

East Village Magazine

May 2025

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Contributing Writer Jan Worth-Nelson
Reporters Canisha Bell
Christina Collie
Harold C. Ford
Dan Vela
Nathan Waters
Columnist Paul Rozycki
Photographer Edwin D. Custer

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720 E. Second St.
Flint, Mich. 48503

Website:
eastvillagemagazine.org

E-mail:
eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com

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Commentary

Staying sane during insane times: Dealing with the emotional turmoil of Trump

By Paul Rozycki

Even for those of us who are political junkies, trying to keep up with the Trump chaos of tariff wars, stock market crashes, federal employee firings and re-hirings, dubious deportations, attacks on colleges, and endless court challenges to most of his executive actions can be emotionally exhausting.

There is no doubt that it is important to stay informed and stay active in opposing what we are seeing happen to our government today. Recent protests are a positive sign that the opposition to Trump's actions is building. The federal courts have shown that they are at least willing to step in and pause or halt some of Trump's actions, and a few Republicans like Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) have begun to express doubts about some of his actions, too.

All of that is important, and it all needs to continue. But for many, the day-by-day, hour-by-hour tsunami of Trump actions and reactions is energy-zapping. We need to pace ourselves and not get burned out.

What follows are a few suggestions to keep your sanity during these insane times. Some are personal observations, others are from professional psychologists or therapists.

My own story

A few weeks ago, as part of

an art talk for a photo show at Mott Community College, I described how photography led me to become involved with journalism and a local newspaper; how that interest in journalism led me to study history and political science; and how that studying led me to a five-decade career in teaching in spite of my initial plans for journalism.

I remain a political junkie and end up watching all too many news programs day in and day out, but while photography led me to politics it has also been an escape.

When I've had too much political news I find it rewarding and relaxing to drive around town, look for an interesting building or a new mural I haven't seen before, and take a few photos.

One great way to forget about the turmoil of today's politics is to take a nature walk at For Mar, Pierce Park, Kelly Lake or one of the many other parks in the county, breathe the fresh air, enjoy the scenery and the wildlife, and take a few photos.

Some other personal views

Many also choose to limit the amount of daily news they consume.

When the national news broadcasts come on, my wife Nancy will often decide that it's a good time to feed the cats. She will also spend her time buying and sending a variety of cards and other notes to her long list of friends and pen pals. She says the

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Cover: A view of the University of Michigan-Flint pavilion and other downtown buildings from Saginaw Street. (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)



Photo of the Month: Daffodils in bloom. (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

Sports Beat

A passion for ice hockey lands Rico Phillips in local sports hall of fame

By Harold C. Ford

While many of Flint's most notable athletes found success in basketball, football, baseball, and track and field, Rico Phillips found it in ice hockey.

The son of an African American father and a German immigrant mother, Phillips grew up in Flint and graduated from Flint Southwestern High School in 1987. In March, he was inducted into the Greater Flint African American Sports Hall of Fame (GFAASHOF), making him one of just four Flint athletes feted in the sport of ice hockey between GFAASHOF and the Greater Flint Area Sports Hall of Fame. The honor also makes him the only African American with Flint hall of fame recognition specifically for ice hockey.

An East Village Magazine (EVM) review of 265 individuals and 15 teams in the GFAASHOF found

only one other reference to ice hockey. Norman Graham Jr. was inducted in 2018, and while a sentence of his seven-paragraph tribute indicates he "was one of seven African-American children from Flint's Southside to join the Greater Flint Hockey Association," and that "he was selected team captain" and "the leading scorer on all but two of his teams," the rest of the message notes Graham's long list of track accomplishments.

Despite making history, in an interview with Phillips after his hall of fame induction, the star athlete noted that ice hockey was "the furthest thing" he believed he would ever participate in.

From floor to ice

Phillips recalled his first experience with hockey taking place

in the gymnasium of Flint's Lincoln Elementary School. That's where he discovered that he enjoyed a game played with sticks used to shoot a puck or ball into a net.

"I really loved it," Phillips said, adding that he had liked playing goalie.

But at home there was less hockey and more basketball, as his backyard featured a hoop in the driveway where the older neighborhood boys would come to compete.

"I was always the short guy," Phillips remembered. "I never was really good at it."

So, he volunteered to grab the whistle and referee those driveway basketball games – an experience that would serve him well in years to come as an on-ice hockey official.

Not being built for basketball

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Sports Beat ...

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isn't what led Phillips to hockey, however. Instead, it was a bit of serendipity.

Phillips got his certification in first aid and CPR while in eighth grade, which led the head athletic trainer at Flint Southwestern High School (SWHS) to ask Phillips to be an assistant.

Phillips immediately said yes.

"It was an opportunity to use hands-on skills," he recalled. Plus, Phillips wanted to become a firefighter at the time, and he knew the experience and first aid-CPR training would be useful.

During his freshman and sophomore years at Southwestern, Phillips saw the hockey teams up close from his position as an assistant trainer.

"I knew there's going to be some injuries so I get to hone my [first aid and CPR] skills," Phillips recalled. That experience as an assistant trainer for Southwestern's ice hockey team turned out to be transformational. "I couldn't believe the speed, the skill, the passion," he said. "It was from there that I found my love for the sport."

"At first I was just grabbing the boards and holding onto them the whole time."

Phillips' budding sideline interest led him to ask the ice hockey coach if he would teach him how to skate.

"He looked at me as if I was kind of crazy," Phillips said, but the team's assistant coach did end up working with Phillips, one-on-one, to teach him.

"That's how I got on the ice," Phillips said. "At first I was just grabbing the boards and holding onto them the whole time."

After a short stint on the SWHS team during spring hockey season, Phillips came back for more.

"I don't know why I came back to hockey after that [spring]

season because I was getting the snout knocked out of me," he said with a laugh.

In fact, Phillips recalled his dad saying to him, "You don't want to play hockey; they get their teeth knocked out."

A few years later, Phillips did, indeed, lose his front teeth playing hockey, but it didn't much matter by then. "I was having the time of my life," he said.

"Go ref basketball where you belong"

During his junior year at SWHS, Phillips remarkably advanced to a head trainer position for all of Genesee County high school hockey.

In locker room conversations between periods, adult ice hockey officials convinced Phillips, still a senior in high school at the time, that he should become an on-ice referee. It would be challenging for certain, but he would be compensated for his time.

While the challenge of refereeing was expected to come from having to skate at the same speed as the players (and stop quickly, which Phillips had yet to learn to do well), the challenge would also prove to come from Phillips' complexion in the nearly all-white world of ice hockey arenas.

"I would start hearing things from people in the stands," he recalled. "Why don't you go ref basketball where you belong?" was one such example.

White referees would insultingly remind him that a faceoff with a puck drop was not the same as a jump ball in basketball.

"I didn't know how to accept it," Phillips recalled of hearing such things from his colleagues.

Then, while officiating at the former IMA ice arena in Flint, 17-year-old Phillips admittedly blew a call. He was summoned to the bench by an angry coach, and once there, the team's assistant coach called him a "n*****" and threatened to assault

him in the parking lot after the match.

"It was a moment that shook me up," Phillips remembered. "There was nobody that could support me; I refed the rest of the game in a fog."

Ultimately, Phillips' co-official (a white adult) skated over to the bench and threw the offending coach out of the contest.

After the match concluded, he offered Phillips advice that remains salient for him to this day: "Rico, either today you're going to grow up or you're going to stay a kid. You're going to come across people that are racist in your life, and it's how you're going to deal with that racism that's going to dictate how happy you are."

His co-official reminded Phillips that he, Phillips, could've and should've thrown the offending coach out of the contest. "But I had your back," he said. "People will have your back."

Even knowing he had allies on the ice, after the incident, Phillips considered leaving the sport that he'd grown to love. Racism continued to taint his hockey experience, but he said he learned how to weather it over time.

Early on, Phillips said he used self-deprecating humor. "I was endearing because I would make people laugh," he explained. But later, he realized that he was "normalizing bigotry," and he'd had enough, saying to himself, "this shit ain't funny no more; I've gotta stop joking."

Adding to the hate he endured on-ice, Phillips also caught hell from his Black friends who didn't understand his passion for ice hockey. "Why are you playing this white sport?" he remembers being asked.

Phillips struggled to explain to his friends the speed and skill of ice hockey.

"All they really knew about the sport is there was fighting," he said.

Phillips eventually moved past the criticisms of his friends, though, noting, "I began to become proud I was the only Black person on the ice."

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Sports Beat..

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Flint Inner City Youth Hockey Program

Throughout his hockey career, Phillips came to realize that many of the participants in youth ice hockey were white and rather privileged. That's what sparked the idea for a Flint Inner City Youth Hockey Program (FICYHP) to serve children of color. He said he longed to "influence young Black families ... about how the sport is so great and offers so much."

"Diversifying the sport is my goal," Phillips explained. He hopes to help move ice hockey to a stage where a future Rico Phillips is not the only person of color to ref or play.

"When that happens, racial slurs will begin to disappear from the sport," he said.

FICYHP, established in 2010, now lists its mission "to introduce,

teach how to ice skate and develop hockey skills to kids who would otherwise not have an opportunity to enjoy the sport" on its website's home page.

With considerable pride, Phillips told EVM that 16 FICYHP gradu-



Rico Phillips (back row, left) and members of FICYHP.
(Photo by Savannah Edwards)

ates have gone on to play organized hockey at higher levels. In particular he referenced William Walker, who began playing FICYHP hockey at seven-years-old and was eventually awarded a partial-ride scholarship at

Michigan's Adrian College.

"He's furthering his education," Phillips said. "There's legacy there."

Reflecting on his recent hall of fame induction, Phillips added that "legacy is important" to him as he grows older and passes his sport on to the next generation. He said he hopes to be remembered as a giving person.

"It's been my passion my entire life," Phillips said. "I wanted to help."

Phillips was inducted into the GFAASHOF on March 23 along with basketballers Thomas McGill, Anthony Pendleton, Demetrius Calip, and Evette Ott; tracksters Edward Taylor and Eugene Taylor; and baseballer Hershel Pritchard. Team inductions included the 1984 and 1985 Flint Northwestern HS men's basketball teams and the 1980 Beecher women's basketball team. ●

Commentary ...

(Continued from Page 3)

activity of writing letters and sending cards raises her spirits.

But when she does phone one of her best friends who shares the same views on Trump, they agree to say no more than two sentences about what he's been up to that day before going on to other topics. And, of course, nothing eases political tension for Nancy more than a trip to Frankenmuth for mac n' cheese and a few new ornaments and postcards.

One of my colleagues has decided to limit his political news intake and instead has been using his time to explore his large music collection and rediscover his favorite albums and CDs.

Others find that a walk through the galleries and art shows of the Flint Institute of Arts, Buckingham Gallery or the Greater Flint Arts Council is a good way to take

a break from the constant beat of the news.

Professional advice

In addition to personal views on how to deal with today's political turmoil, psychologists and therapists have professional advice for those dealing with the emotional impact of politics.

In a 2018 "Psychology Today" article, John Manuel Andriote offered several suggestions:

- Get active and get involved with the community. Andriote suggests that rather than holding your frustration in and letting it upset you, getting involved with a cause you agree with can be liberating. Aiding others who are dealing with similar issues can be a positive way of dealing with your own frustrations.
- Limit social media. It's very easy for people to be pulled into angry debates on social

media. Facebook and Twitter can bring out the most divisive aspects of human nature and engaging on such platforms often resolves little.

- Resist emotional appeals. What Andriote refers to as "mindful resistance" is the process of consciously not responding to the angry and inflammatory words that come from others. Save your anger and energy for the most important issues. Don't feel the need to respond to every tweet and minor issue that attracts attention.

In 2024, Michelle Riba, M.D., M.S., psychiatrist and member of the University of Michigan Eisenberg Family Depression Center responded to concerns over politically induced stress on the University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry website. She says that the tension from today's political conflicts can have a detrimental impact on an individual's health.

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Commentary ...

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Like Andriote, Reba notes that not every story deserves our full attention or personal reaction, and we should be aware of how much time we spend dealing with politics and political conflict.

She also notes that we should be aware of our impact on others: even if you're very active and involved, others may not have that level of interest. Further, we should be open to others and willing to listen to what they have to say. Even if you don't agree, listening can reduce tension and may lead to civil dialogue.

Finally, Dr. Lillie McCain, a colleague of mine who taught psychology for many years at Mott Community College, offered her thoughts on dealing with the emotional impact of the Trump administration:

"Believing that we can do nothing about this situation, many people feel overwhelmed," Dr. McCain explained over email. "Intense anger, despair and other negative emotions loom large, and these emotions can be detrimental to us physically, mentally and emotion-

ally. However, such feelings are normal responses to the current state of uncertainty."

Her advice was to recognize the situation, get involved, and know that the nation can survive. "It is unlikely that the quality of leadership will change in a positive way," she wrote. "Therefore, it is necessary for us to create supportive venues wherein it is safe to realistically discuss the situation with like minds. Realize that we can only regulate ourselves, and frequently remind ourselves that we are not alone."

She suggested one might "forego expecting stability" in the country and instead choose to "stabilize your own emotions by doing for yourself whatever you are able to control."

"For example, rather than believing that you are helpless, take a stand to join in protest, write letters to your representatives, invest in strengthening your spiritual connections," she offered. "We can make it through this."

I think Dr. McCain said it best. Take care of yourself, pace yourself, and be willing to take action. You can make a difference, and we can make it through this. ●



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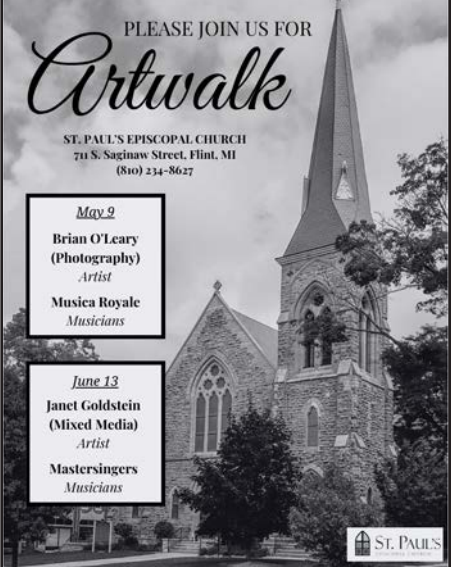
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East Village Magazine

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THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

Below is a selection of events available to our readers, beginning after our May publication date. To submit events for our June/July double issue, email information about your event to eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com by June 13.

Thursday Night Party Rides

Every Thursday | 8:30 pm
Join Social Cycling Flint for a fun, relaxing, and engaging bike ride around Flint each Thursday night! Cyclists are encouraged to bring a bike headlight. Starting location is the Flint Farmers' Market. 300 E. 1st St., Flint

Flint Block Party

Saturday, May 10 | 1 - 5 pm
Come out for giant steamroller printmaking with U-M Flint Artist in Residence Janice McCoy and 22 other local artists. DDA Flat Lot S. Saginaw St. and Kearsley St., Flint

Stewardship Day 2025

Saturday, May 17th | 9 am - 12 pm
Hosted by the Flint River Watershed Coalition and Keep Genesee County Beautiful, the annual Stewardship Day event brings community members together to clean up sites throughout Flint and Genesee County. There will be 10 sites total, with nine in the City of Flint. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/FRWCCleanup> for details.

Edible Flint Garden Kit Distribution Day

Saturday, May 17 | 11 am - 4:30 pm
Join us to pick up your pre-ordered garden kit and enjoy this fun community event! Low cost Garden Kits are available to residents of Genesee County. We offer different kits for the variety of growers in our community. Neighborhood Engagement Hub 3216 Martin Luther King Ave., Flint

Life, Death, and Mozart

Saturday, May 17 | 7:30 pm
The Flint Symphony Chorus will join the Flint Symphony Orchestra for this concert of masterworks that pays homage to one of the most celebrated composers in history. Whiting Auditorium 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint

Levitt AMP Flint Music Series

Tuesday, May 27 | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Communities First, Inc. is hosting a 10-concert series on the back lawn of Totem Books with the support of the Levitt Foundation. This first concert will welcome the LowDown Brass Band from Chicago for a completely free concert! Bring chairs and blankets. 620 W. Court St., Flint

McFarlan Villages 100 Year Celebration & Ribbon Cutting

Thursday, June 5 | 3:30 - 5 pm
Join neighbors to celebrate as McFarlan Villages marks 100 years of serving older adults in Flint. More details on Page 9. 800 E. Court St., Flint

FIM's Music on the Lawn Series

Fridays in June | 7 pm
Featuring musicians from the Flint School of Performing Arts faculty and the Flint Symphony Orchestra. Series is free but registration is required. Visit thefim.org for more information. FIM Dort Music Center MacArthur Lawn

2nd Annual Gays Eating Garlic Bread in the Park

Saturday, June 7 | 12 - 4 pm
Gays Eating Garlic Bread in the Park is coming back to Flint! Celebrate Pride Month with local queers and allies by eating delicious garlic bread in downtown Flint! "B.Y.O.G.B." (Bring your own Garlic Bread) and picnic blanket! Brush Park 507 Brush Alley, Flint

3rd Annual Armed Resources Rally

Saturday, June 14 | 2 - 6 pm
Rally will feature over 40 resources for veterans and their families, free meal and haircut, as well as admission to the Flint City Bucks game at 4:30 pm. Atwood Stadium 701 University Ave., Flint





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Saturday | June 21, 2025
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Food trucks, local vendors,
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kick off the event at 11 a.m.!



Look for the full Schedule of Juneteenth Events throughout Genesee County!

MORE INFO AT: SloanLongway.org/Juneteenth

McFarlan Villages 100th Year Celebration and Ribbon Cutting

*Honoring a Century of Care
Celebrating a New Chapter*

McFarlan Villages at Court Street
800 E. Court Street, Flint, MI 48503
Thursday, June 5, 2025
3:30 - 5 PM

Join us as we celebrate 100 years of
serving older adults in Flint and unveil the
newly renovated McFarlan Villages at Court
Street!

Event Highlights:

- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- Guest Speakers & Community Leaders
- Resident Stories & Historical Showcase
- Light Refreshments
- Tours of the Renovated Apartments

Help us honor the past, celebrate the
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RSVP or Questions?

Contact Kahlia Harper via kharper@pvm.org or
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Parks & Rec in Flint and Beyond: Downtown Fenton Parks

By Christina Collie

This article is the sixth 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.

*Mill Pond Park and Rackham Park
301 S. Leroy Street
Fenton, MI 48430
Hours: Dawn – Dusk*

Downtown Fenton features quite a few parks, but Mill Pond Park and Rackham Park are two of the easiest to find since they are right across Leroy Street from one another.

Plus, with spring here, it's the perfect time to visit, as Mill Pond and Rackham are great for families with young children. Why, you ask? Baby ducks! There are also fun areas for kids to explore while staying safe and in sight of their parents.

While both parks are walkable and stroller- or wheelchair-friendly, I would caution against biking due to the number of pedestrians and small children.

One of my favorite things to do when visiting is to grab an ice cream from Pumphouse Custard, a tiny brick building located right next to the parking lot for Mill Pond Park, before setting off.

Mill Pond connects to the Shiawassee River in Rackham Park with a pedestrian path that runs along the river and provides plenty of green space for littles to run and play.

I saw quite a few children fishing Mill Pond the last time I was there, but I didn't realize there is also a kayak launch until I looked on a map while writing this article. (For those who may be skittish, though, further research turned up comments from others warning of lots

of vegetation, eight-legged species under the stone bridge, and possible encounters with duck digestion due to the large number of ducks at the pond.)

A bonus to these parks is the numerous small businesses that line the street of downtown Fenton, as well as the many festivals, events, and concerts that they host. (Highlights include Fenton Art Walk, Pride Fest, and the Fenton Freedom Festival.)

So, in closing, for Mill Pond Park and Rackham Park:

- Pedestrian + family friendliness: 10 out of 10
- Bicycle friendliness: 0 out of 10
- Kayaking: Available – though I haven't tried it here, so I can't rate it.
- Dog walking: Depends on your dog's temperament around large crowds and children.

Happy exploring! ●



Mill Pond and Gazebo at Mill Pond Park in Downtown Fenton in September 2024. (Photo by Christina Collie)



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Village Life

On becoming a ‘daywalker’

By Kate Stockrahm

For the majority of my life, I was a night owl.

I loved the energy and fashion of groups promenading down city sidewalks, the music spilling out of dimly lit bars as patrons briefly opened a front door, the often too-loud conversations of couples and confidants who’d had a bit too much before sauntering home.

Perhaps this was because I worked in the hospitality industry through most of my twenties, and even on the bad nights, something about leaving work under starlight and street lamps to grab a last-call drink with my teammates felt romantic and special and full of possibility.

But now, I’m what many of my friends in that industry would call a “daywalker.”

Daywalker isn’t an insult, but it does have a tinge of othering to it. I can’t claim to know where exactly it originated, but I assume the term comes from the fictional world of vampires where it indicates that someone is not a vampire – that they can walk out into the sunlight.

In hospitality, daywalkers are the people who frequent the bar tops industry folks work behind. They have nine-to-fives, pay rent (or a mortgage) on time, and probably don’t work in a tip-based environment.

Far from disliking daywalkers, I loved them – they made sure us vampires who stirred Old Fashioneds and made jokes over mid-rare steaks for Table 22 had work from four-to-midnight and were also able to pay rent (mostly on time).

But if you ask me if I thought I’d ever be a daywalker: no, no I did not.

I was having so much fun building a career, meeting new and fascinating people every night, learning how to make classic cocktails, and memorizing service rules for fine dining restaurants. My colleagues were all my best friends, and we drank too much and laughed every day. Who wouldn’t want that?

Yet, here I am, a daywalker.

I would like to blame the pandemic for my movement out of the industry – and it’s true that it played a major role in many people finding other

work – but it was not the reason for me.

A few months before COVID-19 hit, I had already given my notice. I’d taken an entrance exam, gotten into J-School, and was working part-time at a travel company until my pending move to New York. After eight or so years in the industry, I’d decided I wanted to attend the parties and weddings I was planning for others, not run them every evening or weekend. I had missed too many friends’ birthdays, a few holidays at home, and countless hours of sleep. The vibrancy and beauty of the night world could no longer keep me from the draw of daylight and its offer of a set schedule, time off, and (gasp!) healthcare benefits.

But to say I don’t miss the night would be a lie.

I still love the glamour of a floor-length gown and a rye-heavy cocktail at 1 a.m. or the fun of sharing your best story with a new group of strangers you met at that one dive.

So my ask to you, dear Flint night owls and daywalkers alike, is that if you see me out at dusk and you’re heading to someplace fabulous, or loud, or lit by neon beer signs and staffed by that great bartender who knows your name – invite this daywalker to come with you. First round is on me. ●

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