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April 2025

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## Commentary

# The turmoil of Trump's first 100 days, impact on Michigan

By Paul Rozycki

With all the executive orders, reversals and delays of those orders, court rulings, and appeals of those court rulings, it's increasingly difficult to gauge the impact of President Trump's first 100 days.

There are already over 100 lawsuits aimed at blocking the president's executive orders, and the turmoil they've levied on the national and international level is increasing doubts over the United States' global role and threatening democracy itself.

But for those of us in Michigan there is also much to worry about locally – and much to be resolved in the weeks and months to come.

Though the list grows and changes daily, here are some of the concerns that Michigan and Genesee County may have about the Trump administration's attacks on the federal government.

### Tariffs

Trump's on again, off again (and on again) tariffs with Canada and Mexico will almost certainly have a dramatic impact on the Michigan auto industry.

With auto parts being shipped back and forth during the manufacturing process most economists expect that the proposed 25% tariff on trade with Canada and Mexico will increase the cost of automobiles and slow the economy.

Some project the tariffs could raise the cost of a vehicle between \$8,000 to \$12,000, leading to a loss of jobs in the auto industry. However, United Auto Workers (UAW) President Shawn Fain expressed the hope that tariffs will bring back lost jobs to Michigan in a recent USA Today interview.

The tariffs' impact also goes well beyond the auto industry.

The increase in tariffs on aluminum and steel will increase the cost of business for any industry that uses those products, from beer brewers to those who erect billboards. In an interview with NBC 25, Daniel Crannie, owner of Flint's Signs by Crannie, said, "It's definitely going to impact us because most of our products are built from aluminum and steel."

Tariffs on Canadian lumber are also likely to increase the cost of homebuilding and construction in the state.

### Michigan Farmers

Michigan farmers, who generally voted for Trump, have a growing concern over the impact of Trump's tariffs and a trade war on their ability to sell their products outside the U.S.

The cancellation of the USAID program, which provided food to underserved nations, saw over \$900 million of U.S. food products left undelivered and sitting in ports and warehouses.

As reported by MLive.com,

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**Cover:** Pedestrians cross the Saginaw Street bridge above a calm Flint River.

(Photo by Edwin D. Custer)



**Photo of the Month:** Shoppers at the Flint Farmers' Market. (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

## Education Beat

### ***Shake-ups at highest level of government may put research funding at risk for local universities***

*By Nathan Waters*

Given a recent funding freeze and layoffs at the National Science Foundation (NSF), millions in grant money may be in limbo for the University of Flint-Michigan (UM-Flint) and Kettering University.

Since its creation in 1950 to “promote the progress of science,” “advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare,” and “secure the national defense,” the NSF has supported the work of 262 Nobel Prize winners and 353,000 scientists, engineers, educators and doctors. With an annual budget of over \$8 billion, it funds approximately 25% of all federally supported basic research conducted by America’s colleges and universities, according to its website.

But now, in the foundation’s 75th year, things look less certain.

Following a January 27, 2025 memo from the Trump administration’s

Office of Management and Budget (OMB), funding was frozen for NSF and many other agencies across the U.S. government while those agencies work to “identify and review all Federal financial assistance programs and supporting activities consistent with the President’s policies and requirements...”

In a coinciding action, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued guidance to “identify all employees on probationary periods” and “to determine whether those employees should be retained at the agency.”

The AFL-CIO and American Federation of Government Employees soon challenged the order in the D.C. Court of Appeals. There, Judge Loren L. AliKhan issued an administrative stay and required the White House to respond to the plaintiffs’

request for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO). The memo was then rescinded by OMB.

Then, on Feb. 18, the NSF laid off most of its probationary employees as well additional employees classified as “intermittent experts,” or those who don’t work full time for the agency.

This action was taken following an overhaul of federal agencies by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), formerly United States Digital Services. The layoff accounted for 168 employees, or about a 10% reduction in NSF’s staff, according to a statement by NSF Spokesperson Michael England on Feb. 21.

Again, this action faced legal challenges, this time from the American Federation of Government Employees and AFL-CIO. Here, Senior District Judge William Alsup of the U.S. Dis-

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## Ed Beat ...

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trict Court of Northern California and Senior District Judge James Bredar of the U.S. District Court of Maryland separately ruled that firings of probationary employees across six agencies was illegal and those employees needed to be reinstated.

The rulings did not include those fired from NSF. However, the guidance was updated on March 4 to include the phrase “OPM is not directing agencies to take any specific performance-based actions regarding probationary employees.”

In a written statement, NSF Director Sethuraman Panchanathan ordered “reinstatement of terminated probationers with back pay and no break in service” based on the updated guidance.

While all this tumult off in Washington may feel far removed, it has effects here in Flint’s own institutions.

According to the National Science Board, public research in the United States is primarily done in educational institutions with funding from the federal government. Dr. Ken Sylvester, the Interim Executive Director of the Office of Research and Economic Development for UM-Flint describes the model as one “for the world” because “it is so innovative and competitive.”

“It offers an enormous comparative advantage for science and innovation globally,” Dr. Sylvester

explained, adding that partnering with universities allows the federal government to “sustain a robust research enterprise that benefits and strengthens the U.S. economy” for less than the same work would cost either inside the government or private industry.

UM-Flint has ten active grants of nearly seven million dollars from the National Science Foundation. Those include \$3,372,553 for the university’s Strategic Use-Inspired Research Growth and Engagement (SURGE) program, which has a goal, as described by Dr. Sylvester, “to strengthen the ability of a regional public university like ours to respond to the needs of our community and industry partners.”

He added, “The professional staff who will be supported through this award will expand our external partnership building and better prepare our faculty to identify and meet the research needs of external stakeholders.”

On the other side of town, Kettering University has been working with the NSF, as well.

The university has \$2 million in grants, including \$465,000 awarded in September 2024, to implement a research experience for undergraduates (REU).

REUs allow students from across the country to work on research projects with Kettering over a 10-week summer period while being provided a stipend. From the award abstract, the \$465k in funding will go toward a three-year REU in autonomous vehicle development: “Students will focus

on the technical challenges and how to meet them through increasing the level of autonomy in the automotive industry and address issues such as preventing driver fatigue, providing mobility to those who are unable to drive, and increasing safety on the roads.”

Per a press release from Kettering, Dr. Diane Peters noted that the grant “allows us to make a significant impact by bringing together a diverse group of students and providing them with a comprehensive research experience.”

She continued, “We are committed to creating an environment where students can thrive academically and personally while also engaging with our broader academic community.”

While the changes at NSF are still developing, both UM-Flint and Kettering are doing what they can to navigate them.

For UM-Flint, Dr. Sylvester said: “The situation is very fluid at the moment. We are confident that our faculty can respond to any concerns the science agencies [have] about the objectives of their projects. For now, existing awardees are proceeding with their studies.”

When reached for comment on the current situation, Rebecca Norris with Kettering’s media relations team responded, “Right now we are looking for guidance when it comes to these grants and are not able to provide a response.” ●



The Innovation Center on Bluff Street at Kettering University (Photo accessed via Wikimedia Commons)

## **Commentary...**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

in west Michigan, about 32 truck-loads comprising roughly 600,000 pounds of food designated for Feeding America, have been cancelled by the Department of Agriculture. They were part of the USDA's Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Further, immigration limits are mounting worries about finding seasonal agricultural workers both here in Michigan and across the country.

### **Education**

With Trump's move to eliminate the Department of Education, there is increasing concern for K-12 to higher education in Michigan.

State education officials estimate that as much as \$2.27 billion could be at risk for Michigan schools. That would include major funding for school meal programs, economically disadvantaged students, and special education programs. Cuts in these areas would have a major impact in the Flint school system, which serves many students who fall into or utilize these categories. Michigan also receives federal funds for Head Start programs and Pell Grants.

There are claims that some of these programs would be protected or shifted to other departments, but the details and prospects of that remain very unclear.

### **Libraries & Museums**

Trump's little-publicized decision to eliminate the Institute for Museum and Library Services threatens to cut \$8 million from the budget and limit the services of libraries and museums across the state.

The funds support some of the largest libraries and museums in Michigan, such as the University of Michigan Library and the

Henry Ford Museum, but they also support small local museums and libraries.

Particularly at risk is the Michigan Electronic Library, which allows students online access to resources.

### **DEI**

With the Trump administration's attack on all forms of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs, including eliminating photos of the WWII bomber Enola Gay, baseball legend Jackie Robinson, and the first female fighter pilot from government websites, schools are in a quandary about what is or isn't allowable under the new federal rules. At risk are large amounts of federal funds that go to support higher education in Flint and Genesee County.

In a recent Board of Trustees meeting, Mott Community College interim President Shaunda Richardson-Snell said the college is "taking a cautious, wait-and-see approach," while trying to make sure they don't discriminate and protect federal funding as cases surrounding the measure work their way up the court system.

As reported by ABC 12, in response to national pressure, the University of Michigan has closed its DEI offices and shut down its DEI Strategic Plan. The university's alumni association also recently ended a scholarship program aimed at recruiting more minority and underserved students; the LEAD program (leadership, excellence, achievement and diversity) has also ended; and the university removed diversity requirements in its hiring, promotion, and tenure practices.

In a response to the limits on DEI, the Genesee County Board of Commissioners is considering an "Equity in All Policies" proposal that would preserve many of the elements of DEI in the county gov-

ernment.

### **Immigration**

According to the Migration Policy Institute, Michigan has as many as 91,000 undocumented individuals. The state also has about 16,000 children that were born to at least one undocumented parent and 4,000 undocumented children enrolled in school.

Trump's attempt to end birth-right citizenship could threaten all of those individuals.

Recently, the threat of losing federal funds over immigration policy proved a factor in the Mayor of Bay City vetoing a "Welcoming Community" resolution passed by the city council, as reported by ABC 12. A similar resolution was also voted down by the Saginaw City Council out of fear of federal funding loss.

### **Response & Hope For the Future**

As worrisome and dismal as all these possibilities sound, there is still some room for hope.

More than a few judges, even those appointed by Trump and other Republicans, have been willing to take action to block or delay some of Trump's executive orders. Whatever their views on the president or their partisan leanings, at least some judges still seem to support the idea of three branches of government and checks and balances between them.

Further, while the Democratic Party leadership has been scrambling to find a coherent response to the Trump onslaught, there are signs that opposition to Trump's actions is finding a voice.

In recent rallies, Senator Bernie Sanders, who ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination in the past, has garnered huge crowds opposed to Trump's policies. In Denver he and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.),

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## Commentary ...

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drew more than 30,000 to their rally on March 21.

Earlier, on a cold day in Warren, Michigan, Sanders drew more than 9,000 to hear him address the government as “oligarchs and billionaires” in what he calls his “Fighting the Oligarchy Tour,” as reported in the Macomb Daily.

The potential of Sanders’ movement reminded me of a conversation I had with one Trump voter a few years ago. While he said he was a supporter of Trump, he said his second choices were Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. Perhaps that means Sanders’ movement may pull at least a few supporters from the Trump camp, and Trump’s populist supporters who resent the “elites” may have second thoughts as he recruits Elon Musk and other billionaires to his administration. If nothing else, maybe some Republican members of Congress will find a backbone as they face a growing number of angry crowds calling them out at town-hall meetings.

But, in the end, it will take more than just large rallies and

angry speeches to stop the Trump attack on democracy.

Trump may be the carnival barker at the front of his movement, but there are well-organized groups such as the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation working for Project 2025 and similar goals. It will take an equally well-organized and dedicated group to work to block the worst of Trump’s impact.

In 2016, Michigan voted for Trump. In 2020, it supported Biden. In the 2024 election Michigan voters gave Trump his closest margin of victory in the nation. As a key battleground state, Michigan could become the center of resistance to Trump. In fact, it seems critical for Flint, for Michigan, and for the nation. ●

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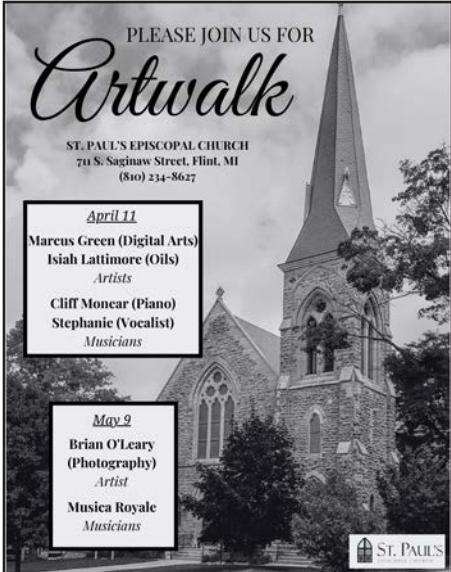
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# THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

*Below is a selection of events available to our readers, beginning after our April publication date. To submit events for our May issue, email information about your event to [eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com](mailto:eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com) by April 30.*

## **Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop**

Saturday, April 12 | 1-3 p.m.  
Join MSU Consumer Horticulture Educator Barslund Judd to learn about grafting apple trees. Attendees can expect a practical demonstration of grafting, a discussion of the principles, and the opportunity to graft their own apples under supervision. At the end of the class, you will be able to take home the plants that you grafted. This class is intended for backyard and home growers that have little experience in grafting. Registration is \$15 per person and required. More information at: <https://shorturl.at/oG4Gh>  
Edible Flint Education Farm  
1628 Beach St, Flint

## **Flint Local 432: 40th Anniversary Kickoff**

Saturday, April 12 | 4-7 p.m.  
Flint's beloved downtown venue will kick off celebrating four decades of live, loud and local with an event at Factory Two. Expect live sets from the Guilty Bystanders, Rats of Unusual Size, Ice Halo, and other special guests, as well as a giant display of flyers, shirts, tapes, records, stickers, patches and more.  
Factory Two  
129 N. Grand Traverse St, Flint

## **Spring Soccer Sunday Funday**

Sunday, April 13 | 2 p.m.  
Are you ready for Spring Soccer? Flint Style Soccer is too! We will have soccer for the kids, information and merch sales for parents in the clubhouse, and much more! Also, if you think you may want to coach with us, we'll have a brief info session for potential coaches at 2:30. Come on down and say hello!  
Mott Park Recreation Area  
2397 Nolen Dr, Flint

## **Learn to Crochet**

Saturday, April 19 | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Want to learn how to crochet but don't know where to start? We'll help you! Learn the basics of crocheting, simple terminology, and how to read and follow a crochet pattern. You'll be given time and instruction to work on a simple project to take with you, plus you'll keep the tools provided (stitch marker, crochet hook, yarn & patterns) to continue your new hobby at home! Register by April 16 by calling 810-237-3409. For ages 16 and up only. Materials included. \$20 per person.  
Sloan Museum of Discovery  
1221 E. Kearsley St, Flint

## **Easter Egg Hunt at the Stockton House**

Saturday, April 19 | 12:30 p.m.  
The historic Stockton House will host its annual Easter Egg Hunt followed by its regular monthly tours from 1-4 p.m. The hunt will take place outside, so please dress for the weather. Tours are \$5 per person or \$15 per family.  
720 Ann Arbor St, Flint

## **Arbor Day Tree Planting at Broome Park**

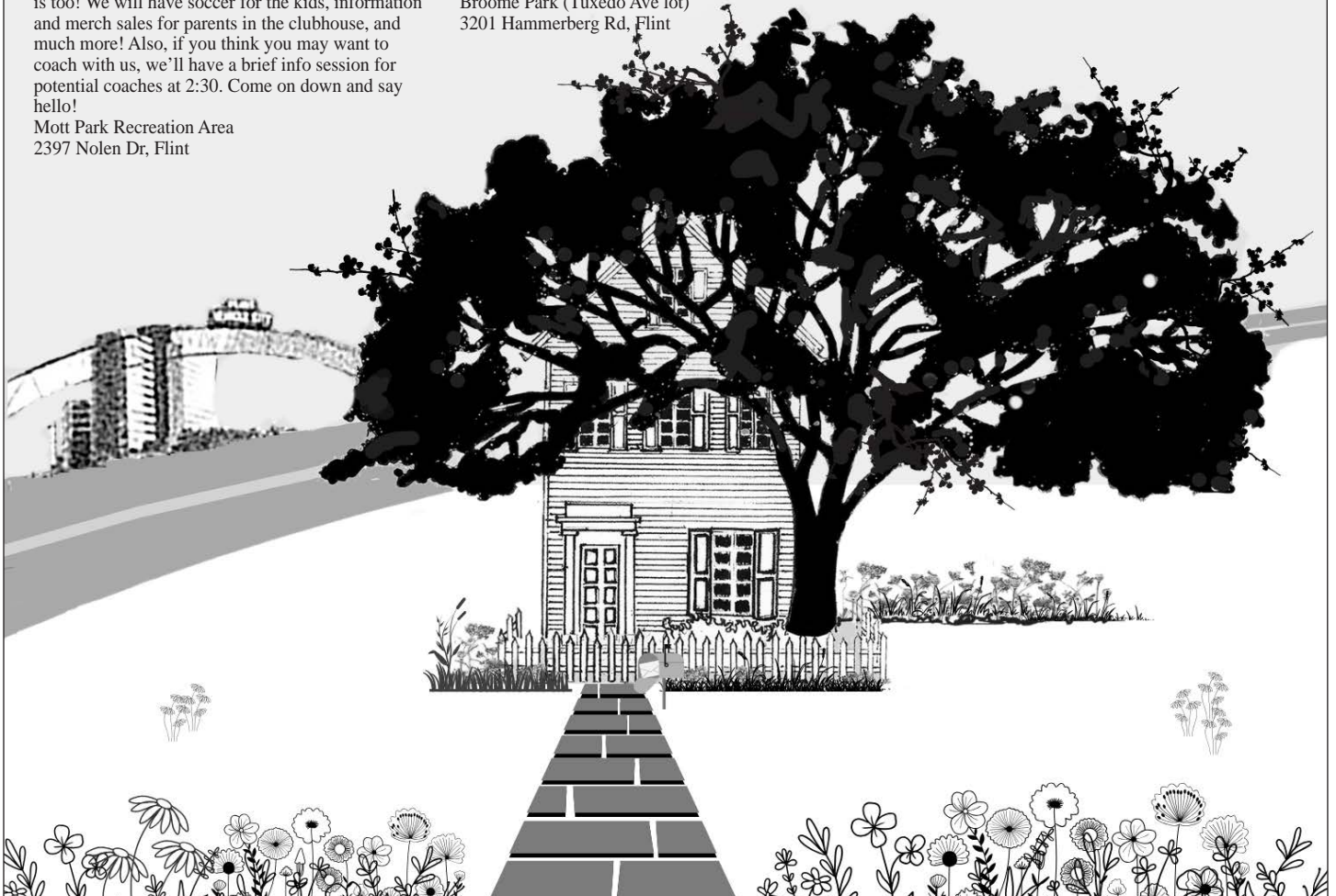
Friday, April 25 | 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
The Genesee Conservation District welcomes you to our annual Arbor Day tree planting! This is a rain or shine event. Join us for this fun hands-on learning experience as we bring even more trees to Tree City USA! For more information, email [taylor.franklin@macd.org](mailto:taylor.franklin@macd.org).  
Broome Park (Tuxedo Ave lot)  
3201 Hammerberg Rd, Flint

## **Passages Storytelling**

Saturday, April 26 | 6 p.m.  
Passages is a monthly storytelling event that showcases true stories told live, with no notes and no props, in five minutes. Each month there is a new theme to guide the stories. April's theme is "Backfired," with storytellers asked to "tell us about foolproof schemes gone bad, proposals that fell flat, or maybe the one great idea you had that went haywire before it could get off the ground." The event is open-mic, and typically 10-11 stories are featured. Doors open at 6 p.m. and stories start at 6:30. Admission is free.  
Queens' Provisions  
421 Garland St, Flint

## **Flint SOUP Community Micro-Grant Dinner**

Monday, April 28 | 5:15 - 8 p.m.  
Come listen to 5 entrepreneur presenters, connect with neighbors, and enjoy a meal of soup, salad, and bread. Event is \$5 (cash) to attend with 100% of the funds collected going toward the micro-grant awarded to the presenter with the most votes. Doors open at 5:15pm, event officially starts at 5:45pm.  
First Presbyterian Church of Flint  
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# Parks & Rec in Flint and Beyond: Chevy Commons

By Christina Collie

**This article is the fifth in a series East Village Magazine is producing about parks and recreational areas to explore in Flint and surrounding areas, presented in no particular order.**

*Chevy Commons Park  
200 N. Chevrolet Avenue  
Flint, MI 48503  
Hours: Dawn – Dusk*

Located near Kettering University in a former river valley, Chevy Commons has strong ties to the history of General Motors (GM) and Flint.

This 60+ acre park was once a sprawling manufacturing complex referred to as “Chevy in the Hole” – the location of a landmark event in labor history as the site of the Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1936-1937.

During the strike, workers occupied the site’s now-demolished plant in demand of better working conditions and for recognition of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union. The strike led to a 44-day standoff, culminating in a victory for the workers and setting a precedent for labor rights across the nation.

Today, the site again finds itself at the center of another piece of history: Genesee County’s first state park.

The designation was announced by Governor Gretchen

Whitmer in 2021, though the site was already open to the public after a host of Flint residents and local leaders came together to clean up the brownfield left behind from the GM complex’s demolition from the mid-90s to 2004.

According to Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources website, site enhancements and a play garden should be added to Chevy Commons between the fall of this year and the summer of 2026.

But even without those enhancements the park is already a lovely space.

Its myriad of crisscrossing,

restrooms, there are two port-a-potties at the South Chevrolet Avenue lot.

After venturing away from your car or bike, you’ll notice the park is just a stone’s throw from downtown Flint, so you can admire the city’s skyline while you roam. Plus, one path actually ends over by Tenacity Brewing if you want to end your excursion with a beer or kombucha.

For those looking for a longer visit, the Genesee Valley Trail runs through Chevy Commons on its way toward Linden Road. While that’s a bit too far for me to ex-

plore, a friend told me you can actually take the trail all the way to Genesee Valley Mall.

But, for those not satisfied by even that roughly 8.6 mile round trip between the park and the mall, there are also plans to link Chevy Commons to the Iron Belle Trail.

That trail, which is roughly 71% complete, begins at De-

troit’s Belle Isle and goes all the way to Ironwood in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

For now though, my suggestion is to take the path that crosses South Chevrolet Avenue if you’re not a fan of sun and heat, as the site’s new trees on the city side haven’t matured enough to cast much shade yet.

Happy exploring! ●



Bella enjoying a walk along the Flint River in Chevy Commons. (Photo by Christina Collie)

paved pathways make Chevy Commons a great place to get active outdoors: walking, jogging, on-leash dog walking, as well as biking along the Flint River and Swartz Creek aqueducts are all options.

There are two free lots where visitors can park. One is off Kearsley Street, and the other is off of South Chevrolet Avenue, near Kettering University. While there aren’t actual

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# Village Life

## *I'm bad at running away*

By Kate Stockrahm

When I was around five-years-old, I ran away from home.

Well, more accurately, I ran away as far as I dared to go without permission, which meant I went to the fenced-in backyard of my family's suburban Detroit home.

I can't remember what happened over dinner to make kindergarten Kate absolutely sure she could never speak with her mom again, though I'm certain younger me was right to think so. (I was – and remain – pretty stubborn.)

But what I do remember about that experience is that I was resolute in my mission to start life anew elsewhere, sure that I would be better off without my parents and my little brother weighing me and my big dreams down.

So, after being sent to my room, I packed up my most precious belongings: a Polly Pocket compact, a few of my “dress up” clothes for the job interviews I'd surely go on, and some crayons and paper to document my rise-from-tragedy for future biographers. Then, I snuck out of the back door.

Already feeling freer from the injustice I'd suffered mere tens of feet away in the dining room, I set up my pink and yellow pop-up tent and pulled one of the patio end tables over so I could start my manifesto.

However, not having the faculties to write more than a few simple sentences before getting bored (and running out of vocabulary), I instead staged future scenarios with my deeply apologetic mother played by Polly Pocket:

*“Kate, where have you been all*

*of these years? We've missed you so much!”*

*“I'm so sorry for doubting you at dinner that night. I can't believe you're 10 now! Double digits and I missed it! I was such a horrible mother to you, you angel.”*

*“Is that a Nobel Prize?! And you're the youngest physicist to ever receive one? I'm so proud. Although I know that I have no right to be since you ran away and made a life for yourself without me.”*



And so it went for the next several hours: my mind growing more and more confident that mom would regret her decision to scold me, and she'd definitely beg me to forgive her should we ever meet again.

But then, it started to rain.

In my haste to escape tyranny I'd not thought about a coat, boots, or a blanket. I was shivering as the droplets started soaking the ground, and my play-tent turned soggy in conditions it was never meant to weather. I wanted to cry... but I also wanted to win.

Soon though, my mom popped her head through the tent flap and asked me if I would come inside.

“Victory,” I thought.

But really, it's clear I was bad at running away.

To learn just how bad, I called my mom to ask if I'd misremembered this ill-fated attempt to flee. She told me no, if anything I'd been “even more stubborn” than I described.

In proof, she said that while I thought I'd “snuck” out, instead I had *directly informed her* I would “be running away” before I went into the yard — an admittedly amateur move.

Further, I'd had to “make a couple trips” back and forth to the house to carry out that pop-up tent and other supplies, resulting in quite a scene.

“Think about it: you were small,” my mom explained. “It was hard not to laugh.”

In my defense, she confirmed that I really had stayed out back at least a few hours, which she'd found admirable at just five years old.

She also said that while I clearly wanted to come inside when the rain started, she knew I wouldn't say so, and she was happy to ask me in so I could save face.

Anyway, April is my mom's birthday month. So in an ode to her goodness, I'd like to thank her publicly for inviting me back inside that evening, and let her know that, decades later, I've come to terms with being bad at running away.

(I'll just settle for being great at everything else, like whatever she and I were arguing about in 1996.) ●

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