



East Village

Magazine

February 2018

*Photograph by
Edwin D. Custer*

The Tom Sumner Program

Produced live weekdays from 9 to noon

Ways to listen...

- ★ **STREAM IT ON-LINE:**
www.tomsumnerprogram.com
(810) 339-8255 (TALK)
- ★ **ON THE RADIO:**
WFOV 92.1 FM in Flint
- ★ **ARCHIVED:**
Episodes & Podcasts



RE/MAX
Real Estate Team
Independently Owned and Operated



FREE Home Warranty

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

Ryan Eashoo

(810) 234-1234



TOTEM BOOKS

Books Music Cafe

STOP

Tu-Th: 10am-6pm
Fr-Sa: 10am-7pm
Su-Mo: Closed

Ph.: 810-407-6402
620 W. Court St. Downtown Flint

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.

Mai Mang
VIETNAMESE CUISINE

Located inside the Flint Farmers' Market

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

M FLINT RECREATION CENTER

The UM-Flint Recreation Center is a leader in health, fitness & recreational experiences for Flint and the surrounding communities.

VISIT FlintRec.com FOR MORE INFORMATION



SPECIAL FEATURES

- Cardio Theater (elliptical trainers, treadmills, stair climbers, bikes & rowers)
- Free Weight & Cybex Weight Equipment
- Indoor Track
- Indoor Pool
- Raquetball Courts
- Multi-Sport Gym
- Free drop-in fitness Classes

LET US HELP YOU REACH YOUR HEALTH & FITNESS GOALS!

- OPEN to the public through membership or day pass
- Free equipment orientations
- Free tours, call (810) 762-3441
- Like us on Facebook | Follow us on Instagram

PERSONAL TRAINING = \$76 includes TWO 1-hour Personal Training Sessions

DAY PASS RATES

0-5 years	Free
6-12 years	\$5
13-17 years	\$10
18-61 years	\$12
62 years & older	\$6

Day pass includes a returnable towel. Bring your own lock for day use lockers. Save \$ — Purchase a 10-pack! WATCH for seasonal sale events!

OTHER SERVICES (fee-based)

- Certified Personal Training
- Fitness Assessment
- Locker Rental
- Massage Therapy
- Iyengar Yoga
- Unlimited U-FIT Cross-Training

Official Training Center for the **CRIMEAT**

Willow's Garden

Willow's Garden JUICE BAR

FLINT FARMERS' MARKET

Open:
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

d'vine WINES

~ wine ~
craft beer
& more...

at the Flint Farmers' Market

Steady Eddy's cafe

Healthy Home Cooking!

810-235-1968
Flint Farmers' Market

Support community journalism! Donations to *East Village Magazine* are tax deductible.
Go to eastvillagemagazine.org for easy giving.



East Village Magazine

Vol. LVI No. 2 February 2018

Founder Gary P. Custer

Editor Jan Worth-Nelson

Managing Editor Meghan Christian

Copy Editor Danielle Ward

Reporters Jeffery L. Carey

Dylan Doherty

Harold C. Ford

Patsy Isenberg

Columnists Jan Worth-Nelson

Teddy Robertson

Paul Rozycki

Business Manager Casey Custer

Éminence Grise Ted Nelson

Photographer Edwin D. Custer

Poet Grayce Scholt

Distribution Staff

Director: Edwin D. Custer. **Staff:** Kim Bargo, Jane Bingham, Helen & Jacob Blumner, Connor Coyne & Ruby Coyne, Casey & Nic Custer, Marabeth Foreman, Andrea Garrett, Charlie & Linda & Patrick & Terrance & Christan & Jillianne Goldsberry, Ingrid Halling & Bob Thomas, Robert Jewell, Andrew Keast, Carol Larzelere Kellermann, Stephen Kellermann, Jo Larzelere, Bill & Carol Leix, James & Lillian & Livia Londrigan, Mary LeRoy, Alan & Julie Lynch, Aron McCormick, Ron & Mary Meeker, Robert & Nancy Meszko, Mary & Jeff Mintline, John Moliassa, Mike Neithercut, Ted Nelson, Edith & John Pendell, Dave & Becky Pettengill, Lucia Rodriques, Julian Rodriguez, Mike Spleet, and Karen Wilkinson.

Board of Trustees

- Jane M. Bingham • Edwin D. Custer
- Jack D. Minore • Paul Rozycki
- Robert R. Thomas
- Jan Worth-Nelson, ex officio

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

Website: eastvillagemagazine.org
E-mail: eastvillage@sbcglobal.net

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

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 first Thursday of each month. Display advertising rates are \$34 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.

Commentary Gerrymandering Part Three: Going to court

By Paul Rozycki

Just when you thought you've heard enough about gerrymandering, and the ballot proposals to end it — there is one more line of attack. Now the courts are getting involved.

Columns in past issues of *East Village Magazine* have outlined the problems and history of gerrymandering, drawing oddly shaped election districts to favor one party over another. A second column also reviewed a proposal scheduled for the November ballot, which would create a non-partisan commission to draw fairer election districts for Michigan.

The courts get involved

As voters prepare to decide the issue, there is one more important group entering the fray to undo and limit the gerrymander — the courts. A number of states have brought cases to the U.S. Supreme Court with the intent of finding the current gerrymandering process unconstitutional.

While the ballot proposal to amend the Michigan Constitution is complicated, many of the issues raised in court may be even more intricate. The ballot proposal to end gerrymandering is fairly straightforward — create a non-partisan commission (complex as it is) and let them do their work. The courts deal with different issues. While gerrymandering may be unfair and perhaps even harmful to democracy, is it unconstitutional? On what basis? And even if it is, what can the nine members of the Supreme Court do to end the practice in 50 states and 435 congressional districts?

Is it a “political question?”

Perhaps the most surprising thing is that the U.S. Supreme Court has taken the case at all. The Supreme Court normally has a choice of which cases they choose to accept — and they typically reject at least 95 percent of those cases appealed to it. One of the more common reasons for declining to hear a case is that it presents a “political question,” an issue that should be decided by the elected officials, rather than a non-elected panel of judges. For that reason, for many years, gerrymandering was considered beyond the court's jurisdiction and they avoided taking such cases.

But now the issue is emerging in lower courts, with conflicting results. Within the last month one federal court panel ordered North Carolina to redraw its election map, while another court upheld a Pennsylvania plan, say-

ing they had no business getting involved in political matters. That conflict among lower courts may force the Supreme Court to take action. The court has already heard arguments over gerrymandering in Wisconsin, and is expected to hear a similar case from Maryland. Other cases from Michigan and North Carolina are working their way through the system, and more are likely. The Michigan case has been filed by former Democratic Party Chair Mark Brewer with the support of the League of Women Voters.

What is fair?

It's easy to look at some of the maps generated in gerrymandered states and come to the conclusion that the whole process is unfair. But judges like precise legal definitions. Some judges have said that only “excessive” gerrymandering is unfair and a constitutional violation. What is “excessive”? What is fair? What is unfair? If a state is 50 percent Democratic and 50 percent Republican, but elects 55 percent of one party, is that unfair? What if it's 60 percent? What about a 70 percent advantage for one party? Where should the courts draw the line? In the Wisconsin case, the Republicans won almost two-thirds of the legislative seats with less than half the popular vote. Nationwide, the Republicans have been the major beneficiaries of gerrymandering. But they are hardly alone. Given the opportunity, Democrats have been willing and able to gerrymander just as ardently as Republicans. In Wisconsin the Republicans have given themselves an advantage with their election districts. However, in an unusual move, the Supreme Court has also agreed to hear arguments against gerrymandering from Maryland, where Democrats have the advantage. Reviewing cases from states where both Republicans and Democrats have gerrymandered is likely an attempt by the court to avoid favoring one party over the other. Some argue that only the courts could really end gerrymandering, since politicians of either party will use it to their advantage.

A way to measure gerrymandering?

It's easy to say that gerrymandering is unfair, but how do you measure it? In the Wisconsin case litigants have tried to provide an objective measure of unfairness with a con-

(Continued on Page 11.)



Photo of the Month: Abandoned beauty at Central High

Daughter of immigrants details Flint's disasters and hopes

By Harold C. Ford

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

- Frederick Douglass

(Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha's favorite quote)

Several dozen area residents gathered at the Flint Public Library (FPL) Jan. 9 to hear Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha reflect upon Flint's proud and challenging history, including the evolution of and response to the city's water crisis. She also provided details from her own personal history.

The event, titled "Water Crisis and Systemic Racism," was the latest in the Tendaji Talks lecture series named in honor of the late Tendaji Ganges, a Flint educator and social justice activist. Sponsored by the anti-racism group Neighborhoods Without Borders, the talk was repeated at the New McCree Theater Jan. 16.

Since documenting toxic lead levels among the young patients of her Hurley Hospital pediatric practice in 2015 – data which some state officials tried to discredit – Hanna-Attisha has become a tireless spokesperson, advocate and ambassador of the water crisis – a national figure, now, with a book coming out this year.

The lens through which Hanna-Attisha shines light on Flint's story is strongly tint-

ed by her experience as the daughter of Iraqi immigrants who fled the repressive regime of Saddam Hussein when she was 4 years old.

"He was big and bad and brutal," she said of Hussein. "My parents were progressives ... and they knew that they couldn't stay in that country so they fled."

Immigrant child

"I am an immigrant," Hanna-Attisha told the FPL audience. "We came basically as refugees in search of a peaceful and prosperous place for my brother and I to grow up ... We came to this country in search of the American dream ... I saw this country ... with the fresh eyes of a little girl who was filled with so much hope, so much excitement ..."

Hanna-Attisha noted that times have changed and the America that welcomed her family in the 1980s is attempting to close the door.

"That America that I woke up to this morning, it's changed a lot since I was that bright-eyed little girl," she reflected. "I would not be in this country with his (President Trump's) first immigration ban ... It's not as easy anymore especially (for) a brown person from an Arabic country."

Hanna-Attisha, of course, was referring to the Trump administration's first attempt

at banning immigrants with an executive order issued one year ago that sought to deny entry to citizens from seven majority Muslim nations, including Iraq.

That attempted ban was struck down by the courts. But the administration's campaign to reject or restrict immigration is continuing.

A better life

"I realized even at that age how I was so lucky to every day wake up to that America," Hanna-Attisha said. Her educated parents earned good salaries, her father as a metallurgist for General Motors, her mother as an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher for immigrants.

"They sent me and my brother to Michigan's great public schools and universities and I know that we were lucky," she recalled. "For my family, that American dream worked. It worked as it should have worked."

Flint helped build American dream

Hanna-Attisha declared 1936-37 Flint as the date and site of "the original American dream." She was referencing, of course, the 44-day Sit-Down Strike by members of the fledgling United Auto Workers (UAW) that ended in capitulation by General Motors

(Continued on Page 5.)

... Daughter

(Continued from Page 4.)

and recognition of the UAW.

"This was radical, this had never been done before, this was revolutionary," Hanna-Attisha said of the UAW strikers. "They risked their lives, they risked their jobs, they risked their families."

"What happened in Flint informed wages and contracts across the country for decades, and it informed me and my life ... because I know that my GM dad and my teacher mom, who was a union member, directly benefitted from those workers' contracts ... and from that bargain we lifted working people into the middle class and into the American dream."

"Flint was a special place," she said. "It was a promised land and ... people fleeing Jim Crow came to Flint ... for those great living-wage jobs."

Not a promised land for all

"The equality was not shared by all of Flint's residents," Hanna-Attisha cautioned. "The auto plant jobs were segregated, so were the schools, so were the neighborhoods. Evil housing practices, blockbusting, and redlining that happened during this period" helped to foster segregation in Flint and Genesee County. She recommended the book *Demolition Means Progress* by Andrew Highsmith who writes:

"During the decades preceding World War II, a potent combination of private discrimination, federal housing and development initiatives, corporate practices, and municipal public policies converged to make Flint one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States ... By the close of the 1930s, the widespread use of restrictive covenants by local residents had helped make Flint the third most segregated city in the nation, surpassed only by Miami, Florida, and Norfolk, Virginia."

It got worse according to Hanna-Attisha. "For a lot of folks that dream quickly turned into a nightmare," she said. "What followed in Flint ... was decades of crisis — disinvestment, unemployment, racism, poverty, decline of unions, population loss, crumbling schools, criminal injustice ... A person living in Flint right now has a 15-year less life expectancy than a person in a neighboring zip code."

Two Americas

"I see it as there's two Americas ... the America that I was lucky to grow up in and achieve that American dream and the America that I see in my clinic every day," she said.

"I have seen things that I wish I had never seen ... things that would never be part of a nightmare, let alone a dream. It's a nightmare of poverty, of injustice, of racism, and, most striking, of lost opportunity."

Lily and the water crisis

During her FPL talk, Hanna-Attisha transitioned to the Flint water crisis through her experience with Lily, a little girl who visited



the clinic for her checkup at age 4.

"Just like most of our Flint kids, she is bright, smart, stubborn, brave, and beautiful," she recalled. Lily's exam was fine. Lily giggled when Hanna-Attisha said she saw Elmo as she looked in her ear. Lily playfully grabbed the physician's stethoscope to listen to her knees.

The mood in the doctor's office turned serious, however, as described by Hanna-Attisha: "And then the mom turns to me with a look, a look that is all too familiar in Flint, and asks me, 'Is she gonna be OK?'" The mood at the Tendaji Talk also turned more serious as Hanna-Attisha reflected on Lily's victimization:

"Lily was born into this city that was almost bankrupt, born into a city that lost democracy. And we know that the emergency manager's job was austerity, to save money, no matter what the cost. Lily's water was switched ... They severed a half-century relationship with pre-treated Great Lakes water, went from a high-quality water source to a lower-quality water source which nobody ever does in the water world. And on top of that they didn't treat it properly. It was missing a fundamental ingredient called corrosion control. You talk to water folks and it's like a no-brainer. How could they not put the corrosion control in? They didn't even put the pump in that was supposed to put this corrosion control in."

Water science

Starting with her father who toiled for GM as a metallurgist, the science of water quality is not an unfamiliar topic to Hanna-Attisha. Her undergrad degree was in environmental health at the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources.

"I started out my career, my education as an environmentalist, a tree-hugging environmentalist," she recollected. "I kind of wanted to save the world ... I realized the connection between environment and health."

"Twenty years ago when I was in college I learned what environmental injustices were," she recalled. One of her U of M professors was Bunyan Bryant, a Flint native and "one of the fathers of the field of environmental injustice."

"We all know what lead does," declared Hanna-Attisha. "It's one of the most well-studied metals out there. We've known what it's done since the Romans used it to build their pipes."

She cited "centuries-old reports on how it impacts children and causes (health) difficulties. Because of science ... we now know that lead levels that used to be acceptable are no longer acceptable ... It impacts every organ system and every age group."

"The lead industry ... there's evilness in that industry," she said. "There was something called the Lead Industry Association that targeted communities of color that blamed the victim and tried to minimize the harm done."

Environmental racism

"Even before this water crisis, we knew that lead exposure, in and of itself, is a form of environmental injustice," Hanna-Attisha said. "Professor Bryant used to call it 'environmental racism' because it disproportionately impacts children of color."

Ignoring science

"We were stubbornly slow as a nation to restrict lead from a lot of things but especially our plumbing," said Hanna-Attisha. "We didn't restrict it from our (water) service lines until 1986 and from our fixtures until 2014 — another amazing example of policies failing to listen to science."

"So this created that perfect storm for the lead in our plumbing to leach out into the bodies of our children," she said.

"And we all know that this would not have happened in a richer city. It would not have happened in a whiter city."

Residual effects

"What's difficult with most environ-

(Continued on Page 7.)

Tree issues, city charter implementation highlight CCNA meeting

By Patsy Isenberg

A disputed tree-replacement contract and concerns about tree removals dominated much of the January meeting of the College Cultural Neighborhood Association (CCNA), along with updates about plans for Pierce Park, discussion of progress in implementing the city's new charter, and concerns about suspected drug activity on Court Street.

CCNA President Mike Keeler and Vice-president Sherry Hayden offered updates on the status of an evolving proposal for the now-vacant Pierce Park. Todd and Tara Korpi from The Cathedral, a nondenominational church, had presented their plan at the last meeting, for renovating the building and improving the grounds. Keeler and Hayden said the request for a proposal from the Korpis will go out soon.

Trees, trees, trees

Keeler explained the neighborhood's ongoing tree problem is two-fold. One was the issue of cutting down trees in the spaces between sidewalks and the street during water pipe replacement. The second is what Keeler said was the lack of the city of Flint's final approval of a plan to buy trees for the neighborhood.

Keeler said the neighborhood tree contract pursued last year to beautify the CCN has stalled. He said neighborhood leaders wanted the tree contract to be bid out, and that a motion by former councilman Scott Kincaid was approved with amounts in the ballpark of \$300,000, but that in the "back and forth, there seems to



Photo by Patsy Isenberg

Monica Galloway with Mike Keeler

be no acknowledgement that it even passed." Addressing recently re-elected Seventh Ward Councilwoman Monica Galloway, Keeler suggested he wanted to get minutes from the relevant council meeting and to "set the record straight." Galloway agreed getting the minutes was a good idea, adding she remembered it differently and noting the matter seems to

be a "bone of contention" between the CCNA and the Council.

Conservation District board election upcoming

This brought up the topic of the election of Genesee County Conservation District Board members. The conservation district, the body responsible for executing the city's tree contracts, has been the source of much scrutiny and criticism by CCNA members, for whom the disposition of trees in the neighborhood's canopy has been an ongoing sore spot. Keeler introduced two of four candidates for seats on the board: David Lossing, a Ph.D. student at Indiana State University who is currently on the board, appointed to replace Laurie Everly in November; and Kris Miner, a recently retired teacher active in urban gardening and other environmental issues. Later in the meeting, two other candidates for the board, Andy Everman and Carolyn Kellogg, also introduced themselves. The election will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 22 at Asbury United Methodist Church. Any resident of Genesee County may vote. Absentee ballots can be obtained by calling 230-8766. Three candidates will be selected.

Blanchard Street pipe replacement threatens silver maples

Another set of tree worries concerned threatened removal of several large silver maples on Blanchard Avenue between Court and Calumet due to water replacement line work. Keeler said the problem stems from not knowing if there is copper, lead or galvanized pipe beneath the tree, and several of the trees have been marked by water pipe contractors.

Residents said sometimes the tree has been cut down only to discover that the line is copper and the tree could have remained. Keeler said one resident suggested the pipe replacement could instead go the way hers did which was the contractor put in another line next to the old one instead of cutting a tree down. Price is a factor and Keeler wondered if that method might be cheaper. He suggested people meet with Councilwoman Galloway to try to come up with a plan that might save the trees. Several residents spoke up to report detailed conversations with the pipe replacement contractors, noting it's not just the loss of trees, but also the damage done to yards and sidewalks that makes them unhappy. One resident countered that trees sometimes cause damage to concrete

and surrounding pipes.

In a related matter, Councilwoman Galloway said she recently received an answer to the question, raised by CCNA members, of whether residents could take responsibility for trees in the "tree park" between the sidewalk and street if they are at the residents' address. She said the answer from the city legal department is "no," based on concerns about insurance and safety.

Pay attention to charter implementation, Bankert and Richardson say

The group also heard from Terry Bankert, Flint attorney and frequent commentator on local affairs, and Jim Richardson, a member of the elected commission who developed the new city charter, to talk about its implementation. The charter, the first revision since 1974, was voted in by a two-thirds majority in August and took effect Jan. 1. Richardson said



Photo by Patsy Isenberg

Jim Richardson (l) and Terry Bankert

work toward implementing the new charter is moving forward. He said city council members had a training session a week ago.

Bankert explained the new charter needs to be interpreted and overseen by an Ethics and Accountability Board to be appointed by the mayor and city council, and he and Richardson urged residents to pay attention to the formation of the board and get involved.

The board will consist of 11 members and one ombudsman, Bankert explained. Each of the nine council members will choose one member from their own ward and the mayor chooses two. The board then will hire the ombudsman. Board members will serve a five-year term, staggered so they don't all turn over at one time. After the members are selected, a public hearing is to take place and each must receive six votes to secure their appointment. Richardson explained candidates for the board must be registered voters, and cannot have served in an elected position, or cannot be a

(Continued on Page 7.)

(Continued from Page 6.)

member of an elected official's family.

Avon Street mansion up for auction

In the monthly real estate report, Mark Fisher from Wiechert, Realtors-Grant Hamady said 11 homes were sold in the last two months and 10 are currently pending, including one foreclosure, but that the number of distressed homes is down and steady. The average price per square foot is up at \$44 and the average number of days a house is on the market is 52.

One house discussed at length, at 925 Avon, is set to be auctioned, Fisher reported. The 9,000-square-foot mansion, behind Richert Manor, is vacant and in need of a lot of work but has good potential, he said.

Gilkey bridge needs work

Keeler offered a report on the Gilkey Creek bridge over Court Street, which he said is badly in need of repair. He said the limestone structure is starting to cave away and the bridge needs tuckpointing. He said structural engineers are scheduled to examine the bridge later this month and if the bridge is judged to be structurally sound a repair project would be presented to City Council for approval. He said Mott Community College students are interested in doing the work, which he hoped would begin in early spring.

Crime down, Burr contracts available

CCNA neighborhood watch chair Mike Herriman reported the number of incidents is down, but that there had been one car theft since the last meeting and reports of packages stolen from some porches in the neighborhood. He also announced that those who wanted to participate in the D.M. Burr Security program could sign up for a partial year at this time even if they didn't sign up for the usual one-year contract last fall.

Drug activity suspected

A number of residents again complained about suspected drug activity at a house on Court Street owned by a Flint police officer who Herriman said owns several other rental houses in Flint. The house has been the subject of earlier complaints at CCNA meetings, including to Flint Police Chief Tim Johnson in August. Johnson told residents at that meeting he would attend to the issue, but residents said suspect activity continues at the address. Herriman advised people to note times when the activity was highest to help police establish a pattern.

Galloway announced she has appointed

CCN resident Heather Kale, whom she defeated for city council in November, to the Zoning Appeals Board.

EVM staff writer Patsy Isenberg can be reached at pisenber@gmail.com. EVM editor Jan Worth-Nelson contributed to this report. She can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com.

... Daughter

(Continued from Page 5.)

mental health issues is that it is almost impossible to prove causation because there is a significant time lag," she reminded her audience. "You might be exposed today but you might not see symptoms for five years from now and the symptoms you see can be caused by lots of different things."

Hope

Hanna-Attisha's social justice mission goes beyond a searing examination of the role of racism in environmental injustice. It includes finding solutions and hope, "flipping the story, making tomorrow so much brighter than yesterday ever was The hope that I talk about is being forged every day by folks around the city ... working together to really realize that hope and build those dreams for our kids."

"We are doing things in Flint that no other city in the country is doing right now," asserted Hanna-Attisha. She delivered her long list of hopeful initiatives in rapid-fire style:

- "We are the only city in Michigan to have universal preschool."
- "We have two brand new child care centers ... free, all year, the highest quality child care you can ever imagine ..."
- "We have (Dolly Parton's) Imagination Library ... so every single kid in Flint gets a free book mailed to them every single month from the age 0 to 5."
- "We have Medicaid expansion. This is probably the biggest gift we got from the federal government ... This means all folks up to the age of 21, pregnant moms, can have access to health care."
- "We've had a huge explosion of home visiting resources to support pregnant moms, and parents, and their children."
- "We have mobile grocery stores."
- "We have things like Double Up Food Bucks. Eligible persons who spend \$10 using a SNAP Bridge Card can spend an additional \$10 on fresh fruits and vegetables."
- "We actually have jobs in Flint now ... early childhood workers, Lear (an estimated 430+ new jobs); we used to have

one school nurse, we now have 10 school nurses."

- Crim Fitness Foundation programs in Flint schools now train students in mindfulness, meditation, and yoga, "an evidence-based intervention that decreases stress," that alters discipline procedures while emphasizing restorative practices. The initiative is aided by Americorps workers.

- A registry akin to that created for Michigan's PBB victims and 9/11 World Trade Center survivors was launched on Jan. 22. "It is a massive project (funded by) a grant from the CDC (Center for Disease Control)," reported Hanna-Attisha. "The goal is to support folks, to identify those that were exposed to the crisis and get them connected to resources to improve outcomes."

"I want you to recognize that this is all based on science," Hanna-Attisha said of the responses to Flint's water crisis. "These are things that will help our children to recover."

Sustainability

In a question-and-answer session that followed the talk, Jan Worth-Nelson, editor of *East Village Magazine* expressed concern about the temporary nature of the remedies.

"Where are we going to be in 15 years?" she asked. "Is this town capable over time of becoming self-sufficient and healthy?"

"I'm an eternal optimist," Hanna-Attisha responded. "But a lot of this is related to capacity-building. We don't need (bottled) water, we need tomorrow investments."

We're in the same boat

Hanna-Attisha concluded her Tendaji Talk with a favorite quote from Martin Luther King: "We may have all come here on different ships, but we are all in the same boat."

"We are all in that same boat and we all must continue to work together as we continue this path toward healing," advised Hanna-Attisha. "We are not going to be defined by this crisis but rather by our response."

A longer version of this story is available at eastvillagemagazine.org.

EVM staff writer Harold Ford can be reached at hcford1185@gmail.com.

**COLLEGE CULTURAL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
ccnaflint@sbcglobal.net
**Neighborhood Watch meets Thurs.,
Feb. 15, 7-9 pm, MCC's RTC Auditorium**
**Members meet Thurs., Mar. 15, 2018
7-9 pm in MCC's RTC Auditorium**

Walling rolls out campaign for state representative

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Former Flint mayor Dayne Walling has announced he is running as a Democrat for state representative in the 49th District. He filed paperwork with the Secretary of State for his campaign committee Jan. 29. The election will be Nov. 6.

Walling, who became an embattled — and controversially maligned — symbol of the city's water woes, was ousted in 2015 by Karen Weaver, in a campaign in which his role in the crisis was front and center.

The 49th District includes Flushing, Swartz Creek, Mt. Morris City and Township, Flint Township and much of Flint.

The seat is available because the current 49th District representative, Phil Phelps, is being term-limited out after the legislatively-mandated maximum of three two-year terms. The district has a population of about 83,000, is 52 percent female, 67 percent white and 27 percent black, according to Wikipedia. The position pays a yearly salary of \$72,000.

Since his departure from City Hall, Walling, who lives with his wife Carrie and two sons in the College Cultural neighborhood, re-opened his policy and management consulting company, 21Performance, with clients including

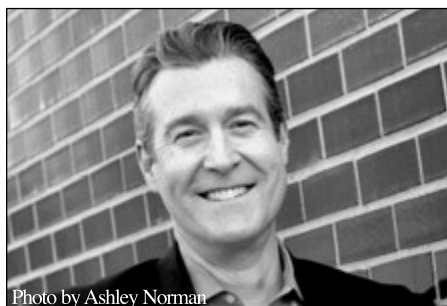


Photo by Ashley Norman

Dayne Walling

Michigan State University's Regional Economic Innovation Center and Phil Hagerman's Diplomat Pharmacy. He is teaching classes in leadership, ethics and diversity at Kettering University and Baker College. He also reported he founded the Flint Forum for Social Business with support from Factory Two and Ferris Wheel 100K Ideas.

The image of Walling flipping the switch that brought Flint River water to the city in 2014 became a symbol of the debacle. He also was attacked and mocked by many for drinking the water on TV in 2015, an act of public reassurance about the water quality that proved unsupported.

In follow-up to his announcement,

Walling responded to a series of questions from *East Village Magazine*. Because of space and time limits, his replies have been edited and summarized. The full transcript is at eastvillagemagazine.org.

He pointed out that during his tenure as mayor, the state had control of the city's budget and personnel decisions through a series of emergency managers, two of whom have since been indicted.

"I apologize for not seeing what was really happening until our doctors had the data on childhood lead poisoning. I understand people's anger; I am angry too and that motivates me to do everything I can to address the problems."

"I made mistakes in my handling of the Flint water crisis and I'm sorry about it every single day," he stated. "I now know that the information I was receiving was being manipulated and I trusted the experts for too long. The assurances I echoed turned out to be false."

"I hope people will look closely at the full record and see that I was working for clean water and better infrastructure," he said. "I can envision regulations, training and programs that will ensure no one and no community is

(Continued on Page 11.)

COSMIC COMBO January 20-May 13, 2018

SLOAN MUSEUM
BE THE ASTRONAUT
BLAST OFF IN
STARSHIP SLOAN



Sponsored by: **M**
FLINT

**Museum Hours: Monday-Saturday,
10:00 am-5:00 pm & Sunday, 12:00-5:00 pm**
Be The Astronaut is a traveling exhibit from Eureka Exhibits.
810-237-3450 | SloanMuseum.org

LONGWAY PLANETARIUM
SPACE SCHOOL
**UNDER THE DOME...
UNDER WATER**



Sponsored by: **ITC**

**Shows daily at 4:00 pm and Thursday,
Friday & Saturday at 7:00 pm**
810-237-3400 | Longway.org

In Appreciation

In recognition and grateful appreciation to the generous donors who offered their support to East Village Magazine and to community journalism in 2017.

Thank you!

Larry Battiste
Duncan & Dana Beagle
Stephen & Carolyn Bernstein
Jane Bingham
Susan Borrego
Peggy Brunner
Joseph Burroughs
John Cherry
Tony Chubb
Deborah Conrad
Geoffrey Dankert
Billie Fisher
Christine Gardner
Roy Graham

Eugene & Rhina Griffel
Ingrid Halling & Robert Thomas
Franklin & Betty Hamilton
Barbara Horner
Betsy Homsher
Harriet Kenworthy
John King
Kathryn Koegel
Stephen Larzelere-Kellermann
Nina Lewis
Laurence & Carol MacDonald
Robert MacDonald
Michael Madden
Robert & Kristin Miner

Walt & Edythe Peake
Jeanne Pepper
& Thomas Herman
Michael & Julianne Riha
Paul & Nancy Rozycki
Grayce Scholt
Kimberlee Streby
Paul Stirling
Tom Sumner
D.J. Trela
Theodore Vansteyn
Karen Wilkinson
& Reginald Lancaster
John & Carol Wishart

We also want to single out for special thanks these very exceptional people for their assistance in 2017:

-Casey Custer, who has provided accounting and bookkeeping assistance as a labor of love for the past three years — a time of sometimes nerve-racking adjustment and learning curve of the editors since the death of Gary Custer.

-Ed Custer, who continues to keep our office in shape, provides one gorgeous cover after another, and coordinates distribution through heat, humidity, rain, cold, ice and snow.

-Dean Paxton, who designed our website and has provided web maintenance service all the while refusing payment.

-Greg Farah, who kindly and with understanding helped us through a paperwork challenge and would take only EVM swag in return.

-Andy Everman, who provided business cards for all our staff writers.



Unclassified ads

For Rent. Studio apartment and two-bedroom apartment. Clean, partially furnished, all bills paid except electricity. Walking distance to UM-F & MCC. Call 810-235-0021. Leave message.

Studio Apartment for Lease. Spacious (540 sq. ft.) apartment on cul-de-sac Avon near Kearsley St. Walk three blocks or less to UM-Flint, MCC, Cultural Center, Downtown, Farmer's Market, five parks. Quiet, set back, one-story semi-detached studio, airy with many windows, well insulated, hardwood floors, can be partially furnished, built in washer and dryer, deck onto large back yard, garden plot, off street parking. On site management. References and credit report requested. \$515 per month plus electricity. Heat and water included. No pets. (write Box 7C, 720 E. Second St., Flint MI 48503. E-mail: ecuster@sbcglobal.net)



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



SLOAN MUSEUM

**January 15-
May 27, 2018**

The making of a
segregated city

Join the
conversation!
#SloanMuseum



SloanMuseum.org

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

“This Month” highlights a selection of interesting events available to our readers — beginning after our publication date of Feb 1. It is not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling of opportunities in the city. To submit events for our March issue, email your event to Managing Editor Meghan Christian at meghan.christian22@gmail.com by Feb. 20.

African American History Month Movies

Feb. 1, 8, 15, and 22
4 p.m.
Flint Public Library, 1026 E. Kearsley St.
810-232-7111
Admission: Free

Each Saturday, enjoy a film celebrating African Americans in the arts.

Queen Light Show: “From Mercury with Love”

Feb. 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, 22-24
8 p.m.
Longway Planetarium,
1310 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-3400
Admission: \$4-\$6

A dazzling light show featuring 10 of Queen’s greatest hits.

Genesee County Relay for Life Kickoff

Feb. 1
6:30 p.m.
Powers Catholic High School,
1505 W. Court St.
810-733-3703
Admission: Free

Join in to celebrate the kickoff of Genesee County’s Relay for Life event.

Space School

All Month
Mon. - Thurs. 4 p.m.
Thurs. - Sat. 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Sun. 4 p.m.
Longway Planetarium,
1310 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-3400
Admission: \$4-\$6

Explore how astronauts prepare for space in their underwater training habitat.

Super Saturday Story Time

Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24
1 p.m.
Flint Public Library, 1026 E. Kearsley St.
810-249-2170
Admission: Free

Craft and storytime for the family. For preschoolers to age 12.

Galentine’s Day

Feb. 9
6-10 p.m.
Sloan Museum,
1221 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-3427
Admission: \$5

A fun night for the ladies, including shopping, drinks, a photobooth, and more. Ages 18 and up only.

Meet the Authors

Feb. 10
1 p.m.
Flint Public Library,
1026 E. Kearsley St.
810-249-2170
Admission: Free

Meet the authors of *Josie’s Bedazzled Shoes*, Lydia L. Miles and Teresa L. Baker.

Minecraft

Feb. 10 and 24
3:30 p.m.
Flint Public Library,
1026 E. Kearsley St.
810-249-2170
Admission: Free

Play Minecraft at the library. Ages 10 and up.

Petra and the Wolf

Feb. 12
7 p.m.
The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$20

A show for family audiences, Petra must defend her home and friends from a wolf that threatens them.

Tween/Teen Writers Workshop

Feb. 13 and 27
4:30 p.m.
Flint Public Library, 1026 E. Kearsley St.
810-232-7111
Admission: Free

For ages 11 to 17, learn more about writing, critiquing, sharing your work, and publishing.

Romance Under the Stars

Feb. 13-15
6-9 p.m.
Longway Planetarium, 1310 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-3427
Admission: \$200 per couple

A romantic and elegant evening at the Planetarium. Enjoy drinks and appetizers followed by a catered dinner from Redwood Lodge. Limited tickets are available. Order online or call 810-237-3427.

Fiction Only Book Club

Feb. 21
Noon
Flint Public Library, 1026 E. Kearsley St.
Admission: Free

Join discussion of Ilyasah Shabazz’s *X: A Novel*.

Jazznite

Feb. 22
5 p.m.
White Horse Tavern
Admission: Free

Enjoy an evening of jazz at the White Horse.

... Politics

(Continued from Page 3.)

cept called the “efficiency gap.” It’s a complex statistical model, but basically it’s a measure of wasted votes. If one party is packed heavily into one district, all those votes it gets beyond 50 percent are, in effect, wasted — it doesn’t need them to win. Similarly, if a party has no realistic chance of winning a district all those votes for the certain loser are also wasted. The combination of the wasted votes on the winning side and the losing side produces a measure of the “efficiency gap.” That’s the “packing” and “cracking” most commonly used to create gerrymandered districts.

Skeptics of this measure contend that if the “efficiency gap” were used it would invalidate almost a third of all state election maps in the country. Further, some argue that the courts shouldn’t get involved in what they call a “social science stew or sociological gobbledygook” of applying and interpreting a complex and untried statistical measure. Other statistical tests have been proposed and face the same criticism.

But trying to determine what is or isn’t fair is only part of the problem. Let’s say the court finds that both Wisconsin and Maryland have drawn unfair election districts. What then? Almost certainly the court doesn’t want to get directly involved in drawing 435 congressional districts, not to mention thousands of state legislative districts, county districts, and city council districts in all 50 states.

What solutions?

While a decision to limit gerrymandering could get the federal courts involved in the minutiae of state and local government, it’s done it before when it dealt with desegregation of public schools. In the past, the courts have overturned some election maps where they discriminated along racial lines. It’s possible that the Supreme Court could do a number of things to end or reduce the impact of gerrymandering. It could allow states to submit plans to lower federal courts, once some guidelines for “fairness” were set. It could also require non-partisan commissions to be used, instead of having politicians drawing election district lines. Some have even suggested that computer programs might be used to limit human political influence in the mapmaking process. Most likely, whatever solution the court orders, if any, would not affect the 2018 election, but would begin with the 2020 election, where those elected in that year would draw political maps for the next decade.

Whatever the Supreme Court decides, we should have a ruling by June.

EVM political columnist Paul Rozycki can be reached at paul.rozenki@mcc.edu.

... Walling

(Continued from Page 8.)

ever in the same position again.”

He said his top legislative priorities would be education, infrastructure and workers’ rights.

He added he would particularly advocate for local democratic control.

“In Flint we all saw what happens when one political party and unaccountable managers dictate from Lansing. It has been one raw deal after another. There are lessons here for both sides of the aisle. We need to protect the democratic process itself and we must ensure the rights of everyone to participate, to vote and to assemble are intact in Michigan. Sustainable policy solutions work with democracy, not against it.

“Our democracy is under attack,” Walling stated. “We’re in a tough fight. I know what it’s like to take a punch and so does our community. I hope people see that I’m not giving up or going away...”

“I learned some very hard lessons in the mayor’s office and through the Flint water crisis and my faith in government has been shaken,” he said.

“Where we are now can’t be the end of the story. Government has to be put back on the side of the people. That’s the message we need to send up and down the ballot in 2018,” he concluded.

East Village Magazine reached out to other potential candidates for the 49th District position, and will provide information as it becomes available.

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

MUSIC

at St. Paul's

Artistic Director G. Donald Kaye Presents
FINAL SEASON



PROF. JOEL SCHOENHALS
Piano
Eastern Michigan University
“Remembering
Joel Hastings”

Sunday, Feb. 25, 2018
3:30 PM

JOHN B. BOHL
Organ
“Welcome home,
John”



Sunday, Mar. 18, 2018
3:30 PM

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

Valentine's Specials!!!

Best Margaritas!
Full Service Bar

SORIANO'S

Mexican Kitchen

• Carry-Out available • Family business since 1999
PH: 810-339-6975 - 836 S. Saginaw St.
web: sorianomexicankitchen.com

FLINT CULTURAL CENTER

AFRICAN AMERICAN

HERITAGE & CULTURE

Enjoy events, exhibits, films, and performances throughout February.

FlintCulturalCenter.org



Village Life

Good Beans owner weaves coffee, community spirit

By Jeffery L. Carey Jr.

Despite the travails of Flintstones, there is an underlying spirit — or as Ken VanWagoner, owner of one of Flint's enduring hangouts, the Good Beans Café, described it, “a shared feeling of tenacity” where “we’re all a fabric that is holding each other together.”

He himself is a prime example of that tenacity, launching and, for 18 years so far, stubbornly sustaining an important hub in the city's historically significant, but persistently challenged neighborhood, Carriage Town. He has consistently cultivated Good Beans as a welcoming meeting place and performance venue for artists, musicians, community activists, and regular residents seeking a good cup of coffee.

VanWagoner, now 56, was woven into Flint's community in 1962 when he and his twin sister were born at St. Joseph's Hospital, once located on the Mott campus. He spent the next 18 years living in Holly with his family until his graduation from high school when he left to attend Central



Ken VanWagoner serving at Good Beans Café. He reclaimed the ornate bar from what is now Soggy Bottom and has determined it originated from the Capitol Theater.

Michigan University.

His said his experience while living in Mt. Pleasant set the groundwork for his career in the hospitality industry. During his eight years there he worked at Elias Big Boy and another restaurant called Papa Don's.

He gained more experience in the industry after moving to Grand Rapids where he worked in a hotel and helped an acquaintance open a new business. This work eventually led him to Indianapolis, where he lived until his return to Flint in 1994.

With candor he confessed it was the “school of hard knocks” that taught him and that he had no mentor to help guide him. He said it was not the two years he spent working on a degree at CMU, a degree he musingly admitted is, “still pending,” but his own drive and experiences from washing dishes to managing a restaurant and everything in between that prepared him for his own business.

The catalyst of his sister's tragic death though proved to be a defining element in the tapestry of his life. A boating accident that took her brought him back to Flint, back to his birthplace where he could take care of his mother. It was at this point, VanWagoner said, that he began taking steps towards what would become the Good Beans Café.

While working in the Hudson's restaurant located in Genesee Valley Mall, he said he realized his need to move beyond what he had been doing. VanWagoner saw the potential of going into what he felt had, “a better mark up,” the business of selling coffee. He bought the building for the café, on the cor-

ner of Grand Traverse and W. First streets, in November of 1997. He wrote a 100-page business plan and presented it to more than 20 lenders.

Laughing, he recalled, “I kept all of my rejection letters.” His persistence paid off though as he did most of the work readying the café himself while renting out the “room on the side,” which ran as an antique shop for about two and a half years.

In what VanWagoner described as a “soft open” the Good Beans Café launched in 2000 despite the difficulties of its Carriage Town neighborhood, one of which was a drug house right across the street. With loyal and understanding customers he plugged away, taking in stride 10 years of break-ins, smashed win-

dows, and seedy characters. All of this, he said, was manageable until someone senselessly vandalized his flowers.

“They just ripped it up,” he said. “I could have understood if they had stolen them, but they just left them laying there.” The incident nearly caused him to “hang it up,” but his “customers’ persistence” allowed him to get through it.

While the Good Beans Café boasts a delectable variety of beverages, like their classic Old Flannel, the café's Anteroom has provided a vital space for creativity, collaboration, and the community. One could compare Flint's fabric to a coat of many colors with VanWagoner as part of the seam that holds everything together and who openly and generously helps patch others into it as well. This attitude is captured in his company's mission statement, “The Good Beans Café, Constantly Supporting Culture, Community, and the Arts in Flint, MI.”

As Flint grows, VanWagoner observed, he welcomes the competition, the expansion of the fabric, the “teeter-totter” effect as he described it. “More businesses means more people move to Flint, means more businesses,” he stated as he gestured the up and down motion. “There is steam in the sails,” he said. “Hell, I hope a Starbucks opens right across the street.”

EVM staff writer Jeffery Carey can be reached at jlcareyjr@hotmail.com.

LVI: 2 (657 issues, 6,607 pages)

ON THE PORCH

by
Grayce Scholt

Today the sun is
hiding in the million snowflakes
gathering on my porch steps
playing peek-a-boo with
patience, but promising
that hidden somewhere in
the thickest clouds
our Star is shining
preparing
for the final
thaw of
spring.

Grayce Scholt is a retired English professor from Mott Community College who wrote art reviews for the Flint Journal and has authored several poetry collections and memoirs. Her newest collection is East of Everywhere, drawn in part from work published in East Village Magazine. The book is available from Friesen Press, www.friesenpress.com and Amazon.