into one class reduces total legal costs.

McGehee added that legal costs would be paid out of the settlement, so members of the class would not have to pay anything out-of-pocket. Additionally, the class representatives would participate in the litigation process on behalf of the entire class, so individual class members would not have to actively participate in the proceedings.

However, McGehee, Pitt, and Hurwitz each repeated that the case could take years. In a follow up conversation, Hurwitz explained that before the case can move forward it has to be approved as a class action. Next, all of the eligible class members — anyone who came into contact with Flint drinking water, including Flint residents, employees, and students — will have to be identified and contacted.

Hurwitz added that since this is a federal case, a jury will determine the total cost of damages and who is liable to pay. However, Hurwitz explained that the amount each defendant pays will be determined outside of the court and will involve defendants' insurance companies and indemnification agreements. Hurwitz said that it is going to be a mess but added "nothing compares to the mess created by the acts of misconduct at every level."

(Continued on Page 7.)

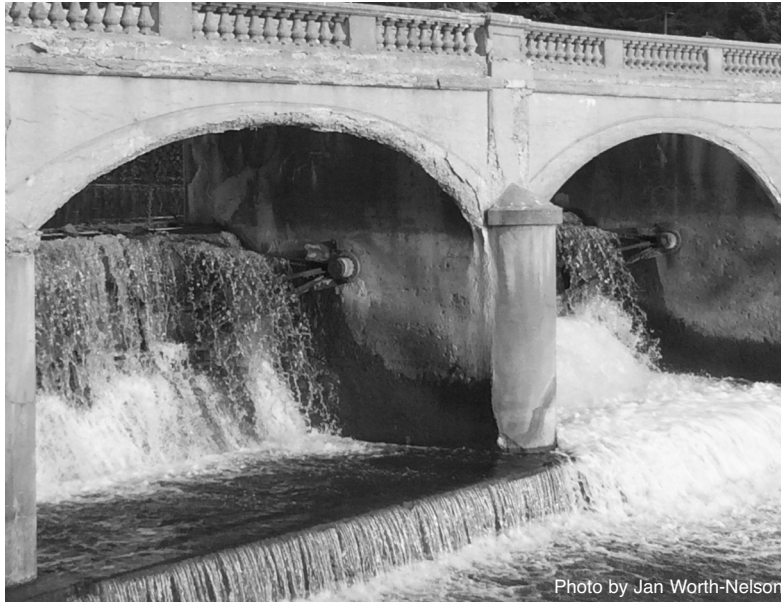


Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson

Hamilton Dam in downtown Flint

hypertension, autoimmune disorder, depression, chronic anxiety, respiratory disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Bill Goodman, of Goodman & Hurwitz, explained that the case is based on the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which protects citizens from "state-created danger."

The lawsuit claims that the defendants violated Flint water users' right to "life, liberty, and property" by switching the City of Flint from safe water to lead-contaminated water. The lawsuit also claims that defendants increased water users' risk of danger by not properly testing Flint drinking water, ignoring warnings of contamination, and dishonestly reassuring residents about the water's safety. Goodman stated that "the government can't hurt people, hide it, and lie about it ... they need to be punished for what they did."

In a follow-up interview, Julie Hurwitz, of Goodman & Hurwitz, said she and the other attorneys "thought long and hard" about including the City of Flint in the lawsuit, but that ultimately the city "has to be held accountable" for its part in violating constitutional rights.

... Lawsuit

(Continued from Page 6.)

Melissa Mays, 37, one of the class representatives, said in a follow-up interview that even though this case will not help victims with immediate expenses, the eventual settlement could be used for long-term support like medical monitoring and special education. Mays explained that her children will experience the consequences of lead poisoning the rest of their lives and that she wants to know they will be supported and that “no other city will ever attempt ... to put profits over people.”

In the meantime, McGehee advised attendees to “get involved in other ways to seek justice.” Trachelle Young, of Trachelle C. Young & Associates, PLLC (Flint), encouraged audience members to continue “grassroots efforts” like attending rallies, protests, and city council meetings. Pitt urged attendees to record experiences and preserve documents relating to personal injuries or property damage from contaminated water.

Kathryn James, with Goodman & Hurwitz, handed out instructions for preserving personal injury and “economic injury” documents. James also distributed a questionnaire asking for contact information and Flint drinking water-related damages and asked attendees to take extra copies for friends and neighbors.

More information and updates about the Flint water class action lawsuit can be found at www.flintwaterclassaction.com.

Staff writer Stacie Scherman can be reached at sscherma@umflint.edu.

... Plan

(Continued from Page 5.)

ception of safety on campus. The Cultural Center also is envisioned as having more outdoor events to draw in visitors. In addition to its regular festivals, the Cultural Center held this year’s Flint Jazz Fest and Flint Gospel Fest.

Blackburn was tasked with getting the campus’ security study moving forward. FCCC is looking at a security plan that provides a single security force patrolling the exterior campus that coordinates with the individual institutions’ interior security. She said this is preferable because art institutes, for example, require a specialized skill set that other institutions do not need. Two different implementation scenarios are being looked at. FCCC hopes to have a direction identified in the next few weeks.

The master plan proposed an Arts,

Culture and Education District that expands beyond the Cultural Center boundaries to connect with MCC, UM-Flint and downtown. Blackburn said that plan is something to look at but not a top priority because it is large enough to be a master plan itself. This district would include Whaley Historical House and involve cross-promotion of marketing, coordinated programming across institutions, cohesive signs, and other shared initiatives. Increased transit options and a meandering pathway from Interstate-475 to the end of Kearsley Street has been proposed to create a more connected campus.

Walker Place Purchased

The FCCC purchased Walker Place, 817 E. Kearsley Street, after the plan was finished to help develop the entryway to the Cultural Center. She said the corner was perfect to fill the gap across I-475 to the students living in dorms.

Forty minutes after Walker Place was purchased, the Cultural Center property manager already was fixing benches and sidewalks, trimming trees, and working on the property, Blackburn said. THA Architects, Way Academy and other tenants are leasing spaces in that building, a former elementary school.

She said she thinks about new programming at Walker Place every day because the Cultural Center buildings are “bursting at the seams.” Blackburn said there has been some exciting talk about adding new venues to the campus but that it is not finalized enough for her to share details.

In the last few years, FCCC changed its governance model. The individual institutions are now responsible for their own fundraising and operations rather than the FCCC president and CEO overseeing those functions. Blackburn said those institutions were hindered from elevating themselves in the arts community while under the FCCC’s control. Now the corporation has no president, just a COO who doesn’t oversee the individual institution directors but works with them as a team.

The plan can be viewed at <http://www.fccc.org>.

Nic Custer, *East Village Magazine* managing editor, can be reached at NicEastvillage@gmail.com.

**COLLEGE CULTURAL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
www.ccnafint.org

**Members meet Thurs., Jan. 21, 2016
7-9 pm in MCC’s RTC Auditorium**

**Neighborhood Watch meets Thurs.,
Feb. 18, 7-9 pm, in MCC’s RTC 1301**

... Wat’er

(Continued from Page 3.)

a very dark tunnel.

Finally, if it’s any consolation, or perhaps in the “miserly loves company” category, the Bridge online magazine published a map showing that Flint is hardly alone in finding elevated lead in its children. Areas of Grand Rapids, Jackson, Detroit, Saginaw, Muskegon and Holland (among other cities) all measured higher levels of lead than Flint. Those elevated lead levels were probably caused by lead paint rather than water. Lead is a much bigger issue than just water and remains a statewide (and nationwide) problem in spite of decades of efforts to minimize it. If there is anything positive about this, perhaps Flint might find some allies in the battle to reduce our lead levels. We may have indeed been the “canary in the coal mine” and now it’s time for the whole nation to take a serious look at the lead issue, from whatever source.

Otherwise, we’ll be “Drowning in debt,” “Facing a rising tide of protests,” “Seeing our future float away,” or “Swamped with lawsuits.” You get the idea.

Let’s hope 2016 is the year we drain the lead out and mop up the water mess – so we won’t be flooded with washed-up water metaphors. (Maybe they’ll just dry up and blow away?)

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.rozenki@mcc.edu.

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.

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 or write Apartment, 720 E. Second St., Flint MI 48503. **Two-bedroom apartment** for rent. Clean, partially furnished, bills paid except electricity. Walking distance from UM-Flint and Mott Community College. Call 810-235-0021 and leave message.

Global Film Festival resumes, also features Kildee, Ramsdell, Rao

By Andrew Keast

The Global Issues Film Festival continues as usual this month, with another set of cinematic views on people and problems not often covered in the popular media. This, the second half of the Festival's 14th season, will be held at the McKinnon Theater on the campus of Kettering University, though two of the set's five films can be seen at the Kiva at UM-Flint as well.

The festival is co-sponsored by Kettering, Mott Community College and the University of Michigan - Flint.

While the films are aimed at enhancing students' understanding of the world, according to event planners, all shows are free and open to the public at large.

The Festival was begun in 2003 by Dr. Badrinath Rao, associate professor of sociology and Asian studies in the Department of Liberal Studies at Kettering University. Determined to bring students into contact with "different parts of the world, and in particular with parts of the world that many of them would otherwise never encounter," Rao said he decided on film as an effective medium for dramatic exposure that might both inform and inspire a desire to get involved with such contemporary challenges as hunger, political oppression and environmental destruction. Funds for the festival over the years have come from the C. S. Mott Foundation, the Greater Flint Arts Council and others, although Kettering remains the Festival's primary source of financial support.

Dividing the program into two sessions accommodates Kettering students, who alternate sessions away from campus for co-operative work experience. Students who miss the Festival's first half, which usually occurs in November at Mott Community College, could attend the second half, usually held at Kettering in January, when many of those who catch the first half will be absent.

Discussions after the films will be led by experts in relevant fields or by the filmmakers themselves. After this month's presentation of *Inequality For*

All, for example, local Congressman Dan Kildee will discuss economic and political trends with the audience. Flint native Mike Ramsdell will take questions after his documentary *When Elephants Fight*. Finally, the festival's founder, Dr. Rao, will join the audience after *Quitte le Pouvoir/Wade, Get Out!*

Here is the schedule for the 14th annual Global Issues Film Festival second half:

Inequality For All
Thursday, January 21, 7 p.m.

Bikes Vs. Cars
Thursday, January 28, 7 p.m.

When Elephants Fight
Friday, January 29, 7 p.m.

100% Dakar – More Than Art
Saturday, January 30, 1 p.m.

Quitte le Pouvoir/Wade, Get Out!
Saturday, January 30, 2:30 p.m.

100% Dakar and *Quitte Le Pouvoir* also will be screened on Tuesday, February 2, at 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., respectively, in the Kiva auditorium at UM-Flint as part of Africa Week celebrations.

Staff writer Andrew Keast can be reached at akeast@umflint.edu.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

dine WINES

~ wine ~
craft beer & more...

TOTEM BOOKS

Books Music Cafe

STOP EYE MUSIC

chasetotembooks@gmail.com

GRAND OPENING JANUARY 20, 2016!
620 W. Court St. Downtown Flint

BARBER CONSOLIDATED

107 W. Kearsley St.
Downtown Flint
Open Monday-Saturday
[Facebook.com/consolidatedbarbershop](https://www.facebook.com/consolidatedbarbershop)

Volunteer Writers Wanted

East Village Magazine is looking for volunteer news staff members. Learn journalism or simply improve your writing skills. Contact eastvillage@sbcglobal.net.

VERN'S COLLISION INC.

Free Loaners

- Unibody • Frame
- Paint Specialists • Glass
- State-certified Mechanics

More than 40 years
at the same
location.

(810) 232-6751
2409 Davison Rd.

BATTISTE'S

TEMPLE DINING ROOM

PUBLIC WELCOME

Serving Downtown Flint since 1947

Luncheon Monday-Friday 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

All Occasion Catering

235-7760

Senior Living Simplified

Near College Cultural Center
Easy Expressway Access

Immediate Occupancy!

COURT STREET COMMONS

Managed by the
Piper Management Group
(Rents start at \$415)

Call today to reserve your new home!

800 E. Court St.
810-239-4400

TDD: 810-649-3777
Equal Housing Opportunity

Water crisis inspires playwright in return to Flint roots, dramas

By Nic Custer

Wisconsin-based playwright Jen Plants, who grew up in Grand Blanc, came back to Flint in December, drawn as many others have been to the drama of the city's water situation.

Plants, 44, who holds a permanent fellowship in playwriting at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is creating a documentary play about the water crisis. She hopes to premiere the show in Flint as a staged reading and workshop by this summer and have a full production by the 2016-2017 season.

But she said she doesn't want to tell a disingenuous story where "these horrible things ... have happened but the people of

contacts, others came forward. She ended up conducting 12 interviews totaling about 25 hours of conversation, and expects to return to Flint over the next few months for additional interviews.

While she declined to say whom she has spoken with, she said she has interviewed "many of the major public players" in local politics, the medical community, and citizen activists.

She said she is interested in the small stories as well as the big ones, adding the documentary play centers on the ripple effects these issues can have. Plants said the project has taken off but she has been looking for a local company or individual to help develop the script. She said she values having both an insider and outsider perspective in the project.

She has contacted state level officials also but has not yet gotten a response. Several interviews were done anonymously. She said this may be for political, personal, professional or legal reasons. She said she will allow her sources to review text if it is used in the production to remove names or identifying details. She said she extends this courtesy to anyone used in the production. Although she will not allow them to remove entire lines of text, she said, she wants to make sure no one feels grossly misrepresented.

"I'm not a strict interview-based dramatist, in that every word will be taken from something someone said," she said. "One of the things I do is take text that people think could never be made into a play and make it dramatically interesting."

The majority of the play will be written based on verbatim interviews but she is also filing Freedom of Information requests and researching Flint's history with the river and its treatment.

"When I go into an interview, I just listen and don't make a value judgment," Plants said. She is not looking at her process in terms of good or bad individuals. Although there are clearly individuals who need to be held accountable, she said, people should also identify systemic and institutional problems.

She said she has turned down other playwriting projects because she couldn't get passionate about the subject matter. She said she wants this project to tell the story of the people of Flint and to discuss environmental issues, failing infrastructure, the difficulties of former industrial centers and the violation of public trust.

Plants' first major documentary theatre production recently opened in London. She said that play, titled *No Feedback*, is about forms of discrimination that lead to

genocide and how people mentally separate themselves from those atrocities.

Those interested in being involved in Plants' Flint project can visit www.jenplants.com and click the Flint Water Crisis tab. Residents can provide their contact information for an interview, leave a short story or questions they would like to have asked.

Nic Custer, *East Village Magazine* managing editor, can be reached at NicEastvillage@gmail.com.

News Brief

Employer subsidies for summer teen jobs offered by Chamber

Local businesses and nonprofit organizations can fill summer job openings and receive subsidies for hiring local teens through the Summer Youth Initiative (SYI) of the Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce, according to a recent announcement from Elaine Redd, Chamber director of communications and public relations.

Employers interested in the program are invited to an informational meeting and employer application process from 9-10:30 a.m. January 28 at the Chamber office, 519 S. Saginaw St.

Teen employees age 14-19 will be matched with qualifying employers for ten weeks in the summer after the teens graduate from the Teen Quest pre-employment training program.

The SYI program provides employers wage subsidy up to 100 percent for non-profits and 50 percent for for-profit organizations for the first 90 days of employment.

"Not only does SYI offer an affordable option for employers with summer job openings, it provides them with a pool of qualified applicants," said Rhett Hunyady, Chamber vice president of education and training.

"These are teens who understand the importance of soft skills like communication, goal setting and taking initiative," she added.

Teen Quest is a free, afterschool program for high school students in Genesee County. It is offered five times a year and aims to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to obtain and keep a job, Redd said.

More information is available from Redd at (810) 600-1418, or email eredd@flintandgenesee.org.

News briefs compiled by EVM staff



Jen Plants

Flint are resilient and great and here are some rainbows shooting out of the stage."

Instead, she said, she wants to tell the story of the people she knows who are smart, resilient and resourceful but at the same time have to deal with tragic circumstances.

"A lot of crises develop not just because one person is evil but because people are operating in a system that does not lead to the best outcomes," Plants said. "It is easier to say there are individual actors and harder to acknowledge there is a systemic problem and finger pointing isn't going to get us anywhere."

Plants was involved in Flint theatre productions before leaving to study theatre at Western Michigan University in 1989. She transitioned from acting to playwriting ten years ago after starring in a semi-autobiographical play.

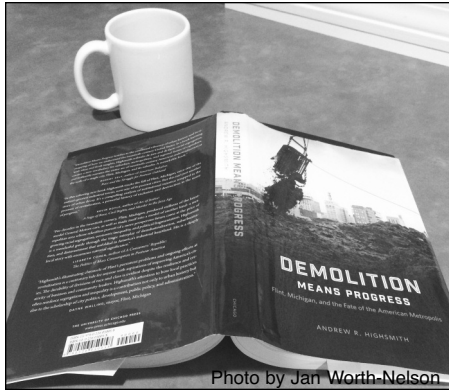
She had been planning the Flint project for a few months and designed her three-day December visit for archival research and checking out the city.

Before arriving she had sent out blind emails and contacted her own network to secure a few initial interviews. In a single day three people agreed to speak with her. As she reached out to more friends and

Book Review

Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the fate of the American Metropolis by Andrew Highsmith

By Bob Thomas



Like a twisted love affair in which things are not what they seem, living in Flint can be an extremely disorienting hall of mirrors.

For 10 years I have been researching Flint's history, trying to understand my hometown roots and my current residence. Despite having read most of the major books on the subject, my Flint narrative has remained littered with black holes between disconnected tissue. I had more questions than answers.

On Nov. 18th in the basement of the Flint Public Library, I discovered some answers.

The occasion was a book-signing and public conversation with Andrew Highsmith, author of *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).

In his opening remarks, the author said his book began as a bunch of Flint questions. "At its core, my book is a local case study of the political economy of racial and economic inequality in modern America. Although it is set here in one particular place, in many ways it's a book about the nation as a whole. At least that's what I want it to be. ... And to do that I looked very carefully at public policies and how public policies and policymakers — often with the support of very powerful corporate officials help to sustain urban poverty and racial inequality."

And what a revealing look at public policy and social engineering the author provides — all of it based on years of research, much of it here in this library, and all of it solidly referenced by 60 pages of sources and footnotes.

I entered the book gingerly, fearing arid drones of science and scholarship, but I was quickly seduced by the measured, engaging narrative voice, synthesizing historical fact upon fact in manageable doses to reveal a kaleidoscope of fresh, shape-sifting perspectives to which the

book's subtitle — *Flint, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* — alludes.

Demolition Means Progress excels in delineating truth from fiction by viewing Flint's modern history in the context of local, state and national history over the past century.

In my early childhood of the mid-20th century, I have no memory of any people other than white people. This is odd since I somehow knew "Negroes" lived in Flint "across the river." I have no memory of ever having gone across the river.

Demolition Means Progress clarified my blind spot with a clear answer. I have no memory of black people because I never saw any. The book offers a graphic display in black and white of the racial profile of the all-white eastside neighborhood and school district of my childhood.

The author backs the graphic view with historical causes. These fruits of his research clearly portray the de facto segregation of my youth and demonstrate a definitive pattern of social engineering under the collusion of several public policies, policymakers and corporate entities. It was in this section of the book that I learned of the racially restrictive deed covenants that GM attached to properties after building houses on the property.

Demolition Means Progress is one of those page-turners where you keep slapping your head and blurting out, "I didn't know that!"

The book's final chapter, "The Fall of Flint," and the epilogue, "America Is a Thousand Flints," is the perfect encore and should be required reading for all of us living in the postindustrial urban decay of the early 21st century.

Those two concluding sections of the book connect lots of Flint dots concerning recent issues like the Emergency Financial Manager regime and the state's

major role in this complete failure of leadership and the resultant manmade water disaster.

Highsmith said it best with his concluding remarks to our public conversation: "In a lot of ways, the current water crisis is really the culmination of the decades of disinvestment that I write about in the book. In our conversations about the water crisis, we've put a lot of blame on city officials and the state of Michigan — and justifiably so because they're all of that.

"And yet there is a broader set of historical sources that are also important in understanding what's happening. The kinds of deferred maintenance that happens when you don't have the taxes to support a city, a viable city in particular."



Andrew Highsmith at Flint Public Library

Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis is a fascinating Flint Decoder Ring. Highsmith's "local case study of the political economy of racial and economic inequality in modern America" is also a notable historic document for our times.

Bob Thomas is an EVM board member. He disappeared in San Francisco for 35 years, only to reappear a decade ago as a retired resident of Flint's Central Park village where he found true love and a new home.

... Sign

(Continued from Page 12.)

pot," she said. "Somebody has to say those things."

That was a lot to take in.

"I wouldn't want him to be president," she continued, "but who else is there? And Hillary lies. And I just don't know about Bernie Sanders."

"Well, 70 percent of what Trump says is wrong," I called out. "But Merry Christmas anyway."

"Merry Christmas to you!" she answered, and strolled away in the moonlight.

I went to the new Local Grocer to get a gift for my Trump neighbors. I wanted leverage, a crutch, if you will, for a conversation. I bought them two organic ribeye steaks and a gift certificate, maybe to use for fresh local veggies or fast-frozen fruit from pesticide-free farmers up North. I wanted them to know I'm a warm-hearted person, if not willing to stand by silently while The Donald, Great Peddler of Fear, the Emperor of the Ignorati, denies climate change, and offends blacks, Mexicans, Muslims, the disabled, and women.

At the Local Grocer, I told Franklin and Erin about the dueling signs. But Franklin, an African American, was not ready to thoughtlessly join my Trump-the-Chump campaign. "It's worth listening to some of the things he says," he commented cheerfully as he touched and swiped the cashier iPad.

I groaned. "Like what??" I demanded. But another customer needed help and I thus avoided hearing anything that would change my mind. This is the Flint I love, but please, you're not going to make me happy about what I regard as The Donald's casually brutal politics.

I delivered my little packet of peace to the Trump house on a day of bitter wind, sleet and snow. The steaks and gift certificates were graciously received, and my neighbor, grabbing a smoke on the frigid back patio, gave me a hug. I told her I was writing about the signs.

She assured me she and her husband were not offended by my counter-message.

"We think it's funny," she said. "We know people have different opinions – that's okay."

"Frankly," she added, smiling, "I don't go for everything he [Trump] says. I'm actually leaning toward Carson."

I walked back across the street, my shoes crunching through thin ice, hopeful that no matter what, neighborliness might trump our differences.

Jan Worth-Nelson is the editor of East Village Magazine. She can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com.



HEARTY THANKS TO ALL OUR 2015 DONORS!

You are part of the reason homegrown community journalism managed to survive and thrive in Flint this year.

\$500 and up:

*Grayce Scholt
Douglas Shook*

\$100-\$499

*Mary Ann Adams
Terry & Lynn Bankert
Kelly Beardslee & Joyce Beardslee
Jane Bingham
David Brown
Edwin & Casey Custer
Peter Levine & Marion Day
Bella Kritz & Ernst Doebeli
Sherry Hayden & Mike Keeler
Michael & Kay Kelly
John Dempsey & Margo Lakin
Michael Madden
Ted Nelson & Jan Worth-Nelson
Tracy Redding
Michael & Julianne Riha
Teddy Robertson
Paul & Nancy Rozycki
Gloria Jean Shipley
Laura & Don Wascha
Ellen Weng
Wesley & Gail Worth*

\$1-\$99

*Dennis Bargy
Ann Bassham
Karen & Carl Bekofske
Greg & Diane Brown
Jennifer Burnett & Sean Siebigteroth
Maryanne & Jerry Caughlin
Carlos & Nancy Cisneros
Jessica J. Coyne & Connor Coyne
Christine A. Digiovanni
Elizabeth & Richard Dix
Margaret DuBuc
Krista E.M. Galley
Diane Ghattas*

*Eugene & Rhina Griffel
Ingrid Halling & Bob Thomas
Anne Hansen & Mark Bradley
Margaret & Basil Hart
Barbara Horner
Harriet Kenworthy
Charles Kroeger & Mary Whaley
Fred & Marsha Kump
Kara Kvasnicka
Virginia Landaal
Spencer K. Lanyi
Byron & Margaret Latter
Max Lepler
Nina Lewis
Nola Lipford
Richard & Claudia Mach
Jack Minore
Jennifer Minore
Olivia Maynard & S. Olaf Karlstrom
Ronald & Mary Meeker
Lucille Myers
Peggy Noone
Donald & Christine Owen
Ben Pauli
Jeanne Pepper & Thomas Herman
Linda Pylypiw
Joel Rash
Doris Sain
David Schon
Paul Stirling
Pat Subora
Alan Thomas
Leonard & Sharon Thomas
Larry & Maria Turouske
Ted VanSteyn
Carson Waites
Dayne Walling & Dr. Carrie Walling
John & Carol Wishart
Dean T. Yeotis
Gordon Young*

Village Life

One sign leads to another, but does “Love Trump Hate”?

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Just to be clear, I can’t stand Donald Trump.

Back in the late 80s when I’d just started working at UM-Flint, a colleague of mine and I bonded over our extreme disdain for The Donald – we called him The Fat-fingered Vulgarian. We used to stop each other in the hallways to swap hilarities about his latest oily escapades. He was a huge joke to us, a cartoon, cheap entertainment in the face of boring institutional banalities.

How I wish for those innocent days again, when he was only a tasteless bowl of kitsch flinging piles of money around



New York and marrying East European women crusted with macabre makeup.

Not Amusing, Ugly American

It’s not funny now. He is possibly the most embarrassing Ugly American of all time, the most crass and pandering, who flaunts his billions and makes jokes of telling lies, of saying anything he feels like to get attention – from a press he can then gleefully skewer. He is the worst of the American white male, coarse, pushy, presumptuous, cruel. Watching Donald Trump makes my blood boil and my head ache. He makes me want to schlong something, but that would be DISGUSTING.

Now you know what I really think.

Anyway, this got personal for me when a “Trump 2016” sign showed up across the street.

I was surprised, annoyed and disappointed. We were happy when that house, one we actually had briefly owned, sold for a good price last summer. We met the young couple who bought it – and enjoyed an afternoon’s conversation with them. He has shoveled walks and offered to help keep an eye on our house when we’re out of town. They are good neighbors.

But I still felt insulted by that sign, as if somebody had put out one of those black jockeys so popular in the fifties. How could anybody in my leafy, diverse

neighborhood, with its writers, nurses, professors, high school teachers, retirees, stay-at-home dads, home-brewers and former Peace Corps volunteers be a Trump supporter? Every day I see it when I come and go, from our den (where we watch MSNBC, of course) from our upstairs bedroom windows.

Time for an alternate message

I decided to respond, in kind.

Online, I ordered ten signs that said “LOVE TRUMPS HATE.” I got the idea, I confess, from Hillary Clinton’s campaign, but I didn’t want this to be about Hillary. I wanted it to be about asserting my own voice.

When the box of signs arrived, I sent messages to the neighbors near and adjacent to the Trump campaign sign, all of whom I know fairly well, to see if they’d like to offer an alternate message.

Two families readily agreed, and one of my next-door neighbors and I went out together and planted our placards with their big blue letters deep in the ground.

My signs became a response not to just one sign on my street, but to Trump in general – a neighborhood, not just one person, arguing for hope that Trump’s words will not define us. I delivered signs to an Episcopal rector, a yoga teacher, a professor, a community activist, a psychologist, a social services worker. The signs have popped up on Court, Vernon, Blanchard, Kensington, Brookwood, Lafayette. There’s also one in Carriage Town.

Others chose subtlety, diplomacy

Several other neighbors of the Trump sign declined. Interesting conversations ensued. First, there was a sense that getting in the Trumpsters’ faces wasn’t a loving response, and some folks expressed the wish to engage in dialogue, that beloved progressive ritual, rather than what might close off conversation and create defensiveness.

Second, the Trump supporters already had demonstrated they are good neighbors – a much-cherished criterion for quality day-to-day life here. They get it: this is how to create and nurture a community, regardless of politics.

Third arose the concept of freedom of speech. Why should we get our underwear in a bunch when the Trump supporters have a right to declare any allegiance they wish?

And fourth, some of us, in truth, have family members vulnerable to Trump’s themes of disaffection, anti-elitism, and alienation. We should try to understand.

It is typical of the good people here that one can expect such thoughtful considerations.

But I am something of a hothead, insisting on my own right to freedom of speech – freedom of counter-message – and thus I kept my signs up, directly facing “Trump 2016.”

I know a simple sign isn’t answer enough to inequality or outrage. But it is a reminder. Certainly we all can co-exist amid differing lifestyles and politics: hot-heads, Second Amendment libertarians, bohemians, evangelicals, stoners, atheists, academics, pickup truck owners, and



temperate progressives alike.

Whatever we do, I believe Trump’s ideas should be challenged, countered, called out. For me, it’s a great feeling to see the signs up, a community saying we aim to include, cooperate, respect, appreciate and sustain, not divide with fear and ignorance.

Loving the way he stirs the pot?

One night – Christmas, to be exact – I went out on my front porch to look at the moon. The next Christmas full moon I will be 85 or in my grave, so I figured I’d better take advantage of it now.

A walker called out to me, “I love your Trump sign! Don’t you just love Trump?”

Some people apparently think the sign “Love Trumps Hate” means “I love Trump’s hate.” Sheesh, as one of my fellow sign-exhibiting neighbors exclaimed, “WHO THINKS LIKE THAT?” But I’m a retired English teacher – language is slippery. And punctuation – or the lack of it – can trip us up a hundred ways from Sunday. As Chuck Todd said to Trump in a recent *Meet the Press* interview, “WORDS MATTER.”

“Umm ... actually, I can’t stand the guy,” I said, shivering a little, to the Christmas walker. “Just so you know.”

“Well, I just love the way he stirs the

(Continued on Page 11.)