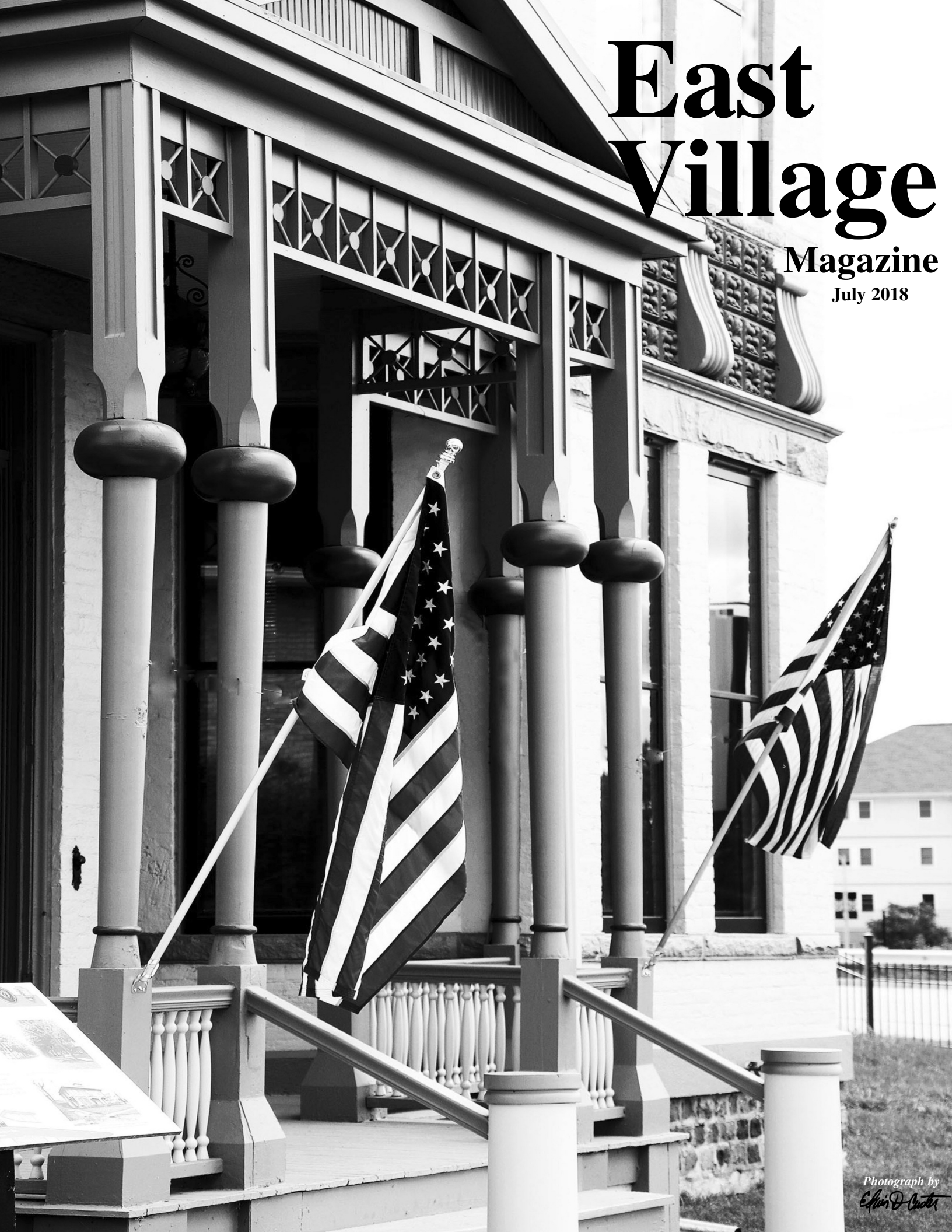


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Magazine

July 2018



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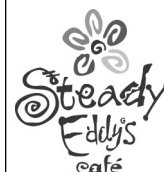
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## Commentary *A primary primer for the Aug. 7 election*

*By Paul Rozycki*

In less than a month, in the midst of summer vacations, art fairs, festivals, and car shows, Michigan will hold its regular primary, and the turnout is likely to be low, as it has been for years. That's unfortunate because, for most officials, the primary is the real election — whoever wins the primary is likely to win in November. That's because most of our election districts are gerrymandered to favor one party or the other. In most of Genesee County, the winner of the Democratic primary is almost certain to win in November. In other places, such as Lapeer County, the reverse is true.

With that in mind, here's a brief preview of the more important races and proposals on the Aug. 7th ballot.

### The Governor's race

The race to nominate Democratic and Republican candidates for Michigan's next governor is clearly the biggest contest on the ballot. The Republicans have a choice between four candidates: Attorney General Bill Schuette, Lt. Gov. Brian Calley, Dr. Jim Hines, and Sen. Patrick Colbeck. The main contest is between Schuette and Calley, with Schuette seeming to be the front runner in the race.

Democrats have a choice of three candidates: ex-Senator Gretchen Whitmer, Shri Thanedar, and Dr. Abdul El-Sayed. By most estimates, Whitmer is the front runner, but Thanedar has become remarkably well known with his early and clever ad campaign, and might offer a significant challenge.

### The U. S. Senate

Incumbent Democratic Senator Debbie Stabenow is unopposed for her nomination and she will face either Sandy Pensler or John James for the Republicans in November.

### The U.S. House of Representatives

For the 5th Congressional District, both incumbent Democrat Dan Kildee

and Republican Travis Wines are unopposed for their nominations and will face off in November.

### The State Senate

For the 27th District, which covers most of Genesee County, incumbent Democrat Jim Ananich and Republican Donna Kekesis are unopposed for their party's nomination and will compete in November.

The 32nd District includes the western townships of Genesee County, and all of Saginaw County. Phil Phelps and Henry Gaudreau are seeking the Democratic nomination. The winner will take on incumbent Republican Ken Horn in the fall.

### The State House

There are five races for the State House of Representatives in Genesee County.

The 34th District covers much of the northern and eastern parts of the City of Flint. Incumbent Democrat Sheldon Neeley is facing Steve Greene and Syrron Williams for the Democratic nomination. The winner will face Republican Henry Swift, who is unopposed for his party's nomination.

The 48th District, covering much of northern and north eastern Genesee County is currently represented by term-limited Democrat Pam Faris. Three Democrats, Eric Gunnels, Sheryl Kennedy and Jordan Tiffany are running for their party's nomination. Two Republicans, Shari Cross and Al Hardwick, are opposing each other for the GOP nomination.

The 49th District, covering Mt. Morris and Flint townships, and parts of the City of Flint (including the East Court area) is also an open seat, with Phil Phelps being term limited. The district has drawn six Democrats into the race to replace Phelps. They are John D. Cherry, LaShaya Darisaw, Justin Dickerson,

*(Continued on Page 9.)*

**Cover: Restored Whaley House re-opened to public (Story p. 6)**



Photo of the Month: Artifact of the past at Crossroads Village

## Work begins on Flint Cultural Center Academy, C.S. Mott commits \$35 million

By Harold C. Ford

An array of Flint area nonprofit and political leaders gathered June 26 on the campus of the Flint Cultural Center (FCC) to break ground for a new nonprofit charter school that will serve up to 650 students each school year in grades kindergarten through eighth.

Project planners expect the new school to open in time for the 2019-2020 school year. The Flint Cultural Center Academy will offer students the opportunity to take advantage of programs at nearby Cultural Center institutions — Flint Institute of Arts (FIA), Flint Institute of Music (FIM), Flint Public Library, Longway Planetarium, Sloan Museum, and The Whiting.

### 90 minutes of culture a day

Todd Slisher, Sloan Museum and Longway Planetarium executive director, told the hundred+ gathered at the groundbreaking that FCC Academy students will spend 90 minutes of every school day at the FCC member institutions. “It’s an amazing set of resources that we have,” he said. After-school programs and summer camps

will augment the daily schedule with “endless” possibilities, according to Slisher.

The Flint-based Charles Stewart Mott Foundation announced its commitment of \$35 million “to cover the costs of designing, constructing, and outfitting the school, as well as making related improvements to the Cultural Center campus,” according to a press statement provided at the event.

The 78,000-square-foot school will house 37 classrooms, a gymnasium, cafeteria, and kitchen. Direct access to the FIM and Sloan by FCC Academy staff and students will be provided by an adjacent exhibit and learning space that features three multipurpose classrooms.

### Cradle to college continuum

“It’s the next step in a comprehensive effort to strengthening the education continuum in Flint, from cradle, to college, to career,” said Ridgway White, Mott Foundation president. “The Mott Foundation believes that the Flint Cultural Center Academy will play an important

role in this education continuum.”

The idea for the school first emerged in 2015, according to Mark Sinila, chief operating officer of the FCC Corporation which will help to coordinate the new school. The Mott Foundation provided \$2.9 million for the school’s planning and development. Flint-based THA Architects Engineers and E & L Construction Group, Inc. became the project’s design and construction partners.

### Flint Schools reportedly turned down chance to charter the project

According to State Senate Minority Leader and Flint resident Jim Ananich, Flint Community Schools, under the leadership of then-Superintendent Bilal Tawwab, turned down the chance to charter the school.

“When this project started, I asked if I could talk to the Flint Schools about chartering it because, under the law, public schools can charter as well,” Ananich said. “I talked to the superintendent (Tawwab) and they weren’t interested in it.”

(Continued on Page 5.)



(Continued from Page 4.)

Ananich, who represents Flint residents as part of Michigan Senate District 27, is a product of Flint schools and has a long history of supporting public education. He attended Pierce Elementary and Whittier Middle School before graduating from Flint Central. He taught at Flint Northern. His wife (Central HS), father (Northern HS), mother (Central HS) are all products of Flint Community Schools (FCS). His mother is a recent FCS retiree.

“He (Tawwab) said capacity-wise, they couldn’t handle it,” reported Ananich. “As a community person, I think it’s important to stabilize Flint schools. Flint would have been my preference (as a chartering agency).”

Ananich explained that, at that time, FCS was planning to knock down the abandoned Central and Whittier buildings and build a new middle/high school campus. (See past issues of *EVM*: March 2017; May 2017; March 2018.) The thinking of some, according to Ananich, was that the students enrolled in the new FCC Academy would transfer, after 6th grade, to the new middle/high school at the start of their 7th grade year.

Indeed, Tawwab indicated to *EVM* in a March 2017 interview that 2020 was the target date for the opening of a new, consolidated Flint high school at the old Flint Central site. But Tawwab was suddenly dismissed by the board of education in March 2018 with no explanation provided. And the public discussion of a new middle/high school campus for Flint is, at present, nowhere to be found.

All the while, Flint schools continue to lose students. Flint has fallen to the fourth largest public school district in Genesee County, trailing Grand Blanc, Davison, and Carman-Ainsworth. Of the approximate 15,000 school-age children in Flint, about 4,600 attend Flint’s public schools.

“It’s a mistake on the part of the Flint schools,” Ananich told *EVM*. “I still support the project (FCC Academy). Making sure we have this type of quality school here is the number one priority. I wished it would have gone through Flint.”

Instead, the school’s charter was



Artist’s rendering of the new FCCC charter school

Main Entrance

approved by Grand Valley State (GVS). GVS is the authorizing body this fall for 76 charter schools with a combined population of 37,000 students, according to GVS representatives Don Cooper and Cindy Shinsky. They declined to comment on the role of charter schools in depleting student populations in public schools. “I prefer to focus on this event today,” Cooper told *EVM*.

“This is about putting kids first,” White told *EVM* when asked about the charter school status of FCC Academy. “Our commitment to the Flint Community Schools is still ongoing. We fund community education in all the Flint Community Schools.”

#### Phased enrollment strategy

Due to its charter status, FCC

Academy enrollment is open to any appropriate-age student living in Michigan. A lottery system will be used on the occasion that there are more applicants than seats available.

In its first year, the school is expected to enroll a total of 300 students from kindergarten through fifth grade. In its second year, 2020-2021, grade six will be added. Grade seven will be added in year three and grade eight in year four. By that time, the school expects to enroll a total of 650 students each academic year.

Information about the application process to enroll a child will be available in early 2019.

*EVM* staff writer Harold C. Ford can be reached at [hcford1185@gmail.com](mailto:hcford1185@gmail.com).

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# Whaley House re-opens three years after fire with top-to-bottom restoration

By Jan Worth-Nelson

For staff and historians of the only Victorian home left from the row of mansions that once graced Kearsley Street, the fire of 2015 was a crushing blow. One November day, a welding torch left by roofers working on copper gutters at the Whaley Historic House Museum ignited a blaze that, along with smoke and water damage, ruined every room.

Following a settlement and fundraising campaign, restoration work began. Workers had to take down the interior to its original timbers on all three floors. The \$2 million restoration project of the two and a half years since is almost done, and the result, as with its near neighbor the Capitol Theater, is astonishing and heart-warming for a city needing evidence of beauty reclaimed from tragedy.

The Gilded Age house opened to the public June 24.

The C.S. Mott Foundation, which also supported the Capitol Theater restoration, contributed about \$200,000 to the Whaley renovation.

It will be open the first and third Saturdays of the month and by appointment to set up a tour. Admission is \$5 for adults and children 13 and up; \$3 for seniors, college students with ID, and children 13 and below. Children under 3 get in free. More information is available at 810-471-4714.

Both Whaley Executive Director Daniel Conner and David White, president of the Whaley board, now agree the fire had an upside.

"While the fire was devastating at first, we quickly realized that it was a blessing in disguise and an opportunity," White said. "Engineers and architects determined that the top of exterior brick walls were buckling from the weight of the roof. Over time the top of the house would have collapsed. As a result we were able to run steel supports from the basement to the



Whaley House restored parlor

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

roof to give added support to the house and relay the upper bricks."

Also, White said, "It was an opportunity to restore the house more closely to the period using research from over the years. Period wallpapers were more accessible than they were when we started in the 1970's. Floors were restored to their original parquet and borders copied from 1890's wood flooring catalogs.

"It was an opportunity to bring the wiring up to code, restore lost interior shutters, and replace the long lost wood storm windows."

All the artifacts in the house had to be moved out and stored and/or restored, White said. "In all, only a dozen pieces were destroyed. Many pieces were refinished, reupholstered, and cleaned. Whaley House is more authentic today than ever before," White stated.

The new parquet floors built by Belfor Restoration of Fenton were laid in the four downstairs rooms. Elaborate

plastering by hand and inlaid wallpaper was painstakingly completed by Stephen Heddy's Artistic Decorating, Inc. — the same crew who recently completed interior transformation of the Capitol Theater. Heddy and his cousin Bill Heddy are fourth generation painters and restorers.

The wallpaper designs are different in each room — all authentic Victorian patterns — Japanese influences evident on the first floor and dragon flies and spider-webs in an upstairs bedroom.

For Executive Director Daniel Conner, who started in his position last July, the re-opening culminates a journey from heartbreak to exuberance.

A UM-Flint history graduate, Conner was walking back to the campus that November day from his then-internship at Applewood Estate, C.S. Mott's family home further east on Kearsley, when he saw the fire. He and his faculty

mentor at UM-Flint, public history professor Thomas Henthorn, stood outside watching the devastation with sinking hearts. UM-Flint had co-sponsored popular "History Happy Hours" at the museum; Conner had been in and out of the building many times, and he understood its significance.

Built in two phases — an Italianate original in 1859, one of the first houses built in Central Park — and a later, Victorian remodel in 1884, the house is a "Victorian gem," Conner said. In 1885, Robert Jeremiah and Mary McFarlan Whaley moved in.

R.J. Whaley, president of Citizen's Bank for over 40 years, played a crucial role in Flint's history, when in 1886 he gave a loan to Dallas Dort and Billy Durant's Flint Road Cart Company — and that led to the creation of General Motors in 1908.

Grieving after the death of their 10-year-old son Donald, who had been sav-

(Continued on Page 7.)

## ... Whaley

(Continued from Page 6.)

ing up himself to give to an orphanage, R.J. and Mary gave \$500,000, an immense amount at the time, to start the Whaley Children's Home.



R.J. Whaley's top hat  
(photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

The house, at 624 E. Kearsley St. at north-bound Chavez, is the last mansion left on Kearsley Street, where once stood homes occupied by Flint legendary families including the Bishops, Whitings, and Motts. The house was rescued from the wrecking ball in 1976 by a coalition of seven volunteer organ-

izations when I-475 went in.

"It's amazing to see the house come alive again," Conner said. "In a way, it's better than ever. This has been a special opportunity to begin a new life."

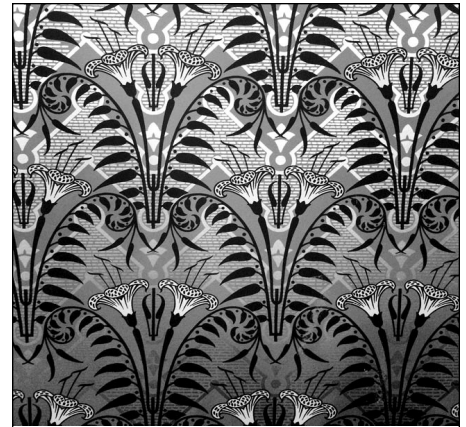
"We're doing this for the people who started us, those who have kept with the Whaley House for all these years," he said. "We want to be part of this community." He said he hopes to open up the home in its new life with outreach to the whole community and programming that will draw people in.

Flint Handmade will resume its quilting gatherings in the house in August, and the History Happy Hours will resume at 7 p.m. July 5.

"It is a monument to the pioneers that created the Vehicle City and to a family who left a legacy to care for Flint's children and seniors with Whaley Children's Center and McFarlan Home," White said.

White's 40-year career as a Flint curator/historian came to an end just three days after the fire—a life change that allowed him to spend the last two and a half years volunteering his time to oversee the restoration.

Conner, 28, was born at Hurley Hospital, and hails from a family of three generations of General Motors workers. He is, he said, "entrenched in the area's history." Driving in from a six-minute commute from his apartment



Victorian-era wallpaper  
(photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

in Grand Blanc, Conner said for him, the Whaley position is a dream job.

"It is very cool to have the opportunity to put my love, my interests, my passion to work. I truly enjoy it here."

EVM Editor Jan Worth-Nelson can be reached at [janworth1118@gmail.com](mailto:janworth1118@gmail.com).

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# "Good news story" arts millage up for Aug. 7 vote

By Jan Worth-Nelson and Patsy Isenberg

A proposed county-wide millage that could bring in up to \$8.7 million/year for the arts in Genesee County for the next ten years will be on the Aug. 7 ballot.

Backers of the proposal say it would guarantee substantial support, educational enrichment and widened access for one of the area's biggest "good news stories," including free admission to the county's best-known cultural institutions and many others in the outcounty.

The .96 mill (96 cents/\$1,000 taxable value, would mean about \$48/year more in property taxes for a home assessed at \$50,000).

## FCCC would distribute

If passed, the millage revenue would be distributed from the county to the Flint Cultural Center Corporation, which would allocate it to the Flint Institute of Arts, the Sloan Museum, The Whiting Auditorium, the Capitol Theater, the Flint Youth Theater, the Flint School of Performing Arts, the Longway Planetarium, the Flint Symphony Orchestra, the Flint Institute of Music, the Friends of Berston Fieldhouse, and the New Floyd J. McCree Theatre.

Based on the county's population and the average price of homes in the county, the yearly revenue from the millage would be about \$8,776,000 in the first year.

Of that, \$500,000 per year would go directly to the Greater Flint Arts Council, which would distribute the funds through grant making to other county arts agencies.

According to the non-profit Citizens for a Better Genesee County (CFBGC), a group that formed explicitly for the millage campaign, "Flint and Genesee County should be known for more than water issues or infrastructure problems or Netflix's 'Flint Town.'" Exact wording of the ballot proposal is available at [bettergenesee.com](http://bettergenesee.com) or at [gc4me.com](http://gc4me.com).

Citizens for a Better Genesee County, headquartered in Fenton, is led by president and Fenton resident Randall Thompson, a former State of Michigan and U.S. Congressional staffer who now

runs his own marketing business.

The arts in Genesee County are "a great good news story," Thompson exclaimed. "The Cultural Center is a gem of Genesee County."

"When you consistently hear bad news, you're not going to attract businesses or

The Fenton Players, Clio Cast and Crew, the Flushing Area Historical Society, or the Grand Blanc Arts Council.

In addition, it would guarantee free general admission to the Sloan Museum and the Flint Institute of Arts and selected discounts on shows and programs at the

Longway Planetarium, the Whiting, the Capitol Theater, Flint Youth Theatre, Flint School of Performing Arts, Flint Symphony Orchestra, and Flint Institute of Music. Also significantly discounted if the millage passes, would be admissions to McCree Theatre and Fine Arts Centre's mainstage productions. In addition, McCree would offer free after school workshops and free admission to Black History Film Series and its after-school workshops for students in Genesee County. Events offered by Friends of Berston Fieldhouse would be free or reduced for

Genesee County residents.

## A plea for support

Charles Winfrey, director of the McCree Theatre & Fine Arts Centre, has publicly supported the millage effort, making a plea for votes during his introduction to "Give Me That Old Time Religion" performance in May.

Winfrey said, "I'm here today to ask you to pray on it and to vote yes on it when you go to vote. If that millage passes, it will support not only McCree Theatre but the Berston Fieldhouse on the north side of Flint to allow us to continue our programs. But it will also enable the entire Cultural Center here in the City of Flint to sustain themselves for the next ten years."

## Transparency, accountability?

Former City of Flint ombudsman and longtime downtown attorney Terry Bankert voiced reservations about the millage proposal, writing on Facebook, "I object to using public dollars for unaccountable private institutions," and said he objected to what he called the "sleazy

(Continued on Page 9.)



Millage could aid many county-wide arts venues

(photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

good jobs or keep up good housing values. But we've got another story to tell.

"We've got a boatload of incredible success stories in the arts here," he said. "We want to say, listen, come here! It's a great place to live and we love it here."

The group wrote and submitted the millage proposal ballot language to the Genesee County Board of Commissioners in early spring. Commissioners approved the proposal 5-3 in April. Commissioners Ted Henry, Martin Cousineau, and David Martin voted against it and Bryant Nolden abstained.

The proposal was endorsed by Flint Cultural Center Corporation in a letter signed by Executive Directors Jarret Haynes (The Whiting), John Henry (FIA), Todd Slusher (Sloan/Longway) and President and CEO Rodney Lontine (FIM).

## How much and for what?

The \$500,000 allocated to GFAC would be dispersed annually for grants to support arts education and cultural enrichment programs at other nonprofit and governmental arts and cultural institutions in Genesee County, groups like



## ... Millage

(Continued from Page 8.)

politics” involved.

He said he is unhappy about what he views as a lack of transparency and accountability for how the money would be spent. He said “back room deals” had led to several changes by the Board of Commissioners in the original proposal—to benefit a wider variety of recipients.

The community needs information, Bankert said. “Who are the people involved? What recourse is there if we don’t like what they do?”

Thompson said CFBGC consists of about 25 grassroots volunteers who meet monthly. He said he is spokesman and only “named officer” and that the group has no office but accomplishes its work around a handful of kitchen tables.

Responding to Bankert’s accountability concerns, Thompson replied that all the arts agencies involved, as 501c3 (nonprofit) organizations, are required by law to file annual reports with the IRS, called 990s, and that those reports would be available to the public.

Also, he said, if the millage passes, the Board of Commissioners is poised to consider two proposals: one to place county commissioner representation on each of the recipient organization’s boards, and another to appoint an ombudsman to oversee use of the millage and conduct yearly audits.

Ultimately, Bankert said, “I’ll probably vote for it. This resource may not continue to exist without this millage help. I have a business and a home within a slingshot of the Cultural Center, and it’s a benefit to the community, a bona fide community resource.”

Thompson, who has five kids, said working on the campaign has been satisfying so far. He said his previous work in Lansing and Washington, D.C. kept him out of town much of the time, and this time he’s found himself able to make a difference right at home.

*EVM Editor Jan Worth-Nelson can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com. Staff writer Patsy Isenberg can be reached at pisenber@gmail.com.*

## ... Primary

(Continued from Page 4.)

Jacky King, Dayne Walling, and Dan Wright. The winner of the Democratic nomination will face Republican Patrick Duvendeck, who is unopposed for his party’s nomination.

The 50th District covers much of Burton, Grand Blanc, and southeastern parts of Genesee County and is currently represented by Democrat Tim Sneller, who is unopposed for his nomination. He will face Republican Trace Fisher in November, who is also unopposed.

The 51st District covers western and southern Genesee County and parts of northern Oakland County, and is currently represented by Republican Joe Graves, who is term limited. Four Republicans, Matthew Anderton, Mike Mueller, Drew Shapiro, and Ian Shetron are competing to replace him on the Republican side. Democrat David Lossing is unopposed for his nomination and will face the winning Republican in November. While most of Genesee County’s house districts lean Democratic, the 51st has a history of Republican advantage.

### **The Genesee County Commission**

Of the nine members of the Genesee County Commission, four districts include parts of the City of Flint.

The 1st District covers the northern parts of Flint and the Mt. Morris area. Incumbent Democrat Bryant Nolden is being challenged by Kenneth Andrews for the nomination. No Republican has filed to run in the district.

The 2nd District covers central and eastern parts of Flint. Incumbent Democrat Brenda Clack is facing a challenge from David Davenport and Adam Ford. No Republican has filed to run.

The 3rd District includes much of Burton, and parts of the east side of Flint. Democratic incumbent Ellen Ellenburg is facing a challenge from Steven Hatfield for her party’s nomination. Three Republicans, Gerald Cross, Gary Goetzinger and James Miraglia are competing to run against the winning Democrat in November.

The 4th District includes the southern half of the City of Flint and parts of Flint

Township. Incumbent Democrat Kim Courts is unopposed for the nomination and no Republican has filed to run against her.

### **The Circuit Court Judges**

On the non-partisan ballot, voters will choose two Circuit Court judges from eight candidates. Those running to fill the judicial slots are: K.C. Baran, Chris Christenson, Glenn Cotton, Marvin Jennings Jr., Elizabeth Kelly, Richard F. McNally, Brian Pickell, and Stephanie Witucki.

### **The proposals**

Voters will also decide on several proposals on Aug. 7.

Several proposals are county-wide.

The Mass Transportation Authority is seeking a renewal of their .40 millage for five years.

Perhaps the millage that has drawn the most attention is the Arts Education and Cultural Enrichment Millage, which would levy a .96 millage to support the Cultural Center, Capitol Theater, McCree Theater, and Berston Fieldhouse (see story p.8)

Michigan State Extension Services is also requesting a renewal of their .04 mill levy for the next four years.

Other proposals will face voters outside of Flint.

Voters in the City of Davison will also vote to amend their city charter. Grand Blanc Township will vote on a fire protection millage and a mosquito control millage. Atlas Township voters will decide on a recreation millage. Voters in the Genesee School District will decide on both renewing an operating millage and a new sinking fund millage. And Lake Fenton will vote on an operating millage renewal.

Even with all the summertime activities, take the time to vote in your parties’ primary. More information on all the candidates is available from the League of Woman voters at [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org).

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

# VOTE

# Flint Council approves two-year city budget and 10 of 11 appointees for overdue ethics panel

By Meghan Christian

Flint City Council (FCC) approved 10 appointments to the Ethics and Accountability Board and approved the Mayor's biennial budget for the city of \$55.8 million for 2018-19 and \$56.6 million for 2019-20 at their June 25 meeting.

Formation of an Ethics and Accountability Board was one of the requirements outlined in the new city charter adopted by 2-1 by voters in August, 2017, and which was to have taken effect Jan. 1.

The council's late June actions leave one more appointment — awaiting a nomination from First Ward councilman Eric Mays — to complete the composition of the ethics board.

The board's main functions include appointing an ombudsman and hearing resident concerns. The board is empowered to hold public servants accountable per the ethical standards outlined in the charter. This power manifests in various ways, outlined in the charter, from calling hearings to subpoena powers, should it be necessary.

The charter calls for 11 members, comprised of one member from each ward and two members appointed by the mayor. First Ward Councilman Eric Mays had not submitted a name by the time of publication.

Mays said he was still choosing between two candidates at the time of the June 25 meeting and would submit his selection later.

Terms on the board are staggered, meaning each of the 11 members serve a different number of years. According to Sixth Ward Councilman and Council President Herb Winfrey, this is to ensure that not all of the members leave at the same time. "You need to have some folks that still have some ... history with the Ethics and Accountability Board," he said.

## Appointees

The 10 appointments were approved by the council with no objection; however, Mays abstained from voting on all of them. According to him, "(The Board) ain't been well-thought out," due to his

interpretation that the board is funded separately from the \$250,000 that was allocated for the Office of the Ombudsman in the 2018-2019 budget.

He further stated he abstained from voting for two of the appointments — Linda Boose and Andrietta Dicks — due to family connections.

All appointees were initially present and invited to speak, but not all were still available by the time it was their turn to be introduced two and a half hours into the meeting.

**Second Ward:** Joseph King was recommended by Councilman Maurice Davis to serve his ward on the Ethics and Accountability Board for a four-year term. According to Davis, King does a lot for the community, including organizing a clean up in Civic Park. "He tries to be ethical in everything he's doing," Davis said.

"I'm not a politician. I'm a community advocate. I believe in helping people and do whatever I can to make sure things are done properly," King said.

**Third Ward:** Linda Boose was recommended by Councilman Santino Guerra for a six-year term. Boose works for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. According to Guerra, she "represents the ideals of all residents in the Third Ward community and throughout the city of Flint."

**Fourth Ward:** Defense Attorney Nicholas D'Aigle was recommended by Councilwoman Kate Fields for a two-year term. D'Aigle has served as a defense attorney for parents in neglect and abuse cases locally for four years. Outside of his experience dealing with members of the community, D'Aigle also has experience sitting on boards, including a board he currently sits on in Genesee County dealing with the juvenile court system.

**Fifth Ward:** Andrietta Dicks was recommended by Councilwoman Jerri Winfrey-Carter for a two-year term. According to Winfrey-Carter, Dicks is qualified to sit on the Ethics and Accountability Board because "she has high levels of integrity" and because of

her experience on the board for the Flint Children's Museum.

**Sixth Ward:** Dr. Delores Langston was recommended by Winfrey for a four-year term. "She has been over various departments, she's an advocate for children and for families, she is what we call a 'decent human being' ...," Herbert Winfrey said in praise of Langston. "I thought that she would be an excellent person for this Ethics and Accountability Board," he added.

Langston touched on her definition of ethics for the council, stating, "I try to get all the facts before I come to a judgment, so I try not to go in with preconceived notions."

**Seventh Ward:** Pastor Allen Gilbert was recommended by Councilwoman Monica Galloway for a two-year term. According to Galloway, Gilbert is a suitable fit for the board due to his previous experiences on other boards, his relationships with the Council as a whole, and his support of the Administration.

"I want to serve to try to do my best the few years that I got left," Gilbert said. "That's why I try to help and we don't always agree, but that's all right," he added.

**Eighth Ward:** John Daly was recommended by Councilman Allan Griggs for a four-year term. Daly, who previously taught two Master's level courses in Ethics, has a decade of experience working on honors systems and ethical codes for academic institutions and other organizations.

"I thought this would be a great opportunity to serve the city of Flint," Daly said.

**Ninth Ward:** Eric Roebuck was recommended by Councilwoman Eva Worthing for a six-year term. Roebuck, a student at the University of Michigan-Flint, ran against Worthing during the primaries. According to Worthing, he is ethical and has knowledge of the City's charter. "I would put my trust in him to do the right thing," Worthing said.

**Mayoral Appointments:** Mayor Karen Weaver recommended Loyce Driskell for a two-year term and Art Evans

(Continued on Page 11.)

## ... Council

(Continued from Page 10.)

for a six-year term. Both were approved without discussion outside of Mays stating his reasons for abstaining.

### The Budget

FCC adopted the Mayor's biennial city budget, \$55.8 million for 2018-2019 and \$56.7 million for 2019-2020, by a vote of six in favor and zero opposed, on the interpretation of the charter that after the council failed to get enough votes to overturn the Mayor's veto June 13, her proposed budget goes into effect.

Those in favor were Mays, Davis, Guerra, Winfrey-Carter, Winfrey, and Galloway. Fields, Griggs, and Worthing had left the meeting by the time of the vote, so the motion passed without opposition.

While the Mayor's proposed budget passed without opposition, Mays, the council's financial chair, addressed agreed-upon amendments that he said would be negotiated after July 1, when the budget actually goes into effect.

Discussions would be based on a previous meeting held between Winfrey, Mays, the mayor, and Chief Financial Officer Hughey Newsome.

The amendments under discussion include \$10,000 each for the FCC department secretaries, \$30,000 for an additional part-time employee in the office, and \$10,000 each for the two senior centers, Brennan and Hasselbring.

As for the other amendments proposed by the council and which were part of a budget vetoed by the Mayor, including \$500 for each ward accounts, the council does not have a steadfast agreement from the Mayor, but more of an agreement to discuss them later, according to Mays and Winfrey.

Guerra voiced optimism that FCC would be able to work with the Administration to make adjustments to the budget in July. "I think this is a process of working together, eventually when we hit July and can add those amendments in," he said.

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## All floors open at Flint economic and innovation incubator, the Ferris Wheel

By Jeffery L. Carey, Jr.

"We are excited to be a part of a community of doers and innovators," said Heather Kale, general manager of Flint's Ferris Wheel business incubator as she announced at a June 21 celebration that renovation of all seven floors of the building are completed. An initial opening of the first three floors of the 100-year-old building, which had been vacant for decades, was last November.



Seventh floor ready for occupants at Ferris Wheel.

(photo by Darlene Carey)

Skypoint Ventures, led by president and chief innovation officer David Ollila, announced the potential occupancy of 39 businesses, entrepreneurs, innovators, and students. Tenants have access to a range of business services, support, and resources all in a single location.

"We didn't create the idea of an incubation center," said Phil Hagerman, founder and CEO of Skypoint Ventures and owner of the building, "but what we were able to create here in Flint, Michigan is something that was built to serve the people of this community."

He described the desire to develop a space for "creatives," saying the incubator "needed a flexible model where people could bring all types of ideas and issues and ventures and thoughts to life."

Tenants in the building already include Flint Prints, an online printing company; Mr. Chip, a mobile auto glass repair company; Grace Peabody of Peabody Insurance; The Disability Network, a group providing services to the disabled community of greater Flint; The University of Michigan-Flint's Innovation Incubator, previously located at the North

Bank and now on the Ferris Wheel's fourth floor.

Businesses expected to move in include Caudill Thornquist Group, Choice Office Products, Northgate, MarxModa, Pop Mod Photography and State Bank.

The 2018 winners of a "Reverse Pitch" contest held in Flint, Stop and Freeze LLC, will be on the second floor. The five-member team is comprised of Paul Baugher, Michelle Kachelski, Linda Kachelski, Adil Mohammed, and Andy Watchorn. The team won a six-month tenancy for designing a security and emergency alert app. "The app name will be finalized at a later time," stated Mohammed, "once we are ready to announce the product release."

Many tenants in the Ferris Wheel have established businesses in the greater Flint area, but are using the space for expansions.

One example is Bill Burgess of Flushing Glass who expanded his territory by creating Mr. Chip, a mobile windshield repair company. "One of the benefits of this service," said Burgess, "is how it can be used for fundraisers." He described how a chip repair service can bring in money while providing a needed service.

"Flint's entrepreneurial community is rich with innovation and ambition, and we're happy to help that spirit thrive at Ferris Wheel," Hagerman said. "Imagine, the ideas, inventions, and innovations that will one day shape our lives are being crafted right now right here in Flint."

Prices for membership and becoming a tenant at the Ferris Wheel begin with a student price of \$25 per month, including a flexible desk space, Wifi, and 24/7 access to the facility. Spaces go up from there with fourth floor spaces running \$299 per month to "premium" office spaces on the seventh floor. Premium seventh floor spaces include office windows with views of the city, Wifi, 24/7 access, printing access, conference room credits, and a mailbox.

EVM staff writer Jeffery L. Carey can be reached at [jlcareyjr@hotmail.com](mailto:jlcareyjr@hotmail.com).

# Dr. Mona calls for “radical reckoning” about lives of children in public library book launch

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Hurley Medical Center pediatrician Mona Hanna-Attisha, for the past three years regarded as one of the stand-out whistleblowers and heroes of the Flint water crisis, turned the tables on the hometown standing-room-only crowd who came to celebrate her Thursday night.

Speaking at the Flint Public Library launch of her book *What The Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City*, Hanna-Attisha said she does not think of herself as a hero, suggesting as a pediatrician, she was simply doing her job.

Her findings in collecting and reporting the elevated blood-lead levels of her young Flint patients in 2015, and her insistence that government officials pay attention, helped blow the crisis open into a national story and disgrace.

However, Hanna-Attisha said, it is the people of Flint who are the “true heroes” of the four-year-old drama. She praised the community for building “a model of hope and recovery” for the whole country. She said the people of Flint have been “brave, stubborn, loud, and organized” since the onset of the crisis.

## Many positive developments

She praised the new Educare and Cummings child care centers providing free pre-school for 500 Flint kids, along with Medicaid expansion, Flint Kids Read and newborn literacy programs, nutrition services, behavioral services and many other initiatives as evidence the city is making strides.

She touted the importance of the Flint Registry, an emerging program to gather information about and match resources with residents who experienced the water crisis — an effort funded by a \$14 million federal grant to Michigan State University which she is overseeing.

She noted the accumulations of the “Flint Kids” fund through the



Hanna-Attisha with Chris Jackson

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

Community Foundation of Greater Flint (CFGF), stewards of the more than \$18 million donated so far from hundreds of individuals, organizations, and corporations around the country in the wake of the crisis. Part of the proceeds from her book, she said, would go into the CFGF fund. She was celebrated again at a fundraiser for the Community Foundation’s Flint Kids fund June 27.

## “Poisoned” v. “Exposed”

Hanna-Attisha spoke publicly for one of the first times about the “lead poisoned/lead exposed” labeling controversy prompted by the release of a paper by a group of her Hurley physician colleagues led by toxicologist Hernan Gomez. The paper asserted, among other things, that based on 11 years of blood lead level data what happened in Flint was not an environmental emergency and that no children in Flint were lead poisoned.

“It was a very misleading article,” she said. “It very much minimized the crisis and trauma.” She said the interpretations of the Gomez group are 25 years out of date and perpetuate the “denial of the science of lead toxicity,” which now contends that “if some-

thing is poison there is no safe level.”

“This just reinforces the need for ongoing education, ongoing writing for many professionals to understand the science of lead and basic science of public health,” she said.

“We never should have gotten to the point where we had proof of elevated levels. We should have called an emergency when that first mom held up that jug of brown water. That should have been enough.”

## Flint lessons connect with larger crisis

Hanna-Attisha’s Flint appearance came in the midst of a whirlwind nationwide book tour and media blitz, including stops at the Rachel Maddow show, Terry Gross’s Fresh Air, The City Club of Cleveland, a booksigning with Chelsea Clinton in a New York City Barnes and Noble, and the publishing of a recent op-ed in the *New York Times*.

In Flint, she asserted the messages of her book — and lessons from the water crisis — connect directly to a larger crisis of “how we care about children as a whole in our country,” particularly since the last election.



Listening: Community Foundation CEO Isaiah Oliver and Dr. Lawrence Reynolds

(photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

An immigrant to the U.S. at the age of four, Hanna-Attisha described how her parents fled the Iraqi regime of Saddam

(Continued on Page 13.)



## ... Hanna-Attisha

(Continued from Page 12.)

Hussein and came to America, seeking “freedom, democracy, and that American Dream.” She said “Lady Liberty had her arms open and welcomed us.” However, if Donald Trump’s first travel ban had been in force when her parents fled, she said, none of them would have been allowed in.

She said she hoped her book would be “a rallying cry to see the power that we have within us — we have to be not only awake and alert, but loud” to effect change.

Hanna-Attisha conversed from the platform first with State Sen. Jim Ananich and then with Chris Jackson, editor and publisher-in-chief of One World, an imprint of Random House which published her book. Jackson flew in from New York for Hanna-Attisha’s Flint launch.

### She made a “choiceless choice”

Saying “this is a book I adore,” Jackson recalled he was grabbed when he heard Hanna-Attisha say her response to the water crisis was a “choiceless choice” because of her ethical, moral, and professional obligations. And he noted that in considering recent national events, “there is a unifying thread in some of these things — this

indifference to the lives of children.”

Hanna-Attisha further developed the point.

“We are allowing our children to be slaughtered in schools because of inaction on gun violence, we are allowing

at the loss of democracy, anger at people in charge of the water decisions at the DEQ” (Department of Environmental Quality).

### Some villains harder to see

There were “clear villains — people that you can name,” she said. But she also came to recognize “the villains that were harder to see — lying underneath — long-standing effects of disinvestment, and poverty and racism and austerity — the undercurrent of this crisis. These are leaving scars that will last forever.”

Library director Kay Schwartz thanked Hanna-Attisha for her “stubborn pursuit of the science that made it possible to tell truth to power” in Flint. Hanna-Attisha later said Flint’s recovery requires a basis in science and decried recent trends in the country to deny it.

“Flint was a place where common sense science was denied,” she said, noting that when

General Motors stopped using Flint’s water, everybody should have understood there was a problem. And ultimately, she said, science provided the path to recovery.

In summarizing why she wrote the book, Hanna-Attisha said, “I knew that the nation’s attention would fade and move on, as it obviously already has, and I wanted a way to shine a spot light back on Flint.”

“I wanted to very much share the lessons of this crisis, this tragedy, but more important I wanted to share the beauty of Flint,” she said.

“I wanted people to see Flint as I see Flint, as a place of loyal, proud and resilient people, and a place that stood up and said we’ve had enough, and a place that is building an incredible model of hope and recovery, especially for our kids.”

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Dr. Mona fans line up for book signing

(photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

children to drink poison water here and throughout the nation, we use children’s health insurance as a bargaining chip in Congress, we have one of the highest poverty rates of all industrialized countries,” she said.

She called for “a radical awakening, a radical reckoning to how we are valuing our children.”

She said the deeper she dug into Flint’s story, the more she felt “anger at the officials who were in charge, anger



### 37th Annual Flint Jazz Festival

July 26th JAZZWALK in downtown venues

July 27-29 at Riverbank Park

Featuring Lin Rountree 7/27

Matt Baker 7/28 &

Donny McCaslin 7/29

Day pass \$10 / Weekend pass \$25

By Greater Flint Arts Council

See full schedule at...

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# VOTE

# THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

"This Month" highlights a selection of interesting events available to our readers — beginning after our publication date of June 7. It is not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling of opportunities in the city. To submit events for our July issue, email your event to Managing Editor Meghan Christian at [meghan.christian22@gmail.com](mailto:meghan.christian22@gmail.com) by June 26.

## From Lens to Eye to Hand: Photorealism

Every day in July  
Noon - 5 p.m.  
Flint Institute of Arts,  
1120 E. Kearsley St.  
810-234-1695  
Admission: \$7

*A reexamination of photorealism and the use of the camera as a foundation of expression, as well as the groundbreaking artists of the time.*

## Sacred Circle: Open Spiritual Discussion Group

July 6, 13, 20, and 27  
6 p.m.  
Sacred Elements,  
5353 Fenton Rd.  
810-422-9125  
Admission: Free, donations accepted

*All faiths, ages, and experiences are welcome to join in a weekly spiritual discussion. Bring a snack to share, if possible.*

## Young Voices, Racism, and the Mid-term Elections

July 10 and 17  
6 p.m.  
Flint Public Library,  
1026 E. Kearsley St.  
810-845-1767  
Admission: Free

*For both youth and those of age to vote, learn why those who are too young to vote are still getting involved and find out what voters can do to help. Voter registration will also be available.*

## Surreal to Sublime

July 13 - 31  
Noon - 5:30 p.m.  
Buckham Gallery,  
134 ½ W. 2nd St.  
810-239-6233  
Admission: Free

*Opening during July's Art Walk at 6:30 p.m. July 13, this exhibit showcases photography, painting, and more from five artists, including Susan Hagen and Tracie Hilder.*

## Euchre Tournament

July 13  
6:30 p.m.  
St. George Orthodox Church,  
5191 Lennon Rd.  
810-732-0720  
Admission: \$5

*Come play euchre. Refreshments available for purchase.*

## Flint Alley Fest

July 14  
4 - 10 p.m.  
Buckham and Brush Alleys  
Admission: Free

*Enjoy local music and vendors as well as activities including corn hole, a kids' area, and more. Food trucks will also be at the event.*

## Summer Osborne in Concert

July 14  
7 p.m.  
Unitarian Universalist Church,  
2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.  
810-232-4023  
Admission: \$12 in advance, \$15 at door

*Come listen to award-winning singer-songwriter Summer Osborne. From St. Louis, her storytelling and strong vocals demonstrate the power of truth and spirituality.*

## Pig Roast/BBQ Chicken

July 21  
5 - 9 p.m., or until sold out  
Richfield Bowl,  
5340 Richfield Rd.  
810-736-7890  
Admission: \$5 donation

*Hosted by the Richfield Road United Brethren Church, enjoy an assortment of food, eat-in or carry out. Get your choice of one main item and three side dishes. Iced tea and lemonade available.*

## Family Fun Day

July 21  
All Day  
Cathedral of Faith,  
6031 Dupont St.  
810-228-8455  
Admission: Free

*A family fun day includes a bounce house, community resources, and free food. Also enjoy music, a dunk tank, and more!*

## Gerrymandering, Racism, and the Mid-Term Election

July 24  
6 p.m.  
The New McCree Theatre,  
2040 W. Carpenter Rd.  
810-845-1767  
Admission: Free

*Come hear how partisan politics influence how voting districts are drawn and why voting is important.*

## Pick-up Softball Game

July 26  
6 p.m.  
Field at Court and Crapo Streets  
Admission: Free

*For the residents of Central Park, Fairfield Village, and the College Cultural Neighborhoods, come play a fun game of pick-up softball. Attendees are asked to bring water, a glove, and a bat, if they have one they would prefer to use.*

## ... Flint

(Continued from Page 16.)

honor and dignity in the ongoing struggles. Stand in any line in Flint — be it bank, government, grocer, or BBQ wagon — and you will have a civil and friendly conversation with a fellow Flintoid you had never met before. As Connor Coyne, a neighbor of mine, recently commented on Facebook, there is a “solidarity of strangers” in Flint that is unique.

Additionally, there is the cachet of being a Flintoid. Flint is a national symbol of tenacity and spirit. Whenever Jan and I traveled, we encountered people who were both curious and sympathetic to our “plight” as citizens of Flint. Chats with vendors often led to their refusing to charge us for our bottled water.

There are two economies in Flint. There is the economy of money, and there is the economy of the heart. Flint may not be a big winner when it comes to money, but when it comes to heart, Flint takes the prize.

On a more profound level, Flint is at the crossroads of all of our country’s historical social conflicts. Poverty, racism, and ignorance have all made their appearances on Flint’s stage. Over time, Flint has become the canary in our country’s conscience — the battleground where the issue of America’s basic values is reflected in the history and struggle of its citizens.

The centuries old question of who and what we are as Americans has re-emerged. We are now engaged in a critical national dialogue to clarify our values and determine the future of our republic. In this respect, Flint’s history and culture of struggle make it an ideal place for this urgent discussion — a place of soul and vitality. A good place to live.

In the end, it was not the issues of money, mind, and logic that decided the matter, but issues of the heart. I came to Flint for love. And I found that here. But I stayed for its dauntless pluck. When it comes to spirit, Flint is America’s heartland.

Flint is the place for me.

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## Raise Your Voice. Vote: Tendaji Talks

RACISM AND THE MIDTERM ELECTION SPEAKER SERIES

### YOUNG VOICES, RACISM AND THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Learn more about why our young citizens are speaking out and what we can do to help by exercising our voices/our votes. Youth groups welcome!

**Jia Ireland of Michigan Voice – Moderating  
July 10 – Keishaun Wade**  
Flint Public Library

**July 17 – Deven and Nikhil  
Mukkamala – The New McCree Theatre**

### GERRYMANDERING, RACISM AND THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Gain insight into how partisan politics have drawn voting districts that have given an advantage to one party over another and why it makes it that much more important that you exercise your voice/your vote in every election.

**State Representative Sheldon Neeley  
July 24 – The New McCree Theatre**

### DISENFRANCHISEMENT, RACISM AND THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Disenfranchisement means the taking away of power and opportunities, including the right to vote, from individuals or minority groups. Voter engagement is important to taking back and protecting the rights of all of our citizens. Come and learn about what you can do with your voice/your vote.

**Natasha Thomas Jackson, Hubert Roberts  
August 14 – Flint Public Library  
August 21 – The New McCree Theatre**

### TALK HOST SITES:

Flint Public Library,  
1026 E. Kearsley Street, Flint

New McCree Theatre,  
2040 W. Carpenter Road, Flint

### ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS:

- Voter Registration by  
League of Woman Voters - Flint
- Neighborhood Activism to encourage  
registration and voting – Materials table  
presented by the ACLU of Michigan

ALL EVENTS 6:00PM

August 7 – Michigan Primary • November 6 – Midterm Election



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## Unclassified ads

**For Rent.** Studio apartment. Clean, partially furnished, washer & dryer, all bills paid. Walking distance to UM-F & MCC. \$450 per month. Call 810-235-0021. Leave message.  
**Apartment for Lease.** Spacious one-bedroom apartment in historic Central Park on cul-de-sac Avon St. near Kearsley St. Walk three blocks or less to UM-Flint & MCC campuses, Cultural Center, Downtown, Farmers' Market, four parks, bike paths, Applewood horticultural gardens and easy freeway access. Deck onto large backyard, laundry, off-street parking. References and credit check requested. On-site management. \$545 per month plus electricity. Heat and water included. No pets. Write: Apartment Box 1A, 720 E. Second St., Flint MI 48503 or E-mail: [ecuster@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ecuster@sbcglobal.net).



# Village Life

## Why I moved to Flint

By Ted Nelson



My first experience of Flint was Bishop International Airport. I still wonder about the “International” part. Could it be that Flint itself is another country? Perhaps there are secret flights here in the dark of night — aliens sneaking in from all over the world to benefit from the city’s abundance of jobs, services, and amenities. Who knows?

I, however, was on a mission of another kind.

I was at Bishop because 25 years earlier I had fallen for a woman who now lived in Flint. We had met in the Kingdom of Tonga on New Years Eve of 1976. She was a Peace Corps volunteer there, and I had been sent by Peace Corps to conduct an in-country training for the newest group of volunteers. I was also there to help the current volunteers deal with the emotional aftermath of a murder that had just occurred — a male volunteer had repeatedly stabbed a female volunteer. At the time, it was a huge scandal.

We had an intense romance over the next three months, but when I returned to the States, neither of us was in a position to carry the relationship forward. Nevertheless, for the next 25 years her memory never left my mind or my heart.

And then something totally unexpected happened.

I received a phone call from a New York journalist. He was writing a book about the murder, knew of my involvement in the aftermath, and wanted to interview me. I was stunned by the call, and immediately asked who he had already talked to. The third name he mentioned was Jan Worth. [In the interest of full disclosure, that woman, Jan Worth, is the editor of *East Village Magazine*. Many of you reading this already know me from the countless times she has outed me in her articles, including her version of this topic in last August’s *EVM*. Finally, I get the sweet pleasure of outing her for a change.]

I broke in, stating, “I will not say another word to you unless you give me

her phone number.” He refused, pleading journalistic ethics. However, he agreed to contact her and give her my number.

After six months of impassioned emailing, phone calls, and a carousel ride of chaotic emotions, we decided to meet in person in Flint, Michigan, Jan’s home for many years. And that’s what brought me to Bishop.

Standing in line at the rental car counter, I felt nervous and jittery. When my turn came, the agent glanced at my reservation and asked, “What brings you to Flint, Mr. Nelson?”

Oddly, the question caught me by surprise. I paused as I pulled myself together. “LOVE!” I finally declared. The four people standing in line behind me clapped and kudoed my pronouncement. From the back room behind the counter, I heard laughter and more applause. The agent smiled brightly as she responded, “Welcome to Flint, then! You’re in the right place. What kind of vehicle would you like?”

“How about a Caddy?” I said.

Despite our mutual fears, the reunion exceeded all expectations. I became a regular commuter to Flint in pursuit of love. Three years later we bought a house here, and two years after that we were married. But one big question still loomed over us. When Jan retired from UM-Flint, would we finally settle in Flint or my home of Los Angeles?

In the year following Jan’s retirement, the question was still a toss-up. Los Angeles had some heavy inducements on the scale. I had lived there since my mid-30s, and all three of my kids and both of my former wives lived there. My awards business in Hollywood was still chugging along, over 35 years old and now employing a daughter, son, grandson, daughter-in-law, an ex-wife, and a Rottweiler. A genuine family business.

In addition, Los Angeles is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world, and Hollywood is the entertainment cap-

ital. And then there is the California coast, the Pacific Ocean, cultural diversity, and some of the best freeway drivers in the country.

On the other hand, there are a few downsides as well: earthquakes, traffic, noise, crowds, density, lack of seasons, anonymity, a high cost of living, and endless asphalt.

Flint, of course, has a few negatives of its own. On its face, Flint is hard-scrabble — a town with a reputation for toughness, violence, economic hardship, racial animosity, political chaos, failing infrastructure, and a host of other acne-like issues that blemish its facade. Not to mention the water crisis. Not to mention WINTER.

So, the choice between LA and Flint was not an easy one. Would the love that brought me to Flint hold us here?

Once again, fate intervened. With the death in early 2015 of Gary Custer, editor of *East Village Magazine*, Jan and I assumed management of the publication ... and a whole new Flint revealed itself to us.

Love broadens. As we pursued our late-found love and worked together on *EVM*, that bond gradually expanded into a deeper appreciation for the place. And that appreciation slowly grew into a surprising fur ball of love for this gritty, spirited town. Flint has a personality. Scratch a Flintoid, get a spark. Talk with a Flintoid, get a story.

For the many years I worked in Hollywood, my favorite pleasure was the daily parade of personalities and fascinating chronicles that came my way. Big egos, giant ambitions, bitter conflicts, abject failures, astounding turnabouts — all feeding an intricate tapestry of intriguing, real-life tales. But these pale in comparison to the richness, power, and compelling humanity of the stories I have absorbed in Flint.

Flint has a simmering undercurrent of toughness and resilience, infused with persistent streams of hope and aspiration. To be a citizen or activist in Flint is to be long-suffering. Yet there is a certain

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