



East Village

Magazine

January 2019

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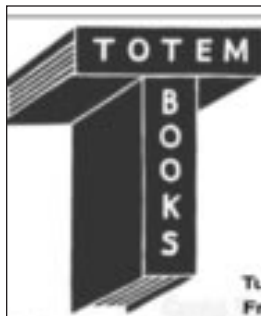
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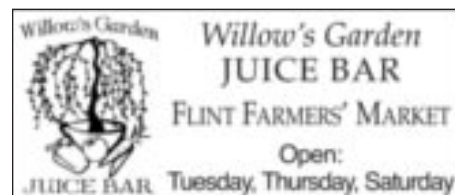


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Commentary

How Lame is the Lame Duck Session? (or) Should Lame Duck be a Dead Duck?

By Paul Rozycki

In the past, the so-called “lame duck” session was a time when the state legislature met in the last weeks of the year, before the newly elected members took office. They took care of relatively modest issues, final adjustments to the budget and other end-of-the-year issues. However, in recent years the lame duck session has become a time when a large number of controversial bills are rushed through the lawmaking maze before the new lawmakers come on board in January.

In 2012, the bitterly divisive “Right to Work” law was passed in the lame duck session. In the same year, the lawmakers passed an emergency manager law, just weeks after the public had voted to repeal a similar measure. And just to make sure that the issue didn’t get repealed again, the lawmakers added an appropriation to it, preventing the voters from placing it on the ballot.

Lame duck has become a time for slipping through controversial bills, and often undoing the results of November’s public vote.

This year’s lame duck issues

This year’s lame duck session may have surpassed any in terms of both quantity and audacity. More than 300 bills were introduced and voted on in a span of 13 days. They finally ended early in the morning of Friday, Dec. 21 after a 21-hour session. The following are some of the most important bills introduced in the last weeks of 2018, aimed at undoing the wishes of those who cast votes in November.

Minimum wage and sick time

Earlier in the year voters presented petitions to raise the minimum wage in Michigan to \$12 an hour by 2022. Most guesses were that if the issue appeared on the November ballot, it would pass. In response, to prevent the issue from going to the voters, the lawmakers passed their own minimum wage law. Then, in the lame duck session, they amended and

gutted their own bill to make 2030 the deadline date for a \$12 wage.

The lawmakers took a similar action with the proposed ballot initiative that would have required businesses to give their employees paid sick time. The law passed by the legislature kept the issue off the November ballot. Then in lame duck they reduced the impact of the law, by exempting a number of companies and limiting sick days.

Governor Snyder signed both bills shortly after they passed.

Limits on the newly elected officials

In a similar move to undo the will of the voters, the state legislature also considered bills to limit the power of the new governor, attorney general, and secretary of state. The major attempts to limit the governor and the secretary of state didn’t pass, but the lawmakers did pass a measure that would authorize the legislature to join in any court case that challenges the legislature’s action or constitutionality of a state law. If signed by the governor, the law would greatly limit the power of the newly elected attorney general, Dana Nessel, to set her own agenda.

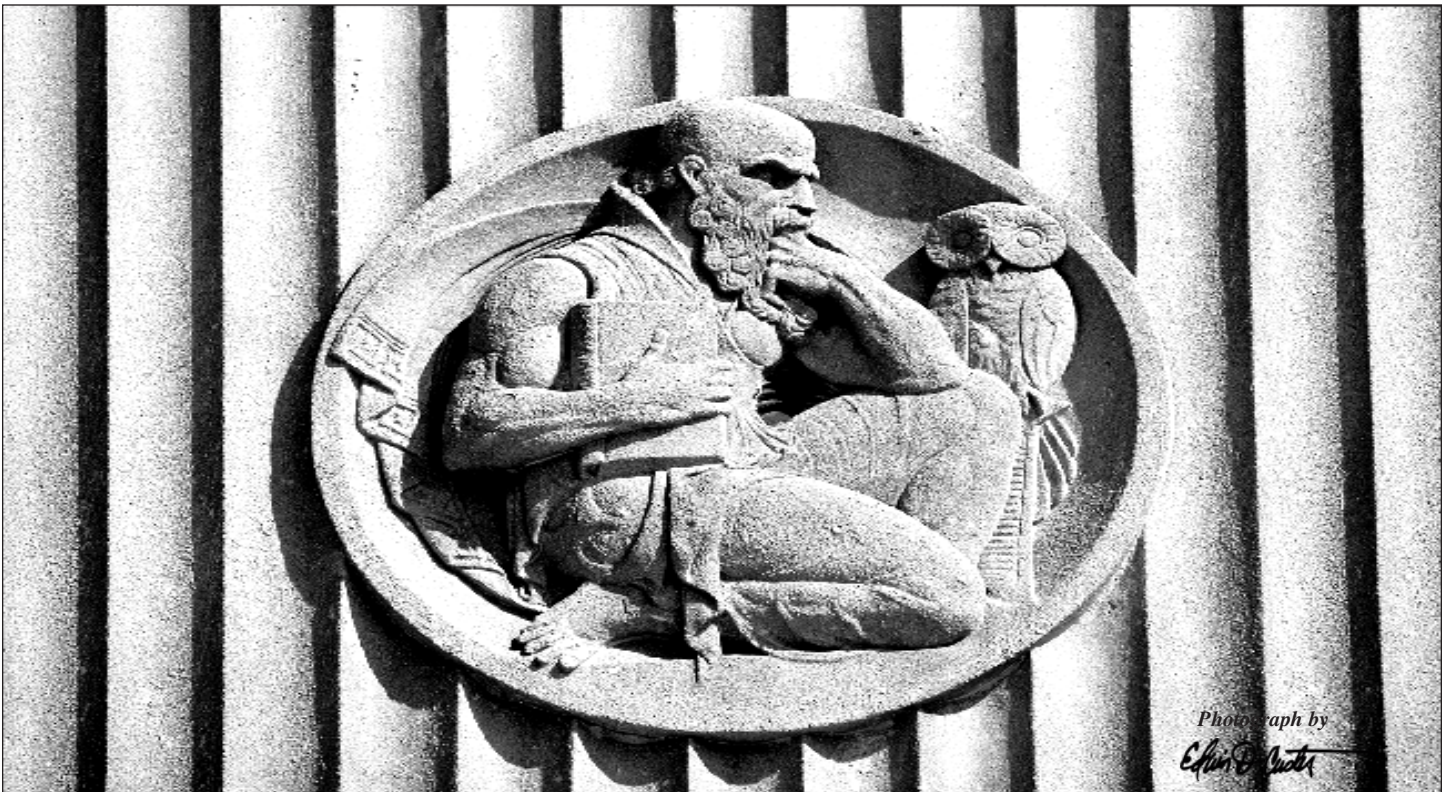
Why is that significant? Well, the state legislature is Republican, and the newly elected governor, secretary of state and attorney general are all Democrats, and for the first time, all women. A similar set of actions took place in Wisconsin and North Carolina, where Republicans limited the power of incoming Democratic officials.

Many of these bills were generated by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a conservative group that presents state legislatures across the country with pre-written laws aimed at blocking their opponents.

Lame duck and ballot proposals

During the end-of-the-year session, the lawmakers also dealt with proposals

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Photograph by
Edwin D. Smith

Photo of the Month: Medallion on the Flint Journal/MSU building: a book, an owl suggest a wise man

Flint Community Schools take actions for new year amid uncertainty and change

By Harold C. Ford

Amid uncertainty and change as the Flint Community Schools (FCS) move into the 2019 calendar year, a host of initiatives, actions, and accomplishments were announced as part of a packed agenda at the regular meeting of the FCS board of education Dec. 19.

Among them were securing \$3.2 million in project funding, district-wide staff training to assure positive learning environments, and adoption of a “balanced calendar” starting in the 2019-2020 school year that will start the year earlier and end later, along with creating “intercession” sessions with no classes when various programs would be offered.

Underlying many of the actions is pressure on the district to fulfill a three-year partnership agreement imposed last spring by the State of Michigan after the district fell into the bottom five percent of districts statewide. The agreement challenges the district to make significant improvements in three areas:

- increase student attendance to 90 percent;
- reduce suspensions by 10 percent;

- improve state test scores by 10 percent.
- If the efforts fail, the district could face three possible consequences: being absorbed by another district, being reconstituted, or being shut down.

Derrick Lopez, marking the end of his fourth month as district superintendent, urged FCS stakeholders to celebrate recent developments. “I would use the word ‘celebrate’ with intentionality,” he said, “because we have really begun to right the ship and restore Flint Community Schools to the place that it once held in high distinction across the state and across the nation.”

Lopez attributed the accomplishments of “Team Flint” — members of the Flint Board of Education and his administration staff — to “working collectively.”

“We’ve done several things that are pretty cool,” he said. Near the top of his list was securing \$3.2 million from various sources to fund the following projects:

- \$480,000 from the Musk Foundation to provide ultraviolet water filtration systems for all 12 Flint schools;

- \$180,000 from the state of Michigan to implement a new partnership agreement;
- \$887,000 from the C.S.Mott Foundation for implementation of a revised model of instructional delivery;
- \$423,600 from the Musk Foundation for the purchase of laptops for seventh- and eighth-grade students;
- \$1 million, “pending” from the state of Michigan, for the reopening of the old Flint Northern High School building.

Student discipline initiative continues with training of staff

Lopez announced the latest phase of securing positive learning environments in FCS buildings and classrooms involved the training of all school employee groups in the two days prior to winter break on Dec. 19 and 20. He indicated that 850 district employees “worked (for two days) to ensure that adults have the tools to engage our students in productive, safe, welcoming environments.”

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... Schools

(Continued from Page 4.)

“We hope that when we come back on Jan. 2 (from the winter break) that we will have a brand new way that we ... educate and love our kids,” he said. “Love requires toughness as well, not just sugar and spice ... Discipline requires teaching and correction.”

Outgoing board member Antoinette Lockett urged school leaders, including Lopez, to “feed the teachers so they don’t eat the students ... We have to make sure that we take care of our teachers ... give them the support that they need.”

The challenge of student behavior continues to bedevil Flint schools as they endeavor to create orderly learning environments while avoiding a heavy-handed disciplinary approach that results in excessive suspensions and expulsions.

And enrollment in Flint schools continues its decline. Only 4,331 of Flint’s approximate 15,000 school-age children were enrolled in its schools as of Nov. 30, 2018, according to a “membership report” presented to the board.

Leadership changes

The Dec. 19 meeting of the FCS board was the last for two of its most veteran members. Lockett and Harold Woodson, both former FCS board presidents, took with them more than two decades of collective experience on the board.

Conversely, Casey Lester, made his first appearance after being appointed to fill the board position vacated by Kenyatta Dotson. The 34-year-old Lester moved to Flint in 2008 and is employed by Huntington Bank. According to his online LinkedIn profile, he has no previous education board experience.

Four of Flint’s 12 schools have new administrators in the 2018-19 school year. The schools include: Durant-Tuuri-Mott Elementary, Scott Middle School, Neithercut Elementary, and Southwestern Classical Academy.

Lopez is Flint’s third superintendent in 10 months. Former superintendent Bilal Tawwab was released by the district on

March 13, 2018, along with two other members of his central administration team. Tawwab was replaced by Gregory Weatherspoon, who served on an interim basis until August when Lopez was hired. Anita Steward is in her first year as Flint’s assistant superintendent.

Action items

The Dec. 19 board meeting featured the fast-paced passage of 16 action items, all on 8-0 votes except one, which passed 7-1. They included:

Adoption of a balanced calendar: A letter of agreement with the United Teachers of Flint (UTF) was ratified to begin a balanced school calendar starting in the 2019-20 school year. Students will start the school year earlier and end later than a traditional school year, while the number of days students are in class remains the same.

Numerous advantages include less learning loss during long summer vacations and the opportunity for creative programming for students during intercession periods during which there are no classes.

Implementation of the new calendar is contingent upon heating and cooling upgrades in the buildings so as to assure moderate temperatures conducive to learning.

Restructuring secondary instructional model

• Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, FCS hopes to house grades 7-9 in a newly reopened Northern High School building at 3284 Mackin Rd. The building has been closed since 2013. It is estimated that \$20 million is needed to reopen the facility; \$1 million toward the project is “pending” from the state legislature.

• Southwestern Academy will house 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

• \$423,600 has been secured from the Musk Foundation for the purchase of Chromebook laptops for students in seventh and eighth grades.

• \$300,000 was secured from the C.S. Mott Foundation to revise middle school instructional practices utilizing Project Lead the Way and The Algebra Project and the Young People’s Project.

Purchase of safe water system

Funds from the Musk Foundation in the amount of \$221,000 will be used to purchase water cooler/bottle filler systems to provide safe drinking water to FCS students. “This will be the safest water in the entire state,” said Kendall Williams, the board’s legal counsel.

Transition to new athletic conference

Starting in the 2019-20 school year, FCS will exit the Saginaw Valley Conference (SVC) and join the Genesee Area Conference (GAC). GAC schools include Beecher, Atherton, Bendle, Bentley, Lake Fenton, Hamady, Goodrich, Morrice, Genesee Christian, Corunna, and Webberville.

FCS athletic teams struggle to compete successfully with schools in the SVC that have larger student enrollments. And the costs of transporting teams to more distant communities such as Lapeer, Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland are prohibitive. The SVC placed FCS on probation due to its inability to field a sufficient number of varsity, junior varsity, and freshman teams.

Other challenges

Unresolved contract with UTF: Flint teachers have been bargaining for a new contract without success since May of 2018, according to Debra Olayinka, vice-president of the United Teachers of Flint (UTF). The FCS board and UTF agreed to extend the old contract, which expired in August 2018, through August 2019.

Karen Christian, UTF president, said unresolved issues include health insurance, building conditions, schools supplies, and compensation. Christian said she was “very optimistic” about the chances of settling a new contract. “We’re three-fourths of the way done with the actual contract,” she said. “We have just a little bit left to go.”

Olayinka said Flint teachers’ wages have been frozen for five years.

EVM staff writer Harold C. Ford can be reached at hcford1185@gmail.com.

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Bees making sweet honey on Flint's East Side

By Patsy Isenberg

Flint's East Side may be a tattered symbol to some human eyes of the city's struggles. But it turns out honeybees like it just fine.

The wildflowers sprouting up in abandoned lots and brownfields may be the secret ingredient that makes city honey taste sweet — better even than rural honey, according to an East Side family of beekeepers who say they have become fascinated by bees and are doing their best to save the buzzy pollinators.

Local businessman Mike Herriman and his family — wife, Trudy; sons, Aaron and Jerin; and sometimes reluctant grandchildren — are beekeepers, or as Trudy calls them, hive keepers. Herriman also owns and operates an auto shop, Vern's Collision, on Davison Road.

As if that isn't enough to keep him busy, he's also a very active volunteer for the College Cultural Neighborhood Association (CCNA).

But it's the bees and the honey that brought *EVM* to visit him recently after an editor saw the honey for sale at the collision shop and was curious to get the lowdown on what it takes to make honey in the city and why East Side honey, according to Herriman, currently tastes of cinnamon.

It was actually Trudy and Aaron who began the venture several years ago. Trudy, a master gardener and pottery student at the Flint Institute of Arts (FIA), kept hearing about beekeeping and a Bees 101 class at For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum in Burton. Out of curiosity the two of them took the course.

"I heard so much about it at Master Gardener and For-Mar had a Bees 101

class so I said, 'Aaron, you want to go to that?' He said 'yeah' so we sat there mesmerized for three hours," Trudy explained, "and I said (to the teacher) 'when's the next class?' and he said, 'nobody's ever asked me that before,'" she added.

They did take the next class and continued to be mesmerized. After that, Aaron decided to invest in some hives and learned more about bees and honey. The rest of the family got hooked as well. They started out with 14 hives, which arrived in three-pound shoe-box-sized containers of about 30,000 bees each.

Over time, they've started producing

soon found that they get better honey in the city. Honey varies in color and pollen content depending on when and where you collect it, he explained.

One main thing to consider is what kinds of flora are available for the bees to eat and then produce honey. Wildflower honey is what will be produced by bees in cities and that is what the Herrimans wanted. They say honey from urban areas is also better because of the lack of insecticides typically sprayed in rural areas for farming.

There currently is demand for another type of honey as well. Buckwheat honey is popular with some people and the

Herrimans tried placing some of their hives in a buckwheat field. According to Trudy, the honey was remarkably different than the wildflower honey in the city. "It's grittier. It has a coarse texture to it and I don't care for it, but some people just absolutely love it," she said.

Their beekeeping has evolved over the years to include monitoring and controlling what the bees are eating to a certain degree. According to the Herrimans, the bees eat whatever is currently in bloom and the honey varies from collection to collection, both in flavor and color.

Some people have commented that the

current batch tastes of cinnamon and is a medium, amber color. "Normally the lighter color the honey is, the sweeter it is. The darker is more robust," Aaron explained. They don't know how to explain the hints of cinnamon.

There are potential profits to be made with honey production. "A hive can produce 100 pounds of honey and even at a

(Continued on Page 7.)



East Side hive keepers (from left) Jerin, Aaron, Trudy and Mike Herriman (Photo by Patsy Isenberg)

and labeling small batches of sweetness under the name H & H Pure Michigan Wild Flower Honey.

While Aaron is a font of information on the subject of bees and honey, the family often calls on Darren Bagley from the Michigan State University Extension for guidance whenever they have questions.

Aaron placed the first hives on Jerin's six-acre property outside of town, but

... Honey

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wholesale price of \$3 a pound, a honey producer sees that they can get \$600 from a full hive. If they have 200 hives, that's a good profit," Aaron said.

"And when you consider that a box of bees costs \$150 ... money-wise it makes more sense to utilize the entire hive for honey production ... but you're watering down the genetics of the bees," he added.

It's about more than just the honey or profits to the Herrimans.

"We got into it to help save the bees," Trudy said. "The honey is just sort of an after effect. There's some hive keepers in it for the honey ... and they don't really care if the bees live through the year or not."

In fact, they keep some details of their operation secret, because, the Herrimans say, there is such a thing as bee hive theft. They requested that no photos make the locations recognizable.

According to a National Public Radio (NPR) report from January 2017, for the first time that month a bumblebee was placed on the endangered species list.

"Pollinator decline is a global trend. A recent major global assessment sponsored by the U.N. suggested that about 40 percent of invertebrate pollinator species are facing extinction. Since some 75 percent of food crops rely at least partially on pollinators, that raises serious concerns about the future of the global food supply," NPR reported.

Because of this, the Herrimans attempt to be as ecologically smart as possible when it comes to collecting their honey. For instance, the hives they use have drawers of different sizes with artificial combs already built. The lower drawers are larger, hold twice as much honey, and, if not tampered with, serve as a home for the bees. The Herrimans leave those larger drawers at the bottom alone to leave the bees undisturbed. Honey producers who are just in it for the money don't do that.

For the bees Trudy keeps in her backyard, she uses a different type of hive called a bar hive. The bees make their own combs on a hive of this type. The hives the bees make look as perfect as the artificial ones used in the drawer types. It's amazing how bees manage to create these hives with the perfect hexagonal

holes. Both the manufactured combs and the ones the bees make have holes that are on a downwards slant so that the honey doesn't run out if it becomes thin, like on a hot day. But the bar hives won't produce collected honey easily.



East Side honeycomb
(Photo from H&H Farms)

Unlike many local honey producers, the Herrimans don't filter their honey. They strain it two times and spin the honey out of the combs in a machine. One benefit of unfiltered honey is help with pollen-related allergies. Aaron explained, "It's almost like a vaccination" against those particular allergens that a person lives around, which makes local honey desirable. On the subject of aller-

gies, when asked about allergies to bee stings Aaron said that "Everybody is one sting away from being allergic. You can get stung 1,000 times and the 1001th you become allergic. So, you never know."

Asked where the very best honey comes from the answer came quickly. Trudy said, "the East Side" and Mike responded, "The closest to where you live."

Though they're not in beekeeping for the money, the Herrimans do have some regular customers for their honey. A restaurant called Grandma's Recipes uses the Herriman's brand of honey from H & H Farms. Asked if they ever thought of selling it at the Farmers Market, they said they don't produce enough to keep up with the likely demand at an outlet like that.

More information about H & H Pure Michigan Wild Flower Honey is available at 810-423-2360.

EVM Staff Writer Patsy Isenberg can be reached at pisenber@gmail.com.

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Flint City Council awards contracts for \$30 million HUD grant, \$1 million more to AECOM

By Meghan Christian

While personalities continued to clash at meetings, the Flint City Council (FCC) made key decisions at their two December meetings, awarding contracts to implement a \$30 million housing grant and adding \$1 million more than the original contract to AECOM for continuing water pipeline replacement.

AECOM supplemental funds opposed but approved 5-4

One of the most divisive decisions facing FCC in December was whether to approve a change order to AECOM's contract, which would give the LA-based global engineering firm an additional \$1,101,477 to "complete all tasks necessary to manage additional exploratory water line replacements, as requested by Public Works," according to the resolution on the Dec. 10 FCC meeting agenda.

As reported in *EVM* in April, AECOM took over water service line replacement project from General Michael McDaniel in the fall of 2017. The firm received a 13-month, \$5 million contract from the city which began Dec. 1, 2017.

For some FCC members and residents, giving AECOM more funds when, to them, the company had not met all of the obligations of their contract was the last thing the FCC should do. Three specific obligations mentioned by FCC members included the excavation and removal of 6,000 lead pipes, the use of hydrovac, and the use of the predictive model when looking for lead-tainted service lines.

"We need an answer as to why we're not going after, at the very least, a contract dispute resolution," Fourth Ward Councilperson Kate Fields said. "Because why should we take another \$1.1 million to pay you more money to dig more holes — because the resolution says to do more 'exploratory work' — when you didn't fulfill this contract?" she asked AECOM's representatives present at the Dec. 10 meeting.

"I cannot understand how this adminis-

tration could in any way support giving you additional money instead of making you adhere to the terms of your contract," Fields added.

According to Flint resident Arthur Woodson, "Do not vote for this ... It's wrong. They do not need this \$1 million."

"You need to look at this as businessmen and women," Flint resident and local attorney Linda Pohly said. "If you are going to hold people to their contracts, then you need to hold people to their contracts."

Some thought that regardless of any current issues with the implementation of their contract, AECOM was not the one to bother with. According to Eighth Ward Councilperson Allan Griggs, "They don't want to say who told them not to do these three items, which is a shame because I think that's who we need to be fussin' with ... not them."

Others supported AECOM's work. "I'm going to vote to pay the million because when they got hung up on money, that's when we got into the disaster," First Ward Councilperson Eric Mays said, referencing the Flint water crisis.

"It's easy to sit back and complain, but at least the mayor and the administration, along with this body, we made some choices to move this city the best we can out of this disaster," Second Ward Councilperson Maurice Davis said. "I'm going to support whatever the administration is doing along with them," he added about AECOM.

"I think you guys are doing a great job," Fifth Ward Councilperson Jerri Winfrey-Carter said to AECOM's representatives, AECOM Vice President Mike Winegard and AECOM Project Manager Ed Thorp.

Ultimately, the resolution passed with a vote of five in favor and four opposed. Those in favor of the resolution were Mays, Davis, Third Ward Councilperson Santino Guerra, Winfrey-Carter, and Sixth Ward Councilperson Herbert Winfrey. Those opposed were Fields, Seventh Ward Councilperson Monica Galloway, Griggs, and Ninth Ward Councilperson Eva Worthing.

While he voted in support of granting

AECOM the \$1.1 million change order, Guerra voiced disappointment that the firm did not host another community forum as they promised at their first forum at Mott Community College on Feb. 1, 2018. "I want to know why you haven't hosted that," Guerra said.

Winegard responded the company was asked not to until they "were further along in the program." Guerra asked Winegard who asked them not to hold a community forum to which Winegard replied, "I believe someone in the administration; I'm not sure."

"It's not a secret. Everyone sitting here knows that it's the mayor who told (AECOM) to do this. However, Council also needs to sign off on it," Worthing said, referring to the allegations that the engineering firm is not abiding by terms of their contract like hydrovac and using the predictive model.

In response to the claim from Worthing and to address other issues raised by FCC members, City Administrator Steve Branch approached the council. "The mayor has never directed AECOM to not use the predictive model. The mayor does not get involved with the selection of addresses that are being excavated and explored," Branch said.

"The decision to stop hydrovac was made by the administration. It was made because hydrovac was missing lines that were spliced. The decision was made that we did not want to miss any spliced lines, so we suspended ... hydrovac," Branch added. Spliced lines are lines that are made from lead or steel that have been patched with copper.

Choice Neighborhoods Grant Update

On Dec. 18, the FCC unanimously approved contracts for three entities to implement the \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Grant secured in July 2018 for the Imagine Flint South Flint Community Plan Choice Neighborhoods Initiative.

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... Council

(Continued from Page 8.)

The three contractors are Norstar Development, developers of the project, approved for \$18,324,000; Mott Community College's (MCC) Workforce Department, the human resources overseer for the grant, approved for \$4,524,000; and the Flint Housing Commission, approved for \$192,280.

As *EVM* reported in July 2018 when Health and Human Services Secretary Ben Carson came to town, "The grant project focuses on the troubled Atherton East housing complex, a set of apartments built illegally, two-thirds on a floodplain, in 1967. Through the decades, Atherton East has been a symbol of substandard circumstances for poor people, as it deteriorated in an isolated and partially unpaved street east of Dort Highway between Atherton and Lippincott Streets, and became the nexus for a plague of crime.

All 192 units are set to be demolished. Over the next two years, residents will be

relocated to new housing provided by the grant, built on more felicitous sites."

"We are humbled to be a part of this effort and we commit to doing our very, very best for the city," Laurie Harris, representative for Norstar Development, said.

Outlook for the New Year

Despite any issues, members of FCC said they look forward to 2019. "We will return in 2019 ready to work," Winfrey-Carter said. "I wish for all of my colleagues that we can come together and be on one accord."

"We've made some huge progress this year, 2018, and in 2019, we can go even further," Guerra said, adding that any residents with issues should reach out to him.

The next FCC meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Jan. 14 in City Council Chambers on the third floor of City Hall.

EVM Managing Editor and City Council beat reporter Meghan Christian can be reached at meghan.christian22@gmail.com.

Unclassified ads

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Two-Bedroom Upstairs Apartment For Rent. All bills paid. Close to UM-F and MCC Call (810) 625-3927.

Volunteer Distributors Wanted

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



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community gala

12th Annual Community Gala

Preview two exhibitions, *Engaging African Art: Highlights from the Horn Collection* and *Vanessa Gorman: Miracles and Glory Abound*, a spoken word performance by Vanessa Gorman and enjoy a reception with live music, strolling supper, and a cash bar.

1.26.19
6:00p-9:00p

Proceeds from this event benefit FIA programming and exhibitions.

For tickets, call 810.234.1695 or visit flintarts.org

FLINT INSTITUTE OF ARTS
1100 EAST Kearsley Street, Flint

< Installation show of Vanessa Gorman in MA - 8/11/19 / Come to our celebration in the U.S. Woodworth Anniversary Museum in Ann Arbor, 2018. Photo: Allen Phillips/Woodworth Anniversary

> Mboko Yela peoples Democratic Republics Congo. Mask made Wood 11 1/2 inches. Collection of Dr. Eshun Hene





Dorothy's House of Coffee a welcoming spot for hot drinks, conversation and faith

By Luther Houle

Over a dozen students met at Dorothy's House of Coffee, 503 East St., for holiday feasts between Thanksgiving and Christmas. They were hosted by the Catholic Community of Flint with the purpose of gathering people together and fostering community.

Visitors coming in from the cold found a warmly lit room full of smiling, friendly faces. An enormous spread of home-cooked Italian cuisine awaited them, with the words "EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY" drawn in big letters across the blackboard wall. The catch? Some of them were asked to stay to help put up Christmas decorations and play a game.

Dorothy's House of Coffee was the brainchild of Fr. James Mangan, a project set into motion three years ago. The goal was to create an all-inclusive place for the Flint community to hang out, discuss life, and have great coffee.

Meanwhile, Bethany Coon was working in Lansing as a barista, with a similar dream of creating a community space for people to gather and meet one another over a cup of something hot. When the two connected, Coon took it as her mission to move to Flint and make it happen. With her experience and Fr. James's leadership, the project quickly developed, with Coon as manager.

In July of 2017, the hunt for a location began. It was important to the duo that the coffeehouse be situated where both college students and community members could easily locate and visit it. After seeing a few potential spots, someone suggested they consider a building by Riverside Tabernacle Church. It had been used by the church as a cafe, but more recently had gone unused.

Peeking in the windows, Coon said she found it exactly what they were looking for. And it was perfectly situated across I-475 from the University of Michigan-Flint, putting it directly between Flint's two biggest college campuses: UM-Flint and Mott Community College. Reaching out to Riverside Tabernacle, the two were

happily received, and acquired the small shop.

Renovations began almost immediately. Inspired by Fr. Mangan's plan to make an all-inclusive community coffee house, volunteers both in and out of the Catholic Community of Flint offered professional



Entry door to Dorothy's (from Facebook, used with permission)

aid. In doing so, volunteers became the first to experience the community they hoped to foster. Renovations wrapped up in January and the shop held an informal opening celebration.

Since then, it's hosted more than 50 community events, meetings of faith, music, and community engagement. In November, it fully opened to the public, serving hot drinks and cinnamon rolls at suggested donation prices.

Dorothy Day, patroness and namesake of Dorothy's House of Coffee, is often regarded as one of the greatest American Catholics. An activist and journalist in the Women's Suffrage movement, Day lived a bohemian lifestyle before converting to Catholicism in 1927. Afterward, she played an important part in establishing the Catholic Worker Movement, and spent her life working to uplift the less fortunate. Dorothy's cap-

tures this spirit by creating a pay-what-you-can environment, where folks are welcome to come in for coffee and conversation without worrying about what they can afford.

"Everything at Dorothy's is donation-based," Campus Minister Michael Hasso explained. Some people come in who can't afford to pay, while many others generously donate beyond the suggested prices. This helps to foster an environment of charity within the community, he said.

Ten percent of all proceeds go directly to the St. Luke's N.E.W. (North End Women's) Life Center. St. Luke's, located at 3115 Lawndale Ave., assists women and men on the North End of Flint by offering vocational training and education, and provides Dorothy's cinnamon rolls through their baking program.

Hasso was an active volunteer during renovations at Dorothy's and will soon be stepping up as a manager, along with Taylor Rush, on Jan. 1. As director of campus ministry for the Catholic Community of Flint, Hasso reaches out to both Catholic and non-Catholic students at Flint universities. He said he plans to expand events already happening at Dorothy's to reach out to more students on campus and neighborhood residents.

Coon, meanwhile, is returning to school to continue her education in social work. She said she is pleased with what Dorothy's has become and excited for its future. "A lot of people want to talk about faith, but it can be very intimidating to walk into a church. Our hope was that Dorothy's could be a first step toward people discovering faith," Coon said.

EVM Staff Writer Luther Houle can be reached at lutherbhoule@gmail.com.

Support community journalism!

Donations to *East Village Magazine* are tax deductible. For easy giving, go to: eastvillagemagazine.org

New Ruth Mott Foundation grants target North End youth, vacant lots, grocery store, arts

By Jan Worth-Nelson

A varied group of 17 grants aiming to nurture youth arts, clean up vacant lots, create a grocery store, support community news and bolster resource hubs in the North End of Flint was announced today by the Ruth Mott Foundation.

The grants, totaling \$1.4 million and ranging from \$267,400 for a Genesee County Land Bank “Clean and Green” program to \$12,730 for El Ballet Folklórico Estudiantil for a bilingual afterschool dance program, were approved in November by the Foundation’s board of trustees.

Nine of the grants aim specifically to serve North End youth, the number one priority identified when the Foundation and north Flint residents developed its strategic plan. The Foundation’s other three priorities, summarized in the announcement press release, are public safety, economic opportunity and neighborhoods.

“Several of the youth programs provide creative outlets for young people through music and dance programming designed to spark creativity and build critical learning and life skills. Others provide mentoring, academic support or character development programs,” Foundation officials stated.

Here is detail provided by the Foundation on the 17 newest grants:

- \$267,400 to the Genesee County Land Bank Authority for the Clean & Green program, to help clean, maintain, beautify and repurpose vacant properties.
- \$250,000 to Fresh Start Community Development Center to acquire a site and develop a new grocery store in north Flint to improve residents’ access to affordable, fresh, healthy food.
- \$169,440 to SIPI, Inc., for the North Flint Capacity Building program, in which SIPI assists selected nonprofits with fundraising efforts, board training, communications help, assistance with reporting and other means of support.
- \$105,000 to the Neighborhood Engagement Hub for its operations as a neighborhood center in north Flint that serves as a source of information, education, facilitation, project development and

advocacy.

- \$75,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flint & Genesee County for the Out of School Time Mentoring Program, which matches north Flint youth with adult mentors designed to improve participants’ social and educational outcomes.

- \$75,000 to the Hispanic Technology and Community Center of Greater Flint for its operations as a north Flint neighborhood hub providing access to computer technology, bilingual instruction in Spanish and English, Spanish translation services, youth programming and property maintenance. The on-site Martus/Luna Food Pantry also provides free food to the community each week.

- \$75,000 to InvolvedDad for the IMPACT Father Engagement program, which offers parenting education and life skills training for noncustodial fathers and their children living in north Flint.

- \$75,000 to United Way of Genesee County for the R.L. Jones Community Outreach Center, which offers an array of supports and direct services to thousands of vulnerable and homebound Flint residents combating the ill effects of the water crisis.

- \$60,000 to Child Care Network Washtenaw Regional 4C for the Family Support Program, which provides scholarships for high-quality childcare for young children from north Flint families facing challenging circumstances.

- \$58,464 to Legal Services of Eastern Michigan for the North Flint Legal Outreach & Immersion Project, which offers free, civil legal support services to low-income, north Flint residents recently employed or enrolled in parenting education and job training programs.

- \$53,190 to the Greater Flint Arts Council for the Shop Floor Theatre Company’s Creative Learning Program, which will provide theatre-based, afterschool programming to 90 north Flint youth at three sites.

- \$51,400 to the CPSA [Concerned Pastors for Social Action] Courier for its operation as a north Flint-based weekly newspaper providing free news and

information to the community and serves as a resource and connector for neighborhood groups and organizations.

- \$27,515 to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Flint for Bangtown Productions’ Studio on the Go Expansion Project, an afterschool program using hands-on lessons with professional-grade technology to connect and expose north Flint youth to careers in music production, technology, and videography.

- \$25,000 to the YMCA of Greater Flint for the Heart of Worship Dance Studio’s afterschool youth development program offering free performing arts classes in liturgical dance, mime, expressive dance, hip-hop, ballet, and dance fitness for north Flint youth ages 4-18.

- \$24,000 to Delta Research and Education Foundation for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority’s Academy, EMBODI & GEMS programs, offering afterschool youth development that engages north Flint young people through mentoring and academic supports.

- \$20,000 to the Student Advocacy Center of Michigan for the Flint Education Advocacy program, to provide advocacy trainings and support to families of students who have experienced chronic suspensions, expulsions and other behavioral or academic challenges in school.

- \$12,730 to El Ballet Folklórico Estudiantil for its twice-weekly afterschool Mexican Folklórico Dance & Music Programs in English and Spanish for Richfield Public School Academy students in north Flint.

The Ruth Mott Foundation awards grants three times a year, with the latest announcement the last round of 2018. A total of 25 grants totaling \$1.9 million were announced in August, and 19 grants totaling just over \$3 million were awarded in March. More information on the grants and the grant cycle is available at ruthmottfoundation.org.

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

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

“This Month” highlights a selection of events available to our readers – beginning after our publication date of Jan. 3. It is not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling of opportunities in the city. To submit events for our February issue, email your event to Managing Editor Meghan Christian at meghan.christian22@gmail.com by Jan. 29.

UM-Flint Ice Rink Open Skate

Every Wed., Fri., Sat., and Sun. until March 3
Wed: 6 - 9 p.m.
Fri: 5 - 8 p.m.
Sat and Sun: Noon - 4 p.m.
University Pavilion, 303 S. Saginaw St.
810-762-3441
Admission: Free, \$3 skate rental

Enjoy ice skating at the UM-Flint ice rink. Skate rental is available. No hockey pucks or equipment allowed.

Wellness at the Wheel

Mon - Sat.
Various times
The Ferris Wheel, 615 S. Saginaw St.,
6th floor
Admission: \$12

Enjoy a variety of health and well-being classes offered at the Ferris Wheel.

Schedule:

Monday: 5:30 p.m. - Hatha Yoga
Tuesday 7 a.m. - Rise and Shine Yoga
4:30 p.m. - Pound Yoga
5:30 p.m. - Hatha Yoga
Wednesday: 9:30 a.m. - Ashtanga Yoga
5:30 p.m. - Hatha Yoga
Thursday: 2 p.m. - Adaptive Yoga
5:30 p.m. - Yoga Basics
Friday: 5:30 p.m. - Mindful Movement
Dance
Saturday: 8:15 a.m. - Hatha Yoga

Friends of Modern Art Film Series presents “Juliet, Naked”

Jan. 4 and Jan. 5, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 6, 2 p.m.
Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St.
810-234-1695
Admission: \$4-6

Part of the Friends of Modern Art Film Series, “Juliet, Naked” is a rom-com that features a different kind of love triangle. Rose Byrne, Chris O’Dowd, and Ethan Hawke star in this film. Run time: two hours.

Trivia Night at Blondie’s

Jan. 6
6-8 p.m.
Blondie’s Food and Spirits, 2520 W. Hill Rd.
810-766-9680

Head to Blondie’s, on the corner of Hill and Torrey roads for live trivia from 6 to 8 p.m. every Sunday.

Friends of Modern Art Film Series presents “Pick of the Litter”

Jan. 7, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 9 and Jan. 10, 4 p.m.
Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St.
810-234-1695
Admission: \$4-6

Part of the Friends of Modern Art Film Series, “Pick of the Litter” is a documentary that follows a litter of puppies trying to become service dogs for the blind.

Russian National Ballet presents “Sleeping Beauty”

Jan. 10
7:30 p.m.
The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$25-60

See the Russian National Ballet perform the classic fairy tale. With great sets and costumes, this family friendly event is one you will not want to miss.

January Art Walk

Jan. 11
6 p.m.
Various locations downtown
Admission: Free

Enjoy snacks and beverages as you take in art from local artists.

World Premiere of “Ring of Silence”

Jan. 16
7-9 p.m.
The Capitol Theater, 140 E. 2nd St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$20

About the dangers of human and sex trafficking in America, see the world premiere of “Ring of Silence.” Filmed in Genesee County, the premiere is a fundraiser for Voices for Children. With every ticket sold, a ticket will be given to a community teen to see the film at no cost.

Classic Albums Live: The Eagles “Hotel California”

Jan. 18
7:30 p.m.
The Capitol Theater, 140 E. 2nd St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$20-45

Enjoy a live performance of the whole “Hotel California” album, featuring all of the hits you love.

Flint Symphony Orchestra January Classical Concert

Jan. 19
7:30 p.m.
The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$10-60

Enjoy an evening of classical music played by the Flint Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Enrique Diemecke.

UM-Flint Department of Theatre and Dance presents “My Children! My Africa!”

Jan. 25 and Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 27, 2 p.m., an ASL interpreter will be at this show
University of Michigan-Flint Theater,
1120 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$8-15

Set in Apartheid-era South Africa, this play is about students of different backgrounds coming together during an inter-school debate competition. Directed by Janet Haley.

“RENT”

Jan. 25, 8 p.m.
Jan. 26, 2 and 8 p.m.
The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$33-68

See Jonathan Larson’s classic musical.

Exhibitions & Events Community Gala

Jan. 26
6-9:30 p.m.
Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St.
810-234-1695
Admission: \$40-75

In conjunction with the openings of “Vanessa German: Miracles and Glory Abound” and “Engaging African Art: Works” from the Dr. Horn Collection, and the celebration of Black History Month, this gala is part of a diversity initiative where the exhibits will open and there will be a topical lecture followed by gallery opening, strolling dinner, and live entertainment. Cocktail attire required and doors open at 5:45 p.m.

Cirque Mechanics 42 feet

Jan. 31
7:30 p.m.
The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St.
810-237-7333
Admission: \$15-40

Be mesmerized by the art form of the circus ring.

... *Lame*

(Continued from Page 3.)

that would have modified the proposals passed by voters in November. There were bills to deal with the legalization of marijuana, drawing non-gerrymandered election districts, and making the voting process more accessible and open. Each of those ballot proposals were supported by a large majority of the voters, yet the lawmakers (in the eyes of many) began modifying, and limiting their application, almost before the votes were officially counted.

There was also a bill that would make it more difficult to collect the required number of signatures for future ballot initiatives, by requiring that no more than 15 percent of signatures come from a single congressional district. The bill would also require gatherers to indicate if they were being paid.

Other lame duck issues

The list goes on of other significant issues outgoing legislators affected in the lame duck session. Among the more important were bills to:

- Authorize a tunnel for the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline under the Mackinac Straits.
- Ease the application process for medical marijuana licenses.
- Legalize online gaming.
- Remove some wetlands from environmental protection.
- Prevent the governor from setting stricter environmental rules than federal law.
- Approve a \$1.3 billion budget.
- Reform Michigan’s auto insurance laws (which failed to pass).
- Apply an A through F grading system to elements of public schools.
- Prevent non-profit groups from having to disclose their donors.
- Prevent local communities from banning the sale of puppies in pet stores.
- Allow for the placement of “baby boxes” at hospitals, police and fire stations, where newborns can be left.

These are just a few; at *EVM*’s press time, there were over 300 in the pipeline. Governor Snyder had until Dec. 31 to sign the bills and make

them law.

Lame duck session and democracy

Above and beyond the merits, or lack of merit, of any of the proposals in the recent lame duck session, there are larger questions about the whole process. Should the final weeks of a legislative session be the time when the most significant and controversial bills are decided? What kind of voice should those who are in their last weeks as lawmakers have? What kind of deliberation should take place for the most important issues of the day? What opportunities should the public have to make their voices heard in the lawmaking process? Should the lame duck lawmakers be in a position to overturn the will of the voters, expressed just a few weeks earlier?

Lame duck and trust in democratic government

When citizens take the time to sign petitions, round up voters, and pass a proposal, what does it say about the trust lawmakers have in democracy, when they block the voters’ proposals from getting on the ballot, and then undo much of the intent of those proposals? That certainly was the case with the minimum wage and the sick time proposals.

Even the three proposals that were passed by the voters faced changes and modifications by the lawmakers in the weeks after the election.

The same could be said about the proposals to limit the powers of the governor, attorney general, and the secretary of state. What does it say about democracy when the lawmakers of one party attempt to undo the results of an election by limiting the powers of the newly elected officials?

It’s not surprising that so many citizens have lost their trust in democratic government, when they see actions like those that have taken place in our lame duck sessions.

Lame duck lawmakers

Does it make sense for lawmakers who either lost their election in November, or are moving on to other pursuits, to decide on controversial bills, many of which are of great importance, when they won’t be

around to face the consequences of their actions?

Lame duck time frame

Does it make sense to try to analyze and vote on 300 bills in less than three weeks, with no hearings, little public input, at a time when much of the public attention is diverted by holiday celebrations and football championships?

Good public policy is rarely made under such conditions. It’s time to consider eliminating or modifying our current lame duck session to reflect the will of the people, and protect good policymaking. A few other states have done it.

Maybe lame duck should be a dead duck.

What’s ahead for Gov. Whitmer?

As Governor Gretchen Whitmer takes office this month she will face a list of policies put in place by a Republican lame duck legislature. She will face a majority of Republicans in both the state House and Senate, though the Democrats gained five seats in each, she will need to work with her opposition to achieve most of her goals. In these divisive times that will be no small challenge.

Almost certainly one of those goals should be to rebuild the trust that has been lost by the misuse of the lame duck sessions in the past.

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

Lead/galvanized tainted pipes replaced so far in Flint:

7,822+

Source: press release from Candice Mushatt, City of Flint public information officer dated 12/26/18

The total includes 1,594 homes completed this year, in Phase 5 of the project.

Crews from the five area contractors doing the replacements have identified copper service lines at a total of 9,223 homes that did not need to be replaced. A total of 19,650 pipes have been excavated altogether as of 12/26.

The city aims to have all of Flint’s lead-tainted service lines replaced by 2020.

... King

(Continued from Page 16.)

ing it gets sweeter on the way down.” And it did. By the time Dora’s father passed, “Jacky considered him dad,” she said. “My father loved me enough to understand that I loved Jacky.”

So this very black man and this very white woman looked past their differences and pledged to help raise one another’s children as if their own. They decided never to use the term ‘stepchildren’ when referencing any of their five children — three from Jacky and two from Dora.

“His children were my children; my children were his children,” she said.

Instead of marking “black” or “white” on application forms, they committed to writing “human race” in spaces that asked for racial identity. Dora’s eldest biological son, Larry, changed his last name to King to honor his loving relationship with Jacky.

In search of a dojo

Jacky hated the restrictive environment of an auto factory; it reminded him of prison. Jacky quit the factory while Dora bought into the martial arts lifestyle. Together they kicked around Flint seeking to start a dojo, a martial arts studio.

They established one small dojo after another in several Flint locations. They taught out of schools and community centers. They started small storefront dojos on Stockdale Street, on Pasadena Avenue, near the corner of Chevrolet Avenue and Flushing Avenue, and on Knickerbocker Street in the Beecher community. Sometimes they lived in their cramped dojos. They even lived in a motel.

In fact, it was motel living that intensified Jacky’s search to establish a more permanent martial arts business and find a more satisfactory home. Dora’s father was coming to town to visit the couple and Jacky did not want his father-in-law to discover they were living in a motel on Miller Road.

Planting roots in Beecher

Jacky boarded a bus, exited on Saginaw Street in the Beecher community, and started walking in search of an opportunity. He came upon a for sale sign on the front of a building at 5339 N. Saginaw St. that read, “See Bill next door at Catfish

Corners.” Jacky went to see Bill and struck a tentative deal to buy the building.

In search of funds to complete the purchase, he struck another deal with the father of one of his martial arts students. He offered the father’s son lessons for life in exchange for several hundred dollars with which he made a down payment to purchase the Storey Plumbing building.

The building on Saginaw Street was far from being ready to open for business, as it needed considerable remodeling. So Jacky enrolled in a construction class and struck another deal when he convinced the instructor that on-the-job remodeling of the plumbing store would be the best lessons he could offer the students in his class. Thus began King Karate.

So King Karate was nurtured and expanded by the Kings. After living in the dojo for a year, they expanded the small house in back of the dojo and made it their permanent home. In the years that followed, thousands of Flint-area students were trained at the dojo and at numerous other locations. The dojo is chock full of trophies, awards, and mementos as testament to the Kings’ success over some three decades.

Urban farming

It occurred to the Kings that something was missing in their design for teaching healthy lifestyles: healthy eating. The idea was sparked when nearby neighbors asked if King Karate students, as part of their community service requirement, could help clean up vacant lots that had been dumped on for decades. The Kings were all in.

The task was enormous according to Stephen Arellano, then a program manager for the Ruth Mott Foundation. His comments were captured in a short documentary film, *The Kings of Flint*, produced by the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at Michigan State University:

“This was removing the trash from the site, and then removing the trash from the site, and then removing the trash from the site, and then removing the trash from the site, and then tilling in organic soil and growing cover crops.”

The cleanup project was an epiphany for Jacky, who worked daily with youth who witnessed poverty and blight on a

daily basis, as he had. “It plays havoc on the mind,” he said. “You take that same place, you fix it up, you put some flowers out there, it brings that hope back.”

“As they (students) came in to study karate,” said Jacky, “we teach them farming because we associate them both together with self defense.”

Within a few years, the Kings’ dream of an urban farming project came to fruition. Three state-of-the-art, 30-by-96 foot greenhouses were built, supported by 40 solar panels, and a rain collection system for providing water to the crops. In 2013, the Kings’ Harvesting Earth Educational Farm (HEEF) became the first urban farm in Genesee County to be certified organic.

The Kings’ urban farming initiative was expanded to include beehives, a chicken coop, and a 200-tree fruit orchard that will provide apples, pears, peaches, and cherries. Support for these projects was provided by, among others, the Ruth Mott Foundation, Kettering University, the Genesee County Land Bank, the Ford Motor Company Fund, and Michigan State University.

In 2011, HEEF was recognized as Michigan Small Farmer of the Year which recognizes farmers for their conservation efforts. It was the first urban farm so named. The Kings were dubbed as “trail-blazers” by Terry McLean, MSU Extension food systems educator.

Transition

So with the passing of Jacky, the two “Kings of Flint” have become one. Dora said she plans to continue both the martial arts program and the urban farming project. “Absolutely,” she said. “I know in my heart I couldn’t live with myself otherwise. I’ve committed over 30 years of my life to it.”

She told her husband of her commitment before his passing. “I reassured him many times that our labor would not go on the wayside, that I would continue on this journey, because we’re not finished with this journey.”

Jacky knew full well the beneficiaries of his labor. “They know whose farm this is,” he said in reference to his students.

“Ain’t no way I can take this with me. When they throw my little ol’ body in the cas-

(Continued on Page 15.)

... King

(Continued from Page 14.)

ket, what am I going to do? Take all of this and put it in there with me? No. It's theirs."

Help wanted

Dora King's commitment to continue King Karate and Harvesting Earth Educational Farm is daunting. The roof on the dojo is leaking and needs repair. The crops have to be planted, cultivated, and harvested. The greenhouses and the chicken coop need to be maintained. The orchard needs to be maintained and harvested.

For those wishing to help further Jacky King's legacy, financial contributions and volunteer labor donations can be given in two ways: 1. A Go Fund Me site was established online on Dec. 5. As of Dec. 23, \$5,470 had been contributed toward a goal of \$10,000. 2. Financial contributions can be made to the nonprofit Youth Karate-Ka Association and mailed to: King Karate, G-5339 N. Saginaw St. Flint, MI 48505.

Full disclosure: As a Beecher educator, Harold Ford often partnered with the Kings on various projects. He also served on the nonprofit board of Youth Karate-Ka Association for about a decade — Ed.

EVM Staff Writer Harold C. Ford can be reached at hcford1185@gmail.com.

Hurley Children's Hospital wins \$70,000 in national contest

By Darlene Carey

In a late night rally of community support the day of the deadline, Hurley Children's Hospital, based out of Flint, Bay City and Saginaw, edged out the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital of Grand Rapids for the top prize of \$50,000 in the online Vote for Miracles Contest.

Along with the votes of everyday citizens in the international contest, there was an added local bonus: Dr. Alan Klein, a Hurley Hospital pediatric dentist since November 1980, donated an additional \$20,000 through the Sheppy Dog Fund. The private fund was established in memoriam for Sheppy, Dr. Klein's dog and best friend of many years. According to Peggy Agar, Hurley's marketing specialist, over the years the fund has donated "hundreds of thousands of dollars to Hurley Children's Hospital."

The Votes for Miracles contest, in its third year, is organized by America's Credit Unions and awards \$100,000 to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. The contest is a three-week online voting promotion where voters choose their favorite Children's Miracle Network Hospital and can vote once per day. The

top five hospitals receiving the most votes get a share of \$100,000, with first prize at \$50,000, second prize \$20,000, third prize \$15,000, fourth prize \$10,000 and fifth prize \$5,000.

Hurley has come in first for three consecutive years. Agar attributes this to community support. Hurley racked up 110,000 votes to win last year; this year, votes for Hurley hit 240,000. She says, "That is 240,000 times people in the community not only thought about our kids, but took action to help them ... simply amazing!"

The reach of the contest relies on citizen involvement, Agar stated. "The Vote for Miracles contest, while earning the much-needed \$50,000 donation, has accomplished something that money can't buy. It has raised awareness of the good work done at Hurley Children's Hospital and has served as a platform for voter engagement not only across our immediate service territory, but around the world. People voted from across the United States, from the Philippines, Japan, England and beyond."

Asked about plans for the prize money, Agar said, "Staff members involved with the care of our youngest patients will discuss immediate needs and will then determine the best way to utilize the \$50,000 gift from ... Credit Unions for Kids" (CU4Kids).

Hurley officials said they expect to use the winnings to purchase much-needed equipment or provide "soft touch" items like stuffed animals and toys that make the young patients' hospital stay more comfortable.

The Pediatric Team at Hurley Children's Hospital serves a large percentage of the community, with the Level II Pediatric Emergency Department logging more than 25,000 visits per year. Hurley has 28 beds in the Pediatric Unit; 14 beds in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit; and 44 isolettes in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

EVM Staff Writer Darlene Carey can be reached at darcar7@hotmail.com.

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Village Life

Jacky King laid to rest: Flint loses a genuine hero

By Harold C. Ford

“Get out there and make a damn difference.”
— Jacky King, Dec. 2017,
STAND Magazine

The greater Flint area, the Beecher community in particular, lost a genuine hero on Dec. 13, 2018, with the passing of Jacky King. King, 65, succumbed to a year-long battle with brain cancer.

Community activist, entrepreneur, Hall of Fame martial artist, urban farmer, Mt. Morris Township trustee, and mentor to thousands of Flint-area children, King was laid to rest Friday, Dec. 21 following what Pastor Patrick W. Sanders Sr. called a “celebration” of his life at the New Jerusalem Full Gospel Baptist Church in the Beecher community.

Early life

King, born in 1953, spent the first 10 years of his life in Middletown, Ohio. He lived with 16 other family members, including his mother Catherine “Cat” King, in a house headed up by “Momma Beatrice,” his grandmother. He would not know until the fourth decade of his life that his biological father was a man who lived in the very same Middletown neighborhood, Floyd Mack.

Neighborhood children were drawn to Mack and his ability to play the piano. He would pull young Jacky onto the piano bench with him and declare, “You and me are buddies.” One of Jacky’s aunts eventually revealed to him his deeper connection to the piano player.

Mack finally confirmed his fatherhood to King and the two of them established a short-term relationship until the elder’s death in 1997. That personal history likely helped fuel King’s passion for mentoring youth as revealed in a lengthy and revealing interview with *STAND* magazine’s David Stanley in Dec. 2017: “I got to teach the boys how to be young men, so



Jacky King, portrait from “Flint Folks” exhibition (©Dan White 2018)

many of them don’t have dads or uncles to teach them, and I got to teach the girls how to be women that know how to say no.”

Move to Flint

King came to Flint in 1963 with his mother and two brothers. It wouldn’t be farfetched to conclude that King stayed in trouble throughout his teenage years while running the streets of Flint. King’s Achilles heel were the thousands of shiny, expensive cars that choked the thoroughfares of the Vehicle City.

“I just wanted to ride around in fast cars — joyriding we called it back then,” he confided to *STAND Magazine*. “Find one with the keys in it, or one of my buddies might know how to hot-wire a car, they were lots simpler back then — and we’d drive around for a while, leave the car, and run away. You do that often enough, and sure enough, the police will catch up with you.”

The police caught up with King plenty of times throughout the decade of the 1960s. King repeatedly found himself in and out of incarceration: Boys Farm near Howell; a juvenile detention facility in Lansing more than once. A subsequent B & E (breaking and entering) sent him off to Jackson State Prison for 18 months.

“I was almost 18 when I went in,” he recollected. “I was 19 when I got out. I had nothing. No job, no diploma or GED,

no skills, not one damn thing.” But two things were about to turn King’s life around: martial arts and Dora Blake.

Martial arts

King came upon martial arts in a Grand Blanc auto factory in 1973 when he saw one of his GM workmates, Percy Dunn, karate kicking. He asked how he could learn to do that, so Dunn introduced him to his martial arts instructor, Robert Anderson of Mt. Morris.

“That was the turning point in (his) life,” according to Dora King, his partner and wife of 33 years. “Karate gave him purpose,” she said in a recent interview with *East Village Magazine (EVM)*.

“God was talking to me,” he told *STAND* in 2017. “I have not missed a day in the dojo since, unless I was sick or traveling. I wasted so much of my youth, bad choices, acting out, refused to listen, didn’t learn to respect or be respected, for years it made me sick how I lived . . . All that was solved when I went into a dojo.”

Dora Blake

Dora Blake of Walled Lake and Jacky King of Flint met by happenstance at a party in Clarkston in the mid-1980s, hugged one another, and spent the next 33 years of their lives together. According to Dora, “I felt the warmth; he felt the warmth. The spark was immediate.”

Dora and Jacky were married in 1987. While it was virtually love at first sight for the new couple, that was not the case for Dora’s family, especially her father. Bobby Blake had family roots that extended back to West Virginia and possessed a visible cowboy persona from top to bottom.

According to Dora, her father said to Jacky, “Young man, I want you to know this is a bitter pill to swallow, but I’m hop-

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