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Magazine
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Commentary *Are foundations replacing city government?*

By Paul Rozycki

The city of Flint is now in the midst of a competitive campaign, and by all indications it looks to be a hard-fought contest to choose the next mayor. We will hear much from both Mayor Karen Weaver, and her challenger, Sheldon Neeley, about their plans for the city as both campaigns move toward the Nov. 5 general election.

Meanwhile, the City Council continues with its marathon meetings as they bicker, battle, and try to recall each other, to the great frustration of anyone trying to cover them, as well as most citizens.

Flint citizens have spent much time and energy passing a new city charter, trying to implement it, and arguing about why it's taking so much time.

For all the attention that we give to what happens in City Hall, maybe we're looking in the wrong direction.

Maybe the events in City Hall don't matter as much as we think they do.

Maybe the real future of Flint rests in hands that don't get as much attention, and don't face the voters.

At least that's one argument being made about cities like Flint.

"Governing without government"

A few months ago, a paper titled "Governing without Government: Nonprofit Governance in Detroit and Flint" was published by Sarah Reckhow, associate professor of political science at Michigan State University, Davia Downey, Grand Valley State University, and Josh Sapatichne of MSU. Their main point was cities that have faced a dramatic decline in their ability to govern themselves — either because of their lack of resources, or their own ineptitude — often end up being governed, not by elected officials, but by non-profit foundations, who play major roles in addressing the cities' problems and crises.

While many Midwestern cities are facing declines in population and resources,

Reckhow and her colleagues offered two Michigan cities as prime examples of how non-profit foundations have eclipsed elected governments, as those governments declined in their ability to respond to public needs. Those two examples were Detroit and Flint.

The paper highlighted Detroit's dramatic decline in population (29 percent) and its even greater decline in its city employees (50 percent). Yet, as bad as Detroit's problems were, Flint's were worse.

The authors said, "Yet, the most striking feature of this analysis is that even after observing Detroit's dramatic decline in government workforce, things look worse in Flint ... Flint lost 22 percent of its population between 2000 and 2016 — from about 125,000 residents in 2000 to just over 97,000 in 2016. Over the same period, the city government lost 56 percent of its workforce — from nearly 1,100 full-time employees (FTEs) in 2003 to 473 in 2016."

As Detroit and Flint faced declining populations and reduced resources, they each dealt with a major crisis — the Detroit bankruptcy, and the Flint water crisis. Both of those events brought non-profit foundations to the forefront in response.

Foundations step in

In both cases, the cities increasingly relied on non-profit foundations to offer solutions that the governments couldn't. However, as Detroit and Flint dealt with their problems, the public response to the foundations, and their city governments, was strikingly different. In Detroit, after their bankruptcy, and the "Grand Bargain" that resolved it, the City of Detroit government was still ranked as the "most important community leader." It was followed by the Detroit Land Bank Authority, the Kresge Foundation, the Community Foundation of SE Michigan, the Skillman

(Continued on Page 14.)

Cover: Thousands cross Flint River in 43rd annual Crim Race



Photo of the Month: Fishing on Byram Lake

Education Beat

Flint Schools launch balanced calendar, donated AC units help mitigate summer heat

By Harold C. Ford

“We always talk about our kids being our most valuable resource, so let’s act like it.”

—Flint Mayor Karen Weaver, at Brownell STEM Academy assembly upon delivery of donated air conditioners, Aug. 20

Flint Community Schools (FCS) launched its newly adopted balanced calendar for the 2019-20 school year Aug. 7, the first day of school for its students.

“We had a tremendous first day of school,” according to Derrick Lopez, FCS superintendent. “Unsurprisingly, kicking off the school year of any school district can provide challenges,” he noted in an email response to questions from *East Village Magazine*.

One of the challenges was the heat. On Aug. 20, FCS announced classes would be cancelled at Flint Junior High, at the former Northwestern High School, the next

day, Aug. 21, “due to high temperatures.”

A statement from the district said, “The ventilation issue is unique to the junior high, and does not present the same concern for other buildings in the District.”

Classes at the junior high resumed Aug. 22.

AC donations to benefit Flint students

While a ventilation issue may be unique to its junior high building, high temperatures have been an issue at other buildings. On the same day FCS announced the one-day closure of its junior high, it accepted the donation of a dozen air conditioning units at Brownell STEM Academy.

“A lot of times people focus on the negative perceptions,” said Shalonda Byas, Brownell principal, as she accepted the donation. “This is the norm. See how our community always works together for its students?”

“All year long we’ve had some challenges,” Byas told EVM. “Sometimes in the wintertime it may be a little too hot, sometimes cold. In the summertime, it gets too hot.”

Students had been visiting Byas’ office to take advantage of her AC unit. “Now I can have my office back,” she said with a smile.

“We’ve been proactive about it,” continued Byas. “We try to take control of the situation, keeping the lights dim. We have calming classrooms; we stay mindful and play classical music that keeps us in that positive mind frame so that we’ll think cool thoughts.”

Chris Martin, pastor at Cathedral of Faith Ministries Church of God in Christ in Flint, spearheaded the effort to acquire AC units for Brownell. “We must pull together as never before to make sure that our children are able to learn in environments that are conducive to learning,” he said. “Brownell today, the rest of the district tomorrow.”

Creating “Sanctuary” in Pierce Park

By Melodee Mabbitt

When Desire Duell’s parents divorced, they sent her to weekend classes at the Flint Institute of Arts. It was there that Duell learned that art could be very therapeutic.

Now living and working in the college and cultural neighborhood, Duell’s latest art seeks to help everyone in Flint heal from the water crisis, as well as other environmental injustices and longstanding socioeconomic and racial inequalities she sees in the city.

Her latest work, Sanctuary, is underway on Flint-owned land that previously was Pierce Park Golf Club. There, Duell worked with neighbors to begin a therapeutic garden and host healing-themed events, with a long-term vision of building a “restorative justice ecosystem that will reclaim urban land to transform it into a refuge to grow, harvest, and teach indigenous plant medicine.”

Indigenous plant medicine uses native plants to heal the body, but to understand the rest of Sanctuary’s mission, one needs to understand Duell’s strong beliefs about public art and how artists can include communities to heal through creative work.

While studying for her Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Hartford, Duell read a lot about social justice, environmental justice, and poverty. She cares deeply about mental health struggles and how they are shaped by these social systems and the resulting environments in which we live. An article about “sick woman theory” particularly influenced her because it argued that care work could be a form of protest for people suffering from oppression.

Duell said she sees the therapeutic garden as an emergence of the communities’ efforts to heal together by caring for ourselves and the land.

“Self-care is often centered on the

individual, but we also need self-care as a community,” said Duell. “This is a communal approach to self-care. By coming together to slowly grow and care for the land, we’ll slowly learn to grow and care for ourselves, each other, and gain our agency over our environment as a community.”

To begin the project, Duell obtained a letter of support from the College and Cultural Neighborhood Association, a letter of permission from the Flint Department of Parks and Recreation, and won a grant from the Michigan Wildflower Association for \$800, with the Genesee Conservation District acting as fiduci-



What could be: Pierce Park proposal
(Rendering by Alexi Logothesis)

ary partner. She then adopted the park through a program at Keep Genesee County Beautiful.

Practical work started May when Duell received help from the Neighborhood Engagement Hub to remove brambles from the old bowling lawn behind the clubhouse building in Pierce Park. Volunteers were organized by Rebecca Pettengill. Neighbors then covered areas of the ground to solarize the soil in order to clear weeds for planting next spring.

Ongoing activities in the park include a drumming circle every other Wednesday at 7 p.m. facilitated by Carl Rogers, and Thai Chi and self-defense workshops by Dawei Li on alternating Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

In the fall, Duell and Pettengill will

host “The Art of Gathering” that will include workshops to make a piece of community land art while exploring how to shape community rituals.

According to Duell, the next phase of work will include an environmental assessment to test the soil, determine what the natural landscape was prior to becoming a golf course, and begin a conversation that Duell hopes will allow neighbors restore the land in harmony with the natural landscape.

“It is possible that this land could have been wetlands or that there is an artesian spring here,” said Duell. “We want to do a comprehensive plan for how to develop the park with involvement from everyone in the community.”

In the long-term, Duell hopes that Sanctuary can use the clubhouse for a community kitchen for drying herbs, holding classes, or creating retail space.

“We’re often so stressed that it can be hard even to just be nice to each other,” said Duell. “I want Sanctuary to give us the agency to heal ourselves and heal the land so we’re not completely dependent on the civic infrastructure

that poisoned us.”

To get involved in Sanctuary, email Duell at desiree.duell@gmail.com or follow the Sanctuary-Art Park page on Facebook.

EVM Staff Writer Melodee Mabbitt can be reached at melodee.mabbitt@gmail.com.

Volunteer Distributors Wanted

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

Flint's Public Library launches \$27.6 million renovation campaign

By Jan Worth-Nelson



Proposed Flint Public Library design (Outside front)
(Rendering by OPN Architects)

When Flint Public Library (FPL) facilities technician Mike McMillan looks around the 60-year-old building at the west end of Kearsley Street, what he sees is trouble.

“The plumbing is falling apart,” he said at the first of a series of open houses to inform the public about a major renovation effort. “Even today, as we were setting up in here, a radiator started leaking right down into the basement. The HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system is falling apart.”

And even maintaining general cleanliness is a problem, he said. “The carpet’s so old, you wash one part of the carpet and all the dirt comes up and you can see it.”

The truth of the building’s deterioration, along with a desire to bring it up to 21st century standards, is what has propelled a campaign for a \$27.6 million project — a “like-new library,” as Library Director Kay Schwartz puts it, with construction to begin in 2020.

Of the projected cost, \$15 million already has been raised or pledged by donors. For the rest, \$12.6 million, the library is putting a bond issue before voters on the Nov. 5 ballot.

The bond, designed for 12-year maturi-

ty, would cost the owner of a \$30,000 market-valued home about \$27 a year.

Plans approved by the library board are well underway. Every piece of infrastructure and system in the library would be replaced under the projected design, Schwartz said, adding that the plan would add 16,000 additional square feet.

It would double the children’s space, double the tech learning space, provide two-thirds more space for local history and genealogy, and would provide all new infrastructure systems and facilities.

Significantly, it also will create 15 meeting rooms and four classrooms — an addition much needed in the library, which at present has only two meeting rooms.

The library also is asking the public one year early to renew its two-mill operating millage, which was set to expire in 2021, for another 10 years. That proposal would not add additional taxes to a homeowner’s bill, but rather continue it.

“We don’t want to start a library renovation project without having our operating millage secured — so we went out a bit early,” Schwartz stated. “Those things need to go together.”

The project has received two major boosts from the C.S. Mott Foundation.

In 2017, the foundation awarded the library \$500,000 to work with an architect and develop the renovation design.

Last week, the library announced an additional \$1.2 million from the foundation to support the renovation effort.

“Flint Public Library is a community center with learning and information at its core,” said Ridgway White, president and CEO of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, in a prepared statement. “This project would create the kind of space and technology the community needs to meet modern-day demands.”

Schwartz said the other major donors have not yet been named.

If approved by voters, construction would begin next year, with the goal of moving into the renovated structure in August 2021. The library is expected to occupy temporary quarters for several months during the process.

The Flint Public Library was founded in 1851. It serves about 500 patrons a day, Schwartz said.

“Many people don’t know this, but Flint Public Library is the only building on the Cultural Center Campus that is completely owned by the people of Flint,” Schwartz said. The

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... Library

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library is not institutionally linked to the rest of the Cultural Center institutions, she noted, and does not receive funds through the arts millage approved by Genesee County voters in 2018.

Three more open houses are scheduled for viewing the proposed design, offering visitors a chance to do a “3D flythrough” and ask questions of library staff.

The dates are:

- 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19
- 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 1
- 1-2:30 and 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 29

OPN Architects of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was selected after a national search of “library specific” architects, Schwartz said.

Toby Olsen, OPN project architect, was in Flint for the first open house. He said the company began its library specialty in the 1980s with renovations and rebuilds of Carnegie libraries in Iowa, and has expanded outward to many states.

Olsen said the FPL design aims for an open, “democratic — small ‘d’ — feeling,”



Lobby design
(Rendering by OPN Architects)

in which “anybody who walks in the door will be treated the same, no matter your station in life. No matter who you are, you’re welcome.”

Plans show an open, “hub-and-spoke” design. When patrons come in the door, Olsen explained, “You’ll have a clear line of sight to your destination.”

The second floor will be opened up, with an added atrium, so that people on the first floor will be able to “look up at your friend



Open design between first and second floors
(Rendering by OPN Architects)

on the second floor and wave,” Olsen said.

Existing windows would be retained and more added — with attention to improved lighting and glazing and, of course, vastly improved infrastructure throughout.

Olsen said OPN as a company is drawn to places where “we hope we can make a difference.”

“This one has a specific meaning to me,” he said.

“Flint has a national presence right now in our national dialogue. It’s a community

on an academic library.

More information about the millage, the bond, the design and the library is

available at YourNewFPL.org.

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

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Unclassified ads

Three-bedroom House for Lease. College Cultural Neighborhood on Maxine Street. Available Oct. 1. Two-car garage with electric door opener. One-and-a-half baths, AC, washer/dryer, air filtration. Great neighborhood, easy freeway access, close to downtown and UM-Flint, walk to Mott Community College and College Cultural Center. References and credit check requested. On-site management. \$975 per month plus utilities. (E-mail: janworth1118@gmail.com or call: 310-977-5502.)

WANTED: Garage Space, approx. 10'X10' to store display shelves for FIA student Art Fair ceramics. Access needed only once or twice per year. Email John at: applegroveclayworks@gmail.com.

Lead/galvanized tainted pipes replaced so far in Flint:

9,179

Numbers provided by pipeline contractor ROWE Engineering are now posted at cityofflint.com under the Fast Start Replacement Program. Totals as of August 23 were **22,876 pipes excavated and 9,179 lead or galvanized replaced.**

The city aims to have all of Flint’s lead-tainted service lines replaced by 2020.

Flint City Council okays Chevy Commons sale to County, rescinds ZMW lease, supports bid protest

By Luther Houle

The Flint City Council voted Aug. 26 to sell Flint's Chevy Commons to Genesee County for \$6.2 million in a plan to restore and improve Flint's riverside parks.

The council also passed a resolution to rescind a lease with water bottling company Zero Mass Water, and supported Austin Morgan Contracting in a bid protest against the City.

The panel conducted committee meetings for two hours, followed by close to four hours in the regular council meeting. Three and a half hours into the council meeting, First Ward Councilperson Eric Mays was voted out of the meeting for disorderly conduct.

Chevy Commons purchase by Genesee County

The council voted eight to one on a purchase agreement between the City of Flint and Genesee County to sell nine

parcels of Chevy Commons for \$6,263,700. Stretching between Swartz Creek and Chevrolet Avenue, Chevy Commons will be developed by Genesee County as a public park. The \$6.2 million funding for the purchase comes from a \$4,697,775 state grant, and \$1,565,925 from the county.

According to materials provided by City Council, the purchase arose from a mutual desire among City, County and State officials to further implement the Flint Riverfront Restoration Project (FRRP). The FRRP began in late 2009 when modifications being designed for the Hamilton Dam inspired plans to restore the larger downtown riverfront area.

The conditions of the purchase will further the FRRP in two ways. Genesee County is restricted in how they use Chevy Commons to enhance the project, and the \$6.2 million will be held by

a third-party escrow agent, and can only be used by the City to pay for constructing "certain improvements" to public parks on the Flint River between Chevrolet and Stewart Avenue.

According to the resolution, deed restrictions specifically require that Genesee County use the purchased land as a park open to the general public for recreational purposes. The County may not charge either an entrance fee or a parking fee without written consent of the City, and if the County decides to resell, lease, or cease using the property, Flint will have the option to repurchase it for exactly \$1.

Additionally, the County can not change the name of the park from Chevy Commons without the City's consent, and any profits earned by the County's involvement in the FRRP will be shared evenly with the City.

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Pierce Park out for Zero Mass Water proposal; concerns linger as company eyes other sites

By Melodee Mabbitt

Neighbors voicing their concerns prevented Zero Mass Water from installing 200 to 1,000 of their SOURCE hydropanels that use solar panels to capture condensation and a water bottling facility on land that previously was Pierce Park Golf Course.

A lease agreement for the company to build at the Flint Water Treatment Plant fell through when the City discovered the ground at the Flint Water Treatment Plant would not hold the weight of the 250-pound solar panel units. Council rescinded the lease Aug. 26.

The City recommended Pierce Park because it is a large plot of City-owned land which allows the City to directly receive rent for the project, according to Deputy Director of Economic

Development for the City of Flint Linette Phillips. Zero Mass Water had agreed to pay \$750 a parcel in the last lease agreement.

"We would not move forward on this

Zero Mass Water Colin Goddard a tour of Pierce Park and recommended that he reach out to the neighborhood.

Goddard contacted the president of the College and Cultural Neighborhood

Association Mike Keeler Aug. 14 seeking letters of support to present to Flint City Council on Aug. 21.

"This issue affects much of the neighborhood, and we think they all need to have the opportunity to weigh in," Keeler explained in an email to EVM. The two agreed to postpone the Aug. 21 presentation to council and instead arranged a special presentation to the neighborhood on Aug. 22. Goddard requested

that the association provide neighbors with his cell number so that he could be reached directly.



Hydropanels at Berston Field House
(Photo by Melodee Mabbitt)

type of project without first speaking to residents in the neighborhood," Phillips said. In early August, Phillips gave Director of

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... Council

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The purchase agreement does not specify how the \$6.2 million would be used, or distributed but it does mention Riverbank Park, Vietnam Veterans Park, and the river banks between Chevrolet and Stewart Avenue as important parts of the FRRP. Which improvements are made will be contemplated in light of the City's master plan.

The agreement does list specific goals of the FRRP to be funded, including improvement of public safety and fishing access. It states Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals will be implemented along the Flint River Corridor. Finally,

paddling will be possible through downtown Flint as the FRRP takes measures to improve kayak safety.

The resolution passed eight to one, with Councilperson Eric Mays the sole dissenter. After the vote, he explained to his colleagues he dissented because of a lack of time to discuss the purchase, stating, "When you cut off my discussion, I vote no."

Bid protests of Austin Morgan Contracting

Facing its second contracting bid protest this summer, the Department of Planning and Development had to once again allow City Council to weigh in. Christina Rasins represented Austin Morgan Companies in two

separate bid protests. One regarded a contract for blight project management, and another regarding Spring 2019 tree planting.

The first question before the council was whether Austin Morgan's protests regarding the blight project management contract was submitted on time. According to Suzanne Wilcox, director of planning and development, and Joyce McClane, director of purchasing for the City of Flint, Rasins had seven days to make her bid protest after the company was denied the contract, but did not respond until 13 days.

According to Rasins, however, the City was not effective in communicating her company's denial of the contract,

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... Zero Mass

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According to Vice President of the College and Cultural Neighborhood Association Sherry Hayden, neighbors who contacted the association were concerned about issues including what impact it would have on Pierce Park, whether it was legal to lease the park to a private company, questions about the company's technology and business model, and complaints that the city's lease agreement excluded financial and liability protections for city interests.

Laura Mebert, assistant professor of social science at Kettering University and a CCNA resident, emailed *EVM* to share her concerns about industrial use of the park.

"This city has SO much abandoned industrial and commercial space. How does it make sense for a company to build over our public green space, instead of repurposing abandoned spaces that have already been built up or paved over?," Mebert wrote.

"While covering up our green space would take something away from our community, building on an abandoned space (such as the parking lot of an abandoned Meijer or Kmart) would contribute something to it," she concluded.

The CCNA shared complaints they had received from neighbors. One cited sections of the city charter that prohibit

park land from being diverted to any use unless approved by voters.

Sec. 4-507 PROHIBITION ON SALE OF PARK LAND.

No City of Flint owned land which is in use as a park or was used as a park shall be sold, transferred or diverted to any use unless approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon at any general or special election. A public hearing shall take place no less than 90 days prior to placing the issue on the ballot.

On Aug. 20, Desiree Duell met with Goddard at Pierce Park. Duell, a local artist and water activist, is in the beginning stages of creating a project in Pierce Park called Sanctuary (See related story in this issue) She said she did not believe a decision could be reached about the impact of the hydropanels in the park without a prior environmental assessment.

Duell also shared the city's master plan with Zero Mass Water representatives and pointed out the green innovation zones, which do not include Pierce Park. She said the company seemed unaware of the master plan.

The next morning, the company pulled out of the neighborhood and the association let neighbors know the meeting with Zero Mass Water was canceled.

"Once Zero Mass Water was separated from parkland, some people we spoke with were more open to the idea of the business at a location that would

make more sense," Hayden said.

Zero Mass Water installed its hydropanels at City Hall and Berston Field House without payment from any entities in the city. That arrangement began in February when Zero Mass water signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding with the City of Flint and the Community Foundation of Greater Flint.

In a statement to *EVM*, Isaiah Oliver, president and CEO of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, said, "The Community Foundation of Greater Flint has not made a grant or invested in any installations."

Brand Director for Zero Mass Water Kaitlyn Fitzgerald said Zero Mass Water has "absolutely not" accepted any payments from the City of Flint for the installations at Berston and City Hall.

"We have some ongoing conversations" about being compensated for the installations," Fitzgerald said, "but right now our focus is on developing our relationship with the community. So over the summer it was very important to us to have these installations to demonstrate our ability to provide clean and safe quality drinking water to residents in Flint."

She said Zero Mass Water continues to look for an appropriate Flint location.

EVM Staff Writer Melodee Mabbitt can be reached at melodee.mabbitt@gmail.com.

... Council

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and said she had responded the day after she became aware of the situation.

The council agreed with Rasins, voting eight to one that her protest was timely, with Councilperson Maurice Davis dissenting. They then moved forward onto the question of whether Austin Morgan was “sufficiently grievanced.”

Rasins contended she should have been awarded the Blight Project Management contract because her company was the lowest bidder. She then said the project was put up for rebid without her or her company’s knowledge, never posted or advertised.

She claimed once she found out about the rebid, and tried to make a bid, it was not available to be accessed online, and had not been properly posted. Despite the issues, she noticed one of her competitors were still able to place a bid, and protested what she characterized as an unfair

and uncompetitive situation.

Though it is city administration, not the council, who would act on the bid protest, the council voted eight to one, with Councilperson Maurice Davis again



Part of Chevy Commons purchased by Genesee County
(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

dissenting, to formally consider her grievance, which the City will take into account when considering the protest.

Zero Mass Water pulls out of lease

On June 10, 2019 the City leased land at the Flint Water Treatment Plant to the company Zero Mass Water to produce bottled water with ZMW’s product called

SOURCE Hydropanels. The council voted to rescind this lease with an eight to zero vote—Councilperson Eric Mays had been removed from the meeting by then.

Zero Mass officials had intended to produce water using specialized solar panels said to be capable of pulling clean water from the air. Since entering the lease agreement, Zero Mass has informed the City the panels could not be built at the Water Treatment Plant, as the ground there could not support their weight (see related story p.8.).

While they will not be operating at the Water Treatment Plant, Zero Mass representatives have told local officials they still are considering other sites within the city. (See related article below).

EVM Staff Writer Luther Houle can be reached at lutherbhoule@gmail.com. EVM Staff Writer Tom Travis contributed to this story. He can be reached at tomntravis@gmail.com.

Flint activists receive Riegle Service Awards

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Three lifelong activists with deep roots in Flint have been selected as recipients of the 30th annual Donald Riegle Community Service Awards.

The three are League of Women Voters leader Rhina Griffel; Beecher High School football coach and former NFL star Courtney Hawkins; and Christ the King Catholic Church pastor, Father Phil Schmitter.

The fundraising event, hosted by the Flint Jewish Federation, will begin at 5:30 p.m. Sept. 12 at the Flint Institute of Arts. A three-term U.S. Senator from 1976 to 1995, Riegle, now 81, is expected to speak.

Proceeds from the event provide funding for acculturation, social programs and case coordination for refugees and other immigrants in Genesee County.

Tickets are \$125 per person. Sponsorships for a table of eight is \$1,000,

and corporate sponsorships including 25 tickets are \$5,000. To purchase tickets, become a sponsor or for more information call 810-767-5922 or email ashleymusser@flintfed.org.



Rhina Griffel
(Photo: Flint Jewish Federation)

Rhina Griffel, an Ohio native, graduated from Hiram College with a liberal arts degree and a major in French. She married Gene Griffel soon thereafter,

and lived in Cleveland and Chicago, where Gene was director of the Elmwood Park Library. When they moved to Flint three years later, they affiliated with Temple Beth El, where Rhina began teaching Sunday school. She has been co-president of the Temple Sisterhood, participant in the Social Action Committee, and secretary of the Temple board.

Her devotion as a community volunteer has been wide-ranging and benefited a host of local efforts. She is a life member of the League of Women Voters, a member of the St. Cecilia Society, sponsor of the annual William Byrd Competition, and a volunteer at Applewood Estate. She participated in PTAs at Pierce Elementary, Whittier Jr. High School and Central High School.

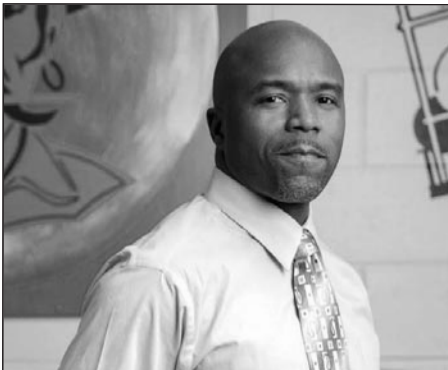
She and Gene were a host family for Russian emigres; she has served on her neighborhood association and neigh-

(Continued on Page 11.)

... Awards

(Continued from Page 10.)

borhood watch; she is a lobbyist for "Medicare for All"; she volunteers at the North End Soup Kitchen and has been on the committee working on the



Courtney Hawkins
(Photo: Flint Jewish Federation)

City of Flint's new charter.

Courtney Hawkins, also a Flint native, attended Beecher High School, where he was a multi-sport athlete: track, basketball, wrestling, and football. He won six state championships in

high school in track and basketball. He earned a full ride football at Michigan State University; there, he made the All Big Ten Team as a wide receiver two times at MSU, and was an Academic All Big Ten Athlete.

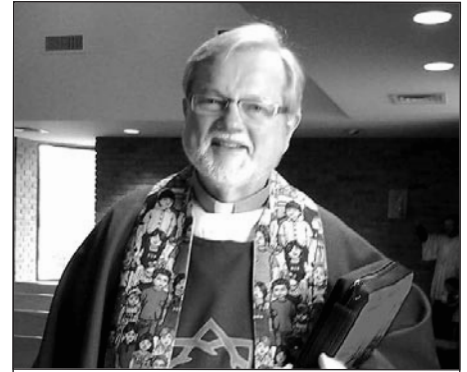
Hawkins was drafted into the NFL with the first pick of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1992. He played five years in Tampa and then went to the Pittsburgh Steelers, where he is still second on their record books for the most catches in one game. He retired after nine years and 15 surgeries.

In 2006, he returned to his alma mater, Beecher High School, as the athletic director and head football coach. Before his arrival, BHS had lost 82 games in the prior 11 seasons. In the 13 years that Courtney has been coaching at BHS, the teams have made it to the playoffs 11 times, won three conference championships, three division championships and one regional championship.

Hawkins mentored hundreds of young men and women in the Beecher community and continues to dedicate

his time and efforts to his school district and community.

Fr. Phil Schmitter grew up in Mason,



Fr. Phil Schmitter
(Photo: Flint Jewish Federation)

Michigan, until he entered the seminary. He received his Bachelor of Philosophy degree from the Athenaeum of Ohio in 1968 and Master of Divinity degree in 1980 at St. John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan. He completed an internship at Milan Federal Correctional Institution and one at the University Hospital in Ann Arbor.

(Continued on Page 15.)

EXCLUSIVELY AT THE FLINT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

FROM THE FLAME

through 10.6.19

From goblets to pipes, from sculpture to jewelry,
this juried exhibition demonstrates the ways
contemporary flamework artists are
exploring and expanding a centuries-old
approach to glassmaking.

Prices courtesy of **Security**
Credit Union

Genesee County residents receive
FREE museum admission every day at the FIA.

1100 E. Kearsley St., Flint
810.234.1695, flin.arts.org

Elise Todd, Program Assistant, 2019, Be us flamework.
24 x 24 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the artist.
Theodora: Cathy Smith.

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

"This Month" highlights a selection of events available to our readers—beginning after our publication date of Sept. 5. It is not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling of opportunities in the city. To submit events for our Oct. issue, email your event to us by Sept. 24 to eastvillagemagazine@gmail.com.

Bikes on the Bricks

Sept. 6-8

10 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday

8 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday

Motorcycle show and law enforcement motorcycle skills competition plus mini bike races, a police donut eating contest, a family block party, vendor displays, contests, live bands, adult beverage tent, a stunt show, a Saturday morning police escorted ride and more.

Flint's Downtown Entertainment District

Saginaw St., Flint

Free Admission

GoodStock

Sept. 7

4-10 p.m.

An evening of music with headliner Eye96, arts and crafts, food and more.

Sponsored by Cawange Town Neighborhood Association

Good Beans Cafe

328 N. Grand Traverse Street, Flint, MI 48503

Visit genecofar.com for more info.

Flint: The Poisoning of an American City Sept. 12

7:30-10:00 p.m.

This film is an overview of the Flint water crisis with interviews with area residents and experts in lead and water and congressional hearings. The film aims to show how Flint was a warning and that this could happen in other cities.

The Capitol Theatre

140 E. Second St., Flint

Visit theflashing.com for more info.

Flint residents get free admission.

Flint Second Friday ARTWALK

Sept. 13

6-9 p.m. Friday

Various locations on and around Saginaw St.

Visit Greater Flint Arts Council at

816 S. Saginaw St. for the walking tour.

For more info visit genecofar.com.

Free Admission

Flint Hispanic Festival

Sept. 13

6-9 p.m.

5th annual Hispanic festival with ethnic food, vendors, artists, dancing and live entertainment by El Ballet Folklorico Estudiantil & Mariachi and Conjunto los Hermanos.

Flint Farmers' Market

300 E. First St., Flint

Visit genecofar.com for more info.

Flint Festival of Writers

Sept. 13-14

The Flint Festival of Writers (formerly Flint Literary Festival) is a two-day event held in locations throughout Flint, Michigan, to celebrate writers and writing around the community. Now in its third year, the festival has a new location and more programming than ever.

The Ferris Wheel

615 S. Saginaw St., Flint

Email flintliteraryfestival@gmail.com for

more info and a schedule.

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds

Sept. 13-15 and 20-22

Fridays-Sundays, two weekends

This play won a Pulitzer Prize and other awards. "A masterful, pace setting drama. It combines moments of pain, poignancy, beauty, and hope. It is the most compelling work of its kind since Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*." *Variety*

Flint Repertory Theatre

1720 E. Kearsley Street, Flint

For more info and to purchase tickets

visit flintrep.org or call (313) 237-1530.

Golden Memories Car Show

Sept. 15

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

This family friendly car show celebrates cars from 1969 and earlier with no visual modifications. There is a People's Choice Award and an award given to the youngest registrant.

Sloan Museum,

1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint

Free Admission

Visit sloandownway.org

for more info.

Stockton House Museum Historic Tours

Sept. 21

1-4 p.m.

Stockton House was constructed in 1872 and then renovated in 2005 and designated as a Michigan Historical site. Visit this hidden gem of Flint and learn about its history.

Stockton House Museum

720 Ann Arbor Street

Flint, MI 48503

Visit stocktonmuseum.com for more info.

An Evening of The Four Seasons

Sept. 24

6-8 p.m.

Enjoy a performance of Antonio Vivaldi's

The Four Seasons in Isabel Hall followed

by cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the Hurand

Sculpture Courtyard surrounded by the

monumental sculptures of Philip Haas.

Flint Institute of Arts

1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint

Visit flinarts.org or call 810-234-1695 for info.

Seating is limited.

Z92.7's #BlackLove Business Expo

Sept. 25

5-8 p.m.

Celebrate Z92.7's 40th anniversary at their

2nd annual Business Expo. This event

highlights businesses and entrepreneurs

supporting the urban community.

Vendor and sponsorship opportunities

are now available.

Flint Farmers' Market

300 E. First St., Flint

Contact Nikki Kotiopoulos at

(810) 244-9689 for more info.

Free Admission



... Education

(Continued from Page 4.)

Five of 12 buildings

"Five buildings have classroom units or central air," Supt. Lopez said. "We are actively pursuing donations of additional units for the remaining seven buildings."

"We are thankful for the units that have been donated so far," he said. "While these are temporary solutions, the district has identified a long-term solution by way of a self-funded renewal, which will supply the needed resources for long-term climate control."

Balanced calendar brings need for climate control

FCS adoption of a balanced calendar meant an earlier start of school on Aug. 7 and a greater need for climate-controlled buildings conducive to learning. Flint's high temperatures average 80 degrees in August, according to U.S. Climate Data and most any other weather reporting service. Temperatures above 90 degrees in August are not uncommon.

High temperatures in buildings without climate control and hundreds of occupants have the potential to be unbearable. Numerous reports cite the need for climate control planning with the adoption of a balanced school calendar.

One veteran teacher in the district who declined to be identified wrote *EVM* editor Jan Worth-Nelson Aug. 20 with the following comments about building climate:

"The union agreed to it (balanced calendar) because we were told ALL buildings would have air ... Now we are sitting in HOT classrooms with not many kids! ... Neithercut had AC units installed this summer, paid for by the district, but they don't have the power to run them all ... so none of them work!"

An attempt by *EVM* to elicit a response from Karen Christian, president of the United Teachers of Flint, was unsuccessful.

Beecher, first district to adopt balanced calendar, planned for climate control

The first school district in Michigan to adopt a balanced calendar was the Beecher Community School District (BCSD), Flint's immediate neighbor to the north. Beecher, with a demographic profile very similar to Flint, implemented its first balanced calendar in the 2013-14 school year.

But prior to the implementation of its balanced calendar, Beecher voters passed a \$2.2 million bond proposal in May 2013 to proactively provide funding for upgrades to climate control systems in its buildings and athletic facilities on a 50/50 basis. The proposal won with 68 percent of the vote and was supported by major BCSD constituent groups including parents, teachers, and school officials led by then-Superintendent Josha Talison.

"I believe it was extremely important

starting close to home.

Emerging research shows benefit of balanced calendar for low-income youth

While the data seems less certain about benefits for middle- and upper-income youth, an emerging preponderance of evidence and opinion seems to support the advantages of a balanced calendar for low-income youth.

"The work we have done over the last few weeks has reaffirmed the need for the balanced calendar model," Lopez told *EVM*. "The balanced calendar is a change of thinking about the way Flint Community Schools operates in order to meet the needs of our students and families."

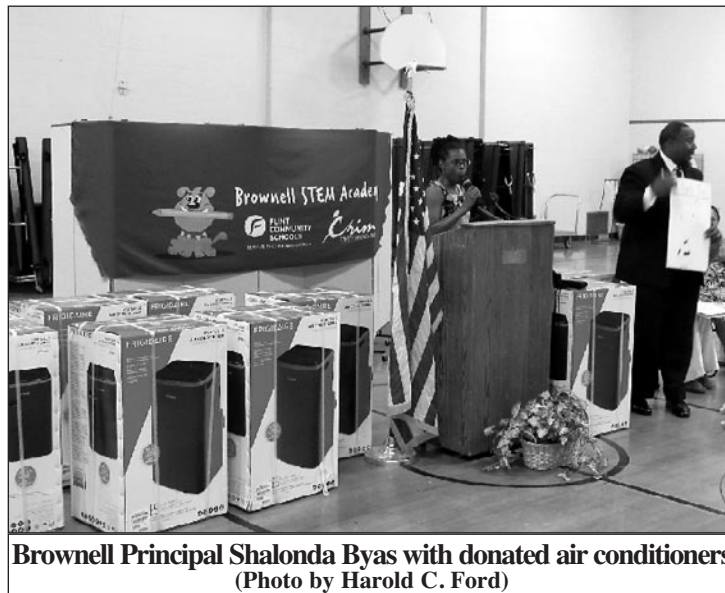
In an April 2010 article titled "What Research Says About.../Year-Round Schooling" published by Educational Leadership, Tracy Huebner writes:

"Research indicates that summer learning loss is a real problem for students — especially for economically disadvantaged students. In one study, Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2007) found that low-income students made similar achievement gains to other students during the school year; the widening of the achievement gap between the two groups occurred over the summer."

Worthen and Zsiray (1994) and Cooper, Valentine, Charlton, and Melson (2003)

... did find support for the following conclusion: Year-round education may be particularly beneficial for students from low-income families."

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



Brownell Principal Shalonda Byas with donated air conditioners
(Photo by Harold C. Ford)

to pass the millage to provide AC in the schools," Talison recalled. "Without this capital outlay upgrade, the lack of air would have been used as an excuse not to implement this innovative calendar change. Also, with the unpredictable temperatures in Michigan, it (helped) to have air conditioning in the schools."

Talison, now the superintendent of Ecorse Public Schools, still favors a balanced calendar seven years after its adoption in Beecher. "I still support the balanced calendar concept," he told *EVM*. "I think the balanced calendar aids in the elimination of summer learning loss for students in rural and inner city environments." That view has plenty of support,



... Foundations

(Continued from Page 3.)

Foundation, and the United Way of SE Michigan. The authors felt that those foundations played a major role in the revitalization of Detroit's local government.

However, in Flint, a very different pattern emerged. When asked who was the "most important community leader," Flint residents ranked the United Way of Greater Flint in first place, followed by the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, and the Red Cross. In the Flint survey, the City of Flint government came in last. In Flint, the authors felt that foundations might become a more permanent fixture, as the city government struggled to become more effective.

In Flint, these results may reflect both the leadership and financial ability of our local foundations, as well as the weaknesses of our city government and its resources. Given the history of Flint, it's no surprise that the Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation, and others have all played major roles for years,

long before the water crisis.

Major foundations in Flint and Genesee County

At a recent open house, the leaders of the Community Foundation for Greater Flint presented an outline of the range and reach of one of the major foundations in the Flint area. The Community Foundation grew out of a merger between the Flint Public Trust and the Flint Area Health Foundation

Charter Clock
**Sept. 1: 610 Days
Without An
Ombudsperson**

in 1988. A full review of the foundation's activities is impossible to cover in a brief column, but since that time they have seen their assets grow to more than \$262 million and have received support from more than 19,000 donors. They have awarded more than \$130 million in grants in Flint and Genesee County and are playing a major role in the Flint water crisis. They admin-

ister more than 750 charitable funds and planned gifts from supporters.

The C.S. Mott Foundation and the Ruth Mott Foundation are even better known in Flint. Founded in 1926, the C.S. Mott Foundation has grown from an initial \$320,000 endowment to more than \$3 billion today, and has given grants worth more than \$3.2 billion in 62 countries. A full listing of its activities and philanthropy is extensive and far-reaching, but for the Flint area, in the fourth year of its five-year \$100 million commitment, it has awarded \$93.5 million in area grants. *East Village Magazine* is a recipient of a Mott grant.

Similarly, in the last decade, the Ruth Mott Foundation has paid out between \$4 million and \$7 million in grants to Flint groups and organizations, with a particu-

(Continued on Page 15.)

**COLLEGE CULTURAL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
ccnaflint@sbcglobal.net
**Members meet Thurs., Sept. 19, 2019
7-9 pm in MCC's RTC Auditorium**
**Neighborhood Watch meets Thurs.,
Oct. 17, 7-9 pm, MCC's RTC Auditorium**

*St. Paul's Episcopal Church presents
this season's schedule of concerts!*



*Admission: \$10 Adults, \$5 Students,
or Membership Pass*

MUSIC IN THE HEART OF THE CITY 2019 – 2020 Concert Series

Sat, Sept. 7 - 4pm
Michigan Chorale &
Chamber Orchestra

Sun, Sept. 22 - 4pm
Townes Osborn Miller,
Nicholas Schneller,
Nick Calandro,
Delaina Oberman

Sun, Oct. 27 - 4pm
Schneller/Kivel
Halloween Concert

Sat, Nov. 9 - 7pm
The Brazeal Dennard Chorale

Sun, Jan. 26 - 4pm
Gail Archer, Organ
Sun, Feb 23 - 4pm
Townes Osborn Miller,
Carl Angelo, Delaina Oberman

Sun, Mar. 29 - 4pm
Townes Osborn Miller,
Brittnee Simon, Carl Angelo

St. Paul's Episcopal Church - 711 South Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48502
(810) 234-8637 Artistic Director: Holly Richardson



... Foundations

(Continued from Page 14.)

lar focus on the north end of Flint.

United Way of Greater Flint and Shiawassee counties has allocated over \$3 million for local programs and leveraged more than \$15 million from other matching sources.

Those are only a few of the major foundations that play a major role in Flint and its development. There are many others with similar numbers, and similar programs, who contributed to addressing Flint's problems and concerns with their philanthropy.

Taken together, the foundations and non-profits may play a bigger role in our future than the city government, with its \$55 million budget.

What does it mean for Flint?

There is no doubt that the residents of Flint should be thankful for the role that foundations have played in the life of the city, not just during the water crisis, but for

much of the last century. Flint wouldn't be the same without them.

On the other hand, as Reckhow's paper points out, what does this mean for democracy, when the elected officials are marginalized, either through lack of resources or their own conflicts? While we should be grateful for the contributions of the foundations and all they have done, they can't do this forever. At some point the city must become self-sustaining, and can't endlessly rely on grants and non-profits to replace elected governments.

The limits of foundations

And for all they accomplish, foundations and non-profits have their limits. At the conclusion of her paper Reckhow says, "Although local government control has been restored in both Detroit and Flint, and capacity has improved in Detroit, residents in these cities may have concerns about transparency in governance and capacity, as nonprofits are driven to do more public service provision in place of the local government unit. Nonprofits,

while mission driven, do have significant barriers to entry in serving large populations. When nonprofits are focused on particular services they tend to excel; however, unlike their local government counterparts, nonprofits have the luxury of being selective when providing services. In the case of local government units, city officials are statutorily obligated to provide for all citizens within city limits, not just those who meet certain criteria."

Flint may be one of the prime examples of non-profits filling the gap when governments can't deliver, but it's not alone. Many other industrial cities face similar difficulties. Clearly, state policy needs to invest more in developing and supporting local governments, particularly those facing declining populations, outdated infrastructure, high legacy costs, and shrinking tax revenue.

In the long run, that may build the strongest foundation for any city.

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

... Awards

(Continued from Page 11.)

Since Fr. Schmitter came to Flint on Labor Day, 1970, he has served six parishes and cofounded the St. Francis Prayer Center in 1974. A labor activist supporting the Teamsters and UAW, he also wrote grants that brought money in from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Fr. Schmitter has been Pastor of Christ the King Catholic Church since 2009 and has taught religion to high school seniors at Holy Rosary High School. Through Christ the King Church, he has been an employer for Genesee County TeenQuest and a member of Michigan Faith in Action.

Among many awards, he has been honored by the NAACP, the Flint Housing Commission, and the Cecilia B. Turner Humanitarian Award for his work in environmental justice on behalf of the poor and people of color in Flint.

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

FLINT FESTIVAL OF WRITERS

SEPTEMBER 13 & 14

FERRIS WHEEL, 615 SAGINAW ST.


FRIDAY

**Kick-off Party at
ArtWalk
6 - 9 pm**



SATURDAY

**Workshops, panels,
featured reader &
book fair
9 am - 6 pm**

**Open Mic After Party
@ Tolern Books
7 pm**



Featured Reader
LaTashia M. Perry
author of "Dreams Like Mine"

flintwriters.org

Village Life

The Flint River dumped us, but we got the story

By Jan Worth-Nelson

I told Sarah Carson the river would give us solace — that was how I talked her into it, for my part always wanting an accomplice in my adventures.

Two writers who revel in sedentary hours alone. Two writers—one young, one old—always expecting the worst.

Two writers who'd never been in a tandem kayak together on an end-of-summer Wednesday. What could go wrong?

Here's the lead: that old river grabbed us and dumped us right in.

We did get a little solace — the solace that we survived. Oh, and the blue herons and that fantastic bald eagle, staring us down and then soaring overhead. And the turtles. Afterwards, Flint River Watershed Coalition Board Chair (FRWC) Doug Schultz said, "Mother Nature always takes taxes."

And sometimes you have to pay for solace.

We were among 20 local figures invited by the FRWC and Kayak Flint, joining with

U.S. Congressman Dan Kildee, a great advocate for the river, home on recess.

At Flushing's Riverview Park, the crew from the FRWC bundled us into life jackets and offered instructions. Executive Director Rebecca Fedewa gave us pause when she explained a two million-gallon leak of raw sewage from three days before had flowed way past us by now. Phew?

We pushed the heavy kayak down the dirt slope and clambered in, Sarah in back and me in front, and we slid out into the river.

My paddle slapped awkwardly, hitting hers. I dug it down too deep and hit gravel and stone. A sheen of sweat came up under my life jacket and teeshirt. She tried some genial commands: left, left—right, right—we worked it a little.

Kildee glided past in his Democrat-blue kayak. Just then, the clouds parted and a bolt of sunshine shot through. Out of the blue echoed "Here Comes the Sun" — Dan had a small portable speaker propped

on his hull, and he flashed a broad smile. He and the Beatles kept going—taking a surprising right turn around one of the river's overgrown islets.

At "little" rapids along the way we did just fine, watching for ripples that signal rocks below. First rapids, second rapids.

Third rapids: our doom.

The current twisted and snagged the bow right into a gap between two boulders. We were stuck, the river piling on us from behind.

I managed to get out of the kayak up to

were soaked, shook up and grumpy, and my phone was dead. We'd left our dignity and our bliss far behind with the Beatles and the bald eagle.

We were late for a meeting back in Flint. We grabbed seats in the first van for transport. "Sarah, I'm sorry," I said. She tactfully insisted she did it of her own accord.

And then, there was Dan Kildee again. He was late, too — he squeezed in beside us. My socks squeaked in my drenched sandals when I moved over to make room. What do you do when you realize

you are sopping wet while squished up against a U.S. Congressman? (Oh lord, I thought, he's an important person and I'm a reporter, he's trapped in the seat with me and I'm supposed to make the most of it.) I was still wearing my press pass, the dangling lanyard wet and tangled. My hair, too.

"My phone's dead, Dan," I said. "You could say anything." He laughed. I realized I was

exhausted and glum. I got ahold of myself.

"How's Nancy Pelosi?" I blurted. Yeah, that's it! Nancy could have managed those rapids just fine.

"She's doing great," he replied. "She's tougher than McConnell and she's tougher than Trump." Then he started talking about appropriations and even though I should have been all wide awake and driving to the next question, I half dozed off. I fingered my sad, dead phone and figured it was a good thing overall to have been in the river — and out of it, too.

But Jaime Welch made me feel better. "You aren't truly a kayaker until you've been dumped — so welcome to the club!"

The Kayak Flint rental program at Tenacity Brewing continues through Oct. 13. Flint residents pay just \$10; everybody else, \$20. More information available at www.flintriver.org.

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



Worth-Nelson's kayak just before the dumping
(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

my thighs and hold on. Sarah toppled out and grabbed the paddles. Next thing I know she's perched on a slimy boulder, stranded, holding the paddles up like heavy wings.

SHE MUST BE SAVED. SHE'S THE MOTHER OF A TWO-YEAR- OLD, I internally screamed. Sarah gave me a look, like, this is bad and just so you know I might kill you when we get out of here.

My phone got swamped and I discovered, only later, one of my rings slipped off and disappeared.

Sarah Scheitler, Corridor Alliance manager of the FRWC and co-manager of Kayak Flint, got right to us. She wrestled the kayak to the bank, while her co-manager, Jaime Welch, protected our downriver flank. Schultz and Daryl Johnson from McLaren-Flint moved in to help. Together, they righted our kayak and set us back on our way.

When we staggered out of the river at the Flushing Township Nature Park, we