

East Village Magazine

August 2021

Photograph By


Elfin O'Chute

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Commentary *After the water crisis and the pandemic, what's next?*

By Paul Rozycki

It looked like the Flint water crisis was over...and it wasn't.

It looked like the pandemic was over...and it wasn't.

The water crisis

In Flint, as July ended, nearly all of the lead pipes in the city had been replaced, a court settlement was on track, lead levels were at record lows, and it seemed that the seven years of the Flint water crisis might be behind us.

Then the newly installed pipes on Court Street began failing, flooding the neighborhood with water, and creating huge sinkholes in the middle of the newly paved road. Arguments over who is to blame, and who is to pay may go on for some time.

Then a group of Flint residents, led by former Mayor Karen Weaver, objected to the proposed \$641 million water crisis settlement as it went to U.S. District Court Judge Judith Levy for approval. They felt that the amount of money allocated wasn't truly enough to compensate those Flint residents who had been harmed by the water crisis. They also objected to the proposed \$202 million in fees for the attorneys who led the lawsuits against the city and others involved in the litigation.

Recently, when announcing the positive news of lower lead levels for Flint water, Liesl Clark, director of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) said "We know that trust was broken."

It looked like the water crisis was over ... and it wasn't.

The pandemic

As we entered the summer many of us were ready to drop our masks, get out of the house, and resume something that resembled a normal life. The dramatic drop in the number of new COVID cases and hospitalizations seemed to justify that view.

Then along came the delta variant, which is more contagious, that began to infect those who had not been vaccinated. A surprising number of young people were being hit with the virus, in sharp contrast to last year, when it was mostly older individuals who had to worry. As vaccination rates lagged, there was a fear of a fourth wave of the virus. Distrust caused as many as a third of all Americans to remain hesitant about getting the vaccine. Los Angeles and other cities began to require masks again, and many worried about what the start of the new school year might bring for young students, who hadn't, or couldn't, get the shot.

The distrust between the Democratic governor and the Republican state legislature caused the lawmakers to approve proposals that would limit the governor's ability to react to future emergencies or pandemics.

It looked like the pandemic was over ... and it wasn't.

What's next?

With those things in mind, it may be even more unsettling to look at other worries on the horizon. And as we try to move beyond the pandemic, and the water crisis,

(Continued on Page 16.)

Cover: Charles W. Parker Carousel at Crossroads Village



Photo of the Month: Battle Alley, Crossroads Village

(Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

Education Beat

Mott Foundation CEO White pauses, then restores, grants to Flint Schools. Public comments at packed ed board meeting signal community division.

By Harold C. Ford

The dramatic twists and turns reflected by and from the leadership teams — elected and appointed — at Flint Community Schools (FCS) deepened when Ridgway White, CEO of the Flint-based C. S. Mott Foundation, announced a pause of FCS grant funding on July 16.

A plan titled the Flint Education Continuum (FEC), spearheaded by the Mott Foundation, aiming to renovate or replace all of Flint's school buildings and provide supportive programming, led indirectly to the pause.

The Flint Community's division over these developments was evident during a five-hour FCS Board of Education meeting in a packed auditorium of some 200 persons at FCS' Accelerated Learning Academy on July 21.

White then reversed himself and announced a restoration of FCS grant funding the next day on July 22.

FCS board's restrictions on its superintendent leads to grants pause

"We must reluctantly pause all grants," wrote White in a July 16 memo to Carol McIntosh, FCS board president.

White reasoned that "community partners must be able to communicate with district leaders to ensure smooth and effective programming."

A June 16, 2021 document titled "Flint Expectations of Superintendent" signed by McIntosh, indicated "Superintendent (Anita Steward) may not fully understand the expectations

from Board members relating to her communications with, and dissemination of information to, the Board of Education members ..."

The board "further resolved that the Superintendent must cease all communication, as well as meetings (in-person, virtually, or over the telephone), with all partners and community foundations as well as affiliates of partners and community foundations, without the presence of the Board President and his or her designee."

During a July 1, 2021 interview with *East Village Magazine*, Steward said: "I am extremely disappointed that we are in this space that we are now. I have been completely transparent ... I'm in a difficult space with at least four board members."

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... School Grant

(Continued from Page 4.)

A July 20, 2021 memo posted by Steward at the district's website titled "FCS Programming Update," acknowledged that, "Grants that supported four of the district's programs and services have been paused." As a result, programming provided by the Crim Fitness Foundation and YouthQuest would not be available for the 2021-22 school year that starts on Aug. 4 for FCS students.

Divided public packs board meeting

Some 200 persons packed the July 21 meeting of the Flint school panel at FCS' Accelerated Learning Academy (formerly Scott School). The FEC may not have been on the agenda but it was on the minds of citizens who chose to address the board at the five-hour meeting.

Speakers supportive of a FCS-Mott Foundation partnership:

- **Marla Settle**, grandmother that enrolled her grandson at Brownell where she works as an attendance clerk: "That last meal from YouthQuest could be their only meal ... That one YouthQuest worker could keep a student from committing suicide ... It is not fair to the parents nor to the students to rip YouthQuest and Crim from them because we can't come together and agree on something ... give them schools that have air because we have asthmatic babies that could pass out ... That's all Flint's board has been for our babies is unstable ... How do you think we feel bringing our babies in them hot, boiling schools? They deserve to walk into a building and have air ... They deserve fine arts ... They deserve a STEM lab. They deserve computer labs ... I don't care if Superintendent Steward met with Santa

Clause, Jack the Ripper, Batman and the Joker by herself ... And if you can't come together President McIntosh, with the superintendent being your blood, and you all can't agree, there's something wrong with that ... If you don't get on the ball and put your pride and egos aside, you're gonna' lose, and these babies are losing ... Care about our babies!"

- **Malique Forward**, 18:



A packed house of 200-plus crammed into the auditorium of Walter Scott School on a hot and sticky July 21 evening.
(Photo by Tom Travis)



Flint Community School Board members listen as residents share their comments. Board Members Diana Wright (front), Adrian Walker (black mask), Joyce Ellis-McNeil (background).
(Photo by Tom Travis)

"What I'm hearing is the board is taking away (funding) from us, the future ... we are products of Flint Community Schools and we're doing good for ourselves ... (YouthQuest) that's a big help in kids' life ... That extra time could change someone's life after school."

- **Sonyita Clemons**, Flint Central HS grad: I implore each of the (board) members to come out to the schools to see what the school directors are doing, to understand from the mouths of children how the programming is impacting them ... We just want an opportunity for the children that attend Flint Community Schools ... that matches, that rivals, that equals everything else that is going on in the county."

- **Margaret Fox**, Flint Education Foundation board member; former FCS educator: "I've watched Flint's student enrollment decline from 25,000 students to under 4,000 students. Students have left for other districts and charter schools causing the district to close buildings ... Currently, 10,000 kids, or 78 percent of the City of Flint's students are choosing to attend other schools ... We must stop allowing this district to bleed students and funding ... We can create a solvent district but we have proven time and again we cannot do it without community partners willing to help. I implore this board to work with the Mott Foundation ... Families want stability, decent buildings, good teachers, competitive technology, and opportunities for their kids ... We have an opportunity to provide these things for our students if this board would allow the district to engage in conversations with the Mott Foundation."

- **Lauren Holaly-Zembo**, Crim Fitness Foundation CEO: "As part of the 2012 Flint Master Plan in which over 5,000 residents participated, the community requested the return of community education. Then-superintendent Larry Watkins asked the Crim to lead this effort ... In 2014 with a grant provided by the C. S. Mott Foundation we were able to pilot community education at the

(Continued on Page 12.)

Flint's Housing Crisis predates recent crises, according to report by UM – Flint professor

By Madeleine Graham

The Flint water crisis had no discernible effect on Flint's housing market, according to a recent report released by the University of Michigan - Flint's Victoria Morckel and Bernadette Hanlon in the academic journal *Housing and Society*.



Victoria Morckel

Photo source: U of M - Flint Website

According to the report, published in March 2020, income limitations, residential segregation, and past practices like redlining restricted some Flint residents' mobility long before the water crisis. Hanlon is the associate professor of city and regional planning at Ohio State University.

Morckel is associate professor of urban planning and public policy at UM-Flint. In an online interview with *East Village Magazine*, she explained that prior to the water crisis, Flint already had a severe lack of housing demand, which contributed to residents' perceptions of constrained mobility.

"Flint's housing market is one of the most affordable in the country, for an urban metropolitan area," said Morckel. "This is not to say that everyone can afford

housing here in Flint. Rather, the issue is more so one of income and employment opportunities. In other words, it's not that the homes are too expensive, it's that incomes are too low," Morckel stated.

Morckel explained that for housing to be affordable, the amount spent should not be more than 30 percent of one's income.

"The more housing costs, the fewer resources people have for other important things like transportation, health care, and education. It is also an issue when people, especially younger people, cannot afford to purchase a home. They miss out on the financial benefits of homeownership, like home equity, that accrue over time," Morckel said.

Flint's impaired housing market exacerbates residents' ability to move

Flint's impaired housing market exacerbates residents' ability to move. "This decrease in relative value is a problem when a Flint homeowner decides to move to another community. The proceeds from the home sale may not come close to covering the cost of a similar home elsewhere," Morckel said.

Flint's oversupply of housing is not unique. "Many small-to-mid-sized cities in the Midwest face similar challenges with vacancy that stem from population loss, deindustrialization, and suburban sprawl," Morckel said.

There are many difficulties with a shrinking city where population has declined. Developers have no incentives to build new homes due to supply costs exceeding potential sales price.

"When housing values are extremely low, some investors buy

homes with the intent to eventually abandon them. They'll rent them out as long as possible with a minimum level of maintenance, then abandon once the properties become uninhabitable — say, when something expensive like a roof needs to be replaced," Morckel stated.

Blight is symptomatic of depressed neighborhoods. "There is not wide-spread blight (things like vacant homes missing windows) in healthy housing markets," Morckel stated.

Shrinking cities and the lasting impact of redlining

"Also because Flint is a shrinking city located in a shrinking metropolitan area, rehabilitating



Bernadette Hanlon is the associate professor of city and regional planning at Ohio State University.
Photo source: OSU website.

homes does not solve the larger problem. In some cases, rehabilitation merely shifts vacancy around from one neighborhood to another," Morckel stated.

Redlining practices that began in the 1930's also have a lasting impact in cities like Flint.

(Continued on Page 18.)

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

*"This Month" highlights a selection of events available to our readers — beginning after our publication date of Aug 5. It is not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling of opportunities in the city, which, because of the restrictions starting to be lifted, are beginning to expand.
To submit events for our August issue, email your event to pisenber@gmail.com by August 20.*

Flint Mural Plays

Presented by Flint Repertory Theatre and The Flint Public Art Project
Continues through Aug. 31
All around the city.
Listen to 25 new micro audio plays by various playwrights, each corresponding with a different mural around Flint. Listen on the PixelStix app on phones or online at FlintRep.org. For more info visit flintrep.org/flintmuralplays.

Flint City Bucks Soccer Game

Saturday, Aug. 14 and 21, 7:30 p.m.
National Champion (2019) Flint City Bucks against Inter Detroit FC on 8/14 and Detroit United on 8/21.
Atwood Stadium
701 University Ave., Flint 48503
For more info visit flintcitybucks.com/2021-schedule.

Flint Public Library Used Book Sale

Thursday, Aug. 19, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Flint Farmers' Market, Pavilion
The Friends of the Flint Public Library are selling a variety of used books, CDs, DVDs on the third Thursday of every month.
Flint Farmers' Market
300 East First St., Flint
For more info visit fpl.info.

The Ultimate Led Zepplin Experience at The Capitol Theatre

Friday, Aug. 13, 8 p.m.
Zoso "perform the most accurate and captivating Led Zeppelin live show since the real thing."
The Capitol Theatre
140 E. Second St., Flint
For more info visit capitoltheatreflint.com or call 810-237-7333.
Tickets are \$23-\$41.

Back to the Bricks

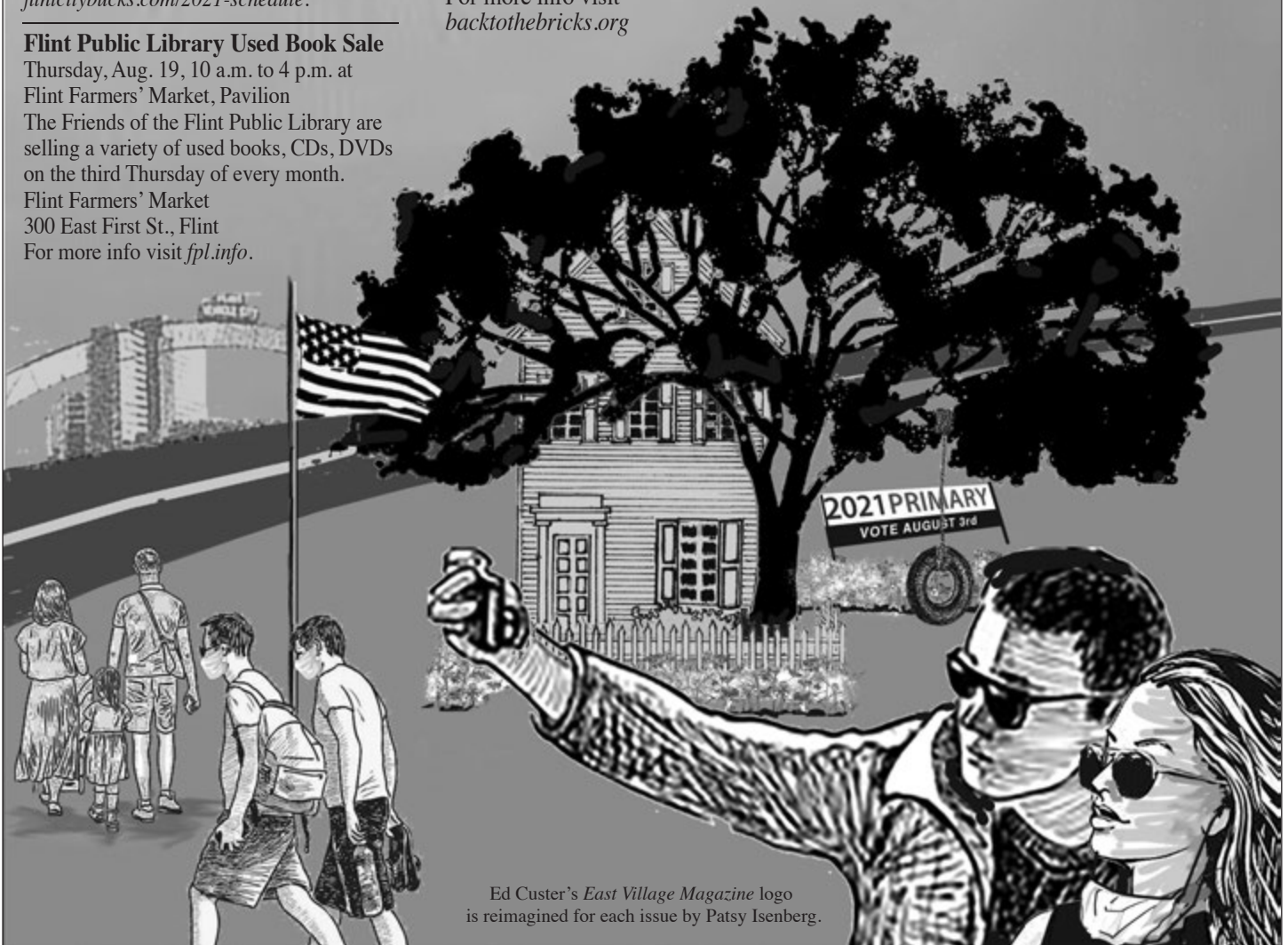
Saturday, Aug. 21
This popular event returns in downtown Flint. There's an opening ceremony at 10 a.m. honoring veterans with patriotic music and a military fly-over. A Corvette Reunion at the Durant Hotel with celebrity guests is planned, and the classic cars displayed along Saginaw St.
For more info visit backtothebricks.org

Buckham Gallery

July 30 through Aug. 28
"Beastly Luster" by Kelly Boehmer shows her soft sculptures with tragic humor.
"No Dark in Sight" by Bill Davis demonstrates how artificial light occupies the night with his photographs.
"Penchant" is Devan Horton's work informing how waste is damaging our planet.
Open Wed 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thurs and Fri 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sat. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sun. 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
For more info visit buckhamgallery.org or call 810-239-6233

Art Walk

This popular event continues in downtown Flint on the second Friday evening of each month from 6 to 9 p.m..



Ed Custer's *East Village Magazine* logo is reimaged for each issue by Patsy Isenberg.

Sports Beat

Bucks booted From USL2 postseason playoffs by 1-0 loss to Des Moines

By Harold C. Ford

“The reigning champions Flint City Bucks have been eliminated out of this year’s United States League Two.” — Ami Rabiai, game announcer, CISN (Central Iowa Sports Network)

The hometown team was booted from the USL2 postseason playoffs by Des Moines 1-0, ending the Bucks’ chances for a repeat championship.

A booming shot from the right foot of the Des Moines Menace’s Sivert Haugli evaded Flint goalkeeper Isaac Walker and landed in the Flint City Bucks’ net at 52 minutes (52’) of the second half, eliminating the United States League Two (USL2) champions from the postseason playoffs. Haugli’s goal was the only score of the match played July 18 at Valley Stadium in Des Moines.



Sivert Haugli, Des Moines Menace;
his score at 52’ eliminated
Flint from USL2 playoffs
Photo credit: twitter.com;
<https://twitter.com/hauglisivert>

The Bucks entered the playoffs as the defending USL2 champions after a 1-0 extra time win over

Reading United AC (PA) at Flint’s Atwood Stadium on Aug. 3, 2019. There was no league play in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Des Moines entered the playoffs as the top-ranked team in the USL2 Central Conference. Flint was seeded number five. Des Moines finished the regular season with a record of 11-1-0 (wins-losses-ties) in the Heartland Division of the Central Conference.

Flint’s regular season concluded at 9-3-2 in the Great Lakes Division of the Central Conference.

Des Moines advanced to the semifinal match after winning its quarterfinal contest, 5-0, against Texas United from the Mid South Division of the Central Conference. The Bucks advanced with a 3-1 quarterfinal victory over Great Lakes Division rival Chicago FC (Football Club) United.

Des Moines will now go to the Central Conference championship match against Kalamazoo FC which prevailed against Mississippi Brilla FC on penalty kicks (4-1) after the clubs were tied at the end of regulation and two extra periods.

Lack of scoring dooms Flint’s chances of advancing

An inability to create solid scoring opportunities in the match against Des Moines doomed Flint’s chances of advancing in postseason play. The team achieved only one shot on goal and one corner kick for the Flint side (club) in 90 minutes of play.

Conversely, Des Moines registered three shots on goal and two corner kicks. And in the 29th minute of the first half, Des Moines’ Rechaun Walkes hit the left post of

the Bucks’ goal narrowly missing a chance to give the Menace an early lead. Another shot by a Menace player went just wide right of the Flint goal.

A paucity of goalscoring in the first half of the Bucks’ 2021 regular season (seven games) resulted in a mediocre 3-2-2 record at the halfway mark. The Flint club scored only nine goals in its first seven matches.

The Bucks solved the offensive drought in its last seven matches outscoring opponents 26-5 while posting a record of 6-0-1.



Friendlylies remain

Five friendly matches -- matches that don’t officially count in league play -- remain for the Flint football (soccer) club in the 2021 season:

- July 24, vs. Rebels FC, 7:30 p.m.
- July 14, vs. Inter Detroit FC, 7:30 p.m.
- August 21, Detroit United FC, 7:30 p.m.
- September 11, Rebels FC, 7:30 p.m.
- September 25, Detroit Union, 7:30 p.m.

Flint’s home matches are played at Atwood Stadium, 701 University Ave., Flint, MI.

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

Flint Home Improvement Fund offers low- and no-interest loans up to \$20,000 to homeowners of all income levels

Flint residents of all income levels can now apply for low- or no-interest loans of up to \$20,000 to make repairs or improvements to their homes.

Flint Home Improvement Fund (Flint HIF) applications are available to pick up at the Habitat Restore at 101 Burton St. in Flint from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays, or may be downloaded from Flint-HIF.org.

To be eligible, applicants must own and occupy a single-family home in the city of Flint as their primary residence. Funding is available for homeowners of all income levels and is not contingent upon the assessed value of a home.

In addition, homeowners may not have to pay back the entire amount borrowed. The amount to be paid back will be determined on a sliding scale based on household income.

"This is a golden opportunity for residents to be able to make home improvements at a fraction of the cost," said Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley. "The Flint Home Improvement Fund is a ground-

breaking partnership that I am so proud is being launched in our city to help families, neighborhoods and the overall community."

After Flint homeowners apply to the Flint HIF, Genesee County Habitat for Humanity will



work with them to see which funding applies to their income level and situation, as well as to answer questions.

"With sliding scale repayment options on these low- to no-interest loans, there is no reason not to apply. Even if you don't qualify now, we will work to find a way to put you in a position where you can access these or other funds to repair your home," said Thomas Hutchison, executive director of Genesee County Habitat for Humanity.

The fund draws funds from a pool of resources. The Mott Foundation granted \$661,878 to provide funding for no-interest home repair loans for low-income Flint

residents and to support Habitat's management of the program.

In addition, Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) contributed \$500,000 from its Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, which will be used to help homeowners with low to moderate incomes make improvements and repairs.

Community Foundation of Greater Flint granted \$15,000 in funding for staff support to facilitate the loan program. In addition, Huntington National Bank will provide low-interest, unsecured home improvement loans for all income- and credit-qualifying borrowers.

Partners from the public, private and nonprofit sectors have come together to create and promote the Flint HIF, which will be managed by Genesee County Habitat for Humanity. Other partners include the City of Flint, Genesee County Land Bank Authority, and the Neighborhood Engagement Hub.

"This is a monumental step toward creating a system where all homeowners in the city of Flint



EVM file photo from the east side of Flint. (Photo by Tom Travis)

At five-year milestone Flint water tests at 3 ppb for lead - the lowest yet: EGLE says, "We know that trust was broken"

By Tom Travis

"From EGLE's perspective and my own perspective, we know that trust was broken. We know that what we need to do is to deliver results to the people of the City of Flint," said Liesl Clark, director of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE).

Clark made these comments at a press conference Thursday on the grounds of the Flint Water Plant, 4500 N. Dort Hwy. to announce the lowest lead levels in the city's drinking water since the crisis began.

**Five-year milestone reached:
"We won't stop until the
job is done"
-- Mayor Sheldon Neeley**

Flint has reached "a five-year milestone" by meeting drinking water standards for lead and "recording its lowest lead levels since 2016," Mayor Sheldon Neeley and Clark announced. Neeley added, "We won't stop until the job is done."

"Let me be clear: no amount of lead is safe. EGLE is committed to Flint to make their water among the safest and most reliable in the nation," Clark said.

Clark said the City of Flint is testing (lead) at three parts-per-billion(ppb), in the 90th percentile. The federal regulation lead level is 15 ppb.

Neeley added, "We won't stop until the job is completely



Mayor Sheldon Neeley announces Flint water tests at lowest point in last five years coming in at 3 parts-per-billion.
(Photo by Tom Travis)

done. We have work to do with lead line replacement and making sure we have potable water that our residents can feel safe to drink. It's a long journey but we're getting there, every single day."

"These measurements were made using Michigan's stricter measuring protocols that detect possible lead exposure from the service line as well as immediately in the home," she stated.

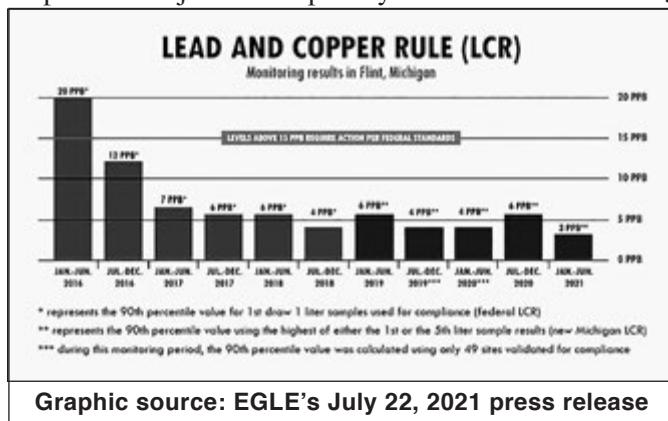
The City collected 71 samples, of which 51 were from so called "Tier One" sites (single family residences) and 12 samples from Tier Two sites (multi-family residences, apartment buildings or businesses). The Flint samples were in compliance with the LCR (Lead

and Copper Rule) Michigan law passed in 2018.

"The purpose of the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) is to protect public health by minimizing lead and copper levels in drinking water," according to the EGLE website. "Lead and copper enter drinking water mainly from corrosion of lead and copper containing plumbing materials. The rule establishes action levels (AL) for lead and copper based on a 90th percentile level of tap water samples."

"LCR monitoring was held to a higher standard than any city in the State. To be included in the final calculation the service line material had to be physically confirmed to have lead," Clark explained.

"Flint's on track to complete the effort to eliminate lead from service lines later this year as part of a \$97 million effort," Clark stated. She added that as of April 9, 2021



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... Milestone

(Continued from Page 10.)

Flint had completed 26,819 excavations and replaced 9,941 service lines that were found to be lead.

“More than 90% of the lead and galvanized steel service lines have already been removed and replaced with 9,912 copper service lines. In addition, 16,838 existing lines have been identified as being constructed

to have their service lines checked and replaced to Friday, July 23. Clark urged residents to participate in the opt-in period.

Flint’s water testing results can be found at www.michigan.gov/flint-water.

More information about Michigan’s new testing requirements and results state-wide can be found at www.michigan.gov/mileadsafe.

Anticipated developments in the service line replacement



EGLE Director, Liesl Clark, commends the City of Flint for their work at reducing lead in Flint’s water.
(Photo by Tom Travis)

with copper pipe so replacement was not necessary,” she said.

Former Mayor Karen Weaver’s administration launched the FAST Start pipe replacement project in March 2016, funded by \$100 million from the federal Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation (WIIN) Act.

The project continued with Mayor Neeley’s administration in the Fall of 2019. Then the project was waylaid by the coronavirus pandemic. The FAST Start project resumed in June 2020, as reported by EVM in April 2021.

Opt-in period for service line replacement extended to Friday, July 23

The City of Flint has extended the opt-in period allowing residents



Department of Public Works Director, Michael Brown, speaks to reporters inside the new \$6 million chemical feed facility at the Dort Hwy. Water Plant.
(Photo by Tom Travis)

Referencing the five-year milestone, Clark listed future anticipated announcements forthcoming: “We expect to announce the start-up of a safe, reliable second pipeline to Lake Huron ... later this year we expect to see the completion of the water service line replacement program, and in the Fall we expect to see the completion of several other projects that will help modernize the water treatment system and distribution system.”

Flint has logged ten consecutive monitoring periods, spanning five consecutive years of lead and copper results that have consistently been below the EPA’s 15 ppb action level for lead. These results also meet future standards in Michigan that will reduce the action level to 12 ppb. According to the EGLE website

a “monitoring period” is every six months from January to June and July to December.

\$6 million chemical feed building will receive 500,000 gallons of water per day - DPW director

Thursday’s press conference took place in front of a new \$6 million Chemical Feed building that Michael Brown, director of the city’s



Water Plant Supervisor, Scott Dungee, explains the purpose of the new \$6 million chemical feed facility (seen in background).
(Photo by Tom Travis)

Department of Public Works (DPW), said is expected to be “fully operational by the end of the year.”

DPW Director Brown explained that the new water feed filtration building will be “taking about 500,000 gallons a day” from the Genesee County Drain Commission water treatment plant (GCDC) beginning August 2021.

“In September we will change that over to taking the full amount of water through the plant to be able to isolate the GLWA [Great Lakes Water Authority -- the source of Flint water] so we can do some repair on valves on the GLWA side. We hope that this plant will be up and running by the end of this year,” he said.

Brown explained, as he conducted a tour for the media through the new chemical feed plant, that the

(Continued on Page 18)

... School Grant

(Continued from Page 5.)

Brownell-Holmes STEM Academy and soon other school principals requested funding at their buildings ... We support educators by allowing them to focus on teaching and learning while we support them by focusing on services and programs to help overcome barriers to learning.” Holaly-Zembo said that Crim helps provide basic needs like food, clean clothes, health care, toiletries, and transportation at low to no cost. She noted that during 2012-20 school year, nine of every ten FCS students were served by Crim programs.

• **Skylar Kelly:** “My kids have been in Crim sports, they’ve been in YouthQuest ... and it was all at no cost ... We need to find a solution ... that keeps services

going for the children ... Our kids are not going to stay in a school that doesn’t even provide the basic, essential services.”

Speakers critical of a FCS-Mott Foundation partnership:

• **Victoria Marx:** “I want to tell the board members, the four of you, to stand your ground. You’re not being unreasonable in your request to have someone else in these meetings.” She likened Ridgway White to a “benevolent puppeteer ... schoolyard, rich-kid, bully taking his ball home because he doesn’t like the way the game is played. Mott has got its dirty finger in everything in Flint and it needs to stop.”

• **Arthur Woodson:** “Anita Steward, why are you not transparent? If Ridgway cared about the students, he wouldn’t have used this funding as a puppet, as a tool ... the sad part is

that this board ... is a middleman ... Why Mott can’t give us the money and we can hire the people we want. Why we gotta’ go through Crim. Crim ain’t nothin’ but a pimp ... Let’s get off that plantation.”

• **Claire McClinton,** FCS graduate, community activist: “Would a partner pull the plug on a program you love? Nobody on this board decided to pull the plug on a program you love. Ridgway White at the Mott Foundation pulled that plug. That is not partnership. When the partner takes over your assets, that’s not a partnership; you’re being controlled. We need to figure out who our friends are and our enemies are.” McClinton and others advocated use of federal funds to support programming.

• **Audrey Young,** occupation-

(Continued on Page 14.)

... Home Improvement

(Continued from Page 9.)

can access funds to improve their homes,” Hutchinson said. By helping residents access capital to improve their homes with flexible and affordable repayment options, the Flint Home Improvement Fund strives to create strong neighbor-

“This collaboration fits our guiding principle of engaging partners in creating innovative, sustainable housing solutions,” said Gary Heidel, acting executive director at MSHDA. “We’re glad to pilot the program in Flint with such strong partners and hope to replicate it in communities across the state.”

and work with outstanding partners to empower residents and build stronger communities,” commented Greg Viener, president of Huntington’s Mid-Michigan region. “We look forward to seeing what homeowners will accomplish with more access to affordable options to repair or improve their homes.”

To support even more homeowners, Flint HIF partners are looking to bring additional resources to the fund. “This is an exciting partnership that will remove the barriers many residents have faced in making repairs and improvements to their homes,” said Ridgway White, president and CEO of the Mott Foundation. “And that positive change will add up, home by home, to help strengthen neighborhoods across the city.”

To learn more or apply, visit Flint-HIF.org or call 810-766-9089, ext. 213.

EVM reporter Melodee Mabbitt contributed to this article and can be reached at melodee.mabbitt@gmail.com.



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Flint Home Improvement Fund website

hoods where residents can maintain their homes while avoiding burdensome debt.”

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Mott Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (hlcommission.org),
a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

... School Grant

(Continued from Page 12.)

al therapist: “Be transparent. Don’t come in here with some other kind of objective ... You wouldn’t pull your money to hurt the children because you can’t control them (board members). Bring us the correct information so we can sit down and talk about it ... It’s the Mott Foundation holding our children hostage.”

• **Beth Hazard:** “Mr. White... wanted them (school board members) to blindly to approve a contract. Hazard claimed a White family business, Lurvee-White Ventures, a local real estate and development company, has benefitted from local construction projects like Michigan School for the Deaf. “His actions ... of pulling funds ... makes me wonder what his plans are for Central.” She suggested that construction contracts and property ownership are underlying issues to be scrutinized.

• **Laura Sullivan,** Kettering University instructor: “Non-profits are directed to throw business to companies in which the foundations have investments and the whole purpose of their presence is not to lift up the poor ... it’s to profit ... There is an intentional lack of transparency ... It’s nice to know that we live in a society where decisions are made by people who are elected, not by wealthy foundations.”

• **Gina Luster:** “We don’t need these foundations. Why fix it if it ain’t broke?”

• **Claudia Perkins,** union representative: “It’s time to stand up and stop letting any one person or entity rule your lives.”

Approximately a dozen speakers spoke in support of a partnership between FCS and the Mott

Foundation. And about the same number of speakers were critical of the partnership.

The final speaker, **Dwayne**

Flint school system ... Crim Fitness Foundation YouthQuest, MSU are organizations that are dependent upon that (Mott) money ... and are

part of that village to help raise these children ... I’m not telling you to take the money. I’m not telling you not to take the money ... I’m telling you to make a good, sound business decision ... You’ve got to think of a way for both sides to win.”

White announces restoration of grant funding

On the very next day following the five-hour board meeting on July 21, White announced the restoration of FCS grant funding for YouthQuest afterschool programs and the Community Education Initiative administered by the Genesee Area Focus Fund and the Crim Fitness Foundation.

“We’ve all been through a lot in the past decade,” said White, “and I will do my best to keep the Mott Foundation’s support positive and beneficial for Flint kids and families ...” White issued a public apology for “creating this instability.”

MOU and FEC sparked the recent chain of events

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) proposing a massive several hundred-million-dollar plan to rescue Flint schools—the Flint Education Continuum (FEC)—was revealed by EVM in May 2021. The FEC would include three levels of government, several Flint-area nonprofits, and all three of Flint’s major institutions of higher learning.

The centerpiece of the FEC would be the construction of new school buildings—four new elementary schools and a new high school—

(Continued on Page 18.)



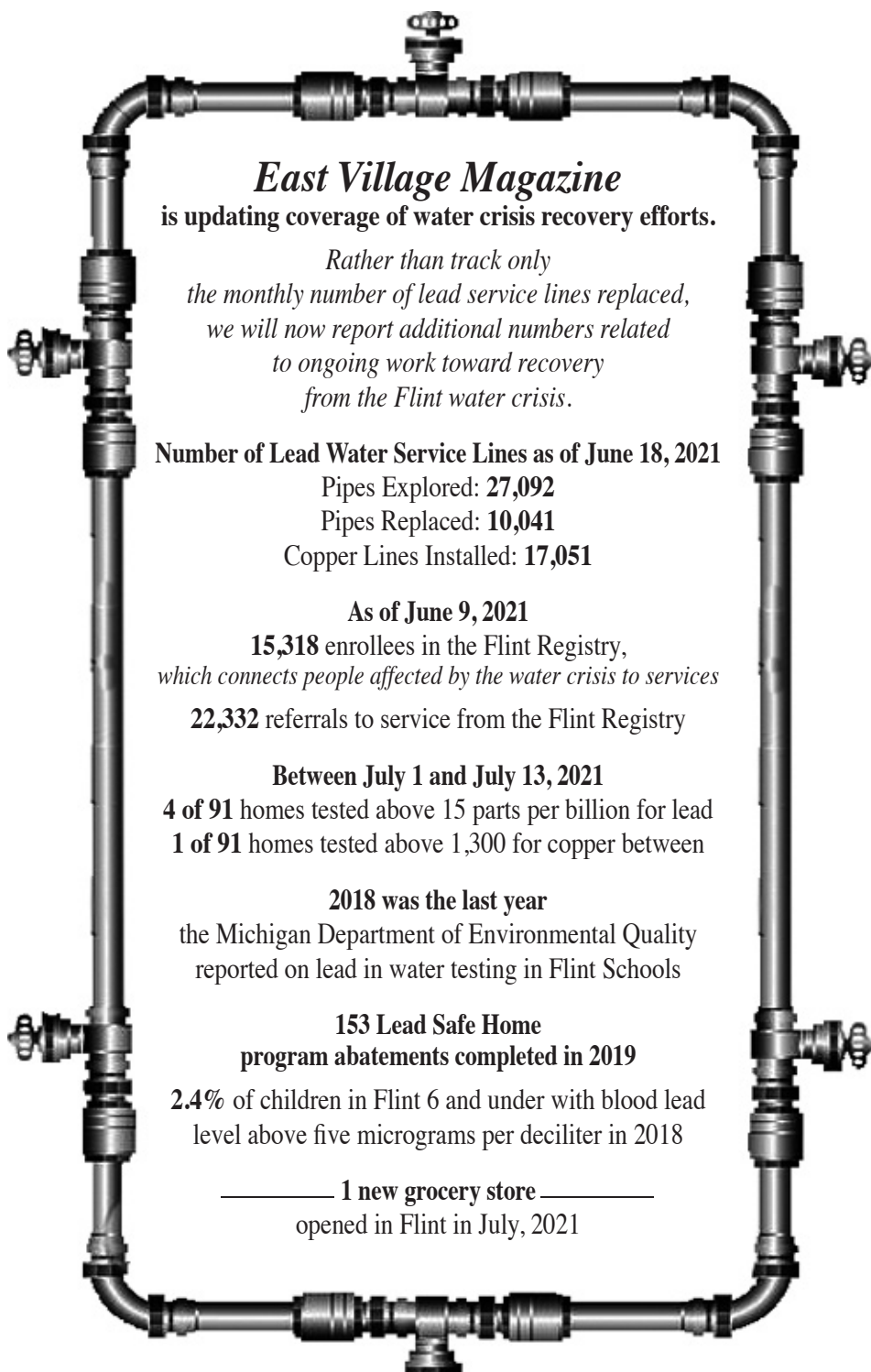
Trishanda Williams, a Flint Community Schools teacher for 20 years who presently teaches at Southwestern High School Academy proudly displays her United Teachers of Flint, “Flint Kids Deserve the Best.”
(Photo by Tom Travis)



Over 200 residents crammed into the auditorium of Walter Scott School. The school board sat on stage at tables.
(Photo by Tom Travis)

Clemons, praised the work of the Crim Fitness Foundation, but urged a middling course of action:

“I’m a businessman. When I look at any situation, I look at it from a business perspective first ... I ask myself, ‘Do I want to repeat the past?’ Those who don’t learn from history are doomed to repeat it ... The C. S. Mott Foundation has built a small economy around the



East Village Magazine
is updating coverage of water crisis recovery efforts.

*Rather than track only
the monthly number of lead service lines replaced,
we will now report additional numbers related
to ongoing work toward recovery
from the Flint water crisis.*

Number of Lead Water Service Lines as of June 18, 2021

Pipes Explored: **27,092**

Pipes Replaced: **10,041**

Copper Lines Installed: **17,051**

As of June 9, 2021

15,318 enrollees in the Flint Registry,
which connects people affected by the water crisis to services

22,332 referrals to service from the Flint Registry

Between July 1 and July 13, 2021

4 of 91 homes tested above 15 parts per billion for lead

1 of 91 homes tested above 1,300 for copper between

2018 was the last year

the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
reported on lead in water testing in Flint Schools

153 Lead Safe Home

program abatements completed in 2019

2.4% of children in Flint 6 and under with blood lead

level above five micrograms per deciliter in 2018

1 new grocery store

opened in Flint in July, 2021

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... **What's next?**

(Continued from Page 3.)

the challenges of the future arise from a similar cause a lack of trust.

The city council elections

The recent August primary has chosen the city council candidates for the November election. City council elections, in an off-year, typically receive little attention from the voters or the public in general. But this year's choices will determine whether the Flint City Council continues with the divisive, rancorous habits of recent years, or whether it becomes a more civil governing body that can be trusted to lead Flint.

The city budget

The most important duty of the city council is to approve a budget. They missed the deadline required by the charter in June, and just barely passed a budget by the end of the month as required by law. But the dry columns of numbers in a city budget underscore a major problem for the future of Flint. In a city with a shrinking population and tax base, how do you provide for the increasing needs of its people? Like most cities that have lost population, Flint has a large number of retirees, and a shrinking number of current workers.

That doesn't leave a lot of money for more police, better streets, efficient garbage service, or lower water rates. Right now some of the pandemic funds will buy the city some time, but the council will need to make hard financial decisions in the not too distant future. Will those decisions be accepted and trusted by Flint residents?

Redistricting commission begins

A few years ago, Michigan voters approved the creation of a

non-partisan commission to redraw the state's election districts. Every ten years, after the census, election districts are redrawn to assure that there are an equal number of people in every district. But in the past, how those districts are drawn has been a source of much partisan conflict. Whichever party has the majority in the state legislature has been able to design districts to elect their own people — what is commonly called Gerrymandering. Michigan's new commission hopes to avoid that.

However, with the census being delayed by the pandemic, they will be under a very tight deadline to create Michigan's new districts by Nov. 1, as required by law. Right now a judge has ruled that there is to be no delay because of the pandemic and late census numbers. That may lead to complaints about the fairness of the process if later census numbers are different than those initially given to the commission. Will that lead to distrust of future elections held in those districts?

The future of Flint Community Schools and the MOU

It's no exaggeration to say that the Flint Community Schools are facing a crisis even more pressing than the city of Flint. As shown in Harold Ford's extensive coverage in East Village Magazine, they are losing students at an alarming rate, and currently enroll less than a quarter of the students within the city.

The relationship between the Flint School Board and Superintendent Anita Steward is growing more combative by the month. The system has had seven superintendents in the last 15 years. On top of all that, the Flint schools are facing financial challenges as the enrollment shrinks, and demands increase to repair and maintain its aging buildings. One positive note is the new education funding package

proposed by the governor, and the COVID relief funds may provide a financial cushion, at least for a while.

Another bright light on the horizon for the Flint schools, is the proposed Memo of Understanding (MOU), led by the Mott Foundation. It would provide a dramatic increase in funds and new programs to rebuild the Flint Community Schools. But that MOU has a long way to go before everyone buys into it, and it's already facing criticism from those who distrust the motives and the Mott Foundation. Recently, the friction between the school board, the superintendent, and the Mott Foundation caused the foundation to briefly pause its funding until communication and trust is restored.

Donald Trump, the election, and trust

And finally, it looked like last year's election was over ... and, at least for some, it wasn't. It's astonishing that nine months after the election, and seven months after the inauguration, there are still many who refuse to accept the results of the 2020 election. In spite of endless recounts, audits, challenges, and more than 60 court rulings, the previous president and his followers still contend that they won last year's contest.

The implications of that denial is about more than Joe Biden or Donald Trump being president. It's about whether or not we can trust the whole system that we have created. That same distrust lies behind many of the challenges we face with the Flint water crisis, the pandemic, the city council, the city budget, redistricting, and the revival of the Flint schools.

Until we can restore that trust, none of these crises will truly be over.

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



EVM welcomes back Cartoonist Pat Hardin after 45 years. Pat presented a cartoon for *EVM*'s very first issue in July 1976.



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... School Grant

(Continued from Page 14.)

and the renovation of two other buildings. All buildings would be operated by FCS and located within the City of Flint.

White told *EVM* that the FEC, inspired by Flint's water crisis, had been in the works for at least five years. Some FCS board members complained they were not included

in the planning process.

However, Steward told *EVM*: "Board members have been invited to participate in these (FEC) conversations. Some of them have participated. Some of them have elected not to attend the meetings."

The entirety of the five-hour July 21 FCS Board of Education meeting can be viewed on YouTube.

The next meeting of the

FCS Board of Education is a Committee of the Whole meeting starting at 6:30 on Aug. 11.

A timeline of the recent events of the FCS Board and community partners can be found in the online version of this story at eastvillage-magazine.org.

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

... Milestone

(Continued from Page 11.)

pipeline from Lake Huron feeds into the new facility below the building.

Scott Dungee, water plant supervisor, was invited to the podium by the Mayor and stated, "This building is the new chemical feed building to take the place of the temporary building where we feed chemicals [into the drinking water]."

Dungee said he has worked at the Flint Water Plant since 1997 and has been the supervisor since November 2020. He explained the new building will house "modern, fully automated pumps that can be controlled by monitoring systems in the old building. The old pumps are all manual and it takes a lot of man hours to operate them. The automated pumps can respond much quicker to changes in the water."

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

... Housing

(Continued from Page 6.)

The U.S. government created maps of urban neighborhoods identifying race, religion, and ethnicity to help determine the creditworthiness of neighborhoods, and these maps were used in cities like Flint by realtors, lenders, developers, and planners. Though redlining is now illegal, the practice has a lasting impact.

Historically redlined neighborhoods among the worst, still today

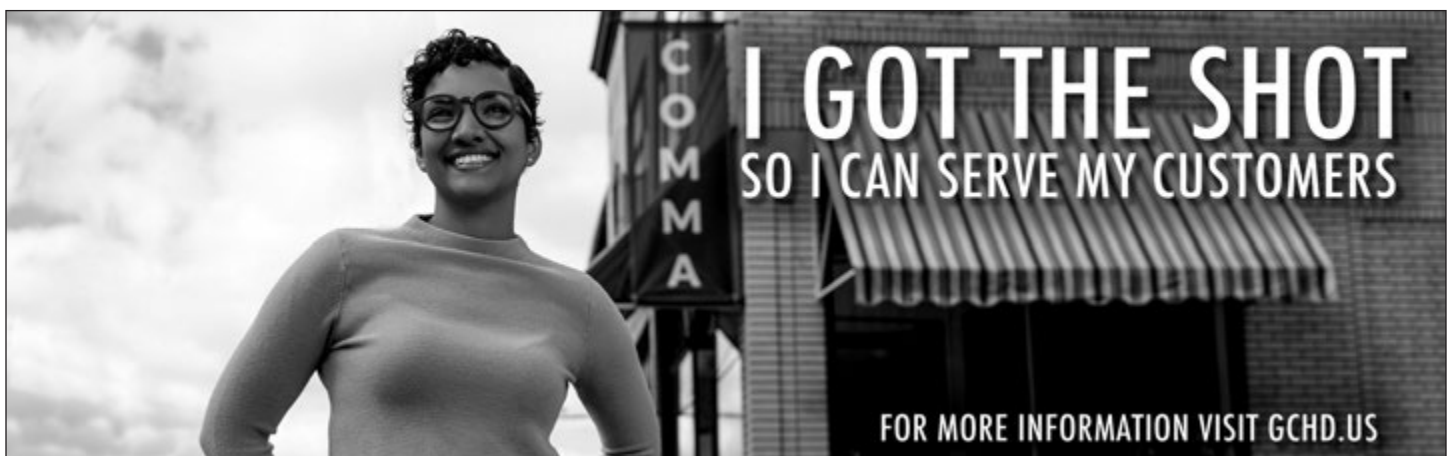
"Historic housing discrimination (say, through the denial of home repair loans) and the resulting disinvestment can contribute to a long-term trajectory of neighborhood decline. Many of the neighborhoods that were redlined in Flint (neighborhoods that experienced additional forms of disinvestment thought-out the 20th century, it

should be noted) are the ones that are in the worst condition today," Morckel stated.

Policy interventions that have worked to create affordable housing include "rent controls and set-aside programs, where developers are required to build affordable housing alongside market rate housing," Morckel explained. "Some places are exploring for ADUs (accessory dwelling units, like garages and sheds) to be turned into small homes, to create more housing supply. There is an increased interest in tiny homes -- very small homes that are affordable because they are so small."

Several agencies are working to try to mitigate the problems in the housing market. Future articles will explore Metro Community Development and The Tiny Homes project.

EVM reporter Madeleine Graham can be reached at madeleine4841@gmail.com.



(Photo by Mike Naddeo)

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... Chevy Coupe

(Continued from Page 20.)

east by train. The Great Northern Empire Builder ran daily from Portland to Chicago's Union Station where they could pick up Grand Trunk Western mainline and get off at Flint. My mother remembered waiting on a gusty Saginaw Street corner for a man who would take them out to the factory --- which must have been Chevy-in-the Hole.

On the drive back to Portland, brother and sister saved money by sharing a motel room; my mother remembered sleeping on a trundle bed. My uncle --- a jazz lover --- looked for towns along US 30 where he could search record stores.

In 1944, my mother got engaged and planned to move to

San Francisco where she would be married. Her brother let her take the car --- he was headed to Washington, D.C., to work in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) established by Roosevelt in 1942. Off to a glamorous career in the capital, my uncle readily signed over the title to the Chevy. He threw in the jazz records, heavy 78s in brown paper sleeves, as a wedding present.

The coupe became my parents' first car.

By 1955, my parents needed a newer, more practical family ride. One summer evening my dad pulled into the driveway in a 1950 4-door Ford custom six "executive sedan." A deep forest green, in the center of its grill a "bullet" jutted out that only underscored the car's roomy boredom.

We never again had a car

like that sporty Chevy coupe.

I'm still in Flint. My mother died here in 2008. I learned how to be one of those grown-ups who can tell stories on themselves.

And the Chevrolet Plant Number Four where my mother's Chevy coupe was likely made? After Delphi demolished the last remaining buildings in 2004, a phased redevelopment restored the resulting brownfield into grasslands, meadows, and woodlands with walking trails. The entire area was re-christened Chevy Commons in 2012. This week (July 14, 2021) Governor Whitmer announced a plan to make the expanse Michigan's 104th state park.

EVM occasional columnist *Teddy Robertson*, associate professor emerita in history at UM - Flint, can be reached at teddyrob@umich.edu.

Village Life

From San Francisco to Chevy-in-the-Hole — the Chevy Coupe helped to move America

By Teddy Robertson

“Jee-zus Christ!” Stress on the first syllable and heavy elongation of the “z” sound. I blurted out one of my father’s favored expletives.

My mother had slammed on the brakes and I tumbled off the bench seat of our old Chevy coupe and hit the floor mat beneath. The brown and red threads of the tan plaid upholstery prickled as I clambered back onto the bench seat.

It was 1951 and I was six years old.

The car was a 1940 Chevrolet, a 2-door business coupe, trim and sporty even with its faded cream finish. A red pin stripe was still visible along its sides. My mother loved that Chevy and decades later I learned why.

The day of my startling outburst we were headed into the city --- to San Francisco, a 40-minute drive from Mill Valley, our small town north of the Golden Gate Bridge. I watched my mother grip the gearshift with its milky bakelite-tipped handle as she pressed in the clutch in one smooth, deft motion. She was a good driver.

Trips into the city in the 1950s were expeditions that entailed coat, hat and gloves. A deckle-edged Kodak shows me in a gray and white checked coat with a matching tam that my mother had sewed. I wore white gloves in little kid sizes that seem unimaginable now --- clothes for city sidewalks, not the gravel

roads where we lived.

Our destination was 450 Sutter Street, a medical and dental office building a few blocks uphill from Union Square. At 26-floors and one of the tallest buildings in the city at the time, its art deco entry doors were recessed beneath a gold fan-shaped portico.

Waiting for the elevator in the black marble hallway, I craned my neck to look up at the bronze and silver ceiling decorated in Mayan revival motif designs. The dimly lit zig zag shapes made me

Kids in grade school never did that.

Grown-ups telling stories --- when not at my expense --- brought relief from my well-behaved boredom. I watched as the launch of some tale snagged the other conversations scattered about the room, reeled in the attention of highball-clutching adults. I listened to half-understood words about opaque situations: the suspense was exciting. I sensed the drama of any weave or wobble in the story, a gasp of surprise, a sigh of let-down, or a hoot of laughter at the end.

The work of what I later learned to call literary devices seeped into my brain.

Sixty years after I banged into the Chevy dashboard, my mother Virginia came to live with me in Michigan. At age 81 she pulled up stakes on the west coast and moved

east to live with me and my son.

Of all places, in Flint.

The back story to the Chevy coupe emerged, this time minus my expletive. Instead, my mother told how she and her older brother Sam had bought the car new in their hometown, Portland, Oregon. In the course of the purchase, the dealer off-handedly mentioned that delivery charges could be saved if the car were picked up at the factory in Michigan.

Brother and kid sister set out

(Continued on Page 19.)



Photo source: www.oldcarbrochures.com

dizzy. I thought my family dentist lived in a temple on the 16th floor.

For years my mother regaled friends and relatives with the story of precocious mimicry. I cringed, but got used to it.

As an only child I lived among adults. My parents had--- and now it puzzles me --- mostly childless friends, so I listened as grown-ups told stories. But they seemed willing to tell stories on themselves, too. I realized that the best talkers knew how to become a character in a story, become the butt of a good joke.