

East Village

Magazine



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Essay *Can left, right find common ground? (or) Should Rand Paul trump Trump?*

By Paul Rozycki

Now that Flint's mayoral primary is over, we'll have to wait until November to see who emerges as our new mayor.

But as our mayoral race takes a short respite, national politics won't give us much of a breather. Though the presidential election is a year and a half away, the campaigns are building up a head of steam and show no signs of letting up. At the moment there are at least 17 Republicans and 5 Democrats in the race—with more likely. Several presidential campaigns have already made appearances in the Genesee County area.

The current contest presents a dilemma. The good columnist genie in me says that I should ignore Donald Trump and his latest goofy statements — they are simply designed to attract attention and boost his overblown ego. But the evil columnist genie says Trump's bloviating is too big of a story to ignore — and besides, it's as much fun as a circus side show.

As is often the case, the evil genie wins — at least for a paragraph or two.

I've often wondered. Does wearing a dead squirrel on your head make you say nutty things? Or if you are a little bit nutty are you more likely to wear a dead squirrel on your head? I don't know. I suppose that question is best left up to psychologists. In any case, Trump's wacky statements have garnered him a lead in the polls, a podium at the debates, and more attention than he deserves.

If he has served any purpose at all, it's to allow other Republican candidates to appear more normal when they denounce him. Some did so fairly quickly ... others took their time. Democrats, in turn, can sit back and watch the Republican food fight and hope that Trump continues to dominate the news cycle.

If past history is any guide, Trump will probably fade with the dog days of summer, and we'll move on to the next "candidate of the month." (Though Trump's money could keep him in the game longer than expected.) He plans to campaign in the area this month. But for all the attention he's garnering, Trump's not the only candidate to visit the area and probably not the most significant.

Rand Paul surprise

Perhaps the most surprising and interesting visit was Rand Paul's appearance at the Flint Farmers' Market in July. Not only did the hardcore Republican/Libertarian make a stop in strongly Democratic Flint, but his speech was not the usual Republican boiler-

plate about lower taxes and smaller government (though that was not ignored for the party faithful). What was most curious about Paul's speech was finding some agreement between the right and the left on at least some issues.

More than a few of his ideas could find a following in Democratic Genesee County. For example, his appeal to reform the criminal justice system by removing drug crimes and other 'victimless' crimes from the law books, could find support among both liberal Democrats and Libertarian/Republican voters. The U.S. incarcerates a larger proportion of our population than any other nation on earth, at a huge cost. Democrats object on human rights and racial bias grounds. Some Republicans see the prison system as a costly form of big government that could be reduced.

Unlike some Republicans, Paul didn't assume that the Second Amendment was the only part of the Bill of Rights that matters.

His denunciation of the NSA spying and his support of the 4th and 5th Amendments would probably find backing among many Democrats as well as some Republicans.

Good left/right arguments

Similarly, Rand Paul's arguments against the overuse of 'civil forfeiture laws' should find a welcoming ear in both liberal Democratic and Libertarian/Republican camps. These laws allow police to seize property that might have been used in a criminal activity. The problem is that the level of proof for such seizures is much lower than the level of proof needed to find someone guilty of a crime. There are many instances of local police departments using these laws to seize cars, houses, boats and other property, even when there are no criminal charges filed against a defendant. For some departments it has become a major source of revenue. In an example of politics making strange bedfellows, both the liberal ACLU and the conservative Mackinac Center have joined together in opposing the practice in Michigan.

Corporate welfare

Republicans have long beat the drum against "the welfare state" — denouncing individuals who receive government benefits — and they are all too willing to conjure up lurid stories of "welfare queens" who buy steak and lobster on food stamps. They have rarely said much about corporate welfare, where businesses receive government benefits in the form of tax breaks, subsidies,



Photograph by Edwin D. Custer

FIA Art School director a new arrival and native son

By Andrew Keast

While courses at the Flint Institute of Arts may provide practicing artists with advanced instruction and support, they also enable outsiders to enter the realm – as Donovan Entrekin did years ago as an unfocused student in his early twenties.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do,” Entrekin, now 39, recalls. With no sense of direction and little interest in art, he began a program at Mott Community College, “just going for an associate’s degree in whatever,” and it was without any definite intentions that he came to the FIA and took a class, “just out of curiosity.”

That class awoke a passion in Entrekin, who eventually went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) degree at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and to pursue a relevant career. His undergraduate degree was in painting and print-making, his graduate degree in painting and sculpture. After years of working as a professional artist, educator and administrator, he has now returned to Flint and FIA’s Art School as its director.

Entrekin came back to Flint after seven years at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, where he was most recently assistant director of admissions and financial aid.

Knowing from experience how the

introduction of art may change a person’s life, Entrekin hopes to encourage others to try a course here – in photography or ceramics, for example, or sculpture, watercolor or graffiti.

“A place like this provides opportunities for people who maybe didn’t know what they wanted to do,” he says. “Sometimes it’s just recreation; sometimes it inspires a path.” Entrekin says he sees tremendous benefits either way.

And just as the new director understands his position as more than a mere job, so does the city itself mean much to Entrekin, who was born and raised in Flint. He says he perceives a lot of creative energy in the city, an atmosphere grown more vibrant since his departure.

“It was a bit of a surprise to me,” he says, “because I hadn’t been in Flint in ages.” Especially moving was “how involved people were – how much they cared,” and “that was part of what brought me back here.”

“When I left here in the late nineties,” he explains, “there wasn’t a lot going on. There wasn’t enough to keep a person here. I felt the need at that time to go someplace else, to learn and to start my life.”

Entrekin remembers how, 20 years ago,

“people were looking for a way out – to just get out of here,” and believes that something of a reversal has occurred. “People are finding wonderful reasons to stay, to become involved and to become invested in the place and in the community,” he says. And he has come to join them.

“When my wife and I decided that I was going to take this job in the city, it was important to us that we also live here,” Entrekin says. To live and participate as part of the community they decided against moving to one of the suburbs and bought a house in the College Cultural neighborhood. They wanted to contribute as Flint residents to the progress being made in the city.

In his professional work, too, Entrekin hopes to serve the city in a communal way, even while reaching out to individuals. Impressed by the Flint Public Art Project but afraid that some might regard such endeavors as exclusive or alien, he wonders if the Art School might establish “different entry points” to community-based art which he regards as tied in valuable ways to living in Flint.

Staff writer Andrew Keast can be reached at akeast@umflint.edu.

Nearly forgotten, abused Thread Lake getting new love

By Ashley O'Brien

It had almost been forgotten, abused and dumped on for years, but now Flint's 82-acre Thread Lake, between Interstate-475 and the Flint Golf Club, is beginning to get some love.

Those behind the efforts to reclaim the lake, which is a dammed portion of Thread Creek near its connection to the Flint River, hope someday soon to see people regularly kayaking, hiking and exploring its many nooks and crannies again.

The second annual "Love Your Lakes" celebration, held in July, was evidence of ongoing plans to clean up the lake and reintroduce it to the local community, said Rebecca Fedewa, executive director of the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC).

In the last century, according to David White, president of the Genesee County Historical Society, Thread Lake had an amusement park called Lakeside Park with a carousel and roller coaster. There was a dance hall and a pavilion. Visitors could rent kayaks and canoes and sail the lake.

The carousel survived. It was at AutoWorld until it closed and now is owned by the Michigan State University Museum. White said there was a trolley line down Saginaw Street that delivered people right to the park on summer nights. Later there was a swimming pool, remnants of which remain. But the park closed and the area fell victim to neglect and dumping.

Fedewa explained the FRWC partnered with Michigan State University's Planning and Zoning Center to develop a strategy for re-engaging the public with the lake.

"We worked for two years meeting with area residents to identify what their priorities are for this area for recreational opportunities, and we have a really fabulous plan. We want to build that sense of community here."

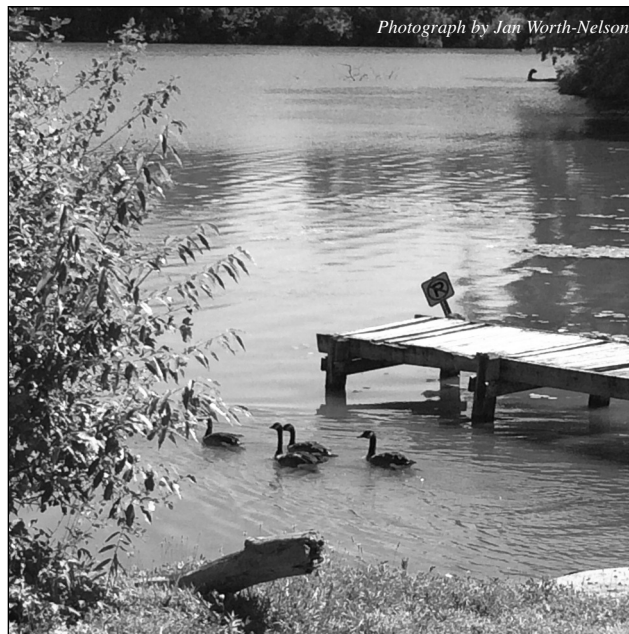
Fedewa pointed out the lake is reachable at McKinley Park off Collingwood Road, with parking available at the Vista Center. There also are docks — not in great shape — on the north side of the lake accessible via Winans and Maybury streets off Lippincott Boulevard.

The 75 people who attended the "Love Your Lakes" event had the opportunity to kayak, walk trails and bird watch.

Sondra Severn, project coordinator for the FRWC, said the organization brings the kayaks out at least a few times between spring and fall for residents to rent. She said they would do it more often if they had more community interest.

Amy McMillan, director of Genesee County Parks, and FRWC board chair, said the parks division had just completed the first year of a two-year agreement with the City of Flint. "We have a partnership agreement with the city, and under that agreement, Genesee County takes care of four parks," including the two surrounding Thread Lake, McKinley Park and Thread Lake Park.

Flint Mayor Dayne Walling said the purpose of the partnership between the city and country parks was to "bring in the county parks maintenance and security, into four of the larger parks, in the hope that they would be improved for the local families but also be assets for the larger region."



Thread Lake at McKinley Park

Thread Lake advocates hope this agreement will increasingly help restore it. And other groups are getting into the act as well. Mike Herriman, education coordinator for Business Promoters of Genesee County, got involved with the lake during the Leadership Genesee program four years ago. Then the Business Promoters group joined him and has volunteered every year since. Herriman also involved his grandkids, J.C., 18, Skyelar, 13, and Evan, 10.

For years, like many other Flint residents, Herriman didn't even know the lake was there. "When we started I had never heard of Thread Lake. I didn't even know where it was," he said.

Fedewa said that makes Thread Lake an anomaly. "It's a lake in the middle of the city that has had very little use," she said. "It's beautiful. It's got neighborhoods on all sides. Unfortunately, it's been a little lost."

Skyelar Herriman described some of the things they pulled from the lake: a payphone, part of a car, a lot of tires, bottles, mattresses and glass.

Mike Herriman said they removed glass from the lake "one piece at a time. Some of it was whole and some of it was broken." They wore gloves to protect themselves.

The cleanup changed Skyelar's view of the lake. "Seeing what came out of the lake, all the glass and everything, it's kind of icky. I'd never really thought about swimming in the lake."

While walking along a trail that leads to Thread Lake, Herriman and his grandkids commented on how different the park looked in summertime with all the vegetation.

Skyelar Herriman laughed, saying, "It's like, wait, did they plant something here, it looks so different. It's really pretty out here in the summer."

Mike Herriman added, "The first few years, you couldn't see the ground because it was all roofing shingles." He said there were piles of shingles six feet high that had been dumped by construction companies.

Skyelar said, "The first year, we didn't even know there was a pavilion back there and it looked like people had just dumped their house. There was just a huge pile of garbage, and now you go back there and it's super clean."

Herriman and the business promoters hold their cleanup each spring — it's easier when there isn't vegetation yet to spot garbage. It's also cooler, he said, so volunteers can wear long pants and long sleeves.

During this past spring's cleanup, Herriman made arrangements with the county to have a 20-yard dump truck brought out. "We could move the truck around as needed," he said. Still, getting the trash out of the park was the biggest challenge.

"If we don't get rid of it, if we don't haul it off, it gets mixed back in. That's been one of the stumbling blocks," Herriman said. Gates have been installed at multiple entrances to prevent dumping, he said. One gate was installed a few years ago at a spot where people had been dumping animal carcasses. A second gate was installed in 2014 to block where construction companies had been dumping.

Protecting the lake is a community effort, according to Herriman, who said the Citizen's Radio Patrol regularly monitors the area. "When they see someone coming in and it looks like they're bringing trash,

(Continued on Page 8.)

Community Profile

Traci Currie: making a space for brilliance

By Jan Worth-Nelson

In the winter of 2013, poet, artist, writer and teacher Traci Currie hit a low point she could not ignore.

Her condo went into foreclosure. She applied for a graduate program she thought was a shoo-in and was rejected. And one day she cussed at a texting student in the middle of a class and felt that she had to publicly apologize.

She had been in Flint for 10 years, having arrived with a Ph.D. in media studies for a job at UM-Flint, and was worn out, demoralized and full of doubts.

So she paid attention. She sold everything she owned, including her car. Then she flew to Italy and took a year to clear her head.

Currie, 40, has the luck of a sister who runs a resort in Tuscany called Il Gavillaccio. There she helped out with the resort, taught English as a second language to kids 9 to 12, tutored the guests, wrote reviews for a magazine called *Audiophile*, and found herself performing her work at festivals where she was astonishingly and warmly received.

She breathed and rested, reevaluated and reassessed her life.

And then she came back, somewhat to her own surprise. As she returned, she found herself newly grounded, balanced and committed more than ever to her writing, to her art, to her teaching.

And to her adopted city, where she has just been named a “collegiate lecturer”—an honored title conferred to only one lecturer a year at the University of Michigan-Flint. She teaches spoken word, public speaking, and film studies in the Department of Communication and Visual Arts.

She is active as a performing artist, introduced Angela Davis at her winter 2015 UM-Flint appearance, and has offered her fabric art through the Flint Handmade collective.

She runs writing workshops for girls at the Genesee Valley Regional Center, a residential detention locale for juveniles 10 through 17 who have been court ordered to stay pending court action or placement in a secure environment.

And she was the editor-in-chief of a recent collection of regional writing called *Messages from the Mitten: Michigan Anthology of Short Stories and Poems by Michigan Writers*, from the Flint River Press.

“So now, I am Flint,” she asserts, perched in a flowered chair in her brick 1930s College Cultural neighborhood

duplex apartment. It’s a fairly new place for her — and she says it feels good after stints in Fenton, Grand Blanc and Burton. Each move she’s made since she got back has brought her closer to the heart of the city.

A guitar rests in the corner. A hundred or so old-style vinyl records are stacked in a bookcase, and on her piano, the sheet music is “I can’t make you love me.” Fresh flowers take the sun on a circular tiled table, and in her packed shelves are an eclectic mix of books on Langston Hughes, Africa, Shakespeare, the history of women, Latinos, Jamaica, and even



Photograph by Jan Worth-Nelson

Traci Currie

vegetarianism and pasta.

“Almost all of this furniture is new — at least new to me,” she says, waving a hand around her breezy living room. “Except that piano — I’ve had it since I was about 10. But whatever is in here, I wanted this place to look like me.”

Currie has settled a few things now — one key being, she says, a powerful affirmation of herself as a writer. And that in her life, she needs to be an artist — of words, fabrics, film — first, because that informs her teaching. Her insights on these points, after her year in Italy and transformative workshops at New York University and Kenyon College, have propelled her back into her personal and professional life with focused energy and devotion.

She is moving forward with several projects, working on a sequence of short stories, and launching a website this month, tracicurrie.com. She says the web-

site is a way of claiming her artistry and identifying as a writer, visual artist and spoken word artist. Her creative work centers on identity, owning one’s voice and personal story, and addressing “isms.”

Currie says she has had the support of a treasured and sustaining cadre—her “tribes” in Flint and beyond. They include her “Goddess Squad” of close women friends and the “Starbucks Saints” who meet for their own spiritual and caffeinated rituals every Sunday.

She and those friends endlessly pursue their curiosities, discussing everything from art and music to the demands of a creative life to Zen Buddhism and eastern philosophy.

As she comes back into a demanding full-time schedule of teaching, she finds herself rethinking premises of higher education, especially at the college level, especially for teachers. Her ideas are stirring and subversive.

“If we’re not careful, we can be destroyed by the system that hired us,” she says. “One of my mentors said to me just before he died, ‘Traci, you’ve got to figure out how you’re going to make the university work for you as an artist, and not how your art will work for the university.’” It’s all a matter of balance, Currie asserts. If the art doesn’t thrive, neither does the teaching.

“When I got back, I was all in — I gave all of me. I learned that I can do the work of teaching best when I incorporate myself unapologetically into it. I have begun to think about what brilliance is — we spend so much time in academia quoting this person and that person, these scholars” she says — heroes and heroines we all admire and to whom we pay homage.

But as a vigorously practicing artist, Currie believes valorizing only others’ expertise misses something essential and drains the work and the teaching of crucial, direct, personal energy.

“At what point do we carve out a space so that we can be brilliant? I’m not supposed to be them — those other scholars — I’m supposed to be brilliant Traci Currie and do what I do best.” She delivers the same call to her students and colleagues, making brilliance seem welcome, even natural, in Flint.

Jan Worth-Nelson is editor of East Village Magazine. She can be reached at jan-worth1118@gmail.com.

As curbside recycling efforts grow, vigilance needed

By Nic Custer

Participation in the city of Flint's curbside recycling program has exceeded expectations after its first two years, with about 3,500 households, or 10 percent of those receiving trash collection services, participating. Officials are working to continue its growth.

In an interview, newly hired Waste Services Coordinator Heather Griffen attributed the program's success to the ease of participation with single-stream recycling. This process means that all recycling materials are put into the same bin and not separated until they reach the ReCommunity Huron materials recycling facility in New Boston.

A few bumps remain. Although the recycling process keeps large amounts of materials from ending up in the landfill, not everything put in a container ends up being recycled. Sometimes materials will be contaminated with others to the point where they cannot be separated and need to be thrown away, such as broken glass being mixed in with other small pieces of plastic.

Plastic bags the worst

But more often than not, program coordinators report, the issue is that non-acceptable materials are being thrown in the recycle bin. Some households still are learning what is and is not recyclable. Certain items are expected not to be recyclable such as paint, food waste, electronics and clothing. But there are other items which might not be so obvious including plastic CD cases, mirrors and window panes, shredded paper, flattened cans, styrofoam and frozen food containers. According to ReCommunity Huron's website, plastic bags are the worst containment that could be put in a container. They are not recyclable. Gary Hicks, Municipal Services Manager at Republic Services explained that when plastic bags are encountered the processing lines have to be shut down and workers have to manually remove the bags.

Transportation Director Kay Muhammad said participation rates are highest in the area north of Interstate 69 and east of Interstate 475, which has trash collected on Thursdays.

Former Emergency Financial Manager Ed Kurtz set the waste collection and recycling fee at \$142.71 in 2013, and as of the summer 2015 taxes this charge has not

been reduced. All residents pay the fee regardless of whether they participate in the recycling service.

Griffen said the city has partnered with Keep Genesee County Beautiful and Republic Services to send out a mailer encouraging residents to join the program. The mailer explains where to get a free recycling bin, the recycling guidelines and when pickups occur. She said 10,000 of these mailers have been sent out over the past two quarters. The neighborhoods targeted with the mailing already have high participation rates. Griffen said these residents might be more likely to participate because they can see their neighbors recycling already. Since beginning the mailings, there have been about 300 calls to the sanitation department referencing the letter.

Muhammad said she would like to see more recycling participation in the Northeast quadrant of the city. Future mailings will be directed in this area to grow the number of residents participating.

"It's easy and we invite all of our residents to reach out and get a bin to put out on the curb," Muhammad said.

Hicks oversees trash collection in 107 communities in mid- and northern Michigan including Flint. Although not every community has recycling, he said the single stream process has made a huge difference in all of the communities using it.

Participation encouraging

He agreed that there has also been growth in local recycling participation since the mailers started going out. Hicks said the program has exceeded expectations growing from zero to more than 10 percent of households in less than three years. Since Flint has a larger population than other communities using the service, these percentages are harder to achieve and the figure is especially encouraging.

Griffen said she would like to expand the program to include distributing 96-gallon carts to residents. Hicks said the cart is a good option because it can be wheeled to the curb and has capacity for many more materials than the traditional 23-gallon container. He said the cart was recently introduced in Fenton Township and the program doubled participation in Midland after being introduced there. Currently, 86% of households in Midland

recycle although that program has been established for a significantly longer time than Flint's. Hicks said the 23-gallon containers were introduced in Flint because initially the focus was on getting the program established and having a smooth transition from public to private trash collection. He said the transition was as smooth as he had ever seen one.

City of Flint Chief Information Officer Jason Lorenz said Flint's program requires citizen involvement. He asserted the city only has resources to lead people to the service and it is up to residents to get involved.

City Hall joining in

This month Griffen began an internal recycling program at city hall. She went to every department and determined that around 15% of city employees were already collecting recyclable materials at work and taking them home to add to their personal bins. So she distributed small bins at desks and larger 23-gallon bins for each department. Griffen will visit departments each week to see how the program is working.

The 2013 contract with Republic, which privatized sanitation, was written for three years with an option for Republic to renew in year four. After that, the city could rebid the job if unhappy with the price. Muhammad said the city will create a recycling committee of community members next year to look at the cost and success of the program and make a recommendation to the administration and city council.

Nic Custer, East Village Magazine managing editor, can be reached at NicEastvillage@gmail.com

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Thriving Applewood prepares for its centennial year

By Andrew Keast

Even though it's tucked just east of downtown Flint at the end of Kearsley Street between Mott Community College and the Flint Cultural Center, to step into C.S. Mott's Applewood estate is to enter another world, far from anything urban and beyond any conventional definition of the city.

"Every time I came here," says Carol Andrew, an Applewood volunteer, looking back on the early years of her acquaintance with the 34-acre estate, "I always felt like I was somewhere foreign."

And indeed the estate may be a part of Flint that a lot of people don't know exists, though the administration's efforts to share this historic arbor continue to establish new friends and build an effective reputation.

The estate gets about 20,000 visitors a year, according to Megan McA Dow, Ruth Mott Foundation/Applewood Collections and Exhibitions manager.

Applewood was built in 1916 and is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. The grounds include an orchard with 29 varieties of heritage apples and 18 landscaped acres. The property includes the main house, a gatehouse, barn, chicken coop and a newer structure used as a maintenance and greenhouse complex.

The late Ruth Mott, C.S. Mott's fourth and final wife, bequeathed the estate to her Ruth Mott Foundation.

McA Dow said all Ruth Mott Foundation staff are involved in preparing for the 2016 Applewood centennial, including in particular the estate's nine groundskeepers, five people working on preserving the house and collections of furnishings inside, and four people working on programming events and field trips.

McA Dow is co-managing the centennial events with Estate Manager Deb Elliott.

They promise the centennial events will offer pleasures for those already familiar with Mott's "gentleman's farm" as well as first-time visitors.

McA Dow said "gentleman's farm" was a common designation when Applewood was built that suggested a farm used for pleasure rather than basic income. C.S. Mott used his farm to grow and raise food consumed by family and staff of Applewood so to be self-sustaining. She said any excess food was sold or given away, and nothing went to waste.

Next year grounds will be open Thursday through Sunday, and guided tours of the house will be available. Two books are being prepared for the occasion: a biography of C.S. Mott and a large volume of photographs presenting the features and history of the estate – both to be published

in the year ahead.

In the meantime, throughout this summer Applewood is open to the public at least twice a month.

On the second Saturday, Applewood hosts a "Strolling Saturdays" program from noon to 4 p.m., inviting visitors to enjoy the grounds without a guide or set route around the grounds.

Everyone is likewise invited one Thursday a month for "Bring Your Lunch and Learn" day from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. It's a chance to hear from gardening experts about topics such as growing roses and common horticultural problems.

The crew who maintain the gardens, landscapes and structures have established easily traveled paths to several choices for picnicking, whether on a soft, green expanse of turf, among beds of cultivated roses, beneath a tower of huddled oaks or between the rows of a healthy apple orchard. The solid bricks and slate of the main house and original out-buildings make it clear Applewood never was a rustic camp, but a home.

There are wilder areas, too, but even in the fields a visitor encounters paved paths. Stairways have been built into the gentle hills and a few pieces of statuary and sculpture share space with butterflies and birds.

"Applewood has always been a place of serenity, for me – a place of peace, a place of beauty," says Dolores Odom, a volunteer so fond of this place that she describes her work as "really not work at all. You just enjoy doing it. It's more like an adventure – something fun to do." That enthusiasm is common here, where one finds visitors of all ages, families and groups of students along with volunteers and staff on duty.

According to Odom, "It's relaxing; it's therapeutic." Anyone may join the staff as a volunteer.

Admission to Applewood during its open hours is free, with no reservations required. Nor is there any charge for Applewood's special events, such as the

(Continued on Page 11.)

... Lake

(Continued from Page 5.)

they chase them down, run them out of the neighborhood."

Sandra E. Robinson, South Parks Neighborhood Association secretary and FRWC board member, said she hopes more people will get involved. "I live on the north side of the lake," Robinson said. "There's a lot happening, but I want to see more on the north side. You don't have to just be a fisherman to enjoy the lake."

South Parks Neighborhood Association, which meets every third Thursday at Vermont Christian Church at 5 p.m. has a Thread Lake Committee.

Robinson said she wants people to "come to the meetings and bring their ideas as well as support what we've been doing."

According to Robinson, the South Parks Neighborhood Association partnered with Vermont Church and Howard Estates to adopt the parks, clean them up and monitor them.

With so much work under way on the lake and parks, Fedewa said, "Our next steps are to do some really rigorous water testing and sediment testing, so we can tell people for sure whether or not the water is safe. Right now we have no data." Fedewa said the FRWC is working to secure funds to begin testing on the lake.

"We need to have opportunities for people to use it," Fedewa said. "On a normal day, nobody will come out here and go kayaking. We want people to feel comfortable to come out here and use the lake."

McMillan said the Genesee County Parks are starting talks to extend and expand the partnership agreement with the City of Flint. "The parks still belong to the city so the residents haven't given up anything. The city is very good at getting grants and we do the maintenance. It's a really good partnership."

The Thread Lake report produced by Michigan State in partnership with the FRWC can be found at canr.msu.edu.

Staff writer Ashley O'Brien can be reached at am.obrien@rocketmail.com. EVM editor Jan Worth-Nelson contributed to this report. She can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com



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Fourteen projects foster art boom in Flint

By Andrew Keast

Over the next few months Flint residents may notice a blossoming of art addressing everything from Flint's water troubles to saving the monarch butterfly to dancing in Riverbank Park. Other projects are creating steel band performances, podcasts, murals, fashion design and a celebration of Hispanic culture.

The plethora of events are thanks to 14 local projects funded through Share Art Flint, an annual set of grants established in 2012 by the Greater Flint Arts Council for innovative contributions to the community.

Working with funds from the Ruth Mott Foundation, the council is distributing \$60,000 among individuals and teams whose ideas were selected from 87 proposals by its panel of 10 judges. The projects are in implementation now, and are to be completed by October 31. Here are brief descriptions of the winners.

Gallery on the Go

Sandra Branch is setting up a neighborhood picnic at Durant Park on three occasions this summer, through a program she calls "Gallery on the Go," designed to serve the area in several ways. Each event is a celebration of community spirit, inviting individuals and families to enjoy the park and the company of their neighbors with music, chalk art on the sidewalk, face painting, games, an open mic, crafts and food. The program also encourages artistic experience and generosity, as participants paint 4 foot by 10 foot panels for a grand mural that is growing to extend across much of the park. The panels are to be taken in the fall to blighted sections of the neighborhood, where they will be used to board up empty Land Bank properties and secure them from vandalism and criminal activity. More information available at sandrbranch1.wix.com or geneseefun.com or Sandra Branch's page at Facebook.

Audio Braid

Alan Harris and Nic Custer are turning to the community to create their "Audio Braid," a series of music, poetry, spoken word and field recordings being woven into a new cohesive narrative arc and shared with the public as a podcast that "immerses listeners in a unique audio experience, while bringing a voice to social, relevant issues and themes." As the material for this community-driven proj-

ect comes from artists and other local contributors, such as members of Flint's Raise It Up! Youth Arts and Awareness, the podcast, to be launched at a free event during the September 11 Art Walk at Flint's Local 432, will be a work of diverse and creative collaboration. Further details are available at geneseefun.com and at the Facebook page for Audio Braid. (In the interest of full disclosure, Nic Custer also is managing editor of *East Village Magazine*).

Body of Water

With "A Body of Water," Desiree Duell allows participants to create thematic art through workshops using sculptures made from water bottles, and hopes to get a lot of people involved to find solutions to the city's water dilemmas.

Arts en el parque

Ana Vargas is setting up an event she calls "Arte en el parque," a day of diverse experience designed for a sharing of Hispanic culture with the general public through a festive and diverse experiences of art, food, music, sports, dance and more.

Arts Empowerment

Selected by the Boys and Girls Club, the girls who participate in Robin Fisher's "Arts Empowerment Program" will learn about Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman to become a pilot in the U.S., and then create their own original performance based on the life of this inspiring figure.

Elevate Fine Arts

"Elevate Fine Arts Instruction" is Darcel Phinisee's campaign to bring formal musical education into the lives of a range of children, from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Instruction to groups and private lessons after school and during the summer will be offered, with a chance of integration into the regular academic day.

Expect to Win

As hosts of a local radio show about the problems of youth in this area, the young people in Bettye Hendricks' "Expect to Win for Youth" will learn to see how they belong to the community, and how their participation can affect its progress.

Fashion camp

Kala Wilburn, the founder the Fannie Lucille line of apparel and handbags, organized her "Fashion4Life," as a "fash-

ion camp" held in mid-July, to encourage participants with guidance and support in creating their own fashion, and to share her knowledge with students through instruction in design and sewing. More about Wilburn's work can be found at fannielucille.com and on her Facebook page for Fannie Lucille.

Flint Steel Band

Jim Coviak's "Flint Steel Band Flint Youth" will provide musical education and experience to local youth through four weeks of instruction and a performance.

Happy Feelings

Mama Sol's event, "Happy Feelings," is designed to inspire and give strength to families and youth through the experience of artistic creation, teaching them to understand their potential for important contributions to the social and economic work through which communities are built.

Finding a Voice

Cherisse Bradley is working to heal individuals and transform society with "I Found My Voice," a program in which participants share their experiences through collaborative poetic creation and performance.

Making a Mural

The "Real Art Team's McLaren Medical Education Outdoor Mural" allows children to work together under the direction of Wendy Brimley and Randee Piper on a public mural presented outside for the benefit of the community, as well as those involved in its creation.

Monarchs in Peril

Craig Henshaw's "Monarchs in Peril" provides an educational experience for children at the Haskell Community Center, where they will learn about butterflies and create art that presents butterflies in ceramic form.

Riverbank Dance

With her "Riverbank Park Dance Project," established in 2014, Emma Davis strives to cultivate appreciation for this public space by relating its history and letting others share their own experiences of the park, and her work further strengthens a sense of community among participants as she directs a conversation of expression through dance. "Story Circles" for the collection of narrative accounts were held at the Flint Farmers'

(Continued on Page 10.)

MUSIC at St. Paul's

Artistic Director G. Donald Kaye Presents



Sept. 27, 2015

Xiang Gao, Violin and Joel Hastings, Piano

Two musical meteors aflame!



October 25, 2015

Nicholas Schmelter, Organ

A kaleidoscopic colorist at the mighty Dalton Memorial Organ



November 22, 2015

Erik van Heyningen, Bass baritone

From the opera stages of Boston and Saint Louis



January 31, 2016

Brittany DeYoung, Harp

A crystalline necklace of sound for the New Year



February 28, 2016

Kisma Jordan, Soprano

The warm embrace of vocal sumptuousness



April 17, 2016

The FSO Brass Quintet

Imagine this in the acoustic ambience of St. Paul's!



May 22, 2016

The Comic Opera Group of Ann Arbor

An afternoon of hilarity Italian style



June 5, 2016

Baron Fenwick, Piano

The Wm C. Byrd First Place Prizewinner of 2015
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The Flint Symphony Orchestra



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... Trump

(Continued from Page 3.)

research development and marketing assistance. Rand Paul's comments on corporate welfare might not sound out of place coming from Elizabeth Warren and other liberal Democrats concerned about the corporate dominance of the American economy.

So in an age of bitter partisanship, where Democrats and Republicans can't seem to agree on what to have for lunch, does this signal a new dawn where both parties will march off, arm in arm, singing "Kumbaya"? I doubt it. There's still a lot of Rand Paul's message that isn't going to fly with Democrats and he's hardly going to win many votes on the left side of the aisle.

But the fact that he was willing to go beyond the standard "let's cut taxes and strangle government" Republican mantra, just might be a sign that there is some room for agreement even among polar opposites on the political spectrum.

And that might be more important than The Donald's carnival act.

Paul Rozycki is a retired professor of political science from Mott Community College. He has lived in Flint since 1969 and has been involved with and observed Flint politics for many years. He is author of Politics and Government in Michigan (with Jim Hanley) and A Clearer Image: The History of Mott Community College. He can be reached at paul.rozycki@mcc.edu.

... Art boom

(Continued from Page 9.)

Market and Buckham Gallery in July, and the work inspired by these stories will be performed on September 25, 26 and 27 at Riverbank Park. The project's website at RiverbankDanceProject.com provides further details.

Staff writer Andrew Keast can be reached at akeast@umflint.edu.

Volunteer Distributors Wanted

The East Village Magazine is looking for volunteer distributors in some of the residential blocks bounded by E. Court, Franklin, Tuscola and Meade Streets. Spend less than one hour a month getting exercise and insuring your neighbors get the magazine. Contact ecuster@sbcglobal.net or write to 720 E. Second St. Flint, MI 48503

Public told "Report it, own it," at neighborhood safety confab

By Ashley O'Brien

Communication and community responsibility dominated the discussion at Flint's second public safety town hall meeting. Eight panelists representing the City of Flint or public safety answered questions from the community.

Members of law enforcement stressed the need for residents to report crime or suspicious behavior.

"You've got to report it," said Amy Belanger, a community service trooper with the Michigan State Police. Belanger added reports can be made anonymously to the local police or to Crimestoppers, which is based out of Canada, so their records can't be subpoenaed.

Sheriff Captain Casey Tafoya told a story about an individual who waited till the morning to report a burglary at a neighbor's house in the middle of the night.

"You're never bothering us," Tafoya said.

At issue for some is perceived ineffective communication and mistrust.

"Nobody up here is going to deny the fact that there has been a lack of communication between law enforcement and the community," Belanger said.

Flint Chief of Police James Tolbert said the police department needs to correct the existing image that police do not care about the community. "We absolutely care," he said. "Unfortunately our issue is resources and priorities. Sometimes when we get there we may not seem interested."

According to Tolbert, police officers are receiving customer service training. "We want you to believe you've been treated fairly."

Tolbert said the Flint police department had partnered with the Mediation Center to provide mediation training to volunteers who could help resolve neighborhood conflicts. About some calls to the police, Tolbert said, "they aren't crimes, they're disagreements, but if they are unaddressed they turn into crimes."

In addition to mediation volunteers, Tolbert called on more people to participate in Blue Badge and Citizen's Radio patrol.

Tolbert said after some training, "You patrol your neighborhood. Why? Because you know who belongs in your neighborhood and who doesn't." According to Tolbert, many volunteers helped last Halloween but interest waned since then.

Belanger coordinated a community event, "Cone with a Cop" in which the Burton Police Department, Genesee County Sheriff's Department and Flint police department partnered with Dairy

Queen in Burton to give away about 375 cones of ice cream.

These kinds of events are about communicating with everyone, according to Belanger. "We're trying to bridge that gap so that the community feels comfortable coming to us with their issues."

Sometimes addressing deteriorated properties helps, panelists suggested. Megan Hunter, director of Planning and Management, said some resources were available from the Genesee County Land Bank's "Clean and Green" program for groups that volunteered to fight blight. Homeowners were also encouraged to adopt adjacent lots.

Some Land Bank properties are available for sale to adjacent homeowners for very low rates, Hunter said.

Natasha Henderson, Flint city administrator, said consolidation of 911 dispatch services was under way. "We do actually realize savings, and any of that money is put back into public safety," she said.

Flint Fire Chief David Cox reported that incidents of arson have gone down in the city of Flint. Cox credits the "Knock and Speak" program, where firefighters reached out to residents going door to door and let "people know that we want them to take ownership for their community."

Vicki Vanburen, Ward 8 councilwoman, warned, "Law enforcement cannot do it alone," but that residents had to make reports, take pictures or keep records, so that issues could be resolved.

Monica Galloway, Ward 7 councilwoman, agreed that residents had to help fight crime and blight.

"We cannot sit idly by," Galloway said. "We have to take ownership."

Staff writer Ashley O'Brien can be reached at am.obrien@rocketmail.com.

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... Applewood

(Continued from Page 8.)

annual "Harvest Festival," held in September, December's "Holiday Walk," the recent "Firefly Walk" or the two August events – a day of artistic creation August 8, when the grounds will be shared with artists painting "en plein air," and "Goodies From the Garden" on August 13, an evening of instruction, demonstrations, games and music with a focus on gardens and growing.

Applewood is located at 1400 E. Kearsley St. where Kearsley meets Longway Boulevard. More information about Applewood and its operations can be found at flintculturalcenter.com/applewood, at ruthmottfoundation.org/applewood, at exploreapplewood.org and on Facebook.

Staff writer Andrew Keast can be reached at akeast@umflint.edu. Jan Worth-Nelson, East Village Magazine editor, contributed to this report. She can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com.

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Village Life

Natural Flint: rusty ruin to riparian beauty

By Bob Thomas

When I returned to Flint a decade ago, the city's rusty ruin totally discombobulated me. Having chosen to live in Flint, I needed to know where I really was, not where I feared I was. I sought orientation and guidance.

Regular walks with my wife Ingrid, a longtime Central Park resident, neighborhood activist and librarian, and our dog Frida familiarized me with the territories. I asked questions and Ingrid provided answers, from local history and politics to the resident fauna and flora. Frida set our moseying pace.

Much of Flint's recent history and politics discomfited me, but nature's revelations cheered me greatly. Reconnecting

with nature also reconnected me to my earthly roots on land that included the site where I was born. Two blocks from that site runs Gilkey Creek, for most of its urban life nothing more than an agricultural and industrial drainage ditch, portions of which run underground through culverts.

Ingrid introduced me to the stream's run from Pierce Park to Dayton Park where it empties into the Flint River. Along this thin riparian corridor are several neighborhood villages and five of Flint's 62 parks.

More stimulating than a cup of strong java is a day kickstarted by meeting with our wildlife neighbors in their village. Be it the blue heron on the pond or the mallard families cruising the creek or the geese roaming the meadow along Applewood or the primeval monster catfish and huge snapping turtles or the fox and the hare and more winged species than I can identify, our animal companions all bring unrehearsed wonders to the morning.

As stakeholders and residents in the Gilkey Creek Watershed, Ingrid and I feel a proprietary bond with our village creek. We continue to be rewarded with natural surprises.

Our most recent dramatic sighting was a mink kit who popped out of the high grass along the creek on his hind legs like a Disney character welcoming us to Gilkeyland. He showed no fear. After he ducked back into the thick foliage and we continued gawking and walking, he reappeared several yards up the line in the same pose. Having seen an adult mink on a previous walk, we were not entirely surprised with the appearance of a kit, but for the rest of our stroll we kept shaking our heads in wonder while mumbling, "MINK living along Gilkey Creek."

Early in our explorations we were surprised by an explosion of water and air. We had startled a pair of wood ducks who had been floating on the creek under the camouflage of thickets. The display was particularly satisfying since Ingrid and I had never seen a wood duck in the wild, an oddity since we both have spent considerable time in Michigan outdoors.

Both the mink and duck sightings occurred very near and either side of the

Court Street bridge in the heart of Flint, hardly the wild, but an indication that the quality of our resident watershed habitat was on the rise.

The Gilkey Creek Watershed Management Plan of 2005/06 and the Gilkey Creek Restoration Project of 2007/08 have been the most recent prime movers in restoring the creek from a drain to a recovering natural tributary of the Flint River, which is also in recovery after decades of abuse.

One of our favorite routes along the stream is the stroll from Burroughs Park through the Mott campus to Kearsley Park. Within that stretch is a fascinating, diversified demonstration of Flint fauna and flora.

There we see daily evidence of the intended results of the Gilkey Creek Restoration Project. Among the plan's objectives in daylighting a section of the creek that flowed through a culvert was to create an area demonstrating techniques of stream stabilization and habitat enhancements like pools, rapids and native plants.

Since this section is in our neighborhood and on our regular walking route, Ingrid and I have watched the plan morph into being, then mature through the four seasons of each of the last eight years. And the show goes on and gets better every year.

Walks through Gilkeyland offer me perspective and distance from my personal woes, some real and some self-induced. Nature's ways allow me to focus on the world outside myself, the world we all share — always a firmly grounding orientation.

Following Gilkey Creek from the Court Street bridge along the restored section running between the Applewood Estate and Mott College's campus to Kearsley Park offers daily enlightenment from Planet Earth and reminds me how life-affirming one of nature's villages can be.

All I have to do is pay attention to where I really am.

Bob Thomas is an EVM board member. He disappeared in San Francisco for 35 years, only to reappear a decade ago as a retired resident of Flint's Central Park village where he found true love and a new home.

Bumble Bee

By Grayce Scholt

A Bombus terrestris
circles milkweed by the porch
until it lights and tongue-laps
nectar from the blossoms'
universe,
then coils, uncoils, folds its
proboscis tight for flight and
takes the air.

Darwin called you *humble-bee*
But oh, he knew your body buzz--
your black and yellow,
orange and buff,
your brush of hair
so miniscule, so fine;
he knew your bulk
took gold to daisies, phlox,
to yellow roses by the fence
to stigma, stamen, anthers
in the pastures, grasslands
fields that stretch across the
hungry earth,
and he rejoiced.



Grayce Scholt is a retired English professor from Mott College who wrote art reviews for the Flint Journal. Her book of poetry, Bang! Go All the Porch Swings, is available online from Amazon. A personal narrative of the poet's life in Europe in the early 1950s, Vienna, Only You, is available at gscholt09@comcast.net. The author's new book of poems, Night Song, is available from Friesen Press (www.friesenpress.com) and Amazon.