

East Village

Magazine

April 2020

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*Photograph by
Tom Travis*



Dear *East Village Magazine* readers:

This is an exceptional issue. We almost cancelled it. To protect our door-to-door distributors, we cancelled our neighborhood delivery. That includes most of our downtown drops as well, almost all of which are closed. But in our hearts, we couldn't accept that there wouldn't be a print edition at all. So here it is.

Most of our advertisers — many of them long-time supporters of EVM and much beloved to us — are shut down, but we hope they'll be back eventually. So we're running all these ads free of charge. We are grateful to Riegler Press, which has continued operating throughout the crisis.

As we "shelter in place" along with all of you, we continue to tell Flint's stories online, and we send our love to all of you, with the hope that better times are ahead.

Jan Worth-Nelson, Editor

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720 E. Second St.

Flint, Mich. 48503

(810) 233-7459

Website:
eastvillagemagazine.org

E-mail:

eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com

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Commentary *Politics in the time of coronavirus*

By Paul Rozycki

Just a few weeks ago, it seemed like the most important things on the horizon were the 2020 campaign, the Flint City Council, Eric Mays, Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, and Donald Trump. The national campaigns were heating up, impeachment was a hot topic, and Democrats were in the process of choosing from among nearly two dozen candidates, as they bounced from one primary or caucus to the next. The economy was doing well, the stock market was at record levels, and Donald Trump appeared to be a formidable opponent for any Democrat.

That seems so long ago. Yet, at this writing, it was just over a week ago that those were the top issues in Flint and around the nation. Today, with the events of the last week or two, it seems like all those things were a decade in the past. At this point, we have no real idea what the world will look like when the virus has run its course, but almost certainly it will be different, perhaps dramatically so.

With the risk that any prediction may be wildly off within days, here's a few thoughts and questions about how the coronavirus pandemic may impact our politics in the months to come.

How will it change our campaigns?

American politics has always been a contact sport. Pack 'em into the hall, kiss the babies, and shake all the hands you can. With his long history, Joe Biden has taken his share of criticism for his old-style "press the flesh" kind of politics. Political conventions were always the place where face-to-face politics roused the faithful, and kicked off the road show of the national campaign, with a flurry of stump speeches, bands, balloons, and banners. Will we have the traditional Democratic and Republican conventions this summer, or some "virtual" events? Local activists went door-

to-door to drop off campaign flyers and greet potential voters. Will they be able to this year?

Will this all be in the past? Will our political campaigns be totally on television and social media? We'll see, but it's worth noting that the public rallies that Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders had in Flint, just before our March 10 primary, may be the last ones we'll see for a while.

Many states, including Michigan, have made it much easier to vote absentee, and an increasing number of voters have done so. Will going to the polls in person be a thing of the past? How will candidates obtain signatures to get on the ballot if they need to keep a social distance from others? How will supporters of ballot proposals gather signatures?

Issues for 2020

Even before the coronavirus pandemic took off, health care was usually ranked as one of the top issues of the year. Did you like Joe Biden's support for Obamacare, or did you lean toward Bernie's Medicare for all? Or did you want to scrap it all, with Donald Trump's plans, whatever they were? It's hard to say where the chips may fall, but after the American medical system scrambles to meet the pandemic challenge, it's difficult to say there is no need for dramatic change in how we deliver medical care. Right now, even most other issues — foreign policy, immigration, climate change, and the economy — are all linked to the coronavirus pandemic in some way.

The economy

The classic formula for winning a campaign has been James Carville's "It's the economy, stupid," which helped elect Bill Clinton in 1992. Donald Trump's strongest argument for

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Cover: Even the front door of St. Paul's Episcopal bore a virus message



Photo of the Month: Deserted Saginaw Street, 7 p.m. Friday, March 27, 2020 (Photo by Tom Travis)

City's health advisor Lawrence Reynolds helping Flint respond to its "new normal"

By Tom Travis

"We are in a new normal," the City of Flint's newly appointed Health Advisor to the Mayor, Dr. Lawrence Reynolds, asserted in a wide-ranging phone interview Sunday.

As numbers on the coronavirus pandemic skyrocket, both nationally and in the state and Genesee County, "All the assumptions under which we operated in the past should be tested, questioned or thrown out the window and reconstructed," he said.

As of Tuesday night, March 31, the state reported 7,615 cases and 259 deaths; in Genesee County, the numbers were 185 cases and 7 deaths.

Reynolds, a pediatrician for 41 years, has been deeply involved in health and health advocacy, especially for underserved parts of the Flint community, for most of his career. He was president and CEO of the Mott Children's Health Center, founding board member of the Hamilton Family Health Center, president of the Genesee County Medical Society, and many other initiatives.

During the Flint water crisis, he was a member of then-Gov. Rick Snyder's Flint Water Advisory Task Force and the subsequent Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee, becoming a bitter critic of state administrators. He was a vocal supporter of Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha's data and their implications for Flint children. He also is an at-large director of the Greater Flint Health Coalition.

At 67, Reynolds said he was "attempting to be a retired grandfather with three grandsons," but Neeley had some other ideas. The two already had been intensely connected during the water crisis.

"Mayor Neeley was my state representative, who, when contacted by the Health Coalition, went to the county offices with State Sen. Jim Ananich and insisted the county must declare an emergency—in September 2015," he said.

And now he has hit the ground running at yet another time of challenge, joining the city's administration team on the exact day in March the mayor shut down

City Hall because of the coronavirus.

He said his new job will largely be communicating and coordinating with the Genesee County Health Department and the county's Emergency Operations Center.

Reynolds, who lives in Flint's 9th Ward, said a strength he brings to his new role is his many longtime ties to the local medical community and in the professional medical community throughout Genesee County and beyond. And because he lives in the city, he said he feels "tied to the community" and will bring those relationships to his position.

"We don't know how bad it is"

Asked how long the pandemic might last, Reynolds replied, "We don't know how bad it is right now. So first of all, we have to find out exactly what our situation is in Genesee County, the state of Michigan and in this country."

"Once we can figure that out, then we can see, are things improving or wors-

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ening, and use that information to guide our activities to shorten the duration of this pandemic if possible.”

“Until we get a complete picture of what’s going on, until we can reorganize our public health, hospitals, and community-based health services, we will be challenged. Until we stop putting stock market ups and downs as our criteria for success, we’re looking in the wrong direction,” he warned.

Testing needed on those with symptoms

Asked if he is a proponent of testing every single individual, he said, “I’m a proponent of identifying contacts and people who have been infected and testing based on symptoms. By identifying their contacts and testing them—once we address those priorities we develop a system of testing.”

However, he warned, “Even if the test exists, a way to deploy the test effectively does not exist. So we have to prioritize who gets tested first. That’s why we tell people don’t go to the emergency room for testing. Instead, call your provider or your clinic’s office to get instructions if you think you have symptoms of the virus.”

Genesee County Commissioners warned seven years ago

Reynolds recalled that seven years ago the Genesee County Medical Society and the Greater Flint Health Coalition went to the Genesee County Commissioners and told them that if they did not adequately budget the Genesee County Health Department, when something happens, the GCHD would be neither adequately staffed nor prepared.

Reynolds recalled a recent timeline of public health crises in Genesee County: “Then came the lead crisis, then came the hepatitis A outbreak and now this pandemic.” Reynolds pointed out

that while Genesee County has twice the population of Saginaw County, the Saginaw County Health Department’s budget is twice as large.

Reynolds stated the County Commissioners’ response seven years ago was “a polite nod,” but no action. Reynolds said it’s not too different than how the federal government has responded — with a lack of planning and anticipation, he stated.

State’s past austerity practices creating big problems now

Reynolds warned that part of the problem is due to austerity practices of the previous (state) administration and legislature and in ending revenue sharing years ago.

But also a problem has been not responding when health issues come up and not seeing the connection between the health of the community and most policies. He contended previous administrations have not looked at the state’s needs from a health perspective so they were slow to respond. He said it appears Gov. Whitmer is replacing what was previously weakened.



Health Advisor Dr. Lawrence Reynolds with Mayor Sheldon Neeley
(Photo by Tom Travis)

Flint budget pending, recovery from water crisis still in process

Reynolds noted that the city of Flint is five months into a new mayoral administration and is still recovering from a lead crisis with the water and the Legionnaires crisis and ongoing fiscal crises precipitated by the emergency managers.

“We have a shrinking tax base that presents challenges for fixing problems, and also it hinders the city being

able to attract experienced people — this is all a challenge,” he said.

Affordable Care Act a bright spot

There are some good things to look at in all of this, Reynolds said. For example, “Imagine what Michigan would look like without the Affordable Care Act. It’s not perfect [the ACA], but it’s definitely better than what we had before.”

Reynolds digressed saying, “Our hospital systems are not connected. When you look at what has happened with the Legionnaires disease, if it happens in one hospital it’s not necessarily communicated in another hospital. The hospitals were constrained by the state health dept and it created all kinds of obstacles and delays. Fortunately, this is significantly less today.”

Over the weekend, Gov. Whitmer signed an executive order mandating water service to be restored to all Michigan residents.

The city of Flint in this case was ahead of the governor, Reynolds pointed out.

Because the city of Flint has experience in dealing with public health crises, Reynolds noted, Mayor Neeley “had the courage” to push for all Flint residents to be reconnected to water service beginning on March 12 when he declared a city-wide state of emergency.

“How can you have two of the largest population centers in south-eastern Michigan, Detroit and Flint, with people not having access to clean water so that they can do the basic necessity of washing hands, washing bedding, cleaning eating utensils with soap and water?”

No plans for makeshift hospitals

Asked if he knew of any plans to have a makeshift hospital set up in the area, Reynolds said he knew of no plans. But he waits to hear from the county’s Emergency Operations Center.

Federal action has released funds to Michigan to pay for makeshift hospitals if needed. Reynolds said he believes Detroit

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would be the initial place for such a site and was sure that the Genesee County Emergency Operations Center has sites in mind if the need should arise.

A “typical day” in Reynolds’ “new normal”

Describing his typical day, Reynolds said he first scans the state and county websites to see any new developments and reviews new statistics updated overnight. Reynolds described the daily scene as an “ever-evolving situation.” He said he then scans medical journals viewing recent research and looking for “any kernel of information that may be useful.”

Next, Reynolds said he is in conversation with those who were involved in the lead crisis, environmental engineers, mechanical engineers, metallurgists, and infectious disease specialists. “We all call each other,” Reynolds said. “They help me with questions I have and they share observations they have.”

Reynolds said every day he talks with Billie Mitchel, the city’s public health manager, Brian Larkin, the chief of staff, and Mayor Neeley. “So once I gather information I can offer an opinion.”

Reynolds said these days he spends 98 percent of his time at home, and does most of his work there. Reynolds said that he was never located in City Hall due to the fact that he was appointed to this position on the day that City Hall was closed to the public.

He goes into City Hall once or twice in a week and more if needed. “We wear out emailing, texting and phone calling” to communicate effectively with all involved, he said.

Reynolds said his “new normal” involves learning every day more and more about the virus.

“We can’t say, with a reasonable degree of certainty anymore, that this is a seasonal virus and that it will go away. We can’t say with certainty what we said in the beginning about this virus being serious just for seniors. Now we’re seeing younger generations being affected by the virus. We have to work every day to get new information for this virus,” he said.

Many struggles around testing issues

“We didn’t even have a widely distributed test for COVID-19. Then we have a shortage of supplies in order to do the test — like having the correct swab for the test and having quick turnaround time for results, and then a reporting system set up and making sure that all these things got out to doctor’s offices and clinics. And we’re still struggling to do that.”

Reynolds stated, “I’ll share with you this story of one large practice in Genesee County that was doing testing following the guidelines for people who had symptoms or had come in contact with someone that had COVID-19. Consequently, their staff had to be put on quarantine and they had to close one office.

“It’s a challenge to get the test, and we really don’t have enough tests completed to come to any conclusions. We are like flying blind without surveillance. We really don’t have any idea how things are, getting better or worse, although we’re getting an idea as more cases are identified.

“Contrary to what’s being said on the news this morning,” Reynolds said, “it’s not wise to reopen schools and public places if we don’t know where the hot spots are.”

Reynolds on Fauci

“Teaching by a wise person is a subversive activity,” Reynolds said, “and Dr. Fauci has been inspiring. You see how he walks the balance between achieving a level of cooperation from the president while calmly putting out the correct facts.

“He has taught me patience just by watching him on the television and listening to his words. If someone were to ask me, ‘well, if I can’t talk to anybody else or listen to anybody else who should I listen to and in what order?’ I would tell them, our state health department and our county health department and listen to what Dr. Fauci has to say.”

Asked what in his life has best prepared him for being a public health advisor for the City of Flint, Reynolds replied, “I’d like to thank Wayne State University, because I was a political science major as well as a pre-med student. Next I’d like to thank the National Health Service, which is

part of the US Bureau of Primary Care. They provided me with a scholarship to finish medical school and an opportunity to serve in the public health clinics in Detroit.”

He also thanked the city of Detroit, because they trained him as an emergency medical technician.

“And then most of my career has been inside federally qualified health centers and non-profits like the Mott Children’s Health Center and working as a medical clinical director of Hamilton Community Health Center, along with working with the local medical communities.”

Reynolds said, “What happened, how I got to this point is not by accident, but it was by opportunities provided by our city, state and federal government.”

“I’m a community health person more than a public health person”

Reynolds is a graduate of the Howard University College of Medicine, which, he pointed out, was open in the freedmen camps outside of the District of Columbia after the Civil War. “So I have a long tradition of being involved in community health,” he said.

“I have to say I’m more of a ‘community’ health person, not so much a ‘public’ health person. I get my information from public health, I get my information from professionals but most of my career was spent trying to figure out how to apply that to community health.”

“Look out for each other”

EVM finally asked Reynolds, if he had a megaphone and could speak to all of the city of Flint right now, what would be the number one thing he would say. He responded, “Look out for each other — even if you’re just shouting across the yard or calling people on the telephone. Avoid unnecessary traveling and outings, use social distancing, wash your hands with soap and water, and if it’s not available, use a commercially based alcohol based sanitizer.”

“Lastly,” he said, “listen to credible sources.”

EVM Assistant Editor Tom Travis can be reached at tomntravis@gmail.com.

Murals, millage and more: an interview with Flint Public Art Project's Joe Schipani

By Jeffery L. Carey Jr.

Last year, due to tireless efforts by Flint's Public Art Project Executive Director Joe Schipani, 104 new murals transformed the visual landscape of Flint.

Schipani moved to Flint 15 years ago from Detroit, where he grew up.

"I moved here because of my partner," he said, "but I fell in love with the place. I more or less fell in love with the people.

"Working in the community, there are a lot of really great people here and they're just so caring and so passionate," he said, asserting that his experience in Flint is in contrast to the disconnect there seemed to be living in Detroit and Livonia.

"It's really neat," he said of Flint. "You almost have this small-town vibe in a big city."

Besides the 104 murals painted last year, Schipani said, some murals were painted in 2018 and another miscellaneous 25 to 30 were in the city before. He refers to some of the very old ones as "ghost murals" — advertising remaining for businesses no longer here.

"The ghost ones are very interesting," Schipani said.

Content on many of the city's new and old murals is available on a new PixelStix app, being linked to each mural site, he explained, which tells you about the mural and the artist. The app takes users to the artist's website and includes a bio and potential art to purchase and information on the business or building hosting them.

Another interesting feature of the app is that a viewer can report vandalism done to the property, illegal dumping, or even if a streetlight is out in the area, Schipani noted. PixelStix also will include events taking place in local areas.

One example is the mural on the north side of the Totem Books building, painted by Nomad Clan. Nomad Clan is the collaborative team of Cbloxx and AYLO, an internationally acclaimed street art muralist duo based out of Manchester, United Kingdom. Information about the mural, Nomad Clan, and its location come up simply by holding the cell phone in front of the PixelStix plaque attached to the building.

The PixelStix plaques are going up gradually on every mural, Schipani

my house last year."

A week-long finale for this year's projects is in the works, he said, and project staff have many plans. He said they envision going into the business district to put up eight to ten more murals, in conjunction with additional programming.

So far for this year, the Flint Public Art Project has received 100 applications during its call for artists. Those include local artists, people from 25 states and 25 countries. "It's really, really amazing to see why they want to come to Flint,"

Schipani said.

He said there has been a great reaction between local artists and artists from outside of Flint, Schipani described. The opportunity for local artists to work with more recognized artists has allowed them to get noticed on an international scale, and allowed local artists to stay busy, even during the winter as cities surrounding Flint have asked for artist referrals to do murals in their cities.

Like many other Genesee County arts efforts, the public arts

project has benefitted from the 2018 millage approved by voters that brings in about \$8.7 million per year for 10 years. Many local arts efforts have benefitted, including Buckham Gallery, Whaley House, Flint Handmade, and the Flint Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

According to Schipani, last year the Flint Art Project received \$30,000 from the millage, and this year, \$24,000. The goal now is to make up the difference with other sources.

"Wal-Mart is one of our big funders," he said, along with the C. S. Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, a pool of other funders and private donors, and support from Totem Books.

Schipani said that a lot of their help comes in the form of paint instead of



Joe Schipani in front of two FPAP murals at the back lot of Totem Books
(Photo by Darlene Carey)

said. Each mural will have a plaque, with the app officially live between March and April, but in the meantime it can be downloaded to see possible tours on what is being designated the Flint Mural Trail

More murals are in the works for 2020, but "we're doing it differently this year," Schipani said. "Last year, they were sort of randomly scattered. This year, we're taking the lessons we learned and trying to do it a bit better than last year."

Schipani described how he hosted artists coming and going at his Carriage Town home from April through October last year. The artists came in from all over," he said, laughing. "I pretty much had someone just living at my house. I had over 60 artists stay at

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... *Coronavirus*

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reelection has been the economy. He's bragged about the strong stock market, and low unemployment rate at every one of his rallies. Now the Dow Jones average has blown off a third of its value, and is below where it was when Trump was inaugurated.

With the national shutdown of so many businesses, the unemployment rate, which was at a record low, may approach or surpass the record-high levels of the great recession a decade ago. How many businesses will be able to survive a long shutdown? It remains to be seen if any of the proposed trillion-dollar stimulus plans will change those numbers.

On the local level

In Flint, the biggest issue in the past was whether or not Eric Mays would be arrested and kicked out of another city council meeting, and how much bickering would take place before it happened. With City Hall closed, that may be a moot issue for a while. Yet, beyond the endless meetings, and conflict in the council, there were major worries that faced the city.

Would there be enough revenue coming in to fund our current governmental activities? Could we find the funds to pay our police officers, firefighters and other city workers, and still take care of the large number of retirees who served a much bigger city in years past? Similar challenges are also facing Genesee County and the Flint Community Schools. No one can predict the full impact of the layoffs and closings generated by the pandemic, but the financial prospects for local governments are very ominous.

With the closing of all of Michigan's K-12 schools and our colleges and universities, all students face questions about their education. When will classes resume? Will the online courses count for K-12 graduation or college degrees?

The Flint water crisis

Now in its sixth year, the Flint water crisis never seems to quite go away, and never seems to be quite solved. There are

still more pipes to fix, and the residents are waiting to see if there will be any legal action taken against those who caused the crisis, as the legal deadline for filing charges approaches. Distrust of the water system is still high. Will the resolution of the water crisis be lost in the tumult over the coronavirus pandemic?

What will it do to us?

There are a thousand questions about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on politics — most of them unanswerable for now. But perhaps the most important questions go beyond politics or the economy. What effect will this have on us? Like the Flint water crisis, will it erode trust in the government? Will it force us all to separate from others, and live our lives solely in a digital world, forever on Facebook, or always six feet apart? Or will the crisis bring us together in ways that we haven't seen for some time? Will we find the ability to deal with this without the rancor and division that has been a part of our national life for decades? Or will it divide us further?

In the first weeks of the pandemic, there is evidence for either outcome.

On the plus side, there are many stories of individuals going the extra mile to help those in need. Community groups have organized food drives for seniors and others. Neighbors have volunteered to go shopping for others. Not enough can be said about the dedication of doctors, nurses, police, and firefighters, as well as those who must serve the public in other ways — the store clerks, mail carriers, truck drivers, and many others who can't afford to isolate themselves, as the rest of us can.

On the other hand, there are too many stories of people hoarding (and reselling) food, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, and cleansers. There are stories of retailers price-gouging during the crisis. And there are a few stories about the increased sales of guns and ammo. I'm not sure what they will be doing with these. (Your toilet paper or your life???)

How we respond may define us long after the coronavirus is medical history.

Political columnist Paul Rozycki can be reached at paul.rozycki@mcc.edu

... *Schipani*

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cash. "There's different ways of making up the difference," he said.

Over the past few years, because of the arts project and an Artist in Residency program offered by FPAP, five artists have come to Flint. "It was funded for two years," Schipani said. "Our first artist is coming in April and we do a different call for artists depending on the projects and what we're looking for. So we have a few programs planned for next year."

In addition to his work on the Flint Arts Project, Schipani is co-author with Roxanne Rhoads of a book titled *Haunted Flint*, a tour of Flint's most haunted locations..

"I am also working with Kady

(Continued on Page 11.)

Lead/galvanized tainted pipes replaced so far in Flint:

9,554

Numbers provided by the city are posted at cityofflint.com under Fast Start Replacement Program. Totals as of March 20 were 9,554 lead or galvanized pipes replaced, 25,409 pipes excavated.

A total of 15,526 pipes have been discovered to be copper service lines.

Unclassified ads

One-bedroom Apartment for Rent. Clean, partially furnished, upstairs. Walking distance to UM/Flint and Mott College. Call 810-625-3924 for appointment. Please leave a message.

TOOLS NEEDED: We are mentoring a student enrolled in auto class at Mott. We are in need of tools. Please check grandpa's, dad's-mom's tool box for donation or sale of wrenches, pliers, screwdriver sockets compression gauges etc; Thank You! IT TAKES A VILLAGE and there's none better than East Village. Call Jerry at 714-352-7531.

Share Facts About COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

**FACT
1**

Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

**FACT
2**

Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19.

People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or people who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread are at an increased risk of exposure.

**FACT
3**

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

**FACT
4**

You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you

- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

**FACT
5**

There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

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

Solitaire Marathon

Apr. 6-30

All day

This activity takes your mind off of troublesome events, improves your focus and keeps your brain active. Play with a deck of cards or computer. Your home daily.

Free

Comfort Food Cooking

Apr. 6-30

All day

Create those hot savory dishes the family will rush to the dinner table to enjoy.

Your home any day you feel inspired.

For more info visit: bonappetit.com

or foodnetwork.com

Cost: price of the ingredients if you can find them.

White House Briefing

Apr. 6-30

Every day, times vary

Reality show boss meets Dr. Fauci; can be entertaining. If you want to shoot the TV, switch to Andrew Cuomo, talking about his grandma and love.

For more info visit:

twitter.com/WhiteHouse

Free if you've paid your cable or internet bill lately

Personal Hygiene

Apr. 6-30

More often

Have you skipped showers during the "shelter in place" order?

Has anyone said to you, "You're wearing THAT again today?" You might want to work these things into your daily "routine" again. It will

probably make you feel better, more normal.

You've got time.

Free event unless

you use a laundromat.,

But well worth it!

Read an Actual Book

Apr. 6-30

All day, any time, every day

This activity can take you to another place or time and even another world. Or pick up a non-fiction book that will educate you!

Good for all ages.

Any place 10 feet away from others.

Free from your bookshelf or available for purchase and delivery from numerous websites such as amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com

I Forgot We Had That One!

Apr. 6-30

Whenever

Dig through your DVD collection and discover gems you forgot you had.

Good for all ages.

Your home.

Free

Cocktail Hour

Apr. 6-30

Up to you

Combine with any other activities except calls to ex. If you hoarded vermouth and olives, make up your own "quarantini," and drink the good wine now. Make sure the kids are tucked in for the night--you've made it through another day. Must be 21.

Your home daily.

Free except for risk of hangover

Dance to the Music

Apr. 6-30

Whenever it comes over you

This one goes well with the one just listed.

Great exercise!

Good for all ages.

Your home.

Free and freeing

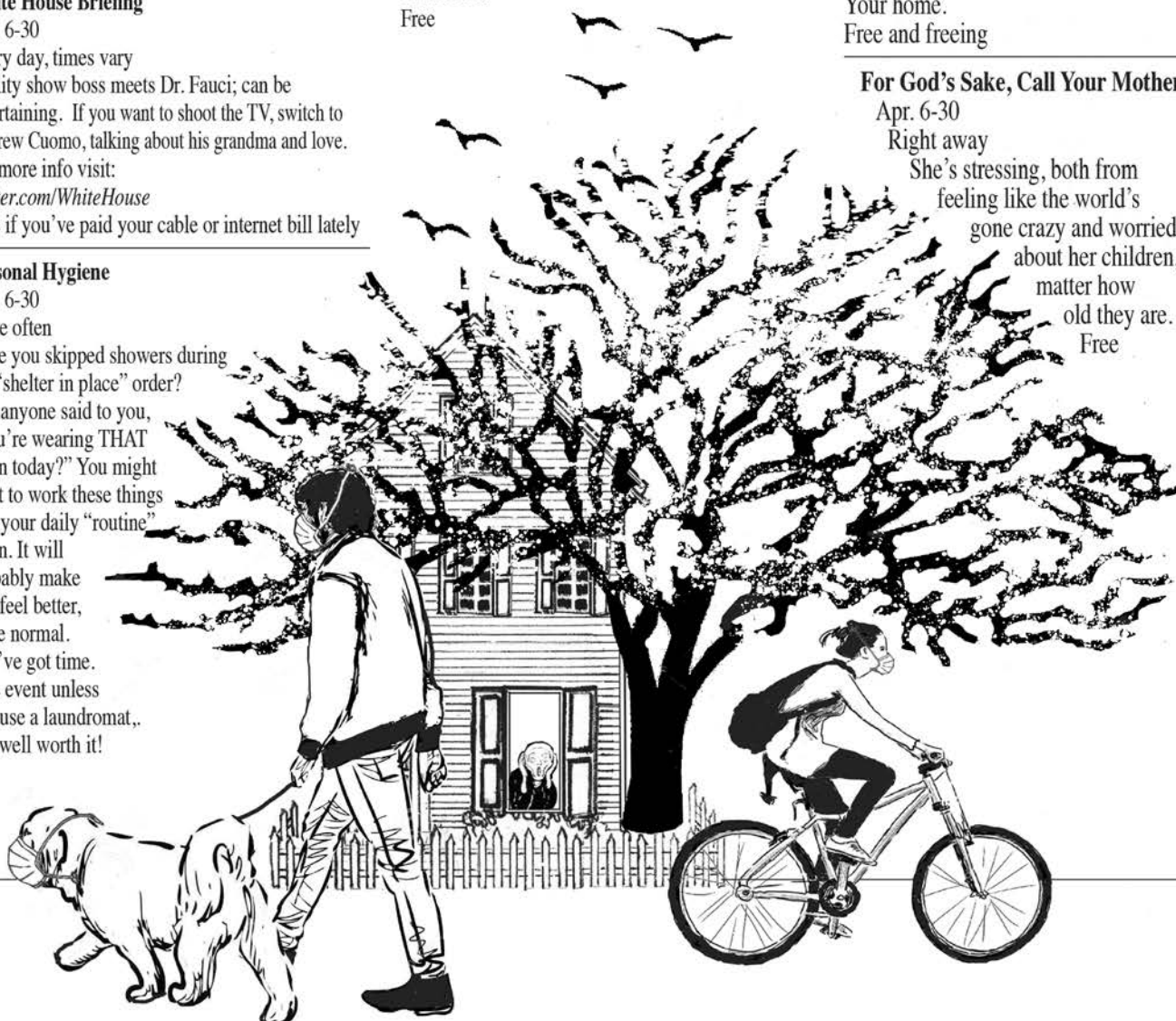
For God's Sake, Call Your Mother

Apr. 6-30

Right away

She's stressing, both from feeling like the world's gone crazy and worried sick about her children, no matter how old they are.

Free



... Cello

(Continued from Page 12.)

soil — Miracle-Gro, to be exact.

I wanted a big fat bag of Miracle - Gro for my garage ... just in case. Just in case my flagging life force turned to filling pots with that pliable black dirt and sprinkling in seeds from packets I never opened last year, rediscovered at the back of the junk drawer: sweet pea, phlox. A packet labeled “Burpee’s Bee Garden” from a hopeful conference last year at the Food Bank — back when we could all get together.

Completely alone in the garden section, usually busy this time of year, I was in a sci-fi movie and I was the only human left. Spooked, I wrestled my Miracle-Gro into the cart and rushed to check out.

But at the check-out line, ahead of me another human appeared. Older than me, she wore a heavy coat, elaborate fur hat, and incongruously, a huge smile. I didn’t see what she had bought — a small plastic bag.

I respectfully stayed behind the yellow X taped on the Home Depot floor, marking my safe six feet. The young clerk’s mask didn’t hide uneasy eyes and furrowed brow.

But the old woman was happy.

“Sister,” she said, turning to me, “Do you know how great God is? Do you know how much Jesus loves you? It’s a wonderful thing, just wonderful, how great God is ...”

Even six feet away, at first the clerk and I both cringed back a couple of inches. Was this going to be a crazy one in the off-kilter sci-fi scene?

“Sisters,” she said, smiling at both me — a crabby old skeptic with limited tolerance for public ecstasy — and the apple-cheeked clerk. “Sisters, God is good, God is just wonderful!”

You all know me. I’m so lapsed my late mother told St. Peter just to reassign my angel to somebody else. But this day, as long as the exuberant woman in a magnificent hat kept to her six feet and didn’t try to hug me, I smiled back. I liked the way she called me “sister.”

“I’m so glad Jesus makes you happy — I’m very happy for you,” I said. On this of all days, I wanted to be kind. And she was touting love. So, I chaim. She left through the sliding

door and I gave her some berth, before trundling out with my Miracle-Gro.

And then, the cello.

Back home, I was exhausted from the brief outing, relieved to be inside, like an escaped rabbit shuffling voluntarily back into its cage.

I knocked on the window glass when my friend Tyler walked by. I opened the front door and shouted out greetings through the screen: “Tyler, Tyler! How are you?”

There’s somebody really sick in his house — not COVID-19. “The only visitor we’re getting is the Grim Reaper,” Tyler said. His dog strained at a virus-free leash, eager for Gilkey Creek.

We both heard the music, but the dog pulled Tyler on. I circled around the house next door. In russet afternoon sunset light, Ben Flood was on the back porch playing his cello.

I stood far enough away in the still-stiff grass of early spring. Ben paused and said his two housemates were gone, staying with their parents. He’d been working alone, from home.

“And this is all I have,” he said, cradling the cello. We covered the territory: do you have enough food? Enough water? Yes. But not enough music. When he went back to it, leaning over the beautiful body, the cello vibrated deeply, hauntingly over the yard, into the air, into my heart, onto Maxine Street, and back into houses where everybody’s camped out behind closed doors. I tell you, Ben’s heart-rending cello transcended all the scary bullshit. I admit it: I cried. I cried for all that we are losing and for all the sweetness and hunger for each other that remains.

And then I retreat into my own house, where I knew there’d be a faux fur blanket and my husband to cleave to. And where I have milk and bread. I don’t know how long this fearful strangeness is going to last, or how bad it’s going to get. That’s perhaps why it matters to remember one day, and then another, and then another, if we’re lucky, where there is still bread and milk and music and love.

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

... Schipani

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Yelloww, Flint’s new director of place-making,” Schipani said. “I am really proud of her.” Yelloww applied after coming to Flint last year to help with the mural project. The two are working on a new book set to come out next year.

It’s a mural book — “...not just a coffee table book; it’s going to have a lot of information in it also,” he said. The book will feature international artists and their work in Flint with Flint artists’ work equally interspersed.

According to Yelloww, Schipani is too modest. “He has an incredible background in theater and performance art,” she said. “He’s really top notch.”

She said Schipani has “a really incredible curatorial process.

“Murals are not new to development and beautifying and reenergizing communities,” Yelloww said. “They can go wrong — it doesn’t always go right and actually it goes wrong a lot in different places.” Yet, Yelloww noted, out of 104 murals, only one in Flint resulted in a complaint.

Schipani’s work has drawn national attention, Yelloww said — he is being flown around the country to speak at conferences, including a recent appearance at the University of Pittsburgh Carnegie Library.

“How do you fly people in from around the world and put up 104 murals for less than a quarter million dollars? Unprecedented,” Yelloww said.

“He does it not because of economic reasons; he’s doing it out of passion and love. He does it because he loves his town. This is his home.”

EVM Staff Writer Jeffery L. Carey, Jr. can be reached at jcareyjr@hotmail.com. EVM Staff Writer and photographer Darlene Carey can be reached at darcar7@hotmail.com.

**COLLEGE CULTURAL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
ccnaflint@sbcglobal.net

**Neighborhood Watch meets Thurs.,
Apr. 16, 7-9 pm, MCC’s RTC Auditorium
Members meet Thurs., May 21, 2020
7-9 pm in MCC’s RTC Auditorium**

Village Life

One day of coronavirus means milk and bread, Miracle-Gro, Jesus, and a cello

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Not surprisingly these days, I'd had a restless night's sleep. Sometime in the darkest time before dawn, my mind started obsessing on two things: bread and milk.

Bread and milk, bread and milk. We have to get some bread and milk, my mind said, badgering me repeatedly, an urgency just shy of panicked. We can't run out of bread and milk.

I've got a really great comforter my niece sent us last year — a faux fur blanket so soft it is almost as good as a chip of Xanax for soothing away my fears. I pulled it up around my neck and nestled further down in bed, cleaving gratefully to my husband's warm body, angling for a couple more hours of sleep.

But no. Milk and bread, bread and milk.

As inky 5 a.m. turned to slate gray 6 and finally, milky dawn around 7, I visualized getting up and running into Aldi's before all the bread and milk was gone.

I saw myself putting on a mask, pulling out a disinfecting wipe for the push bar of the cart and wiping it down; I saw myself being careful not to touch the automatic door, using the disinfecting wipe to open the door to the milk cooler, making sure to pick up the bread with the disinfecting wipe.

And then going through the line — pulling out my little bottle of sanitizer, and using it on my hands before and after getting my change, swiping the cash with the sanitizer, using the disinfecting wipe on the gallon of milk, carting it back to the car and getting home with the booty, beginning the disinfecting all over again.

Not to mention yes, yes, washing my

hands: assiduously lathering, making sure to scrub between the fingers, the thumbs, the nails, the wrists — a new, serious, conscientious kind of handwashing unlike my usual

fear and collective responsibility. And it's sort of exhausting — and stressful.

So, I consider staying in bed. Just staying in bed, curled up next to Ted, until it's over.

"Over ..." at this point, is hard to imagine — with its own anxieties, like what it must feel like to get out of the insane asylum: will I be able to handle it? Will it ever feel safe? ... The strangeness of a free world, prickling the skin, the brain's management capacities pinging with wary adrenaline.

It's a nerve-wracking dream we're all walking around in.

The concert I wanted to go to — cancelled. The coffee shop I like to linger in, which named a sandwich for me, shuttered. All the tables moved out of the Farmers' Market, the floor shocking like a shaved head. The restaurant I go to because I like their comfortable booths — take-out only. The late-night talk show that has saved many of my bad days with its cathartic hilarities, gone gone.

Really, why should I get out of bed? For what earthly reason should I straggle out into this chaos, stripped of so

much shareable grace?

Well, bread and milk.

And then the lady in the check-out line at Home Depot.

And then the cello on the back porch. Stay with me now.

My trip to Aldi's played out almost exactly as I imagined it. I got the bread and milk.

After that, in violation of the "executive order," the Big Brother language of our surreal new life, I snuck into Home Depot. I craved a big fat bag of potting

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Ben Flood on cello
(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

perfunctory approach ... Now we know it can't be lackadaisical and absent minded — it has to be conscious, timed out to "Happy Birthday," foamy and earnest. It must be, as a friend puts it, "flawlessly executed." Washing our hands with appropriate propriety and epidemiological altruism is what we do these days, along with the deliberate, safe six feet we keep between us ...

Bear in mind that in this part of my narrative I am still in bed.

By now, like everybody else, I know the drill. I can see it step by step: A new rhythm, a new practice we adopt out of