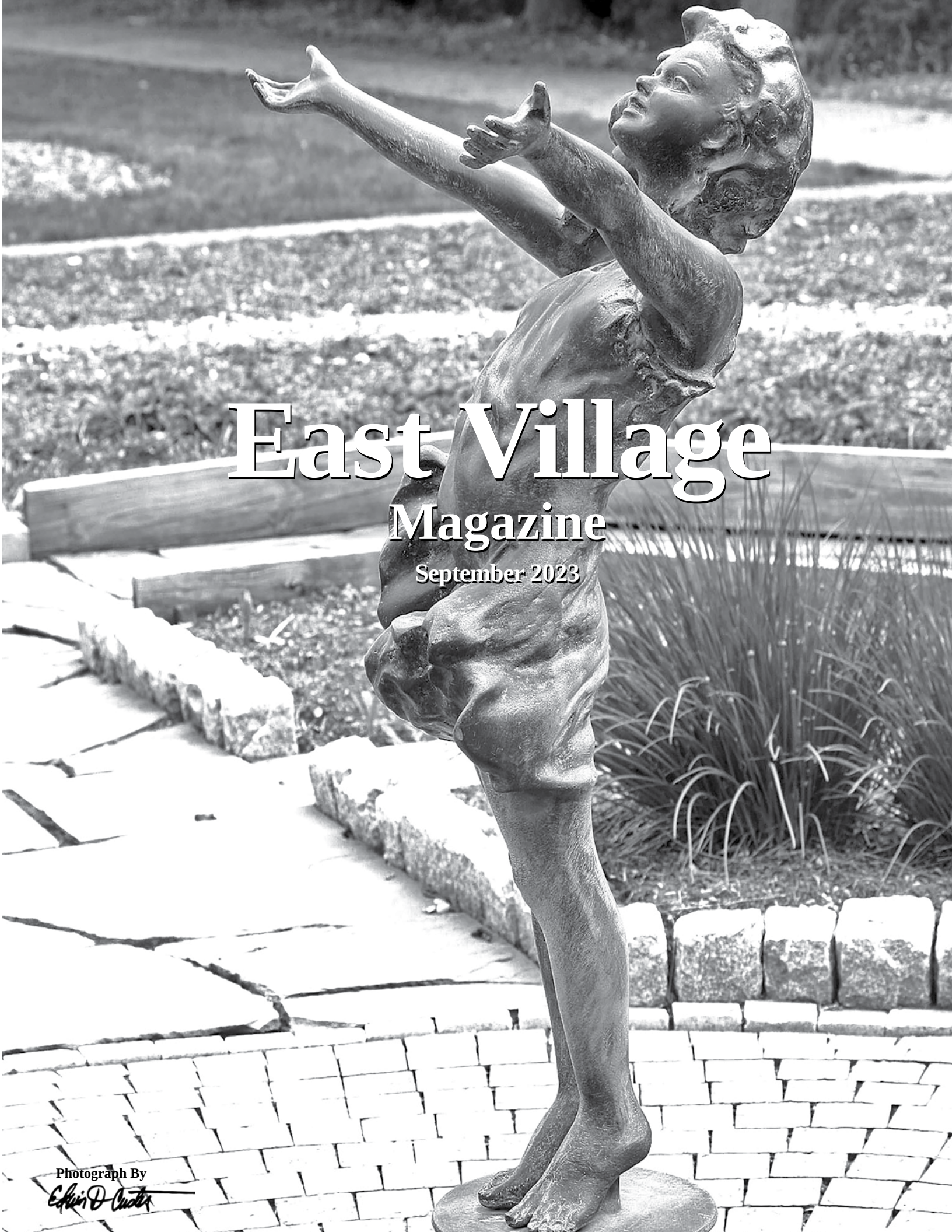




East Village

Magazine

September 2023

Photograph By

Edwin D. Carter



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About Our Cover

The statue, "La Breeza," by artist Josephine Kern, was installed at Applewood in 1996. At Ruth Mott's 90th birthday party, she held her arms out wide in gratitude for all the loved ones who had come together to share the day with her. Some time later, a staff member of the Ruth Mott Foundation saw this statue in a catalog and it reminded them of that moment.

According to Kristin Longley of the Ruth Mott Foundation, staff, friends, and family pitched in to purchase the statue from Florentine Craftsmen, Inc. for Ruth Mott on her 95th birthday.

More information can be found at this link about the statue and photos of Ruth Mott with "La Breeza":
<https://www.ruthmottfoundation.org/applewood/gardens-grounds/art-in-the-gardens/>.



Vol. LIX No. 19 September 2023

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Layout by Patsy Isenberg. Printing by PrintComm Inc., 3040 S. Dye Rd., Flint, MI 48507.

East Village Magazine is a program of the Village Information Center Inc., a nonprofit corporation. We welcome material from readers, but all submissions become the property of the publication and if published will be edited to conform to the editorial style and policies of the publication. All inquiries about the publication should be mailed to *East Village Magazine*, Village Information Center, 720 E. Second St., Flint, Mich. 48503. Distribution is the first Thursday of each month. Display advertising rates are \$34 a column-inch plus any other costs. Unclassified ads are \$2.50 a printed line or part of a printed line. Rates subject to change without notice. The deadline for advertising is 10 days before each publication date.

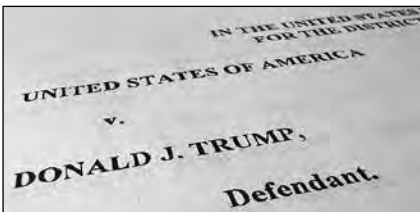
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Commentary *Four indictments for “45.” What will it mean for 2024?*

By Paul Rozycki

Donald Trump is running for president next year. He’s also facing 91 felony charges in both federal and state jurisdictions.

With the first Republican debate last month behind us, we are about to begin the 2024 presidential election campaign. It may be the most unusual and challenging election we have ever seen.



The opening page of an indictment against former U.S. President, Donald Trump
(Photo source: Reuters/Kevin Fogarty)

With over a dozen potential Republican candidates vying for the nomination only one name had been dominating the headlines—Donald Trump, who is currently facing 91 criminal charges in four different jurisdictions. He is leading all other challengers for the nomination by a large margin and it appears that he may be facing a series of trials during the first six months of 2024, just as the primary elections are taking place to pick the nominees for the Democratic and Republican parties. If the trials take place as scheduled they may dominate the headlines as much as any of the primary contests.

As things stand now, Trump is facing four major criminal indictments, summarized here:

Stormy Daniels hush money

In March of 2023, Trump was indicted in New York on 34 counts of

falsifying business records over his payment of \$130,000 of hush money to porn star Stormy Daniels. The case is scheduled for trial in March of 2024. This was the first time a former U.S. president was charged with a crime after leaving office.

Classified documents at Mar-a-Lago

In June of 2023, Trump was indicted, facing 37 federal criminal charges for illegally keeping classified and secret documents after the left the White House and refusing to turn them over to authorities when requested. The trial is scheduled for May of 2024. Thirty-two counts were for the willful retention of national defense information. The other counts included attempting to alter, destroy, or conceal evidence.

Federal election certification and the Jan. 6 insurrection

On Aug. 1, the former president was charged with four criminal indictments relating to the certification of the 2020 election. Among other things, he was charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States “by using dishonesty, fraud and deceit to obstruct the nation’s process of collecting, counting, and certifying the results of the presidential election.”

As part of his attempt to overturn the 2020 election Trump has been charged with a number of federal crimes for his support of the riots in and around the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Like the Georgia indictment, the case includes charges relating to the false elector scheme. In addition to Georgia, the indictment includes activity in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona, and other states where

(Continued on Page 6)

Cover: “La Brezza” from Florentine Craftsmen, Inc.

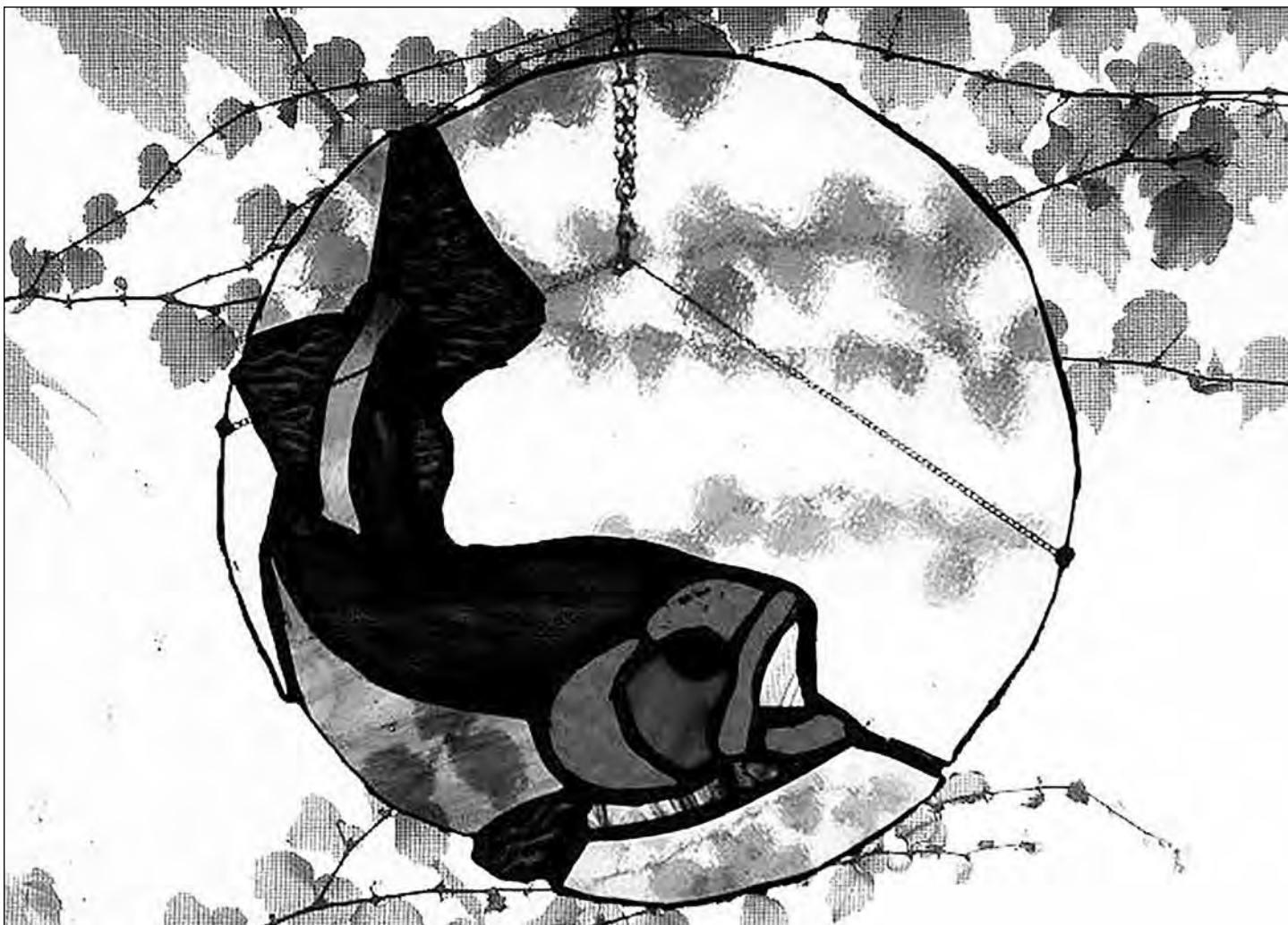


Photo of the Month: Leaded glass art piece by Andrew William Custer (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

Education Beat

New school year starts with \$156 million ESSER funding moves; new backpack policy in place; administrative changes announced; Washington demo delayed; MSU partnership renewed

By Harold C. Ford

A new academic year at Flint Community Schools (FCS) began Aug. 9, as students reported back to school under a newly-adopted backpack policy.

The day before, on Aug. 8, several changes in administration positions were announced by FCS Superintendent Kevelin Jones in a press statement.

And at its Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting, also on Aug. 9, the Flint Board of Education (FBOE):

- gained clarity on the status of \$156 million in ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding and expenditures.
- delayed the demolition of Washington Elementary – torched by arsonists -- for about a month as the FBOE decided to reopen bids for the project.
- renewed the district's partnership with Michigan State University's Fellowship of Instructional Leaders.

Eight ESSER grants totaled \$156,770,000

Interim Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Brian Jones provided unprecedented clarity about the massive amount of COVID-19 relief funding – a whopping \$156.7 million – made available to Flint schools via eight waves of ESSER grants from federal and state governments.

“That’s a lot of money,” Jones

(Continued on Page 5)

Ed Beat ...

(Continued from Page 4)

concluded.

Four grants, termed “the biggies” by Jones, included the following four federal grants*:

- ESSER 1: FCS spent about \$9.226 million of a \$9.450 million grant. “We had not fully spent that grant,” reported Jones. “Our general fund ate that cost.”

Jones indicated the amount lost – \$223,961, about 2.4 percent of the ESSER 1 grant – could not be recovered by the district. “We had to send it back.”

“I think you did excellent,” concluded Jones who came on the job only months ago after a spate of FCS central administrative resignations – including then-CFO Latisha Wolf – in April 2023. ESSER funding originated as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the federal government level in March 2021.

“Can we agree the goal is to spend every dime?” asked Melody Relerford, FBOE trustee. “Absolutely,” Jones responded, “I don’t like to leave a dime on the table.”

The sunset (end date) for ESSER 1 was September, 2021.

- ESSER 2: ESSER 2 funds available to FCS totaled approximately \$44.2 million. “We did spend all of that,” Jones reported.

The sunset for ESSER 2 was September, 2022.

- ESSER 3: The ESSER 3 grant, \$99.4 million, is “a work in progress” according to Interim CFO Jones; about \$17.8 million has been spent, leaving more than \$80 million for the district to use.

FCS Superintendent Kevelin Jones reported a “back and forth” process, at present, between FCS and Michigan state government in spending the ESSER 3 grant as expenditure of these dollars requires state approval. “What we’re doing now is sending it through for full approval,” Jones said. “The state has yet to approve.”

Flint’s superintendent explained that a goodly portion of ESSER 3 monies is being spent on renovation

projects at Flint’s 11 school campuses (Details about campus renovations was reported by *East Village Magazine* on July 26, 2023.) Jones cautioned, however, that 20 percent of ESSER 3 “had to be spent on academics.”

The sunset for ESSER 3 is September, 2024.



ESSER image from National Math Foundation

- ESSER EQ: “We’ve spent about 80 percent of that money,” said Interim CFO Jones, about \$1.5 million of \$1.9 million received.

The remaining four grants –



**FCS Interim-Chief Financial Officer
Brian Jones**

(Photo source: LinkedIn)

ESSER Benchmark and Geer (federal grants) and Section 11(P) and Section 103(d-2) (state grants) were all “closed out” according to Interim CFO Jones. “The district spent all the money that was allocated,” Jones said. “There’s no outstanding balance.”

At the end of the ESSER presentation, FBOE President Michael Clack deduced that 98.9 percent of ESSER dollars awarded FCS were on track to be spent.

“That’s exactly right,” Brian Jones responded. “You spent every-

thing but a penny on a dollar. This is an outstanding job.”

“The level of transparency,” added FBOE Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Laura MacIntyre, “this is wonderful.”

[*Grant amounts are rounded off for readability and ease of understanding.]

Revised backpack policy, new administrators

A revised backpack policy and new administrators greeted students upon their return to school Aug. 9.

Revised backpack policy

FCS Superintendent Jones announced “an important safety measure” in a July 21, 2023 letter to Flint families:

- Students in pre-K to sixth grade will have the option to use a clear backpack at no cost to the students; the district will provide them if needed.
- Students in grades 7-12 will not be allowed to have backpacks. Small purses with personal items, gym clothes in clear plastic bags, and lunchboxes will be allowed “within reason.”

Jones said the policy had gotten the approval of the FBOE and the district’s administrators. The policy change was also supported by safety advocates and the Flint Police Department, according to Jones.

Additionally, all visitors to FCS buildings will need to present a valid driver license or state ID.

Jones cited safety as the rationale for the policy changes: “Across the country, we have seen an increase in threatening behavior and contraband, including weapons, being brought into schools at all levels,” he said.

Administrative changes

Jones announced several changes in the FCS administrative lineup in an Aug. 8 communique:

- Most notably, Kelly Fields left her principalship at Accelerated Learning Academy (ALA) for a central administrator position as executive

(Continued on Page 11)

Rozycki commentary ...

(Continued from Page 3)

Trump lost and tried to overturn the results with false electors.

Attempts to overturn the Georgia election results

On Aug. 15, Trump was charged with election interference in Fulton County, Georgia, where he pressured local election officials to “find 11,780” votes for him in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election. Trump and 18 other officials are charged in the Georgia case. Among those charged are close Trump allies, attorney and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Chief of Staff Mark Meadows.

If all 19 are to face trial this may be the most important and complex of the four cases. Yet many suspect that more than a few of the defendants will bargain for lesser charges in exchange for testifying against Trump. Among the charges filed in this indictment are a violation of Georgia’s Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act and a solicitation of a public officer to violate their oath of office. Many consider this the most serious of the indictments.

At this point, as noted, Trump is facing 91 felony charges filed since March of 2022. Some also say they believe Trump could also face further indictments in those states where false electors were put forward to overturn the 2020 election.

What all this could mean for the 2024 election

If he is convicted on any or all of these, the result could be prison time for Trump and others. What could this mean for the election?

We have never had a major presidential candidate facing jail or prison as they campaigned, though in 1920, Eugene Debs was in prison as he ran on the third-party Socialist ticket that year, earning three percent of the vote. In 1992, minor party candidate Lyndon LaRouche ran while in prison

for tax fraud. If Trump were elected and convicted could he serve as president? The Constitution doesn’t forbid it.

The nomination

As the indictments piled up for Trump, one would expect it to be fatal to his campaign. So far, the opposite has been the case. As he claims to be the victim of a “witch-hunt” he has raised more money than expected for the campaign (and his legal fees), and his standing in the polls has bumped up among his Republican MAGA supporters. Several current polls show him 40 points ahead of his nearest Republican challenger.

That of course, could all change, as the campaign season builds. But at the moment it seems that the dozen or more Republicans challenging Trump may split up the vote so much that Trump could win the nomination with a plurality of the votes, as he did in 2016, when he was also one among many candidates. If he fails to get the Republican nomination will he run as a third party candidate?



Trump merchandise at a Vice President Mike Pence 2020 campaign stop at Bishop Airport in Flint
(Photo by Tom Travis)

The election

Most polls show that while Trump is holding his own or gaining among his hard core supporters, the criminal indictments are hurting him among independent voters, suburban Republicans, and any Democrats who might have voted for him. Many Democrats and more than a few Republicans see him as a weak candidate for the general election. Yet, that could all change as well. Because of his age and partisan division, President Biden’s polls are worrisome as he approaches the election year — and Hunter Biden’s legal problems won’t help. The entrance

of third parties could also play a role in the outcome next year.

While we pay most attention to the presidential contest, after the 2020 election many of those who claimed that the election was fraudulent have run for state and local offices, such as election clerks. They will be in a position to oversee the counting of votes and the registration of new voters. Other election officials have faced threats as they tried to do their jobs and some have quit. After the 2020 election, some of the fumbling attempts to overturn it often had a Three Stooges—Keystone Kops quality to it. But in 2024 those who tried to overturn the last election may be back, be better organized, and a greater threat. We need to pay attention to those often ignored state and local elections. They will be critical next year.

If Trump wins

If Trump should win, almost certainly the federal charges would disappear, either with a new attorney general or a pardon. However, he would not have the power to dismiss or pardon for the state charges. In his public statements he has said he would “go after” those who brought the charges against him and it could get very nasty.

While the trials are scheduled for early 2024, Trump’s attorneys have been attempting to delay them until after the election. Many of the cases are complex and could face long trials or delays. If any of the trials result in an acquittal or a hung jury, it’s likely that Trump will claim victory and blame others for the “witch hunt.”

If he loses, will the Republican Party move beyond Trump and the MAGA movement?

In almost every election year it is said to be “the most important election” of our lives. But in 2024 that may be true. It will likely be the strangest and democracy may be on the line as never before.

EVM political columnist Paul Rozycki can be reached at paul.rozycki@mcc.edu.

City council approves Phase 2 of the Buick City Redevelopment Plan — using a complex financing model

By Tom Travis

The Flint City Council has approved an embattled resolution for the city to release the 350-acre former Buick City brownfield to developer Ashley Capital.

Ashley Capital is under contract to purchase the site from Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response (RACER) Trust. Ashley officials plan to develop a state-of-the-art industrial park expected to bring about 3,000 jobs to the City of Flint — jobs paying upwards of \$17 per hour. The company plans to invest about \$300 million in the site, pending a period of due diligence that is expected to end in 2023, according to Ashley Capital.

Funding for the massive redevelopment is being funded with \$3.25 million from the City of Flint American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds (leveraged at a rate of about 4:1), \$2 million from the C.S. Mott Foundation, \$3.25

million from the Genesee County ARPA funds, \$8.5 million from the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF).

million from the Genesee County ARPA funds, \$8.5 million from the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF).

The City Council vote came after hours of debate during a council meeting. The debate among council members and members of the public was in part about a complex financial arrange-

ment in which future property taxes are captured and used for the development of the property.

Voting ‘yes’ were Councilpersons Ladel Lewis (Ward2), Quincy Murphy (Ward 3), Judy Priestley (Ward 4), Candace Mushatt (Ward 7) and Eva Worthing (Ward 9); Tonya Burns (Ward 6), Jerri Winfrey-Carter (Ward 5) and Dennis Pfeiffer (Ward 8) abstained their vote. Councilperson Eric Mays (Ward 1) did not vote because he is currently suspended for 30 days.

What is a (TIF) Tax Increment Financing?

A critical and complex component of a redevelopment is the financing of the project. The Buick City redevelopment project uses a financing mechanism called a TIF (Tax Increment Financing). TIFs, were created by the

Originally the TIF mechanism was a way to finance the redevelopment of blighted areas. But the TIF mechanism has morphed into a more complex financing option that allows developers to use estimated future property taxes for the development of the property over a period of time, capped at 30 years.

For the Buick City redevelopment, Ashley Capital has built an 80/20 model to follow for the capturing of new property tax. The new taxes created by the development are considered the “tax increment.” The 80/20 model would allow for 80 percent of the tax increment to be reimbursed to the developer for pre-approved redevelopment expenditures. The baseline taxes being paid on the value of the property before the development would continue to be collected by the normal taxing jurisdictions (city, county, state).

The remaining 20 percent is considered the “pass-through.” The 20 percent will be distributed through normal taxing jurisdictions (city, county and state). Throughout the discussions of this resolution Ashley Capital has stated the 20 percent will provide immediate tax benefit to the city from the new development. The assumed project buildout period is about 16 years with a new building constructed approximately every two years. This assumption is subject to market conditions.

For more details about the Tax Increment Financing (TIF), see the online version of this article at www.eastvillagemagazine.org.

Editor’s note: EVM interviewed Tyler Rossmassler, Executive Director of Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance for this article.

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



Mark Quimby of Ashley Capital presenting the Buick City Redevelopment plan at a June 2023 council meeting.

(Photo by Tom Travis)

federal government in the 1950s and are used widely across the nation in redevelopment projects. In 1996, Michigan passed Act 381 to create the Brownfield Plan mechanism to facilitate the redevelopment of blighted and contaminated land. Brownfield Plan TIFs are the most common tool in Michigan to support redevelopment projects.

Taliah Abdullah, new director of the Gloria Coles Flint Public Library, welcomed at reception, vows to enhance community wellbeing

By Canisha Bell and Jan Worth-Nelson

“We are in such good hands. I would just like for us to get to know each other and to explore ways to enhance the wellbeing of our community,” Taliah Abdullah, new executive director of the Gloria Coles Flint Public Library (GCFPL) said to a crowd of about 50 community leaders, library staff, and library patrons at a welcome reception Aug. 2.

After thanking the assembled

crowd, the library board, the FPL staff, and the Flint community in general -- for what she said was an unfailingly warm reception -- Abdullah invited those present to join her “in creating a welcoming and thriving community as we embark on this journey together.”

“I am committed to fostering open communication and transparency,” she said. “I believe that by working collaboratively we can ad-

dress challenges, celebrate achievements, and create lasting connections that will uplift, build, encourage our community in ways we are currently doing and that is yet to be done.

(Continued on Page 9)



New Library Executive Director of the Gloria Coles Flint Public Library, Taliah Abdullah, greeting a crowd of about 50 community leaders and library patrons at a welcome reception

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)



Mx. Abdullah with Karl Olmsted (center) and Sue Peters of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint (right)

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)



GCFPL Director of Library Operations Leslie Acevedo with former GCFPL director and library name-sake Gloria Coles

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)



GCFPL board member Jim Richardson (left), McCree Theater Artistic Education Director Cathy E. Johnson (center), and GCFPL Development Director Ashoka Rao (right)

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

Library Director ...

(Continued from Page 8)

"We are so excited to have Director Abdullah onboard," Reta Stanley, president of the GCFPL board, said at the reception. "She comes with a wealth of knowledge in library systems and in programming, and is an advocate of equity, diversity and inclusion."

Stanley described Abdullah as "a visionary, very thoughtful in her decision making."

"She is going to build a larger community engagement with the library -- which is very important," Stanley added, noting that Abdullah plans to connect more with the Flint public schools and promote literacy in the community.

Stanley said the new director aims "to promote greater civility in our community as well. [The GCFPL] is a place for lifelong learning," Stanley said, "and when people engage on that level only great things can happen -- she's the leader for that."

Abdullah's first official day on the job was July 24. She comes to Flint from Arapahoe Library District in Englewood, CO and has worked in academic, school, and public libraries in multiple states, holding management positions for 20 years. She replaces Kay Schwartz, who retired this summer after seven years as director and a total of 24 years at the library.

Abdullah comes into a physically transformed facility. It re-opened in 2022 after a massive renovation at a cost of more than \$20 million. Of that, \$12.6 million was supported by a library bond approved by voters in 2019.

EVM Reporter Canisha Bell can be reached at canishajbell@gmail.com.

EVM Consulting Editor Jan Worth-Nelson can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com.

Village Life ...

(Continued from Page 11)

wool into holes where mice escape into the walls. Mice chew through about anything but they won't chew through steel wool.

I kind of felt like "MacGyver" by putting that wood plank in my shower to allow for a humane exit from the shower. While feeling humanitarian-like I felt emasculated because I couldn't bring my self to just physically get rid of the mouse in my naked and afraid state. Every 'mouse' experience I've had builds



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on the next one. I've learned new ways to keep these critters out of my life. But they keep coming back. For sure, mice are here to stay. Now it's time for me to get dressed and head to Aldi.

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



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Village Life ...

(Continued from Page 15)

mouse would get up so high then fall back to the floor behind the choir loft. Then the mouse would head up the wall again, fall, and start again. After about the third time this happened the congregation was not paying attention to the preacher anymore but laughing at the spectacle behind him. Finally someone spoke up and said, "Reverend we're not laughing at you," then

explained what was going on behind him. A brave congregant went up and chased the mouse back into the walls of the church.

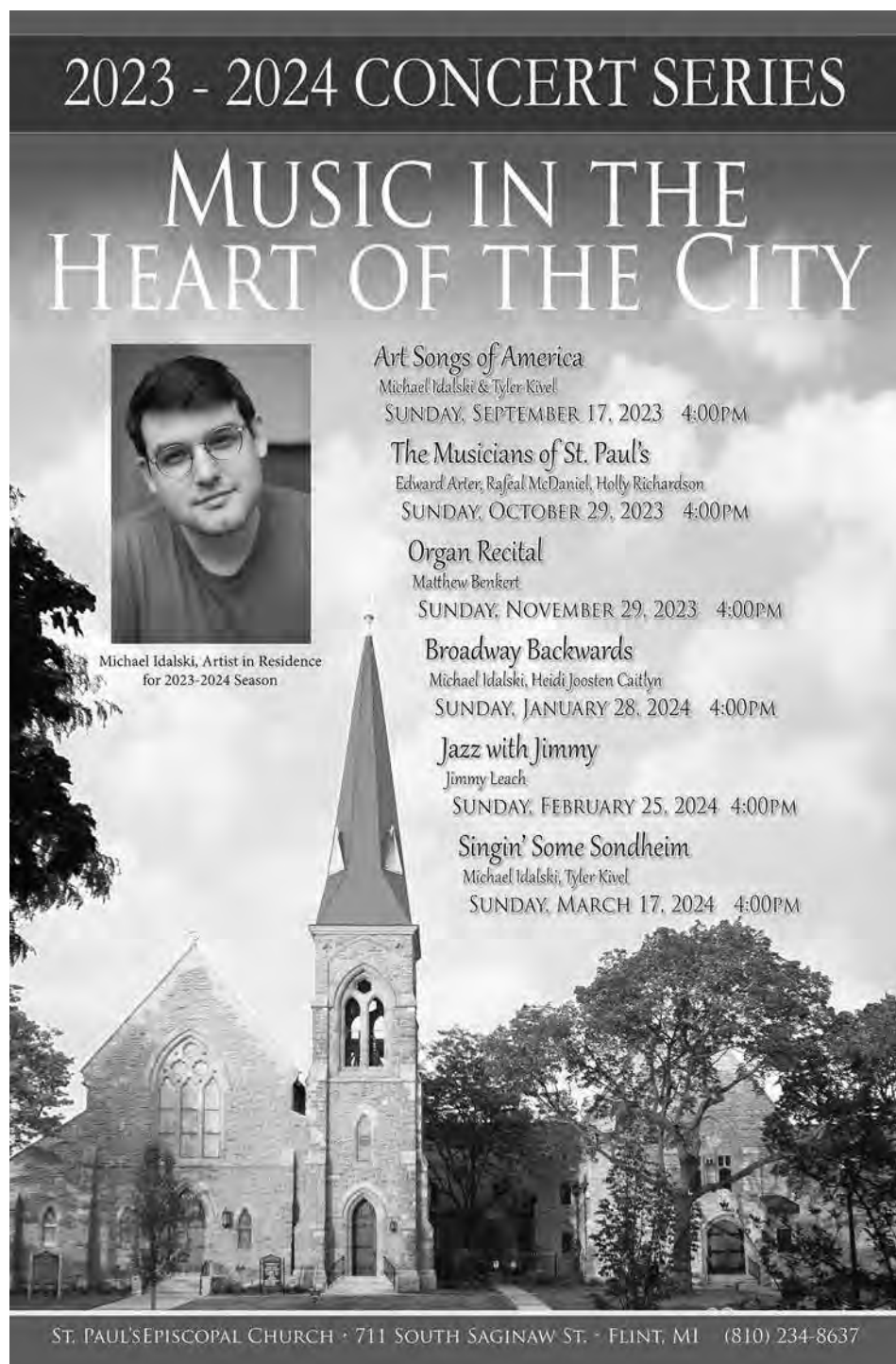
I was shocked to learn that the lifespan of the common mouse is about one year. In my house around October the mouse traps go out en masse. As the outside temperatures dip the mice seek warmer surroundings. I've caught 12 mice once in a Fall/Winter season. Last year was the a low

year only catching about eight or nine during the cold months.

According to the National Institute of Health, about 95 percent of all animals used in research are mice and rats and about 120 million mice and rats are used each year for various experiments.

Before you begin to think that I'm some kind of filthy person to have so many "mouse" experiences in my

(Continued on Page 11)



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Village Life ...

(Continued from Page 10)

life I'm, in fact, a rather well groomed and neat person and I generally do not live in filth. But as I said, I live in a 100-year-old house. Old houses, no matter how fancy, are likely to have a mouse inhabitant. And as they say, where there's one mouse there's usually ten more. Even the most elegant homes have mice. A 2017 Time magazine article unearthed hundreds of work orders from the White House for an apparent infestation of mice, ants and cockroaches throughout

the presidential mansion. The White House! -- that's an image too delicious to ignore. If there's a pest in the White House, as humans, we just head to the voting booth to get rid of them. But apparently the staff has to deal with the real-life vermin.

Over the years after living in many really old houses I've learned some tricks that really work at deterring mice from being present in my life. Honestly, I know they're there, but as long as I don't see them I'm happy. One great trick is stuffing steel

(Continued on Page 9)

Ed Beat ...

(Continued from Page 5)

director of academics.

- Richard Russell transitioned from assistant principal at Southwestern to ALA principal.
- Donnetta Moore-Beaugard stepped up from assistant principal to principal at Holmes.
- Julie Groce was appointed the new principal at Freeman Elementary.
- KaSandra Cookenmaster was named the new principal at Neithercut.

Washington demolition delayed

The anticipated demolition of Washington Elementary, at 1400 N. Vernon on Flint's east side, was delayed by the FBOE at its Aug. 9 meeting. The century-old building closed in 2014. Repeatedly targeted by arsonists and vandals, the building has been considered an eyesore and endangerment to the public by area residents and school officials.

"It's the worst looking property we have," Jones said at a meeting earlier in 2023. "We have to do something," added FBOE Treasurer Dylan Luna.

Flint's school board did do something; it approved the demolition of Washington at its May 17 meeting for a then-projected cost of more than \$700,000.

A very public process toward the Washington demolition that included deadlines for applications and proj-

ect bids (costs) was to have moved forward at the FBOE's May meetings with the award of a contract for \$680,000 to a successful bidder.

Four of the six bidders had completed the process; two did not. At least one of the two incomplete bids did not include a "familial disclosure statement" that is designed to disclose familial ties between bidders and school officials. A complaint was made to school officials by a failed bidder.

In the end, the bidding process for the Washington School demolition was reopened by a 4-3 vote. Voting to reopen the bids were McNeal, MacIntyre, Relerford and Claudia Perkins, FBOE secretary; voting against were Clack, King, and Luna.

A new timeline for the reopened bidding process is expected to end with the awarding of a contract at the board's mid-October meetings, according to Clark Construction officials who have helped oversee the process.

* * * * *

Future meetings of the FBOE for the 2023 calendar year are scheduled for: Sept. 13 and 20; Oct. 11 and 18; Nov. 8 and 15; and Dec. 13 (two meetings). Check the FCS website for location of meetings. Meetings start at 6:30 p.m. and can be viewed on YouTube.

EVM Education Beat reporter
Harold C. Ford can be reached at
hcford1185@gmail.com.

Unclassified Ad

Apartment for Lease.

Two-bedroom second floor apartment on cul-de-sac Avon St. near Kearsley St. Features appliances, laundry, off street parking, small deck and a large back yard. On site management. \$795 a month plus electricity. Heat and water included. No pets. References and credit check requested. E-mail: ecuster@sbcglobal.net or write to Apartment Box 2, 720 E. Second St., Flint 48503.

Apartment for Lease.

Two-bedroom, second floor apartment. It has a large deck, off street fenced parking, laundry, storage. On Avon near Kearsley Street. In the center of it all. Walk three blocks or less to UM-Flint, MCC, downtown, Cultural Center, Farmers Market, Library, horticultural gardens, four parks. and easy freeway access. On site management. \$695 per month plus utilities. References and credit check requested. No pets. E-mail: ecuster@sbcglobal.net or write: Apartment Box 11, 720 E. Second St. MI 48503.

Studio Apartment for Lease.

Spacious efficiency (540 sq. ft.) in historic Central Park on cul-de-sac, Avon, available August. Walk four blocks or less to UM-Flint and MCC campuses, Cultural Center, Downtown, Farmers Market, four parks, bike paths, and easy freeway access. One story semi-detached, partially-furnished, laundry, many windows, hardwood floors, deck onto large backyard, and off street parking. References and credit check requested. No pets. On site management. \$650 per month plus electricity. Heat and water included. E-mail ecuster@sbcglobal.net or write: Apartment Box 7C, 720 E. Second St., Flint MI 48503.

**COLLEGE CULTURAL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
Sign up to get notices of meetings at
ccnaflint@gmail.com

Every Flint pregnant mom to receive \$1,500, no strings attached, plus \$500 per month in “first of its kind” program

By Canisha Bell and Tom Travis

Pregnant women in Flint will receive \$1,500 each, no strings attached, through a new program called Rx Kids announced by the State of Michigan and other partners this week. The program aims to provide every pregnant person and infant in the city of Flint, no income requirements attached, for food, prenatal care, rent, or whatever

they need most. the nation, Rx Kids expects to enroll approximately 1,200 mothers per year, based on Flint’s population.

Hanna-Attisha, associate dean for public health and Charles Stewart Mott endowed professor of public health at the MSU College of Human Medicine, will lead the program.

“The entire nation will learn from the city of Flint,” Lt. Gov.

Where will the \$16.5 million come from?

Rx Kids will receive \$16.5 million from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant in the FY2024 State of Michigan budget. The announcement in front of the MSU building downtown hosted by Gilchrist, State Senator



Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist standing with other politicians, community leaders and mothers with their babies who attended the event

(Photo by Tom Travis)

er they need most.

After giving birth, moms also will receive \$500 per month for their baby’s first year to cover formula, diapers, childcare and other expenses.

The Rx Kids program was announced by State Senator John Cherry, Michigan Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist and Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha of Michigan State University, at a press conference this week at the MSU building downtown.

Enrollment is set to begin in 2024 and designed to continue for at least five birth years of expectant mothers and newborns. The first community-wide program of its kind in

Gilchrist declared when announcing \$16.5 million from the State’s budget to Rx Kids, the nation’s first citywide prenatal and infant cash allowance program.

To obtain the Rx Kids booklet visit <https://issuu.com/msupublichealth/docs/flintrkids>.

Who’s eligible?

All pregnant women and infants who are residents of Flint will be eligible, regardless of the mother’s or family’s income. Families can spend the money in whatever way they think is best.

John Cherry and Hanna-Attisha.

Sen. Cherry explained that the Michigan state budget fund source is from a TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) block grant. It’s a one-time appropriation from the state budget and in addition to philanthropic dollars, that should be enough to fund the Rx Kids program for 5 years, Cherry explained.

Rx Kids is a collaboration between MSU and the University of Michigan. The two universities have partnered with a national expert on child allowances, Professor H. Luke Shaefer, director of Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan. Shae-

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Rx Kids ...

(Continued from Page 12)

fer has worked collaboratively with communities and policymakers to find new ways to prevent and alleviate poverty.

Shaefer has designed the program in such a way that outcomes can be measured and “We anticipate a major impact on poverty,” Cherry said. “The ongoing data gather will create a mechanism by which we can replicate Rx Kids across the state and other places across the nation.”

The project is estimated to cost \$55 million over five years. In April, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation committed a \$15 million challenge grant. Further support has come from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, Community Foundation of Great

er Flint, Hurley Foundation, Ruth Mott Foundation, and the Jamie and Denise Jacob Family Foundation. With over \$34 million raised to date, the program aims to start in 2024.



Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha (at podium) and Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist (right).
(Photo by Tom Travis)

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed the state’s budget into law July 30, including a line item of \$16.5 million for Rx Kids.

Ashley N. Strozier, Flint mom

“Rx Kids is the type of support that will fill a void and offer an intentional level of added support by encouraging all of those important milestones and well-care visits for mom and baby. This is the type of program that can enhance the success rates of healthy kids and healthy families.

“Rx Kids aims to improve health, equity and opportunity by increasing economic stability, housing and food security, health care utilization, and many other outcomes such as hope, joy, and dignity to improve infant and maternal health and well-being and life-long outcomes. Research will evaluate the impact of Rx Kids on participant health and communi-

(Continued on Page 15)



YOU'RE INVITED TO CELEBRATE!

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION ALL DAY
SEPTEMBER 23, 2023

PARADE | 10am | Downtown to MCC, Flint
CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL & OPEN HOUSE
Noon-4pm | MCC

Music, Food Trucks, Car Show, Craft Show, Tours of College Buildings & Grounds, Games, Prizes and More!

CONCERT: THE DAVE BENNETT QUARTET
6pm | Mott Memorial Building Auditorium, MCC

FIREWORKS | Dusk | Kearsley Park
(visible from MCC campus)

All events are free and open to the public

Be part of the Celebration!
Register your organization
for the parade, or apply for
the Car or Craft Show at
100.mcc.edu

100.mcc.edu
810.762.0200

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

A selection of events available to our readers is highlighted — beginning after our publication date of Sept. 6. It's a sampling of opportunities in the city. To submit events for our October issue, email info about your event to pisenber@gmail.com by Sept. 26.

Bikes on the Bricks

Fri.-Sun, Sept. 8-10, 8-10 p.m.

Join bike enthusiasts from around the county. There will be a bike show, police skills competition, police escorted rides, entertainment and fun! Free

Downtown Flint

For more info visit bikesonthebricks.com

or call Chris Everson at 810-908-7717.

2nd Friday ArtWalk

Sept. 8, 6-9 p.m.

Walk around downtown Flint and enjoy open house receptions, food, music and art. Free

Greater Flint Arts Council

816 S. Saginaw St., Flint

For more info visit greaterflintartscouncil.org

or call 810-238-ARTS (2787).

Gazillion Bubble Show

Sat., Sept. 9, 2-3 p.m.

World-famous bubble artist Deni Yang presents this interactive bubble extravaganza.

Tickets: \$21-\$65 with a 30% discount for Genesee County residents.

The Whiting

1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint

For tickets and more info visit

tickets.thefim.org/gazillion-bubbles.

Mindfulness Walk at Applewood

Sat., Sept. 9, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

This is the last of Applewood's guided tours of various places throughout the gardens and grounds. It encourages tranquility, well-being, and self-awareness. Free

Applewood Estate

1400 E. Kearsley St., Flint

For more info visit ruthmottfoundation.org/applewood.

Flint Repertory Theatre's "Rain On Fire"

Sept. 15-Oct. 1

Evening performances (Fri and Sat.) at 8 p.m., matinees are at 2 p.m.

Discovered at The Rep's New Works Festival. This is its world premier.

Strong language and adult situations, recommended for age 13 and up.

Tickets: \$27 (regular), \$22 (senior), and \$10 (students).

Flint Repertory Theatre's Elgood Theatre

1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint

For more info visit flintrep.org or call 810-237-1530.

KC and the Sunshine Band at The Capitol Theatre

Sept. 16, 8-10 p.m.

KC and the Sunshine Band perform.

Tickets: \$65-\$150.

The Capitol Theatre

140 E. 2nd St., Flint

For tickets and more info

call 810-237-1530

or visit thefim.org.

Nature Club: Frog Scientist

Sept. 17, 1-2:30 p.m.

Students will learn to identify frogs by sight and sound. Dress to be outside rain or shine.

Pre-registration required by Sept. 16.

Cost: \$5 per student, ages 7-12, all abilities.

For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum

2142 N. Genesee Rd., Burton

For more info visit geneseecountyparks.org.

Music in the Heart of the City

Sun., Sept. 17, 4 p.m.

Michael Idalski (tenor) and Tyler Kivel (piano) will perform "Art Songs of America."

Tickets are \$12, Students (with I.D.) \$5.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

711 S. Saginaw St., Flint

For more info call 810-234-8637.

Mott Community College Centennial Celebration

Sat, Sept. 23

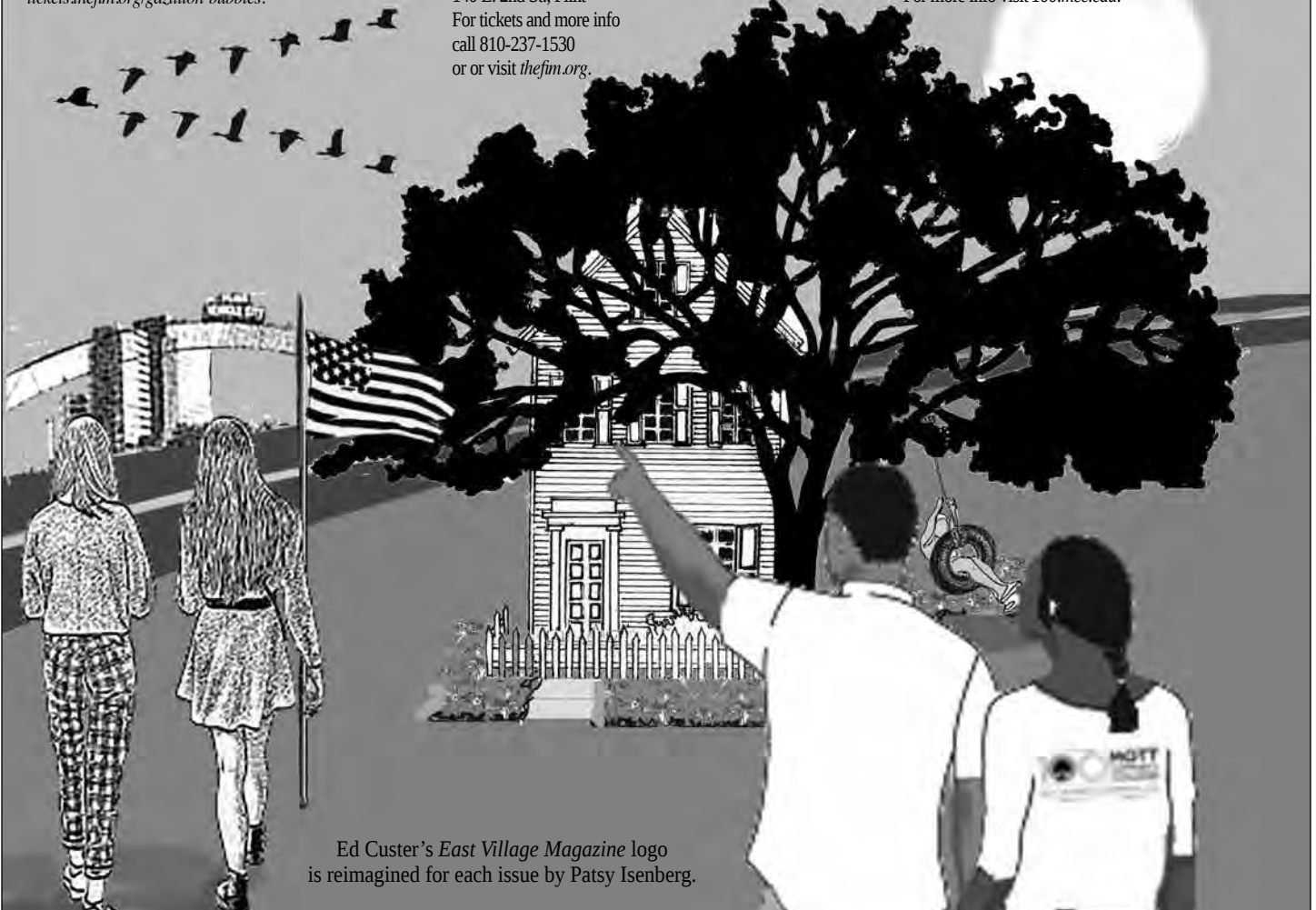
Events scheduled all day. Parade at 10 a.m., festival & open house noon-4 p.m., The Dave Bennett Quartet at 6 p.m., and Fireworks at dusk

All events are free and open to the public.

Mott Community College

1401 Court St., Flint

For more info visit 100.mcc.edu.



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

Rx Kids ...

(Continued from Page 13)

ty-wide outcomes,” Flint mom Ashley Strozier quoted in the Rx Kids booklet. The link for the Rx Kids booklet is at the top of this article.

Darwin Hence, Flint dad

“I am a parent and citizen of the city of Flint who has been helping Dr. Mona for almost a year on Rx Kids. When she first introduced it to the group, I instantly knew that it would be a huge task to achieve. With consistency and committed effort, the impossible is becoming a reality for the kids and residents of the city of Flint,” Flint dad, Darwin Hence quoted in the Rx Kids booklet. The link for the booklet is at the top of this article.

“When it’s for everybody there’s no stigma” Hanna-Attisha

“It’s for everybody -- not based on income. We’re the poorest city in the state... so when it’s for everybody, there’s no stigma. This [Rx Kids] is society saying we believe in you, we’re walking alongside of you... this is what we do..” Hanna-Attisha said.

“Early childhood science has demonstrated the lifelong consequences of adversity, but also the promise of bold, preventative and justice-driven interventions,” A nationally recognized pediatrician, Hanna-Attisha is the founding director of the MSU-Hurley Children’s Hospital Pediatric Public Health Initiative, a model community partnered program working to improve child health equity.

“An incredibly effective way to reduce child poverty and improve health and well-being” Dr. Shaeffer

“The evidence is piling up that direct cash payments to families with children are an incredibly effective way to reduce child poverty and improve health and well-being. Rx Kids takes

this work to the next level,” said Shaeffer. “We’re excited to see the immense good that can be accomplished by supporting all expectant and new mothers across the entire city of Flint, and to share these lessons with the nation.”



Mrs. Ashley Strozier and daughter Briella Strozier, age 1.

(Photo credit: Michigan State University Charles Stewart Mott Department of Public Health)

Other funders

The Ruth Mott Foundation has awarded \$1.2 million to Michigan State University for Rx Kids, “We’re incredibly proud to support this innovative citywide approach to investing in Flint children and families, especially in the wake of the water crisis and a global pandemic,” said Raquel Thueme, president of the Ruth Mott Foundation. The Ruth Mott Foundation’s award of \$1.2 million

over three years is the largest single grant commitment in the history of the Foundation, which has focused its grantmaking on the northern half of Flint since 2016.

“According to U.S. Census data, approximately one in every two children in Flint grows up in poverty – a rate that is more than three times worse than the state and national childhood poverty rates. The childhood poverty rate in some north Flint neighborhoods is as high as 80%, as shown in Census data displayed on the Foundation’s North Flint Community Dashboard. Children living in areas of concentrated poverty are more likely to have poorer health and more likely to experience developmental and academic difficulties.

“By providing funds that families can use for whatever they need most, Rx Kids aims to disrupt a root cause of inequities and disparities while supporting families with dignity and trust during the developmentally crucial first year of a child’s life,” according to a press release from the Ruth Mott Foundation.

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Village Life ...

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before. I’m a lover not a hater. And yet here I am devising a violent death for a cute little creature. I’ve always thought mice were cute. Except I’ve never wanted to touch one on purpose. But I’m not a fan of touching any animal. Not dogs, cats, horses, any animal. I feel like I have to immediately wash my hands after I touch an animal. I don’t hate them. I support animal rights but I just don’t want the animals touching me.

Mice are cute in every other context, in photos and cartoons, but not in the context of running around in my shower. But now that I had

washed up, gotten dressed was my confidence built up? No, I was a 190 pound man, dressed -- but still afraid.

These little critters really know how to dominate a story. When you’re sitting at home and see a mouse dart along the wall it’s startling. I was in a church once when a mouse decided to dart across the church rather than along the wall which is their usual path. A woman happened to be looking down and saw it dart across her foot. She let out a scream and a jump during the sermon. In a different church a mouse started climbing the wall behind the preacher while he was preaching. The congregation started chuckling. The

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Village Life

If a mouse could take a shower, what does a naked guy do?

By Tom Travis

Both the mouse and I were upset with the positions we found ourselves in. I flipped on the light inside my shower and turned the water on as I've done every morning. But this morning a mouse scampered across the bottom of my tub/shower. It was clawing desperately to get out of the tub. I jumped back with a startled scream. It turned and looked at me, I stared at the mouse. I could see his little mouse heart beating rapidly. I could feel my own heart beating rapidly. There we stood staring at each other -- me naked and afraid.

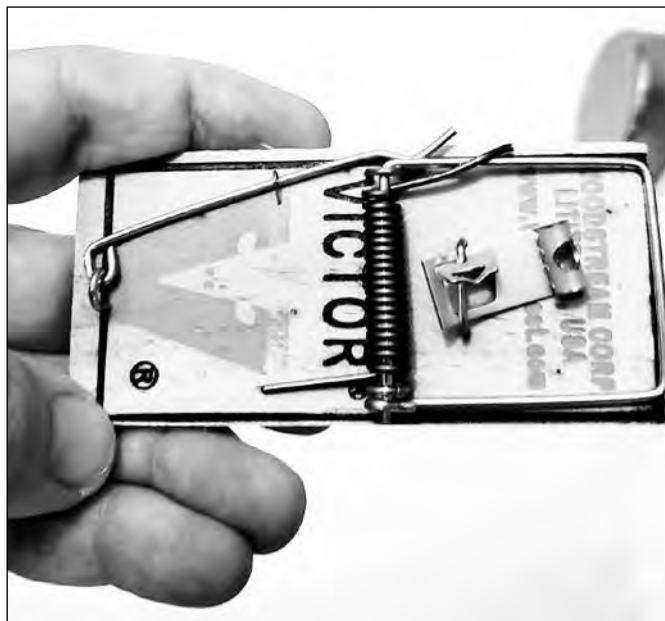
In a nanosecond the options spun through my mind - grab the mouse and throw it outside (not in your wildest dream would I ever intentionally touch a mouse) so that option was out; get a container with a lid; put the container over the mouse; put the lid on and take it outside. Even the old trick from Bugs Bunny cartoons came to mind: get a broom and try to beat it to death. The flash of those ideas had zero appeal to me.

I calmed down for a moment. Took a deep breath and tried to map out more reasonable ideas of how to get rid of a mouse in my shower. How'd the mouse get there in the first place you might be asking. My house is over a hundred years old and I estimate my bathroom was remodeled in the 80s.

The tiles in the shower probably need to be replaced because one of them came off, leaving what I thought a miniscule hole into the wall. It's pretty amazing mice can get through little tiny holes. And this was a baby mouse. I'm assumed the mouse was wandering through the boards and plaster behind the walls and saw an opening and thought, "Oh, I'll try this hole." Or maybe he came up through the drain. Do mice come up through drains? I don't know.

In my 100-year-old house I have lots of mouse traps set at key locations,

high mouse trafficked areas, in my house. There are more mouse traps stacked in the closet. I grabbed one and put some Swiss cheese I'd bought from Aldi the previous night, not Queen's Provisions type of cheese. Usually I slop some peanut butter on mouse traps, but no peanut butter in my cupboard that day.



One of the many mousetraps found around my house

(Photo by Tom Travis)

Still naked and afraid, I had tried to start this shower about 20 minutes before I had to be somewhere. I didn't have time to get the mouse, get ready and not be late. So I took an old fashioned sponge bath with a washcloth and my bathroom sink. For then, it would have to do.

As I washed up, my mind was still spinning with ideas of how to get rid of the mouse in my shower. By the time I got ready to leave I decided I'd leave the triggered mouse trap in the shower for now and see if my mousketeer buddy would take the bait. My plan was that the mouse would get hungry, try the Swiss cheese from Aldis and SNAP!

I kept thinking, if I was a real man I could get this little baby mouse out of my life. You know, just grab the tiny bull by the horns -- or mouseie ears -- and take it down. But as I stood there in my 190

pounds of nakedness, heart racing, mind spinning with ideas, I got so mad I was made to feel vulnerable by this creature that didn't even weigh a half a pound.

A friend gave me some mice advice once, "remember, they're much more afraid of you than you are of them." Wrong!

I left the house for the day with mouse and swiss cheese in my shower. I was gone for about three hours. Came home for lunch and did a mouse check. The trap still had the swiss cheese on it and the mouse, in a rather cute way, was curled up in the drain sleeping. I kicked the side of the tub to wake it up.

I went into the kitchen to make my lunch again, ruminating over ideas of how to get rid of the mouse. I chopped and mixed my lunch and then thought of a plank of wood I had in the utility closet. I figured I'd put the wood plank in the shower with one end touching the floor of the shower and the other end extending over the top edge of the shower/tub all. The

mouse could go up the wood and jump off. Would a mouse jump to the floor?

Then I left the house and went to some more meetings. Again after about three hours I returned home. I'm very good at compartmentalizing things going on in my life. While I was gone I had put the mouse dilemma going on in my shower into a compartment in my brain, not even thinking about it.

I trepidatiously walked into my bedroom then into the bathroom. Voila... No mouse. The trap was still set, the cheese in place. It must have chosen life by walking up the plank and diving off the edge of the tub. So that means it must be somewhere in the house. Which is fine with me. I have traps set all over the place, so his doom was certain.

I'm not a killer yet I've killed mice

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