

East Village Magazine

September 2026



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Commentary

What to look for on Nov. 3: A Flint general election preview

By Paul Rozycki

As summer fades into fall the midterm elections are on the horizon and this year's may be more significant than most. Though President Donald Trump is not on the ballot, in many ways he remains one of the major issues of this fall election as Democrats hope to take back the majority in the U.S. House and Senate. They will need to gain five seats in the House and four in the Senate. Gaining the majority in the House is a reasonable goal but the Senate may be a larger challenge as 20 Democrats are facing reelection and only 14 Republicans are.

Election Day on Nov. 3 is more than six weeks away, but voters will be receiving absentee ballots soon and early voting will be available well before the election. If this proves to be a normal midterm election, it should be a good year for Democrats. Typically the party in the White House loses seats in the midterms – the party holding the Presidency has lost seats in 18 of 20 midterm elections since 1946, and Trump's record disapproval ratings suggest that trend should continue.

However, there are two reasons for concern among Democrats. While new election districts are normally created every 10 years, after the census, a number of states have done so within the last year. While both parties have tried to gerrymander new election districts recently, most observers indicate that Republicans have gained more than the Democrats.

A split between the “estab-

lishment” or moderate Democrats and the progressive wing of the party also has raised some questions about the electability of some candidates, particularly in the Michigan Senate race. Ironically that split is similar to the divisions within the Republican Party when Trump emerged as the “anti-establishment” candidate 10 years ago, outflanking many traditional Republicans such as George Bush and Mitt Romney.

The key races this fall

As usual this fall election will determine key national and state office holders. But just as important are those local offices that will be chosen by the voters this November.

The State and National races

Governor

After the August primary, current Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson was the Democratic nominee over Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson. Rep. John James, who had Trump's endorsement, was nominated by the Republican voters after a bitter fight with Perry Johnson. Recent polls give Benson a 46-41 lead to replace term-limited Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

U.S. Senate

The Michigan contest that drew the greatest national attention was the race to replace Democratic Senator Gary Peters, who chose not

(Continued on Page 6)

Cover: Construction work at Riverfront Park in downtown Flint. (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

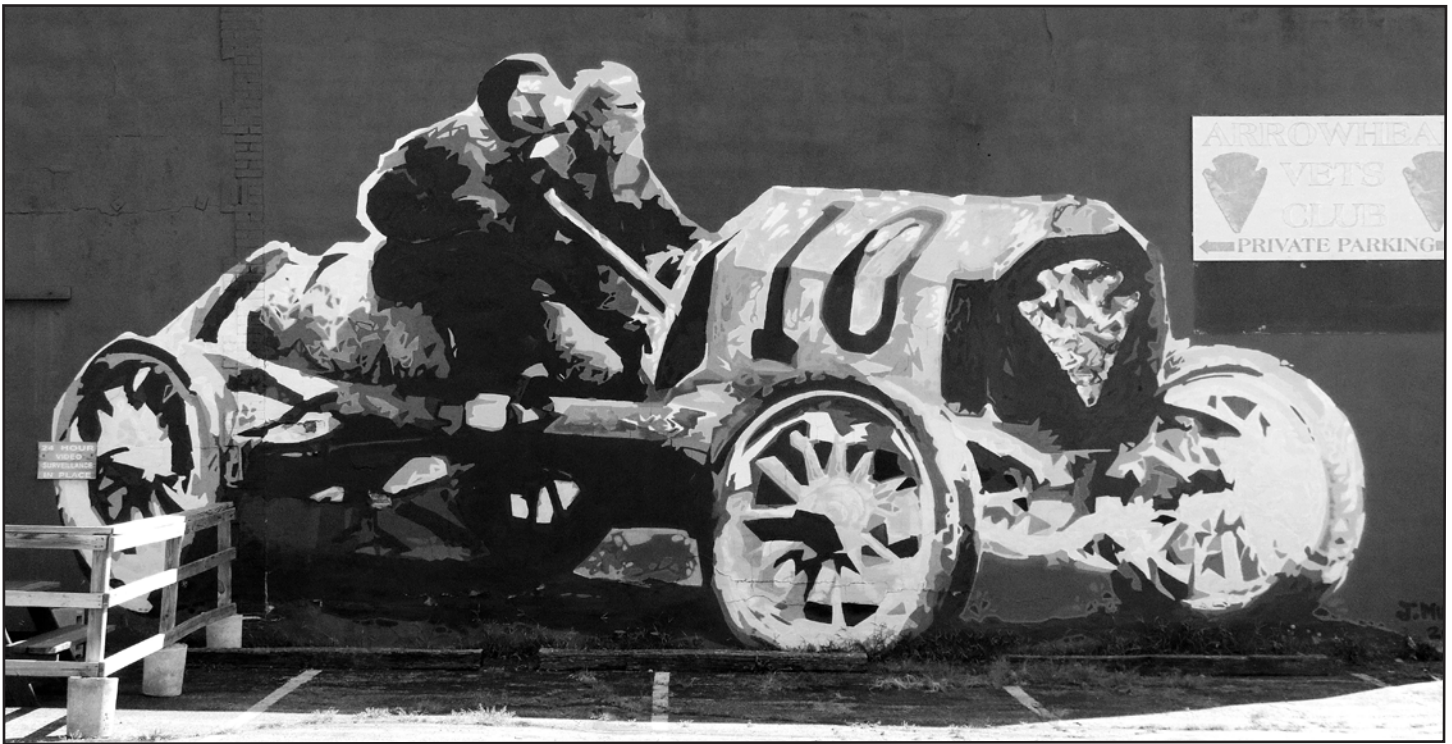


Photo of the Month: A mural by J. Muzacz on Water Street in Flint's Historic Carriage Town Neighborhood.
(Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

Education Beat

Fenton High School tops Genesee County schools in U.S. News rankings

By Harold Ford

Fenton Senior High School topped the list of high school rankings in Genesee County, according to a study published in August 2026 by U.S. News and World Report. The U.S. News rankings include data on more than 27,000 public high schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia.

In response to an inquiry by East Village Magazine (EVM) about the report, Douglas M. Busch, Superintendent of Fenton Area Public Schools, issued a statement.

"We are deeply honored to see Fenton High School recognized on a national level as the top-ranked high school in the Flint Metro Area," Busch wrote. "The ranking reflects Fenton High School's rigorous academic curriculum, robust Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) opportunities, exceptional extracurricular activities, and strong support systems designed to empower

all learners."

Emily Rossmassler, president of the Fenton Board of Education, added, "Earning the #1 spot in the Flint Metro Area is a testament to the culture of excellence, high standards, and community partnership that define Fenton Schools."

EVM contacted more than 20 Genesee County school districts about the U.S. News report; only Fenton provided a substantive response by press deadline.

Rankings methodology

Information found about individual schools at the U.S. News website includes: rank (in a selected geographic sample such as state or county), location, grades served, student enrollment by grade, student demographics, percent of student population economically disadvantaged,

and percent of student population enrolled in free lunch and reduced lunch programs.

Ranking factors include: college readiness index rank, college curriculum breadth index rank, state assessment proficiency rank, state assessment performance rank, and graduation rate rank.

Flint-based EVM used the U.S. News search engine to narrow its search to high schools in Genesee County. U.S. News indicated that 1,259 Michigan high schools were included in its rankings; 27,267 high schools in the U.S. were included in the report.

EVM restricted its search primarily to Michigan's Public High Schools. A few area charter schools made their way onto its list but most did not. Thus, most charter schools, private schools, online schools, and

(Continued on Page 5)

Fenton High...

(Continued from Page 4)

hybrids are not included in the following review. Data about home schooling is scarce in Michigan.

24 Genesee County High Schools

A total of 1,259 Michigan high schools were listed in the U.S. News report, including 24 found in Genesee County. The list below includes the name of the high school, the community in which it is found, name of the district, and national rank out of 11,747 high schools in parentheses.

- 114. Fenton Senior High School; Fenton; Fenton Area Public Schools; (3,000 national ranking)
- 137. Lake Fenton High School; Linden; Lake Fenton Community Schools; (3,687)
- 159. Davison High School; Davison; Davison Community Schools; (4,392)
- 182. Linden High School; Linden; Linden Community Schools; (4,977)
- 225. Grand Blanc Community High School; Grand Blanc; Grand Blanc Community Schools (6,356)
- 236. Kearsley High School; Flint; Kearsley Community School District; (6,639)
- 258. Goodrich High School; Goodrich; Goodrich Area Schools; (7,072)
- 305. Flushing High School; Flushing; Flushing Community Schools; (8,231)
- 316. Clio Community High School; Clio; Clio Area School District; (8,571)
- 327. Hill-McCloy High School; Montrose; Montrose Community Schools; (8,917)
- 349. International Academy of Flint (K-12); Flint; (9,445)
- 400. Swartz Creek High School; Swartz Creek; Swartz Creek Community Schools; (10,813)
- 415. Bentley Senior High School;

Burton, Bentley Community School District; (11,225)

- 447. Genesee High School; Genesee; Genesee School District; (12,108)
- 438. Carman-Ainsworth High School; Flint; Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools; (11,747)
- 492. Atherton Jr./Sr. High School; Burton; Atherton Community Schools; (#13,432)

(The following schools have imprecise rankings, due to factors including a lack of data available in the U.S. News model, are presented in alphabetical order.)

- 494-678. Beecher High School; Mount Morris; Beecher Community School District; (13,460-17,945)
- 494-678. Bendle High School; Burton; Bendle Public School; (13,460-17,945)
- 494-678. Bobcat Innovation; Grand Blanc; Grand Blanc Community Schools; (13,460-17,945)
- 494-678. E.A. Johnson Memorial High School; Mount Morris; Mt. Morris Consolidated Schools; (13,460-17,945)
- 494-678. Hamady Community High School; Flint; Westwood Heights Schools; (13,460-17,945)
- 494-678. Lakeville High School; Otisville; Lakeville Community School District; (13,460-17,945)
- 494-678. Madison Academy High School; Burton; (13,460-17,945)
- 494-678. Southwestern Classical Academy; Flint, Flint School District of the City Of; (13,460-17,945)

Unranked area schools

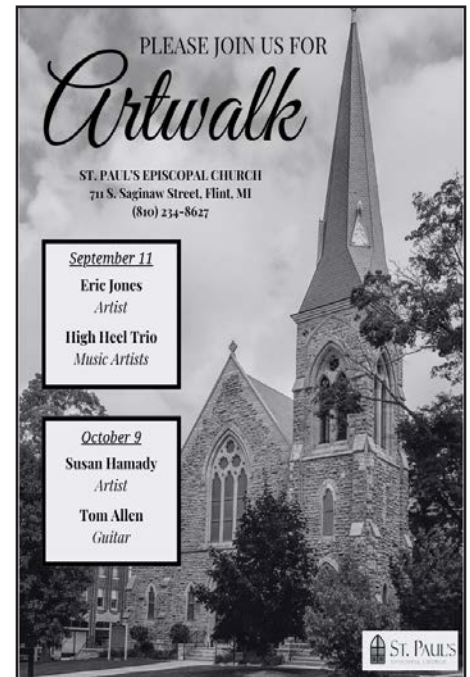
Nearly a dozen area schools, mostly academies, were unranked with little or no data reported.

The unranked schools included: Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center (Genesee Intermediate School District); Flex High Burton; Flint Cultural

Center Academy; Glen Academy; Greater Heights Academy; Michigan School for the Deaf; New Standard Academy; Northridge; Richfield Public School Academy; Way Academy Flint; Woodland Park Academy. ●

* * * * *

Editor's note: Harold C. Ford was a public-school educator for 44 years in four different capacities. He has been writing about education for East Village Magazine for about a decade.





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Commentary ...

(Continued from Page 3)

to run. Mike Rogers was unopposed for the Republican nomination but the Democrats faced a bitter battle between progressive Abdul El-Sayed and moderate Haley Stevens. El-Sayed won narrowly. Some of that division was still visible at the August Democratic convention in Lansing. However, after many voiced doubts about his electability, current polls show the race to be a toss-up, with El-Sayed having a narrow 45-44 lead.

U.S. House 8th district

The Michigan 8th District for the U.S. House includes much of Saginaw, Bay, Genesee and parts of Midland counties. It is currently represented by Democrat Kristen McDonald Rivet, who replaced Dan Kildee when he chose not to run two years ago. In an odd turn of events Republican voters nominated Thomas Smith, who had dropped out of the race a month before the primary, defeating the Trump-endorsed candidate, Amir Hassan. The district is one of the dozen or so that has been carried by Trump but is represented by a Democrat. Current polls give Rivet a 70% chance of winning.

Also at stake this year is majority control of the Michigan House and Michigan Senate. Currently the Senate has a 19-18 Democratic majority and the House has a 58-52 Republican majority.

State House 70th District

In Flint incumbent Democrat Cynthia Neeley is running against Republican Larry Hutchinson.

State Senate 27th District

Incumbent Democrat John Cherry is opposed by Republican Bill Bain.

Ballot Proposals

As is the case every 16 years Michigan voters will have the opportunity to call for a convention to write or revise a new state constitution. In the past, the proposal has been turned down by a wide margin.

Locally, Mott Community College will have a millage renewal proposal on the ballot.

The City of Flint will have a police and fire protection renewal, a city-wide parks, forestry and recreation renewal, and public transportation renewal on the ballot.

While those races have garnered much of the media attention, several local contests may be just as significant for Flint and Genesee County.

Flint Mayor's race

Incumbent Mayor Sheldon Neeley faced three challengers in the August primary, sixth ward Councilperson Tonya Burns, Micaiah Owens, Linda Anthony, and Roshonda Womack. Neeley finished first and will face Burns in November. However, with Neeley getting only 42% of the vote the key question is who the other 58% of the voters choose.

The Flint City Council

Council members are elected to 4-year terms in the same year as the governor and the mayor.

First Ward

Community activist Arthur Woodson and Debra Coleman were top finishers in the primary and will face each other to represent the First Ward. Leon El-Alamin currently represents the ward but is running in the third ward after recent changes in ward boundaries.

Second Ward

Incumbent councilperson for the second ward LaShawn Johnson

will face Ladel Lewis. Johnson is the incumbent councilperson for the third ward but is running in the second ward after ward boundary changes.

Third Ward

Leon El-Alamin will face Paradise Williams to represent the ward. Berverly Biggs is planning a write-in campaign as well.

Fourth Ward

Ramie Yelle is on the ballot unopposed but incumbent Judy Priestley, Tracy Frazier, and Joyce Vincent are planning write-in campaigns.

Fifth Ward

Incumbent council member Jerry Winfrey-Carter chose not to run again and voters will choose between Joel Arnold and DeWaun Robinson.

Sixth Ward

Dakota Starr is unopposed on the ballot, but Gregory Ahejew is planning a write-in campaign.

Seventh Ward

Incumbent Candice Mushatt is facing Darell Brown to represent the ward.

Eighth Ward

Incumbent Dennis Pfeiffer chose not to run for reelection, and voters will choose between Ezekiel Harris and Carry Lester in this ward.

Ninth Ward

Michael Harris is unopposed for the position. Jonathan Jarrett is the incumbent, but was disqualified from the primary ballot.

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Commentary ...

(Continued from Page 6)

Mott Community College Board of Trustees

After several years of controversy and conflict over the selection of the new college president, there are eight individuals running for two positions on the Mott Community College Board of Trustees. The terms are for six years. Incumbent John Daly chose not to run.

The candidates are: Steven L Bentley, former Board Chair Andy Everman, Quentin Groce, incumbent Santino Guerra, Lynn S. Hukee, Dawn Muma, Elizabeth Warren, and Andrew Watchorn.

Flint Board of Education

Eight individuals are running for three 6-year terms on the Flint School Board as the district plans to open a new high school soon and continues to face enrollment challenges.

Kasey Calvert, Joyce Ellis-McNeal, Leonard J. Fox, Terae King Jr., Laura Gillespie MacIntyre, Dominique D. McGlown, Meshelle Merritt, and Annalissia Padilla are the candidates. Ellis-McNeal, King Jr., and MacIntyre are incumbents.

Beyond this list most local cities, school districts, state universities, courts, and townships are also electing officials and placing proposals on the ballot.

One of the advantages of absentee and early voting is that you can take the time to learn more about the candidates and the ballot proposals. For more information, look to East Village Magazine and Flint. Daily as we collaborate to present candidate information in the coming weeks. Take that time to learn about the candidates, the proposals, and vote this November. This may be one of the most important midterm elections in years. ●



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THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

Below is a selection of events available to our readers, beginning after our September publication date. To submit events for our October issue, email information about your event to eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com by September 30.

Bikes on the Bricks

Friday thru Sunday, September 11 - 13
Visit bikesonthebricks.com for the full schedule of this year's event, which includes live musical performances, VCR Stunt Team show, a pin-up contest, and, of course, a motorcycle show with prizes. Street closure begins at 6 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12. Downtown Flint
Saginaw Street & Second Street, Flint

Levitt AMP Flint Music Series: Cabildo

Tuesday, September 15 | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Based in Grand Rapids, Cabildo brings an energetic blend of Latin, folk, cumbia, and ska to the stage. Their vibrant rhythms and dynamic sound create a fun, danceable atmosphere that invites the whole community to get up and move. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets to this free event and enjoy an evening of live music in a relaxed, community atmosphere.
Totem Books
620 W. Court St., Flint

Children's Day at the Farm: Fall Harvest Festival

Saturday, September 19 | 1 - 4 pm
Edible Flint and MSU Extension are excited to offer "Children's Days at the Farm" at the Edible Flint Educational Farm. Families are encouraged to bring your own snacks to enjoy a picnic at the farm. Activities include craft tables, scavenger hunts, planting and harvesting, free play and learning how veggies grow. Portable restrooms are available. Registration is required for this free event: <https://tinyurl.com/3jt-2p8m3>. This program is generously supported by Genesee Health System.
Edible Flint Educational Farm
1628 Beach St., Flint

Flint Pride Festival: Take Two

Saturday, September 19 | 2 - 8 pm
Join us for the 16th annual Flint Pride Festival in downtown Flint! Expect a day filled with music, performances, vendors, food, and community as we come together to celebrate our resilience. The temporary move to the downtown Flat Lot ensures we keep the spirit of Flint Pride alive and thriving. Same Pride, new home—see you there!
Downtown Flint Flat Lot
428 S. Saginaw St., Flint

Carriage Town Porchfest

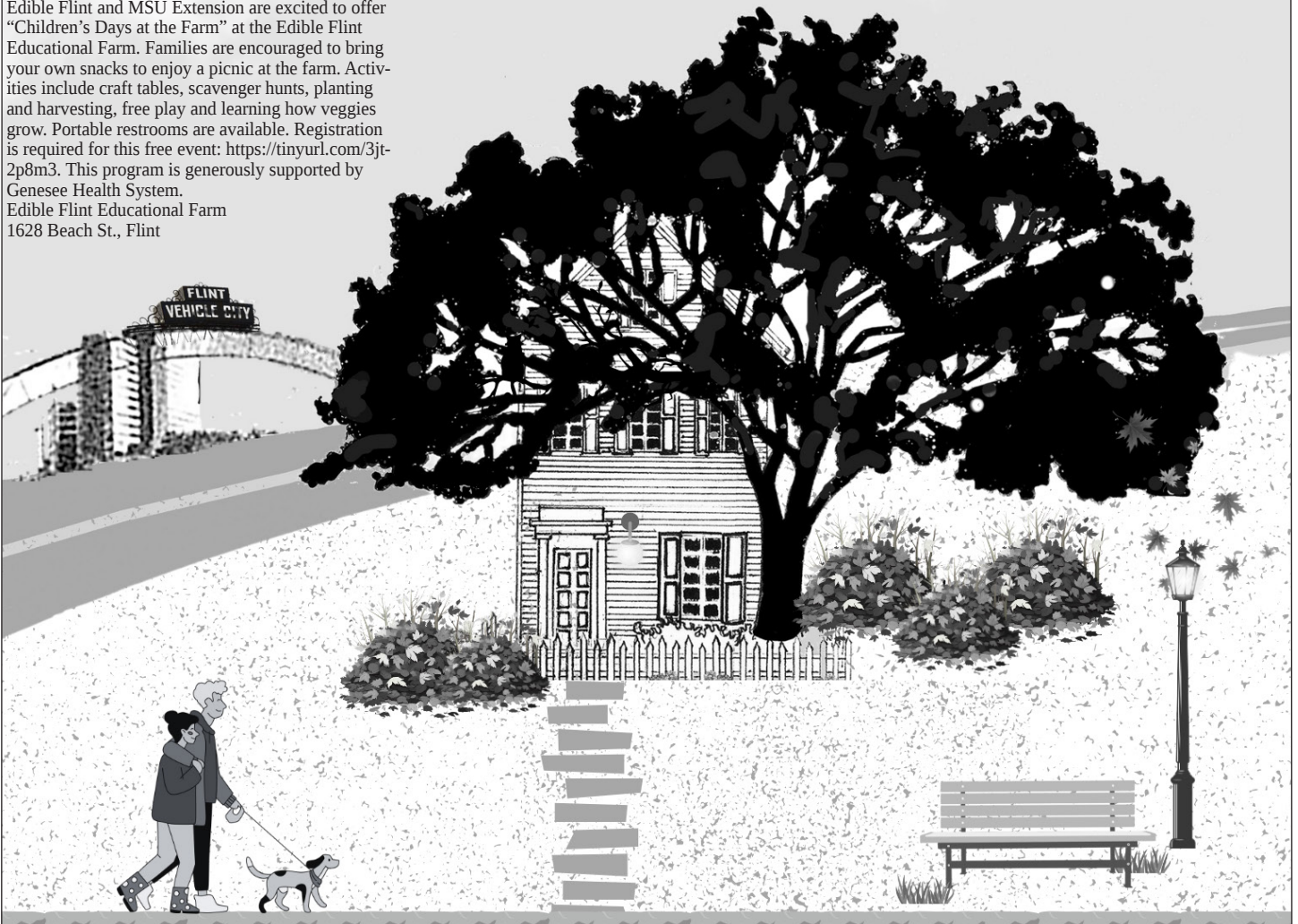
Saturday, September 19 | 5 - 10 pm
Get ready for an unforgettable evening at the seventh annual Carriage Town Porchfest! While we were bummed to have to reschedule this beloved summer event, there's still time left this season to come out and dive into a vibrant celebration of local music, food, and art! This free, community event transforms the historic Carriage Town neighborhood into a lively festival, offering something special for everyone.
Carriage Town Historic Neighborhood
Mason Street & First Street, Flint

Flint Handmade Halloween Craft Market

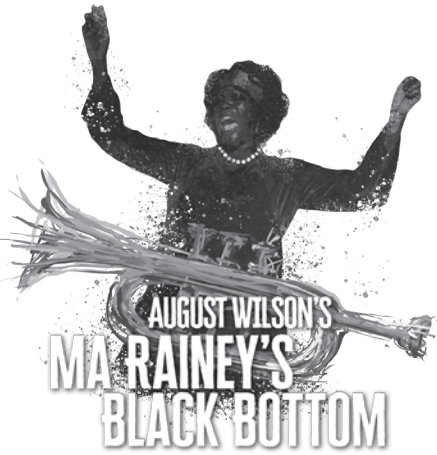
Saturday, September 26 | 10 am - 4 pm
Flint Handmade is pleased to present our Halloween Craft Market and admission is FREE! Featuring 20+ local artisans with unique, modern handmade goods such as vintage-inspired jewelry, hand-poured candles, natural bath and body products, knit and crocheted items, home décor and much more. Many items will have spooky or fall harvest themes! Live music by Erik McIntyre and Walter Prettyman.
Flint Farmers' Market
300 E. First St., Flint

Afternoon Tea with Tips & Treats

Saturday, September 26 | 3 pm - 5 pm
Enjoy Afternoon Tea and treats while learning how to host your own! We will share recipes, themes, and decorating ideas while you enjoy scones, finger sandwiches and other treats. Registration required at <https://www.fpl.info/event/afternoon-tea-tips-treats-28200>.
Gloria Coles Flint Public Library
1026 E. Kearsley St., Flint



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Kidd LaRue



Leafy Green



Marz



Monica Devereaux



Perry Dox



Sage

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7pm at the Capitol Theatre
Doors open at 6pm.



Registration required.
\$10 suggested donation to KidsTix.

thefim.org/dragshowev

FIM Capitol Theatre



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FILM SCREENING & VAMPIRE BALL
Saturday, October 24



The historic Capitol Theatre transforms into a candlelit gathering of the dead, complete with music, dancing, speciality cocktails and more! Vampire attire encouraged!
thefim.org/draculaev

FIM Capitol Theatre



Local News

Mott faculty gather in solidarity on first day of class

By Patrick Hayes

A group of Mott Community College faculty members gathered for a “solidarity assembly” on the first day of classes August 31. The gathering was to call attention to what faculty union leadership says is a disconnect on compensation in negotiations between the union and college administration.

“We’re looking for an increase in wages that matches inflation,” said Brian Littleton, PhD, president of the Mott Community College Education Association (MCCEA). “The last few raises have been below the inflation rate, so it’s kind of going backwards in that regard.”

Littleton said the union is also looking for increases in longevity pay, which is additional compensation for employees who show long-term years of service to an organization. Although the union is negotiating on behalf of full- and part-time faculty, Littleton noted that raises that don’t match inflation rates particularly hurt part-time faculty, who often have added costs. Part-time faculty are paid only for the courses they teach. They also regularly teach at Mott’s other satellite campuses or high schools, in addition to often teaching at other colleges in order to piece together a full-time wage.

“A lot of our part-time faculty, they may teach between multiple campuses, between Mott and actually other colleges themselves,” Littleton said. “They’re driving all over. A lot of our part-time faculty are the ones that teach in the high schools. And so it’s a lot of wear and tear on the car with the mileage, the gas prices are high. And also their wages are not high. They don’t have the same ben-

efits and protection. And so it’s really been difficult for them. There’s a lot of part-time faculty also engaged in what I would call uncompensated labor.”

Littleton cited examples of “uncompensated labor” including things like music department faculty members being asked to perform at various college events. He also said nursing faculty frequently participate in non-classroom events that aren’t part of their compensation.

“We’ve been negotiating for the last few months,” Littleton said. “We did go to mediation, which was unsuccessful. Our raises typically kick in at

affairs experience specifically related to teaching and curriculum. Richardson-Snell’s hiring last year was controversial because she had no background in education when Mott’s Board of Trustees voted 4-3 to hire her.

“There’s no one around her (Richardson-Snell) that actually comes from the academic side in her executive cabinet,” Littleton said. “It’s always been a concern of ours. We need more than just praise when you come to a meeting. We deserve fair wages.”

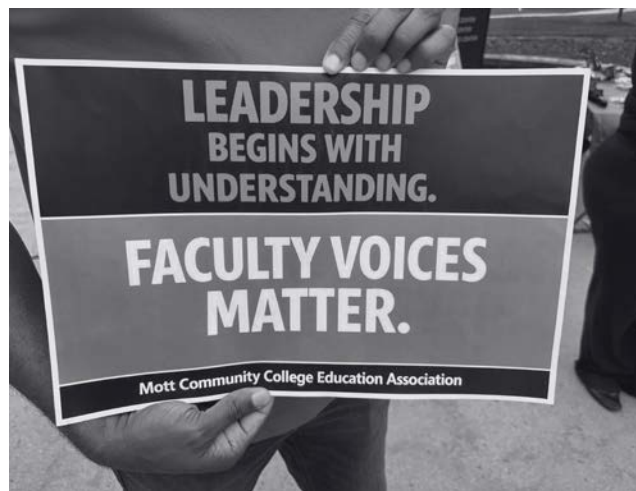
The gathering of faculty was meant to show solidarity with one another and raise awareness of the tense negotiations but not be disruptive to teaching and learning in the classroom. The assembly took place outside and no classes were canceled or disrupted as a result of faculty participating.

“We wanted to show that we’re in for this fight for the college, for the students, and the community,” Littleton said. “There’s some serious issues going on with administration and overall leadership. Mott has previously been listed as one of the top community colleges

in the country. Most of these same faculty were here when we had those designations. We’ve seen that slowly erode and go away, and we want to return back to that spot. The only difference between then and now is leadership. We’re here for the students. We’re still gonna be the same dedicated faculty. We just wanna show collectively that we’re all together.” ●

* * * * *

Originally published by Flint. Daily.



A sign held by an attendee of the “solidarity assembly” at Mott Community College on August 31, 2026.
(Photo by Patrick Hayes)

the beginning of August, and so now we’re operating without any raise at a time when we would’ve typically had a raise by now.

In a statement released to NBC 25, college administration said, “MCC has been bargaining in good faith to reach an agreement with its faculty that is fair to all parties and is committed to continuing to do so.”

Littleton pointed to disconnects between faculty and the college’s leadership. In particular, he said that MCC President Shaunda Richardson-Snell’s executive cabinet lacks academic

Arts & Culture

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian to speak in Flint

By EVM Staff

Pulitzer Prize-winning author and presidential historian Jon Meacham will deliver a keynote address in Flint as part of a local celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary.

Meacham will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, at the Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St. His presentation, "America 250: Then, Now & Next," will explore American history and its connections to current events and issues facing the country. Seating begins at 6:30 p.m.

The event is presented by the Ballenger Eminent Persons Lecture Series at Mott Community College in partnership with the Griffin Endowed Chair at Central Michigan University.

Meacham is the author of several New York Times bestsellers, including *And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle* and *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush*. He served as managing editor of *Newsweek* from 1998 to 2006 and editor from 2006 to 2010. He is a distinguished visiting professor at Vanderbilt University, where he holds the Rogers Chair in the

American Presidency. Meacham was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2024 and is a frequent commentator on national news programs.

Admission to the event is free, and a ticket is not required. Attendees are encouraged to register in advance to help organizers plan for seating, but seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at the door.

The Ballenger Lecture Series was established to expand educational opportunities for Mott Community College students while providing a forum for discussion of issues affecting the Flint community. The Ballenger Trust has funded the lecture series since 1955, with additional support from the Ruth Mott Foundation and other community partners.

Registration is available through the event's online registration form: <https://bit.ly/4w5f8iz> •



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Village Life

Let's build more local news in Flint

By Patrick Hayes

I am unfortunately an aging millennial, so as I sat down to think about funny ways to introduce myself, a publisher of another local news outlet (Flint. Daily.), to East Village Magazine (EVM) readers as the publication's new editor, I flashed back to my sophomore year of college when then-WWE wrestling chairman and evil (both on screen and, it turns out, in real life) billionaire Vince McMahon showed up on WCW Monday Nitro to tell that audience that he had, in fact, taken over his competition.

I would like to assure everyone that my intentions here are in no way as nefarious as Mr. McMahon's were.

First and foremost, I am honored to have the opportunity to steward an exceptional and beloved independent news publication that has survived for 50 years on the strength of passionate volunteers who have, often miraculously, kept it going. I am also honored to take the hand-off from Kate Stockrahm, a friend and talented journalist who will hopefully stay connected to the EVM family.

I am particularly interested in being a part of EVM at a unique time for journalism in Flint. Just last week, the parent company of the Flint Journal announced it would cease publication of the newspaper's print product and become a digital-only publication by the end of the year. That makes EVM's 50-year run of publishing a monthly print magazine not only impressive, but suddenly vital.

Print products are expensive, and increasingly, there isn't the volume of advertising dollars available to support thriving daily or even weekly

print publications in most small and even mid markets. But the dilemma is, according to recent statistics shared in a Detroit Free Press article, about 63 percent of people trust news from print sources more over news they read online.

Accessibility is also an issue. For MLive and the Flint Journal, for example, a print edition of the newspaper is still more affordable than paying a subscription cost for news behind their paywall. The number of people who prefer to read news in print over online might be a shrinking number, but it is still a significant one, and it is an exciting opportunity to work for a publication that still has a print magazine as part of its platforms for providing vital information to readers in our community.



Patrick Hayes, editor of East Village Magazine.
(Photo by Jenifer Veloso)

As for a little about me: I'm a proud Flint resident, raising my family here. My partner and three kids live on Kensington (we have the Pistons court if you ever walk through College Cultural). I work for Michigan State doing public health communications in my full-time job, and I devote (probably too much) of my spare time to a

borderline obsession with figuring out a financially viable way to make local news consistent and sustainable. Combining my two professional worlds for a second, I firmly believe that the lack of access to credible, thorough local news in our communities is a public health crisis that is connected to many current serious issues: rampant government corruption and secret deals; the spread of misinformation; targeting of vulnerable groups of people; lack of community pride; feelings of hopelessness; the proliferation of idiotic rage baiting influencers on social media that pretend to be doing journalism ... you name the issue, and I am betting I can connect it back to disappearing local newsrooms.

So I'm here today writing this not because I have the answers ... yet.

But I am grateful for this opportunity with EVM because I believe it connects more resources to start finding some. The partnership between EVM and Flint. Daily., which started with a primary election series we did in August, will grow and evolve. We will hopefully find ways to pay more writers and get exposure for their work in both publications when it makes sense while also keeping both distinctive. We will be able to pursue more creative funding and advertising opportunities. Mostly,

I think we'll be able to do more local news at an opportune time – as Paul Rozycki points out on these very pages, we have a consequential election that could dramatically reshape our local government in just a few weeks. I'm excited to get to work. ●