

East Village

Magazine

December 2016



Photograph by Edwin D. Custer

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Commentary Post-mortem on the 2016 election: a “Top Ten” list of questions

By *Paul Rozycki*

We all thought it would be over after Nov. 8. Almost everyone expected Hillary to win by a close, but decent margin. She had a half dozen ways she could win the Electoral College. Trump barely had one.

Yet after the shock and dismay of this unprecedented and vicious campaign, we are still reeling from the results.

It may take years to assess the full impact and implications of the 2016 campaign, but there are at least 10 things worth examining as we look back at the scarred and scorched political landscape of the past year.

Obviously, the dominant figure this year has been Donald Trump. Almost no one thought he had the slightest chance of winning either the Republican nomination or the November election. In his wake, there is much to be resolved and more than a few questions. Here are a few for starters:

• **Electoral College:** For the second time in 16 years, and the fifth time in our history, the Electoral College has chosen the person who finished second in the popular vote. At the moment, Hillary’s popular vote margin is approaching 2 million votes. Are these two recent failures a sign that it’s time to revisit this old and odd way of electing presidents?

• **Presidential Campaigns:** Donald Trump broke almost every traditional rule of presidential campaigns----and won. Based on past history he should have lost because of his endless insults, his lack of a campaign organization, the fact that Hillary outspent him, his failure to win any of the debates, and his complete lack of governmental experience. Just one of those should have destroyed any other candidate. Are all the ‘old rules’ of the game gone forever? What will the new rules of political campaigns look like?

• **White Working Class:** With his angry appeal to the white working class, has Trump awakened a sleeping giant, or is this the last hurrah of a passing generation, and a backlash against an emerging and changing America that is rising in the new century?

• **Campaign Promises:** After only a few weeks, Trump has retracted or modified a long list of his campaign promises and threats — erasing the Affordable Care Act, denying climate change, imprisoning

Hillary, building a wall with Mexico, getting rid of lobbyists and banning all Muslims. Thankfully, he has stepped back from these, but what will he really do, and what will it mean for his ardent supporters?

• **A Presidential Trump:** For the week following the election, Trump acted “presidential” in his acceptance speech and tried to reach out to “unite all Americans.” But, within days he was picking fights on Twitter with the casts of both “Hamilton” and “Saturday Night Live.” Can the “presidential Trump” last more than a few days? How will he react to something more threatening than a Broadway play or a comedy show skit?

• **Fake News:** This has been the “fake news” election, where blatantly and intentionally false stories often garnered more readers and internet hits than legitimate news sources. In an age where editors and reporters are being forced out, and newspapers are shrinking, will we realize how critical a role they play? And whatever flaws one might find in the mainstream media, they are immensely more reliable than random tweets or Facebook postings from anonymous sources. When the media has been the target of many of Trump’s attacks, how will a free press manage in the hostile environment now developing?

• **Uniting the Nation:** Is there any hope that Trump will be able to unite the nation when he appoints alt-right spokespersons such as Steve Bannon to White House positions? Will Trump be willing to denounce the racists, white nationalists, and wanna-be Nazis that have emerged as part of his movement? Will he be able, and willing, to rein in the alt-right fringe that has been energized by Trump’s victory? Is there any serious chance that he can heal the breach with all those he had offended in the last 18 months?

• **Political Parties:** What will the Republican and Democratic parties look like in the future? Will Democrats be able to regain the title of “The Party of the Working Man” and remain the party of minorities? Will Republicans remain the party of big business if Trump pursues his protectionist policy? Will it remain a conservative party? Do Bernie Sanders Democrats and Republican Trump

(Continued on Page 5.)

Cover: Carillon bells at Kettering



Photo of the Month: Wreaths for the season at St. Paul's Episcopal

Pierce Park, millage details, Crim education plans topics at CCNA

By Nic Custer

A proposal has emerged for reuse of the long-vacant Pierce Golf Course, City Administrator Sylvester Jones told the College Cultural Neighborhood Association (CCNA) at its November meeting.

Jones also addressed Kearsley Manor residents' concerns about a rental inspection fee issue with their landlord.

Other business at the meeting included details on the safety millage results, a report on a Crim Fitness Foundation community education initiative and an overview of neighborhood real estate prices.

Regarding the golf course, Jones told members the city has been trying to make partnerships with like-minded organizations who can reuse vacant public facilities. He said the city received a proposal from Gear Up 2 Lead for the Pierce Community Center and Golf Course, but he did not offer any details.

He said because it seemed Gear Up 2 Lead had not yet explained their plans to the neighborhood, city officials did not want to proceed without hearing public comment.

"We believe it's important the residents have some dialogue with this group before the city makes its decision," Jones said.

He said he would invite the organization's leadership to the January CCNA meeting to present their idea for leasing the space. That would allow the city to hear residents' feedback before moving forward.

Jones said he also will determine whether the organization has the necessary resources

to manage the facility so the city will no longer have to pay for mowing, plowing and utility costs. "If they don't, we don't want to enter into a partnership with them," he said.

He said Gear Up 2 Lead was the only organization to submit a proposal for the site to the city so far. The organization offered to lease the vacant community center for \$1 per month. The city may ask for a larger lease amount if the proposal is accepted, Jones said.

Kearsley Manor inspection fee upset clarified

Andy Everman questioned Jones about letters Kearsley Manor residents received from their landlord stating the city is charging each resident a \$5 inspection fee. Jones explained it appeared the property owner is trying to get out of paying his rental inspection fees by claiming the city is asking the tenants to pay the cost themselves.

"Kearsley Manor had not paid their rental inspection since 2009," Jones said. "This gentleman has been raising the rent at this facility but has not been paying for the rental inspection since 2009. And so his way of getting out of it is to say, 'the city of Flint is asking me to do this.' The city of Flint is not asking him to do it," Jones clarified.

Jones said rental inspections hadn't been a priority under the Emergency Financial Managers. Earlier that day, Mayor Karen Weaver visited Kearsley Manor to speak with residents directly and called the property owner, who lives in Arizona. Jones said she let

the owner know the city is holding him responsible for the rental inspection fee and not the tenants. Jones said the rental inspection price is based on the number of units in a property.

Millage approval means more firefighters, reopening Station 8

He also announced that because city residents voted to renew a public safety millage in early November, the Flint Fire Department will be eligible to receive a federal SAFER grant to hire 33 firefighters and reopen the Station 8 firehouse on Atherton Road.

Flint Fire Chief Raymond Barton said he appreciated the community support for the public safety millage renewal. He said funding generated by the millage renewal made the difference in whether additional federal funds were available. The fire department will be able to reopen Station 8 instead of having to close Station 3 and lay off several firefighters, which would have occurred if the millage and grant funds were unavailable. Barton said this will allow firefighters to respond to fires more quickly because they can fully staff fire trucks and will have the minimum four firefighters required on site to immediately enter burning structures instead of a three-person fire truck crew waiting for additional backup.

Crim Foundation to bolster Pierce "community center" approach

In other news, Kyle Peppin, Crim Fitness Foundation's Pierce Creative Arts Elementary community school director, told members Crim has partnered with Flint Community

(Continued on Page 5.)

... CCNA

(Continued from Page 4.)

Schools to provide supplemental education programs for students in all 11 Flint schools.

Peppin said the program will include extracurricular programs for both children and adults at Pierce Elementary, which allows it to function more like a community center.

A Crim adult runners' club is set to be the first program for adults at the school, but Peppin said the foundation also wants to hear what residents would like to see. He distributed a survey asking for other suggestions. He said a DM Burr security officer will be present at the building whenever programs are occurring.

Because arts have been cut from the schools, the Crim Foundation is also looking for volunteers to help teach art classes, Peppin said.

The survey also mentioned volunteer opportunities for residents to help youth in education, sports, mentoring, safe pathways to school or for neighborhood cleanups.

Peppin said the foundation, like the city of Flint, is interested in working with the former Pierce Golf Club and would welcome suggestions for reuse of that site. He pointed out that in 2014, Crim used the golf course for a 3-mile "steeplechase" cross-country race. More information on the community education initiative is at flint-communityed.org. More information about Pierce Elementary is available from Peppin at 516-1171 or at kpeppin@crim.org.

CCNA "distressed homes" down, sales prices up

Realtor Mark Fisher reported 28 houses are for sale in the neighborhood. This number was typical since inventory rises and sales decrease in early winter. He said only one house for sale is considered distressed – that is, either a short sale or foreclosure. This is the lowest number of distressed homes for sale in the neighborhood since before 2008. Fisher has been tracking home sales' price per square foot since 2013. The current average is \$37 per square foot, which has risen from an average of \$18 per square foot in 2013. Fisher said the water crisis has not slowed down sales in the neighborhood and all houses attempting to get a mortgage have their water tested anyway. He said he has not seen many homes for sale that have high lead levels.

The group will meet next at 7 p.m. Jan. 19, 2017 at MCC's RTC auditorium.

EVM Managing Editor Nic Custer can be reached at niceastvillage@gmail.com

COLLEGE CULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
www.ccnafint.org

Neighborhood Watch meets Thurs., Dec. 15, 7-9 pm, in MCC's RTC 1301
Members meet Thurs., Jan. 19, 2017, 7-9 pm in MCC's RTC Auditorium

... Post-mortem

(Continued from Page 3.)

supporters have anything in common?

• **Local Campaigns:** On the local level, one of the strangest things was how quiet campaigns were for everything but the presidential contest. Most of the candidates for countywide offices were unopposed, and campaigning and competition for many of the other offices were surprisingly limited. In a typical election year, every street corner is littered with a forest of yard signs. This year there were relatively few. Was this simply a reaction to the distracting national election, or a sign of deep frustration (or satisfaction) with our local leaders?

• **Flint Water Crisis:** One key question is the effect of Trump's election on Flint

and its water crisis. Mayor Weaver came out strong for Hillary and raised the Flint water issue at the Democratic National Convention quite effectively. Will that hurt her, and Flint, when the Republicans come to the White House in January? Or will Trump's move to rebuild our infrastructure include money for Flint's water lines? Will he be willing to work with Governor Snyder and Detroit Mayor Duggan?

In the end, these are most likely only the first of many questions that we will have over the next four years. The answers may be as unpredictable as this election.

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

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Jan Worth-Nelson, Editor, East Village Magazine

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PepsiCo grant funds Food Bank-managed community help centers

By Jan Worth-Nelson

A \$570,000 grant from the PepsiCo Foundation was put to work last month with the launch of two Food Bank-managed community “help centers” aimed at continuing recovery efforts from the Flint water crisis.

In a chilly parking lot under sunny skies at Bethel United Methodist Church, officials from PepsiCo, along with city officials and community leaders, celebrated the collaboration that brings two trucks, supplies of bottled water, food and fresh produce, personal care items, nutritional service, and physical and mental health services.

The two centers are at Bethel, 1309 N. Ballenger, and at Greater Holy Temple COGIC, 6702 N. Dort Hwy.

Hours of the centers are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

“The water in Flint still isn’t safe to drink without a filter,” Flint Mayor Karen Weaver noted, while thanking PepsiCo for its donation. “This water crisis is much bigger than Flint can handle alone. But with help from our government and community organizations, we will emerge from this stronger and better than before.”

In addition to the food and water supplies, PepsiCo has provided employees pro bono through the PepsiCorps program to consult with local nonprofits about logistics and warehousing, assessing residents’ needs and efficient ways to store and deliver goods and services.

The grant also includes \$225,000 to supply nutritious meals for Flint school children. Much attention in the water crisis has focused on child nutrition, based on evidence that some foods can provide “lead mitigation” to those poisoned.

Tony West, PepsiCo general counsel and executive vice president of public policy and governmental affairs, who also serves as president of the PepsiCo Foundation, said “We consider Flint part of the PepsiCo family,” noting that the company employs about 150 Flint residents and neighbors and over 3,000 people statewide in bottling and distribution centers.

“We recognize if our communities don’t succeed, we don’t succeed,” he said.

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan will manage the help centers. Other partners in the program include the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the United Way of Genesee County, Genesee Health Systems, and GST Michigan Works.

The Food Bank has been a key player in relief and recovery efforts during the water crisis, distributing more than 26 million bottles of water and more than 120 truckloads of lead-mitigating foods to Flint residents, according to a press release provided at the launch. The Food Bank also reports it has pro-

vided 464,104 meals rich in lead-mitigating nutrients to the Genesee Intermediate School District’s Head Start program. Statewide, the Food Bank has distributed over 25 million pounds of food yearly through a network of 415 partner agencies in 22 counties.

William Kerr, president of the Food Bank, praised how a network of over 75 agencies in the city of Flint, along with “the trust of the community of Flint itself” had galvanized around the recovery efforts and in particular, the development of the help centers. “So many groups – United Way, Genesee Health Systems, the State of Michigan – everybody came together around the idea.

“In my 22 years, this is one of the greatest collaborations I’ve ever seen in the city of Flint,” Kerr said.

And he expressed gratitude for the funding support of the PepsiCo response. “The help centers are a testament to the resilient strength of Flint,” he said. “The past year has been extremely difficult, yet community leaders and residents continue to work

together to move forward and recover.”

Among those millions of bottles of water flooding into Flint have been PepsiCo’s Aquafina brand. Asked about the source of that water, considering Flint residents’ concerns about their water quality, a PepsiCo spokeswoman confirmed Aquafina comes from “municipal water sources, regulated by the EPA” – technically the same as Flint’s water before the lead debacle – in essence, from the same sources as tap water.

She added that Aquafina goes through a trademarked purification process known as HydRo-7, which includes “reverse osmosis and other filtering and purification methods to remove things like chlorides, salts and other substances that can affect a water’s taste,” according to an Aquafina website.

The PepsiCo grant to Flint includes about \$50,000 for “recycling education and support” in the Flint schools, the spokeswoman said.

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

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Starting with the next issue, *East Village Magazine* will be introducing some new writers and new features. What stories would you like us to tell? What issues would you like us to deal with? For now, please email us your ideas at eastvillage@sbcglobal.net. Next month we’ll offer a survey to be completed by mail or online.

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Montessori classroom offers new learning options for Flint public schools

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Can a classroom that allows students to learn at their own pace, help one another, and follow their natural curiosities, actually work in a public school system?

And could such a teaching approach enrich options for Flint students and help convince reluctant parents to bring their children back to the public schools?

A group of Flint-area parents fervently believe the answer to both questions is “yes.”

Due to their efforts and a receptive superintendent of schools, a kindergarten/first grade Montessori classroom has been established within the Flint Community School (FCS) district.

The pilot class, launched in the 2016-17 school year, meets in a room the district provided at Durant-Tuuri-Mott Elementary School. Its 13 students are supervised by teacher Michele Stinson and UM-Flint student teacher Amanda Ling. The Montessori system limits the student-teacher ratio to 17-1.

Free to all Flint students

The parents’ group and the district hope the idea will catch on with other parents and teachers and already plan to add a second Montessori classroom next fall. They are “actively recruiting” now for 2017-2018.

What’s unusual about the FCS/Montessori arrangement is that participating in the classroom is tuition-free and open to all kids in the Flint district, according to Vivian Kao, a college professor, resident of the College Cultural neighborhood since 2015, and one of the parents on the organizing committee.

“Usually, Montessori programs are in private schools, and they have a reputation for being for ‘high income, high-middle class white suburban’ kids – they can be expensive. But this is available for any Flint student,” just like any of the other educational opportunities in the district, she noted.

Based on the work and ideas of early 20th century Italian educator Maria Montessori, the Montessori system, according to materials provided for prospective parents by program leaders, is a way of teaching in which students

- “learn at their own pace and have freedom within limits
- learn from each other in multi-age classrooms
- learn with hands-on materials, moving from concrete to abstract concepts and
- learn by following their natural curiosities.”

Kao said in a Montessori classroom students don’t sit in desks and are not all facing forward in rows as in a traditional classroom. The Montessori classroom is designed with different zones – with sup-

plies students can work on set up on low shelves so students can get them down themselves.

There is always a “peace corner,” she said, where kids go to read or just to sit and be calm. But it’s not everybody sitting by themselves. They can get up whenever they want and they don’t have to ask to go to the bathroom, she said.

Critiques have emerged over the decades about the Montessori system as in a 2012 *Atlantic* magazine feature, “The Great Montessori Schism”: it is too “individual,” its materials limit creativity, it has not kept up with evolving cognitive theory – but the Flint Montessori parents say they believe the program has proven flexible and most of all want their children and any others in the district to have the choice.

Superintendent Bilal Tawwab, in an email to East Village Magazine, agreed. “Flint Community Schools recognizes that families want and need a variety of high-quality options for their children, as one size does not fit all,” he wrote. “That is why we are so pleased to add the Montessori program.”

Elizabeth Jordan, a parent who spearheaded the initiative and now coordinates meetings and communications, said feedback about the program from families so far has been “overwhelmingly positive, and the teacher is truly excited to work in a Montessori classroom.”

Following an Okemos model

Kao said the Flint effort is modeled after a similar program in the Okemos schools, where the district added one Montessori grade level a year and now has moved into its own building – a formerly closed one.

The Okemos findings so far suggest that Montessori students do just as well or better than students in regular classes in required state standardized tests, Kao said.

While test results are politically and educationally promising, there can be some adjustments in adapting Montessori within a regular school system, and the parents know they will have to make compromises. For instance, the Flint Montessori students wear uniforms just like all other Flint public school students and report cards have to be devised to mediate between the Montessori system, which does not assign grades, and a more traditional approach.

There also are adjustments for the kids themselves, which is one of the reasons the parents’ group hopes the program will eventually be available for higher grades.

“For kids who get used to taking responsibility for their own learning in a Montessori preschool, transitioning to a traditional school environment can be jarring – sitting at a desk and doing assigned work does not fit every kid (or a lot of

adults!),” Jordan said.

She added the pilot program this year attracted students from “across Flint and beyond – including those who previously looked to private and charter schools.”

A “real Flint gem”

“No one else in the county offers this kind of public Montessori elementary program, so Flint has a real gem,” she said.

For the inaugural group of parents, the stakes are high in having a public school Montessori option. Their hopes for the expansion of the Montessori option are not just about the pedagogy itself or about their children alone, but about trying to help save public education in Flint.

Because of the way the state funds public education, paying districts “by the head,” parents who choose to take their kids out of the public system seeking different educational options end up short-changing public school funding while trying to do the best for their kids, Kao noted. The state pays school districts about \$7,000 per student per year.

“The system the state has created is one in which you either choose your child or your community – and that’s ridiculous. In reality the money each of our kids brings into the district helps all the students, not just our own.”

Kao and her husband Ben Pauli, a Kettering social science professor, see parallels between the emergency manager phenomenon and the way public schools are squeezed in cities like Flint.

For “shrinking cities” like Flint, Kao and Pauli contend, the result of the state funding system compounds a city’s struggles, reducing resources to districts that need it most and forcing the public schools to compete with others.

“Public schools should not have to advertise for students,” Kao said.

Funding from Welch Foundation

Start-up costs for a batch of standardized Montessori materials – what students can choose from to work on – were covered by a grant from the Welch Foundation. The foundation also is paying for the Montessori teacher training and certification.

Montessori teachers in the public school system must be double-certified – both by the state and by the Montessori system, Kao stated.

Jordan said the Flint Community School district “has reaffirmed to us their support

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Flint water not likely cause of shigella outbreak: CDC officials

By Jan Worth-Nelson

An outbreak of shigella bacteria in Genesee and Saginaw counties over the past eight months does not appear to have been caused by Flint's drinking water system, a team of researchers from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention told the Flint Recovery Group (FRG) by phone in a recent presentation at City Hall.

A total of 180 cases of the highly-contagious disease, called shigellosis, which can cause severe abdominal discomfort and bloody diarrhea, have been confirmed since March — 129 in Genesee County and 51 in Saginaw County, according to Jevon McFadden, a medical epidemiologist with CDC's Career Epidemiology Field Officer Program.



CDC's Dr. Jevon McFadden

The disease primarily struck children locally — with 51 percent of those afflicted 9 years old or younger. A total of 26 percent were younger than 5. McFadden said the outbreak had peaked in June and July and has subsided dramatically since, with no new cases reported since Oct. 31.

The CDC team came to Flint in early October to work with the state Department of Health and Human Services and the Genesee County Health Department to investigate the outbreak.

They have been interviewing members of households where people got sick, collecting and testing bacteria samples and mapping where illnesses have occurred “to see if there is a link between water quality issues, like water main breaks and low chlorine levels and

the people who got sick,” McFadden said.

He said the interview portion of the work is finished, and that results still are coming in on the lab testing and mapping.

However, Paul McClung, an epidemic intelligence service officer with the CDC's Waterborne Disease Prevention Branch, offered three “initial conclusions” from the work completed so far.

First, shigella does not appear to be spreading through a drinking water system — a concern vital to Flint residents uneasy about the dangers of the system in light of the water crisis.

The researchers reported that “almost all of the people from Flint who got sick (90 percent) drank only bottled water.” In fact, 65 percent of Flint residents who contracted the disease drank only bottled water to brush their teeth.

“Because so few of these people were consuming water from the drinking water system, it is likely they became infected with Shigella bacteria from a source other than the water,” the researchers stated.

Also, the people who got sick did not share a common drinking water source, suggesting water use is not likely to be a common link between people who got sick.

They used water from multiple different drinking water systems, and more than 15 percent used water from private wells.

Second, shigella bacteria appear to be spreading in the community from person to person — particularly the young. A total of 59 percent of those who got sick either wore diapers, changed diapers, or came into contact with a person wearing diapers in the week before they became ill.

“This suggests the bacteria could have been passed from the feces (poop) of sick children to their siblings, friends or care-

givers — one of the most common ways shigella bacteria spread in a community.”

The researchers said their data suggests the outbreak did not seem to originate from a single source, such as a restaurant, drinking water system, or swimming pool.

Third, the outbreak is slowing down, with no new cases reported so far in November.

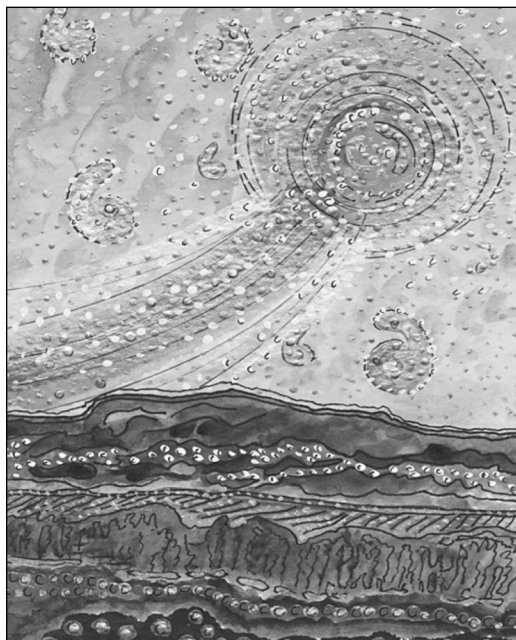
Nonetheless, the researchers strongly urged continuing prevention efforts, in particular “good hand washing.”

A handout provided at the meeting emphasized frequent hand washing with soap and water after using the toilet or changing diapers, before preparing food or eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

The conclusions presented to the FRG also were summarized in a memo signed by Dr. Michael Beach from the CDC, along with Dr. Eden Wells from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Dr. Gary Johnson from the Genesee County Health Department.

In a follow-up email, McFadden added that the CDC's Career Epidemiology Field Officer Program “assigns experienced CDC epidemiologists to field sites in response to requests from state and local health departments,” and is one of the forms of assistance that CDC provides. The focus of field assignees like McFadden and his team, he said, is on “building epidemiologic capacity within state and local health departments for responding to a variety of public health emergencies, including outbreaks like the shigellosis one in Saginaw and Genesee Counties.”

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



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CASPER survey: Flint residents report physical, behavioral woes

By Megan Ockert

Residents of many Flint households have been experiencing worsening of their behavioral health, including trouble concentrating, signs of depression and increased anxiety or stress since the Flint water crisis began, according to a recent survey of 182 randomly selected residences conducted by a consortium of local, state and federal health officials.

The survey was carried out as a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response, commonly referred to as CASPER. It was requested by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) on behalf of the Flint Community Resilience Group, Data & Gap Analysis Workgroup, from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to assist in recovery efforts.

Results of the community assessment were announced in early November.

The CASPER assessment found that 65.6% of surveyed households, including adults 21 or older, reported at least one or more new or worsening behavioral health concerns since the crisis began.

The study also found that households containing younger family members have been negatively affected, with 54.3% of Flint households with residents younger than 21 reporting they have experienced one or more behavioral health concerns.

The assessment asked Flint residents to answer questions related to their physical and behavioral health and how each has been affected by the water crisis, which had been brewing since the 2014 water changeover but exploded into local and national attention in October, 2015.

On April 25, 2014, the city of Flint changed the municipal water source from the Detroit-supplied Lake Huron water to the Flint River. The switch in the water source resulted in the corrosion of water pipes and leaching of lead and other contaminants into the city's drinking water. In succeeding months, hundreds of children and adults showed increased levels of lead, a toxin extremely dangerous to humans, in their blood.

The surveyors found that nearly half of household representatives reported some physical health concerns. The most common were skin irritation or rashes, which prompted an investigation by the MDHHS in conjunction with the CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in February.

Fatigue, nausea, aches and pains

In addition to rashes, residents reported symptoms such as fatigue, nausea, forgetfulness, and muscle aches and pains since the water crisis began.

Surveys were conducted in mid-May. Fifteen teams of two went door-to-door to

randomly selected homes throughout Flint.

The Centers for Disease Control provided interview teams with a three-hour training before they interviewed 182 households.

As stated on www.cdc.gov, a CASPER is “an epidemiologic technique designed to provide quick and low-cost household-based information about a specific community.”

Major areas of study included self-reported household and individual behavioral health concerns for adults and children since the crisis began; household access to behavioral health services; self-reported physical health concerns; water-related resource needs and barriers to resources; and the effectiveness of the communication from relevant government and community agencies with the community.

Data helps recovery planning

Patricia Reynolds, an epidemiologist for the Genesee County Health System, stressed the importance of the CASPER assessment. She said, “This survey will help give us a deeper understanding of what the community requires and will help us determine how best to ensure that those needs are fulfilled.”

One tool that the Genesee County Health System made available to Flint residents is MyFlintStrong.com. Announced in August, this interactive website offers a platform for teaching people how to overcome trauma and stress often associated with events like the Flint water crisis.

“What we’ve learned over the years in emergency response and recovery is that all crises are unique, yet have common elements – including increased behavioral health needs,” said Dr. Nicole Lurie, assistant secretary for preparedness and response with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Lurie has been the team leader for the federal government’s response to the Flint water crisis.

According to their report, investigators also conducted water-quality tests by taking water samples from 170 homes in Flint where people reported rashes. Investigators were unable to determine if the lead in the water caused the residents to develop rashes.

However, the ATSDR cautions that there are limitations to their findings because the samples for the survey were all taken at a single time from each household, and water quality and concentration of metals can change over time. It is possible that a substance was present in the water at the time the participants’ rashes began but was no longer in the water at the time of testing.

Director Nick Lyon of the MDHHS, said, “We are committed to continuing our efforts to help residents connect with the behavioral and physical health resources that are right for them. With the right support, information, and collaboration, we can continue to improve the short- and long-term health out-

comes in Flint.”

Results of the CASPER study are continuing to help guide ongoing recovery efforts in Flint. The National Disaster Distress Hotline remains open 24/7, and crisis counseling also is being offered in addition to other actions that have been taken to address the emerging behavioral health concerns since the water crisis.

Prevention screening

Because children are more susceptible than adults to the adverse effects of lead exposure due to hand-to-mouth actions, higher physiological uptake rates, and developing biological systems, particular attention is being placed on their behavioral health services, including prevention screening and early intervention for children and youth. Infant mental health and home-based services are also being offered.

To aid the city of Flint, the MDHHS received a \$500,000 emergency response grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) that went toward hiring outreach workers from the Flint community to provide crisis support for underserved adults via a Mobile Mental Health Unit.

In an earlier interview with *East Village Magazine*, Elizabeth Burch, Genesee Health System supervisor, stated the elderly are particularly affected by the water crisis because their limited mobility and isolation can cause them to “miss out” on new developments pertaining to the water crisis and information about available resources.

The funding will also expand current behavioral health services to all affected adults in Flint and educate Flint residents about services and support available to them as well as where to go to receive those services. In addition, the grant will help employ more personnel to provide services such as lead testing, treatment and outreach.

As stated on michigan.gov, federal, state and local partners will continue to provide behavioral health services to the Flint community, and will use the findings of the Flint CASPER to support these efforts. To view the full CASPER assessment, visit [www.http://www.michigan.gov/flintwater/0,6092,7-345-76930--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/flintwater/0,6092,7-345-76930--,00.html). For more information regarding the resources available in Flint, visit www.michigan.gov/flintwater.

Lurie assured Flint residents that “federal agencies have been working with the state and community to meet these needs” identified in the study. An overview of the federal response to the crisis can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016> under Flint water crisis recovery.

EVM staff writer Megan Ockert can be reached at ockertma@gmail.com.

Longtime community landmark Woodside Church up for sale

By Jan Worth-Nelson

Woodside Church, designed by internationally-known Finnish architect Eero Saarinen and built by his brother-in-law Robert F. Swanson in 1952, has been put up for sale by the congregation, who voted on it at an Oct. 30 congregational meeting.

A press release issued Tuesday said the congregation is beginning its search for a new home and “expects to invest itself more deeply in what the church stands for.”

Rev. Dr. Deborah Conrad, senior minister of the College Cultural neighborhood landmark since February, 2014, said the action was “a first step toward establishing a new home and focusing its efforts and resources on the needs of the broader community.” The church is located at 1509 E. Court St.



Deborah Conrad, Woodside minister since 2014

She characterized the congregation's decision as occurring in “a time of growth,” bringing in 15 new members just last month. She noted the church has long been known for its “progressive theology and social activism.”

Karen Eaton, the congregation's moderator – the equivalent of a president of a congregation – said, “It has been a wonderful home for many years; but, with a heritage of over 160 years dedicated to social justice, we must ensure our resources can be fully devoted to our mission.”

Donald Harbin, a College Cultural neighborhood resident and member of Woodside since 1994 with his wife Elizabeth Perkins-Harbin, served on a committee that spent the last year pursuing options for the church.

“As a group we concluded that the only option for the church to survive was to downsize and sell the beautiful building that we all love. ‘Mission over mansion’ as we like to say,” Harbin said.

The church currently has about 120 members and an attendance of about 70 on Sundays, Conrad said – considered a “stable small congregation” in denominational circles.

Noting that the structure was originally designed for a congregation of 600 or more, Harbin said building maintenance, utilities and general expenses “were consuming a large portion of finances on our small congregation, forcing our mission to take a back seat throughout the year.”

“As a congregation we hope to remain in the city center,” Harbin wrote, “but our path is yet to unfold.”

“Liz and I are both architecture freaks,”

he added, “so we will miss the calm feeling that we get at services held in the sanctuary. We hope that whoever buys the building will maintain the integrity of the architecture, but there are no guarantees. In the end the people are the church and we love the people of Woodside Church.”

The congregation first assembled itself in 1837, according to a historical marker in the church's front yard. According to details provided this week by the church, the congregation coalesced in the 1850s. It first met in the courthouse and then in a small room over what was known as “the Scotch store” on Saginaw Street.

The Court Street location was the congregation's third of what was originally known as the First Baptist Church of Flint. The first official building was at the corner of First Avenue and Lyon Street; the second, at the corner of Beach and Second streets.

After the 1952 move to the current building, the congregation opted to join the Congregational Christian Church denomination, and in 1961 changed its name to Woodside Church. It is a member of two denominations – the United Church of Christ and the American Baptist Church and still bears the legal name of “First Baptist Church.”

Woodside was a stop on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War; an advocate for fair housing, civil rights, and an end to Jim Crow in the 1950s. In recent years the congregation has “ruffled feathers,” Conrad said, “over its welcome of people who are gay, les-

bian, bisexual and transgender” and acting as “a catalyst for examination of policies of mass incarceration, poverty and water rights.”

“Woodside will never abandon our brothers and sisters most likely to be marginalized and targeted by oppressive social policies and politics,” Conrad said.

“We have been very at home in the CCN – this isn't us trying to get out of the neighborhood,” she noted in a follow-up interview. “We have a mission that we care about. Caring for a building has required too much attention, and caring for the mission has taken a backseat. We realized we could do more. This is partly about setting financial priorities and partly about the passion of our folks and how the church has changed.”


“We are merely selling a building,” Conrad said. “We are not losing our voice. We will continue to be the church.”


East Village Magazine photographer and board president Edwin D. Custer, a long-time resident, homeowner, investor and neighborhood activist in Central Park near Woodside, has taken many photos of the landmark, consistently noted as one of the most architecturally important buildings in Flint.

For Custer, the building means more than its famous architect.

“Woodside Church holds a special meaning for me,” Custer said. “In my youth in the 1950s it was the place Gary (Custer, Ed's brother and late long-time publisher of EVM) and I were baptized

(Continued on Page 11.)

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... Woodside

(Continued from Page 10.)

(full immersion), attended services and the youth group classes, had sock hops in the basement, where I sang (poorly) in the choir, and where I fell asleep during every candlelit Christmas Eve service with my mom poking me to stay awake."

In reporting on their decision, church leaders quoted one of the church's pastors from the 1940s, Rev. Dr. Franklin Elmer, who said, "Woodside is not a spectator church. For those who do not wish to become involved in the difficult issues confronting our contemporary world, or for those who do not wish to be disturbed about their own condition or the general state of the world, this is an impossible church.

"Participation means more than attending worship services," Elmer said. "It means joining in on the adventurous and exciting process of life itself."

Conrad said the congregation has "no idea yet of where we're going to go – no clue yet. A lot of people are very emotionally involved about where. We're going to make sure the congregation is really involved – it's just the beginning of the process. We're going to work together and work it out."

Conrad said the conversation about moving has been ongoing for years.

"Unlike other 160-year-old congregations, because of our history, we're not bound to a place," she said.

When Conrad came to Woodside two and a half years ago, she said it was not long before it became clear a move was "something we were going to tackle ... the process for us has been a really healthy one."

"We are not dying," she said. Rather, she said, the congregation is devoted to the concept of "tikkun olam," a Hebrew phrase for "world repair."

She noted the growing effect of the millennial generation, who, she said, "care a great deal about social justice and the common good instead of the common purse serving institutions. They are trying to make the world better."

"Woodside has this mindset more than any other church I've ever served," she said.

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



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... Montessori

(Continued from Page 7.)

of having multiple high-quality options available for families.

FCS Superintendent Tawwab noted, "Early education is the foundation to a successful school career, laying the building blocks youngsters need to grow intellectually and socially. This is another option for families that will prepare children for success in our classrooms and, more importantly, in their lives."

According to Kao, the parents' group hopes that while the program is beginning with one kindergarten/first grade class, it will grow considerably in the next few years.

Jordan said, "The long-term vision for the program is that we will have a public Montessori program through at least middle school, and that we add grades each year and classes as needed to accommodate the level of demand."

Interested parents are invited to attend the Montessori group meetings at 4 p.m. the third Friday of every month in the library of Durant-Tuuri-Mott Elementary. To qualify for next year's kindergarten class, students must turn five by Dec. 1, 2017.

For more information or for enrollment call (810) 760-1232 or email Keiona Murphy, kmurphy@flintschools.org.

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

... Buckle up

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shattering time interfere with the love of my life?

How dare the greedy billionaires disrespect the real struggles of our lives, of the meaning we are trying to make, the catastrophes always menacing the vulnerable, the hard-won peace of mornings together in cafés and workplaces and homes where people can be with whomever they love, the serenity of evenings in fading light in a world we are trying to save?

There's a storm front on the horizon that threatens all I love and believe in, all my life and work has stood for. Chief among those beliefs is freedom of the press, a bedrock American commitment to the pursuit of truth upon which the man about to be president has spit and repeatedly scorned.

And so here I am, an outraged old woman motivated by anger and fear, ready to make my words get back their mojo, ready to tell Flint truths to whatever forces dare to betray our values and our future. Buckle up. I'm ready to fight.

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

Editor's Note: This poem, while written after 9/11, seems appropriate now as well. We welcome this first appearance in our pages by Ted Nelson, the Eminence Grise of EVM.

I AM AN AMERICAN

By Ted Nelson

I am an American.

I am born and bred of
rebels and revolutionaries.

My heart pumps the blood of freedom.

I believe in the human family
and I believe in love.

I am of all faiths.

I am an American.

I am a work in progress.

I believe that liberty and justice
for all is a good idea ... and as difficult
as it is noble. Yet I persevere.

And it is always
a struggle.

I am an American.

I shed tears for the dead
and salute the living brave.

And then I reach out to my neighbors
and we unleash the most powerful
force on earth: one nation,
indivisible ...

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Village Life

Buckle up for the pursuit of truth

By Jan Worth-Nelson

There's a room in our house I can't go into right now.

It's the den, a formerly beloved room we've always nestled into, a small paneled hideaway with almost all the books I own piled onto floor to ceiling shelves.

It's the room where my husband and I finally got up, stiff with tension and growing dread, from the chairs where we'd sat stunned as the outcome became more and more clear, the room where we grabbed hold of each other and I cried and said, "I can't believe this is happening to our country."

It's the room we were in, more and more horrified, until about 1:30 a.m. Nov. 8, when the world, our world, changed forever.

An editor, as my critics have pointed out, is supposed to be impartial. But this column – a place for personal reflections on the news, is not impartial about its core message: I am worried about the future of "truth." So I begin by saying, the staff of East Village Magazine and I are devoting ourselves more diligently than ever to our mission: a fact-based pursuit of the truth. It's our job.

AVALANCHE by Grayce Scholt

When it begins
it's only
a slight shift of sound,
a murmur that can almost soothe,
that drifts through dreams.
We sleep

But all the while
the mountain we believed
was solid rock, is quivering
quaking as the lethal mass
begins its dip, its slide
crushing boulders
pounding our most cherished
peaks that we believed
were strong and firm
the eternal alps,
into pebbles,
crumbs
embalmed
in ice.

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.

Amendment I. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

On our inside pages, we strive to bring you impartial fact-based coverage about our city and our many neighborhoods.

When it's marked as a column or commentary, as in this "Village Life" feature I've been writing for the last 10 years, there's a somewhat different intent: to describe the effects of events, the consequences of facts, on our hearts and minds and daily lives – sometimes through the feelings of the writer. Sometimes, of course, the truth shows up most vividly in emotion. That is where this column begins.

It's no secret what I think about, feel about, the president-elect. I've outed myself right on this page and received feedback – both angry and supportive – in response. I am sorry about those who were offended by my views, and I am sorry for them now, too, because I'm pretty sure they will not be happy with the president they get, or the cons they have fallen for.

Many of the man's supporters had a right to petition the government for a redress of grievances, grievances that are legitimate, complicated and borne out of political obstructionism and neglect. But their mesmerizing messenger, a depraved and bullying figurehead, will not provide them that relief.

And I'm thunderously sorry about all the rest of us, plunged into despair and wondering how our future suddenly became so impenetrably dark.

This is a holiday season so we're supposed to be spreading tidings of great joy. Instead, we are passionately instructing each other about how to prepare for the coming fights – for justice, for the rights of the oppressed, for science, for education, for the possibilities of peace, for dignity, for honor, for the survival of our 240-year-old experiment of the people, by the people, for the people. For the Earth, this gorgeous blue dot rotating, astonishingly verdant and increasingly imperiled, in the universe.

And not least, powerfully not least, for freedom of the press. The president-elect's casual disdain for the facts, for the Fourth Estate, his cavalier dismissal of the

Constitution, as if it really doesn't apply to him, are among the scariest elements of his rise to power.

I've been so depressed I can hardly will a single sentence out of my fingertips onto this screen. Words stick in my cranium just behind my furrowed forehead like a bag of black stones, useless and ludicrously inadequate. My mind's craving for graceful syntax seems antiquated and futile, questions of grace and clarity mocked by the country's decision to side with lies and ugliness. When I start a sentence I keep forgetting how I wanted it to end. I used to think the pen was mightier than the sword, but nobody uses pens anymore and it's not the sword that dogs us now – it's manipulated pixels and corruption delivered with such blithe audacity over and over that finally nobody seems to care or know how to stop it.

What's remarkable about all this is that I am not alone.

Almost all my wrenching life troughs have been personal – the result of my own screw-ups, delusions, self-inflicted damage and detours. My individual travails, almost tediously commonplace and clichéd.

This, on the contrary, is a national nervous breakdown, a pernicious plague of clinical depression, in which I am only one tiny fulminating molecule. It's what one writer, Jeffrey Gillenkirk of *Alternet*, calls "The New PTSD: Post-Trump Stress Disorder." It's a real phenomenon.

People are digging into the drawers of their bedside table to see if there's any Xanax left on that old prescription. Nobody's sleeping right. One friend said she woke up the morning after the election with a flareup of shingles. Somebody stayed in bed three days. Somebody ate a whole box of chocolates. Somebody found a bottle of Schnapps in a cupboard after the whiskey was gone. Somebody packed a pipe with indica and talked and talked with a table of other mourners till 4 a.m. Somebody called in sick. Somebody cried every day for a week. Nobody's got any libido to speak of. It would be funny if it wasn't so desperate and dreadful and with no end in sight. Calls to suicide hotlines in some parts of the country, Gillenkirk reports, have jumped 30%.

My husband and I started fighting. We are on the same side, understand. So how did the country's dysfunction worm its way into our bedroom, our just-before-sleep sweet nothings turned sour with acrimony over old slights? Why was I suddenly outraged by his table manners or his war with the fat backyard squirrels?

How dare the dystopian politics of this

(Continued on Page 11.)