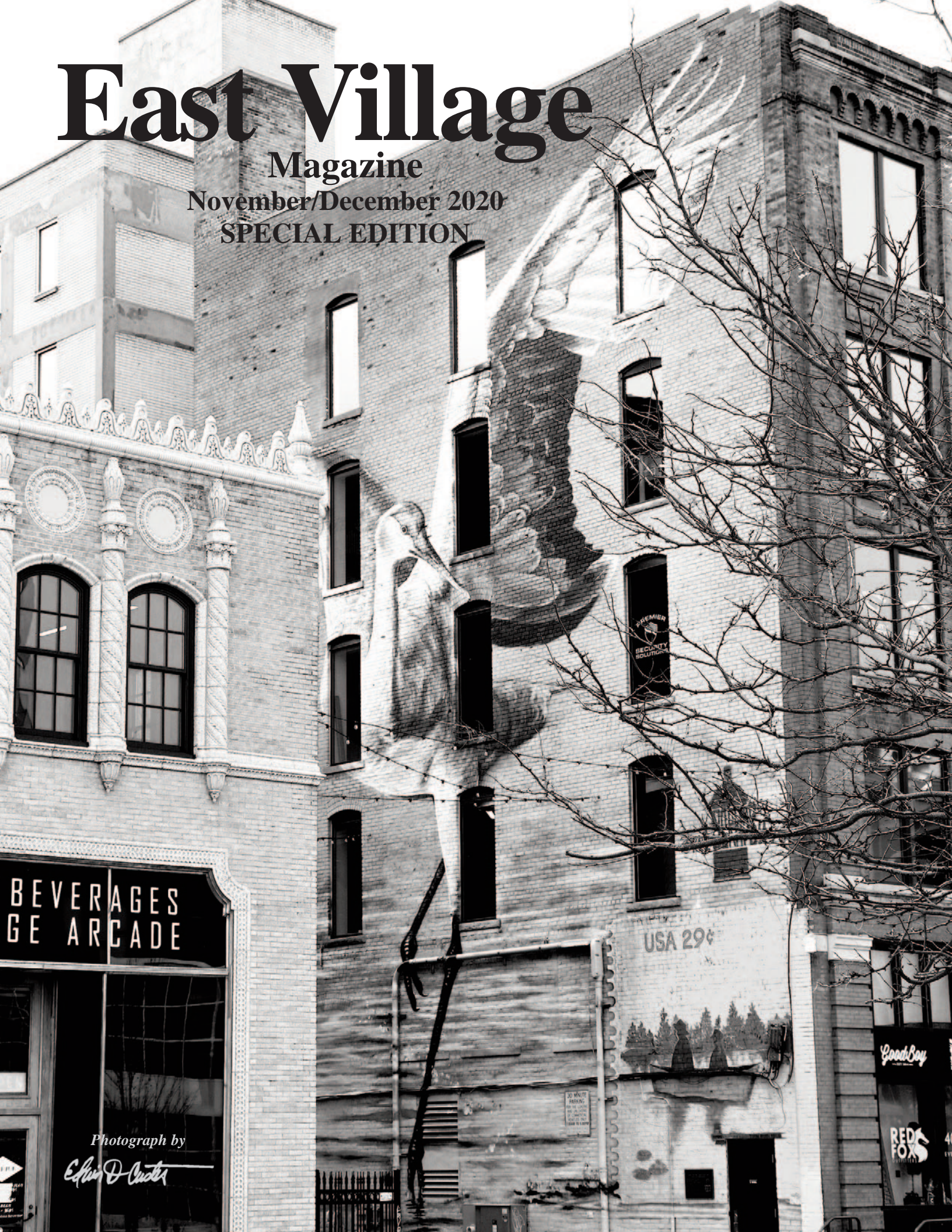


East Village

Magazine

November/December 2020

SPECIAL EDITION



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Commentary

Biden wins — what does it all mean? Ten takeaways from the 2020 election

By Paul Rosycki

In a year of pandemics, racial division, economic crisis, and the most divisive election in the last century, it's a challenge to uncover the things that really matter in this year's presidential election.

In the last weeks, we've all had wall-to-wall coverage and analysis of this year's presidential contest. It may be months, or years, before we fully unravel the full impact and the meaning of the Trump presidency and its aftermath.



President-elect Joe Biden outside Berston Field House
Photo by Paul Rosycki

And it may take as long to assess the impact of the Biden presidency as he begins to tackle the crisis of 2020. Yet, with those limitations, there are several things that have emerged from this year's election that will matter for the future.

In no particular order, here are a few significant takeaways from this year's election.

1. There was no Blue Wave.

The victory of Joe Biden was certainly a reason to celebrate for Democrats. Yet, the expected Blue Wave, which was supposed to give Democrats a dramatic increase in membership in the U.S. Senate, House and state legislatures didn't happen.

While Democrats have a chance to win a majority in the Senate, based on two special elections in Georgia, they lost at least five seats in the House, and lost ground in state legislatures.

While the state legislatures didn't get much coverage on election night, they are important because next year will be time to draw new election districts for the next decade, and state lawmakers lead the process.

2. Is there a Blue Wall?

One of the biggest surprises in the 2016 election was Trump's victories in the 'Blue Wall' — the states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, which had voted for Democrats for nearly the last 30 years. Everyone assumed that Hillary had those states in the bag and Trump took them all, giving him his margin of victory. Biden regained those states, but the margins were close, and the Blue Wall may be more of a 'Purple Wall' in the future where either party has a chance of winning.

3. Demography is destiny.

It's no surprise that the makeup of the nation's population is always changing. Millennials are about to outnumber Baby Boomers, and Black and Hispanic minorities are on track to outnumber whites in the decades to come. The election of Kamala Harris, as the first woman, Black, and Asian to be vice president highlights the direction of the country in the future. Based on current patterns, that should favor Democrats.

4. How will both parties change?

The Republican Party has long been the party of business, limited government, balanced budgets and traditional values. They still retain much of that support but will they become the party of white, working class, union voters that have been part of the Democratic Party? Will they become the party of Trump? Will the Democrats become the party of the urban, college educated and minority voters? Both parties may have a different look in the future. Traditional loyalties have shifted. Though a large majority of both Hispanic and Black voters typically support Democrats, an

(Continued on Page 12.)

Cover: Brush Alley and E. 2nd Street. Artist is Kevin Burdick.



Photo of the Month: Flint Town mural created by Bron Theron and Lisa Hirata

Photograph by Edwin D. Custer

Education Beat

Three newcomers elected make an all female Flint school board; host of challenges await

By Harold C. Ford

The Flint Community Schools (FCS) Board of Education will have a new look in 2021. Joyce Ellis-McNeal, (9.13 percent/9,409 votes), Anita M. Moore (8.78 percent/9,053 votes), and Laura Gillespie MacIntyre (6.09 percent/6,277 votes) were elected to six-year terms that begin Jan.1, 2021 and end in 2026.

(Note: Percentages and votes are from those posted at the website of the Genesee County Clerk's Office on Nov. 4, 2020 at 6:57 p.m.)

The remainder of the crowded field of a dozen candidates included: Ariana Hawk (5.45 percent/5,618 votes); Timothy Abdul-Matin (4.9 percent of the vote/5,052 votes); Mario DeSean Booker (4.8 percent/4,942 votes); Billie D. Mitchell (4.75 percent/4,894 votes); Michael D. Doan (3.9 percent/4,024 votes); Antonio V. Forte II (2.96 percent/3,055 votes); Leondrew Wesley (2.87 percent/2,961 votes); Jaron

Houston (2.83 percent/2,918 votes); and Roemon M. Murphy (2.63 percent/2,711 votes).

Ellis-McNeal, Moore and Gillespie-MacIntyre will replace three incumbent board members who opted not to run for the seats they currently hold. Casey Lester, board president (with nearly two years on the board); Betty Ramsdell, secretary (11 years); and Blake Strozier, trustee (10 years); take more than two decades of Flint board experience with them as they step down at the end of December.

The three newly-elected board members will join four others on the seven-person board: Diana Wright, vice president; Danielle Green, treasurer; and trustees Carol McIntosh and Vera Perry. Flint's school board will be an all-female panel, perhaps for the first time in the district's history. The board will hold its annual organization-

al meeting on Jan. 13, 2021 to elect new officers.

EVM Special Edition

All three winning candidates submitted responses for East Village Magazine's (EVM) Special Edition on the FCS board election. Candidates were asked for a short biography and responses to three questions. Their full responses to EVM's queries can be found at the EVM website exactly as the candidates submitted them, including in the excerpts below.

Candidates were asked by *EVM*: 1) how to stem the erosion of students from Flint schools; 2) to comment on the three-year improvement plan with the state of Michigan to increase student attendance, improve standardized test scores, and reduce student suspensions; 3) to comment on the state of financial affairs in the school district.

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... Newcomers

(Continued from Page 4.)

Joyce Ellis-McNeal

Ellis-McNeal's Facebook page indicates she is self-employed with Round 2 Education & Research Center, Inc. Education achievements, according to the website, include a Master of Public Administration degree from Central Michigan University.



**Newly elected Flint Community School Board member
Joyce Ellis-McNeal
Photo provided by Ellis-McNeal**

Ellis-McNeal's response to EVM indicated she has been an FCS learning support specialist, guest teacher, and literacy specialist.

In her written responses to EVM, Ellis-McNeal said, in part, that "stabilizing student population cannot be done with out first determine how much money will FCS need to maintain stability in staffing and services."

She said that "improving test scores and reduce suspension are attainable goals, which I have worked in schools and see that this can be done...we must remodel our school infrastructures and create a new way of teaching our children to be self-sufficient."

About FCS finances, Ellis-McNeal wrote: "I would like to look more into expenditures and once again, due to Pandemic and Flint Water Crisis more federal assistant is needed, as well as the recent past Mileage."

Anita Moore

In her response to EVM's request for a short bio, Moore wrote, in part, that she was "born and raised in North Carolina found her education foundation early. It was always a natural niche for her. Got to babysitter and friendly neighbor in the hood, followed her calling as a fresh high-school graduate making magic in Michigan pursuing her undergrad in Early Childhood Education with studied interest in fine arts and Spanish."

Moore also cites "self-study in metaphysics, yoga and alternative natural living formed a way to merge education with the essence of existing."

About stabilizing the FCS student population, Moore wrote: "An increase in the student body would be a direct



**Newly elected Flint Community School Board member
Anita Moore
Photo provided by Moore**

display of needs being met by the school's services, overall. Seeking stability and strength within Home-school partnerships."

Moore wrote, in part, that meeting state partnership goals would include: "restructuring the system ... consideration of how students learn; minimizing time, maximizing efforts; taking into account the physical foundations/buildings and environment that learning takes place; adapt(ing) new approaches that reflect real life experience; mak(ing) students want to show up ready and willing; stabilizing assistance for the home lives of the attendees ... revolutionizing outdated

systems; continued education/updating for educators."

About school finances, she wrote "I'm definitely interested in more insight on this subject. Overall, society's shift is toward sustainable solutions."



**Newly elected Flint Community School Board member
Laura Gillespie-MacIntyre
Photo provided by Gillespie-MacIntyre**

Laura Gillespie MacIntyre

In her written response to EVM, Gillespie-MacIntyre wrote, in part, that she "is an educator ... public sociologist ... Flint native who attended Flint public schools...was raised by 2 Flint public school teachers ... has over 30 years of experience in education and is a proud member of the American Federation of Teachers."

She wrote, in part, that stabilizing student population would include a "plan to ensure that all households have safe, clean and AFFORDABLE WATER ... encourag(ing) home ownership as opposed to predatory home rentals and leasing ... and work(ing) to ensure that school districts remain public and local and change the ways that charter schools are able to unfairly compete with public education."

Gillespie-MacIntyre wrote, in part, that the three-year improvement plan "is disingenuous and designed to create failure for the public school system in Flint...Increased attendance can only be accomplished with wider systemic changes ... Improved test scores are a red herring. We need to demand that standardized testing is eliminated ... reducing suspensions is

(Continued on Page 6.)

... Newcomers

(Continued from Page 5.)

simple: Stop suspending students! Eliminate all forms of the School-To-Prison-Pipeline and institute a comprehensive Restorative Justice Program in the schools.”

About school finances, Gillespie-MacIntyre wrote, in part, that “The revenue sharing for cities and the ways in which the public schools are funded in the state of Michigan is criminal and needs to be recalculated.” She wrote “there is little hope for public schools to meet the artificially constructed measures of ‘financial success’... that “financial emergency manager laws in the state of Michigan ... (are) a clear violation of our democratic process.”



FCS Superintendent
Anita Steward
Photo from FCS website

Challenges

The FCS board will continue to face significant challenges in 2021. First and foremost is safely navigating a surging pandemic that will likely keep students from face-to-face/brick and mortar instruction for the remainder of calendar year 2020 and into 2021.

Emerging data confirm that, for most students, virtual/online instruction is generally far less effective than face-to-face instruction in the classroom.

A report titled COVID-19 and Student Learning in the United States: *The Hurt Could Last a Lifetime, learning loss from last school year will*

worsen for most students, but especially for racial minority children.

And, as reported by *East Village Magazine* in Sept. 2019, “Test scores for students in Flint Community Schools ... lagged significantly behind ‘similar students’ and state averages ...”

“We’re already at a disadvantage because we’re not in face-to-face instruction which is the best form of instruction,” said FCS Superintendent Anita Steward at a meeting of the Flint board on Oct. 21.

Another major challenge will be the continuing loss of student population—now reported at just more than 3,000, possibly making Flint the 8th largest school system in Genesee County—and resultant loss of state aid.

Additional challenges include:

- Meeting the requirements of a three-year (2018-19 to 2020-21) partnership plan imposed by the State of Michigan to improve test scores by 10 percent, reduce suspensions by 10 percent, and increase student attendance to 90 percent;

- The erosion of staff — 78 educators in 2019 taking with them 1,014 years of experience in the Flint schools — and subsequent staffing of classrooms with paraprofessionals and guest teachers still seeking certification;

- Adopting a strategy to rid the district of at least 22 buildings already closed and 16 vacant properties—including a final decision on the status of the Northwestern campus that still houses the central kitchen.

- Improvement of infrastructure at the dozen buildings that remain open to students—especially heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to meet the needs of a pandemic era and a balanced calendar school year.

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

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\$1 million-plus restoration project announced for Flint River-Swartz Creek confluence

By Harold C. Ford

“Sometimes it’s the use of land, not for commercial purposes, that has the greatest value.”

—U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, (MI-5th District), in a statement to East Village Magazine, Oct. 14, 2020

A restoration project on the peninsula where the Flint River meets Swartz Creek — the “Flint River-Swartz Creek Confluence” — was announced Oct. 14 by representatives of organizations sponsoring the project at an event hosted by the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC).

The “Flint River-Swartz Creek Confluence” is an approximate 2.5-acre triangular patch of land bordered on the south by W. Kearsley Street, projecting northward to a peninsula bordered on the west by Swartz Creek and on the east by the Flint River.

\$1 million+ project

According to Rebecca Fedewa, FRWC executive director, the first stages of the project are projected to cost nearly \$1 million.

Thus far, \$500,000 has been secured from the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) for development of the Swartz Creek side of the peninsula. Initial plans call for the following:

- Infrastructure upgrades to include drainage systems (storm water sewers, catch basins, culverts), new sidewalks, outfall rehabilitation (at the shoreline), driveway access and parking spaces for automobiles;
- Visitor-friendly amenities such as scenic overlooks, interpretive signs, shaded seating, benches, and an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access ramp;
- Greening projects consisting of bioretention systems to remove contaminants from storm water runoff, tree

plantings, and landscaping;

- Accessibility to the water.

A grant-writing/application process already is underway to secure the projected \$485,000 cost for development of the Flint River side. Plans call for similar developments on the Flint River side of the peninsula including kayak/canoe launch sites and a truck/trailer staging area, Fedewa said.



Standing in front of abandoned Serval Building, 630 W. Kearsley St., Flint, MI (l-r) Doug Schultz, FRWC board chairman; Dan Kildee, U.S. Representative, 5th Congressional District; Rebecca Fedewa, FRWC executive director; Scot Lautzenheiser, Wade Trim project manager/landscape architect.
Photo by Harold C. Ford

The now-abandoned and dilapidated Serval Building at 630 W. Kearsley St., along with its adjoining driveway and parking lot, are also targeted for upgrades pending additional sources of funding.

Fedewa said the goal was a “major rehabilitation to turn this whole 2.5 acres from what you see now — blighted and abandoned — and turn it into a hub of activity right outside of downtown Flint.”

“Once this piece is done, it ties into all of the investments that have happened at Chevy Commons ... and the future work that’s slated through downtown to improve the accessibility of ... the river (Flint River) through downtown Flint,” Fedewa said.

Accessibility

Currently, there are only two access sites located within the city to the

Flint River for kayaks and canoes — at the Mott Park Recreation Area (MPRA) and at Vietnam Veterans Park.

The MPRA roughly includes what used to be the Mott Park Golf Course, sandwiched between Nolen Drive and the Flint River. Kettering University and McLaren Hospital are nearby.

The access site at Vietnam Veterans Park, located near the intersection of E. Hamilton Ave. and James P. Cole Blvd., is shortly upriver from the Hamilton Dam. That usually means kayakers and canoeists decide to paddle upriver as the dam would short-circuit a downriver trip.

“There aren’t any other great locations where people can get in and use the river recreationally,” Fedewa said.

Spring 2021 is possible start date for project with federal funds

“There’s funding available right now from the EPA’s GLRI to do storm water improvements on the Swartz Creek side,” Fedewa said. Work may begin in the spring of 2021, she said.

“(GLRI) is a source of some of the funds that has been used for various aspects of this work,” confirmed U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, whose 5th Congressional District includes Genesee County and the City of Flint, in an interview with EVM.

Using his position as Chief Deputy Whip in the U.S. House, Kildee helped secure \$335 million for the GLRI in recent appropriations bills passed by the House. “Each year that I’ve been in Congress there’s been an attempt to cut it (GLRI funding),” said Kildee. “Last year, in fact, President Trump essentially proposed the full elimination of GLRI.” He indicated that GLRI has survived due to bipartisan support.

“Too often, the calculation is that if we make an investment, there will be some immediate commercial value,

(Continued on Page 14.)

After \$36.5 million renovation of century-old downtown landmark, Hilton Garden Inn opens with two new restaurants, COVID-19 protocols

By Tom Travis

The first guests have checked into their rooms and reservations have been made for the weeks and months to come, according to the new Hilton Garden Inn staff. A historic century-old building that sat vacant for two decades has been renovated into a new 101-guest room hotel in the heart of Flint's downtown and is launching with several levels of COVID-19 protections.

Towering over downtown Flint, the 11-story building at the corner of Kearsley and Saginaw Streets, which has sat empty for more than 20 years, now includes The Sauce Italian/American Restaurant, and The Federal coffee shop.

The 148,000-square-foot building has been remodeled at a cost of \$36.5 million. An equity investment from the Michigan



The vault door used in the original bank building 100 years ago has been incorporated into the design offering a unique backdrop for elegant dining. The kitchen is behind the vault.

Photo by Tom Travis

Strategic Fund totaling \$7.95 million has supported the project. In addition there was support from the City of Flint Brownfield Redevelopment



Executive Chef of The Sauce, Antwain Trimble (r) and The Sauce manager, Dorothy Brown (l).

Photo by Tom Travis

Authority which supports the alleviation of brownfield conditions in redevelopment sites in the city, according to a press release from the Flint and Genesee County Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to the restaurants and meeting spaces, the new hotel will staff 45 full-time and 15 part-time employees.

The building that was at one time Flint's tallest building has two addresses. The entrance to The Sauce restaurant is 325 S. Saginaw Street and the entrance to the Hilton Garden Inn, around the corner, is 110 W. Kearsley

Street. Both The Sauce and The Hilton Garden Inn can be reached from either entrance.

The Sauce is open daily Monday through Thursday 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Friday 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. More information can be found at their website at www.sauceitalianflint.com or by calling 810.233.9110.

"A lot of restaurants located inside of hotels are

boring or expensive, and we want to be neither of those. We are an independent restaurant on Saginaw Street, first, before we are the restaurant for the Hilton. And the more restaurants there are in the city, the more people want to visit," said Dan Wright, food and beverage general manager in a press release.

Opening in 2021, the Simmer Rooftop Bar is located on the five-story wing of the Hilton Garden Inn. With space for 115 people, about 90 percent of the seating will be outside. There is a small bar area inside. Simmer is expected to feature live entertainment at least twice a week. "It will have a nice, chilled vibe where you can go and simmer down and enjoy a great view," Wright said in a press release.

The Hilton Garden Inn Hotel

(Continued on Page 9.)



The 3rd floor hallway has geometric designs in the carpeting.

Photo by Tom Travis



New Hilton Garden Inn sign in front of the new hotel on Kearsley Street.

Photo by Tom Travis

... Hilton

(Continued from Page 8.)

has 101 guest rooms and five meeting rooms with total event space of 3,130 square feet with the largest meeting room set up of 1,400 square feet. More information about the Hilton Garden Inn Hotel or The Sauce Restaurant can both be reached by calling 810.233.9110. The Hilton Garden Inn information can be found at their website.

“The revitalization of downtown Flint has taken a major step forward with the opening of the Hilton Garden Inn,” said Tim Herman, president of Uptown Reinvestment Corp. (URC), the project's developer. “Not only does the hotel bring needed accommodations to downtown, it is bringing new jobs. In fact, it's a lightning rod for increased activity and spending in the area,” according to a press release.

Indoor amenities and outdoor “green space” in the new Buckham Square

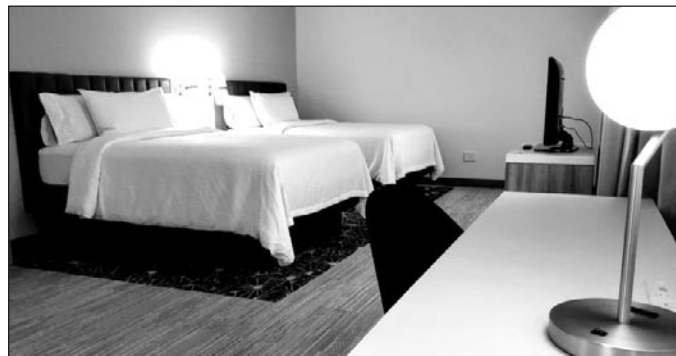
A new green space is provided through the demolition of two obsolete and blighted buildings with a total of 37,155 square feet. Those buildings were demolished at the corner of Kearsley and Beach Streets. The hotel staff hopes the green space will be used for outdoor lunches or early evening cocktails.

Covid-19 protocols are followed

The Hilton Garden Inn General Manager, Jeff Stableford, said that the hotel staff are taking precautions for the continuing pandemic and spread of the novel coronavirus. Stableford said they basically operate with two sets of protocols, the Hilton Hotel corporate and the State of Michigan



Construction machinery, debris in dumpsters, and street blockages occurred for several months on Kearsley Street during the two year renovation. This photo is from Spring 2020. (Photo by Tom Travis)



One of the 101 guest rooms in the hotel. This room looks down over Saginaw Street and UM-Flint campus. (Photo by Tom Travis)



The view looking down from the mezzanine level onto The Sauce restaurant area. Photo by Tom Travis

protocols.

He said they're very similar but when there is a difference they side with caution and take the more stringent protocol. One example was that the State of Michigan hotel protocol states that after a hotel guest leaves the room and the room is cleaned and sanitized before a new guest can enter the room.

Hilton's protocol states that after a guest leaves the room it is cleaned and sanitized and the room must sit empty for 24 hours before a new guest can enter the room. The Hilton Garden Inn follows the 24 hour rule in.

Mask and social distancing signs are posted on all entry doors and throughout the hotel, bar, cafe and restaurant areas.

Sustainable improvements made to the century old building

Improvements listed include new windows from floors 3-11, patio bar, meeting rooms, restaurant, fitness room, landscaped park, new sidewalk, curbs and street gutters and restoration of the century old lime stone brick exterior.

Sustainable improvements include Energy Starlight, non-heat absorbent roofing, new high-performance closed-loop fluid cooling system, high-efficiency boilers and low-flow plumbing fixtures throughout the building.

Low-VOC (volatile organic component) paints were used throughout the building and energy-efficient LED lighting fixtures also used throughout the building. According to a fact sheet provided to members of the press about the renovation.

The new Hilton Garden Inn is designed with geometric designs in the carpeting, wallpaper and flooring tiles throughout the hotel. Historical photographs of Flint are seen throughout the building as well.

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



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Election 2020 Roundup

Biden wins the White House as a record number of Genesee County voters choose their candidates

By Paul Rozycki

Five and a half million Michigan voters turned out to vote this year, surpassing past records, as 66 percent of Genesee County voters turned out on Nov. 3 to elect not only a president, but a long list of state and local officials as well.

Mail-in and absentee ballots hit record levels and there were long lines at City Hall in the days before the traditional Election Day. Election Day brought long lines at many polling places when they opened, and a steady flow of voters all day long. During the day, campaign workers passed out their cards, and at Mott Community College voters were entertained by Eclipse, a band that performed under the banner "Joy to the Polls."

On the national level, it took five days to determine the winner of the presidential election, but in the end, Joe Biden was chosen the 46th president of the United States. While the nation waited for Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona, and Nevada, to count and recount their ballots, most Michigan and Genesee County's elections were settled fairly quickly.

But as absentee and mail-in votes were counted, the advantage shifted to Democratic challenger Joe Biden, as he won Michigan with 51 percent of the vote, leading Trump by almost 150,000 votes. The Biden/Harris ticket carried Genesee County over Trump/Pence by a 54 to 44 percent margin. All of the minor parties (Green, Libertarians, U.S. Taxpayers, and Natural Law Parties) had less than two percent of the vote combined.

On the national level, though the presidential contest is still officially undecided, Joe Biden seems to be on his way to becoming the 46th president of the United States. While the nation waits for Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Arizona to count and recount their ballots, most Michigan and Genesee County's elections have been settled.

The U.S. Senate race

On the statewide level the contest

for the U.S. Senate seat between incumbent Democratic Sen. Gary Peters and Republican John James has drawn the most attention. As expected, it was a close contest with Peters keeping his Senate seat beating James by about 87,000 votes, a 1.6 percent margin, according to the Associated Press. Though Peter's has declared victory, James has refused to concede so far. The Michigan Senate seat was considered one of the most vulnerable in the nation this year. Peters was running for his first reelection, and James had run a very strong campaign against Sen. Debbie Stabenow two years ago.

The State Supreme Court

Though the Michigan Supreme Court justices run on a non-partisan ballot, they are normally nominated by the political parties. Both incumbent Chief Justice Bridget Mary McCormack and Elizabeth Welch, who were nominated by the Democratic Party, and ran as a team, won their elections to the state's top court.

University Boards

Michigan voters elected one Democrat and one Republican to each of the state's major university boards. Democrat Mark Bernstein and Republican Sarah Hubbard were elected to the University of Michigan Board of Regents. Voters chose Democrat Shirley Stancato, and former secretary of state, Republican Terri Lynn Land, to serve on the Wayne State University Board of Governors. For the Michigan State Board of Trustees, Republican Pat O'Keefe and Democrat Rema Vassar were the top vote getters.

State Board of Education

Democrats Ellen Cogen Lipton and Jayson Strayhorn were elected to the State Board of Education and keeping the Democrats 6-2 majority on the board.

Ballot Proposals

There were two state-wide proposals on the ballot on Election Day.

Proposal 20-1 amended the state constitution to modify how the revenue from oil and gas drilling on state owned lands is apportioned. It passed with an 84 percent yes vote.

Proposal 20-2 amended the state constitution to require a search warrant to access one's personal electronic data on cell phones or computers. It also passed with an 89 percent yes vote.

The 5th District U.S. House contest

In the contest for the 5th District U.S. House, which includes Genesee, Bay, Arenac, Iosco, and parts of Saginaw and Tuscola counties, incumbent Democrat Dan Kildee faced Republican Tim Kelly. Though the race was close early in the evening, Kildee easily won his fifth term with a 54 to 42 percent margin over Kelly. While there were some new faces elected, the Michigan congressional delegation now includes seven Democrats and seven Republicans.

On the national level, Democrats, who have a majority in the House, are expected to keep control but are expected to lose several house seats.

Genesee County State House races

Democrats hoped to gain as many as four seats in the 110 member state House of Representatives in this election to give them a majority in the chamber. Currently Republicans have a 58-52 majority over Democrats. Most election results indicate that won't happen, and that the Republicans will keep their current majority.

In Genesee County the closest race was between incumbent Democrat Sheryl Kennedy and Republican David Martin in the 48th District, covering much of northern Genesee County. With nearly 50,000 votes

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... Voters

(Continued from Page 10.)

cast, Martin beat Kennedy by 490 votes, giving the Republicans a gain in the legislature.

In other Genesee County State House races, there were few surprises as incumbents won.

In the 34th District, covering much the northern and eastern parts of the city of Flint, incumbent Democrat Cynthia Neeley, wife of Flint's mayor, coasted easily to victory over Republican James Miraglia with an 84 to 13 percent margin.

In the 49th District, which includes southwestern Flint, and townships west of Flint, saw Democrat incumbent John Cherry win over Republican challenger Bryan Lutz, with a 67 to 30 percent margin.

In the 50th state House district, which covers much of southeast Genesee County, saw Democratic incumbent Tim Sneller defeat Republican Christina Fichette-Hickson by a 52 to 44 percent margin.

In the 51st District, which includes southern Genesee County, saw Republican incumbent Mike Mueller defeat Democrat Brad May by a 60 to 35 percent vote margin.

Genesee County races

Voters elected a long list of Genesee County officials as well.

The Genesee County Board of Commissioners

The biggest change was on the County Board of Commissioners, where five new members were elected. Most significant was the defeat of the chair of the County Commission, Martin Cousineau, (D-Thetford Township), by Republican Meredith Davis. Davis won with a 390 vote margin, out of nearly 27,000 votes.

Of the nine commissioners four are within the city of Flint. Three of them were unopposed. First District (Mount Morris Township and north Flint) commissioner Bryant Nolden (D), 2nd District (central and east Flint) commissioner Charles Winfrey (D), and 4th District (southwest Flint and Flint Township) commissioner

Domonique Clemons (D) all were elected without opposition. In the 3rd District (Burton, east Flint, part of Genesee Township) Democrat incumbent Ellen Ellenburg beat Republican Gary Goetzinger by a 55 to 39 percent margin.

In the remaining commission districts, Democrat Mark Young was reelected in the 5th District beating Republican challenger Sean Trowbridge, 48 to 44 percent. In the 6th District Shaun Shumaker was unopposed. In the 8th District, Democrat Debra Newman defeated Republican Rod Shumaker with a 48 to 45 percent vote margin. In the 9th District Democrat Gary Peppin of Davison, defeated Republican Matthew Smith by 575 votes out of nearly 27,000 votes.

Other Genesee County officials

Several of Genesee County's official were also unopposed.

Prosecutor David Leyton (D) faced no opposition.

Newly appointed Sheriff Chris Swanson (D) defeated Republican challenger Stephen Sanford by a 67 to 29 percent margin.

County Clerk/Register of Deeds John Gleason (D) was opposed by Republican Jesse Couch. Gleason won with a 57 to 38 percent margin.

Incumbent County Treasurer Deb Cherry (D) faced Republican Deborah Hass and Cherry won with a 55 to 39 percent margin.

Incumbent Drain Commissioner Jeff Wright (D) and County Surveyor Kim Carlson were both unopposed.

Judicial Contests

Most local judicial candidates were unopposed, however there were contests in several jurisdictions.

For the Judge of Circuit Court 7th Circuit Non-Incumbent Position, Chris Christenson defeated Herman Marable Jr. by a 45 to 28 percent margin.

For the Judge of District Court 67-2B District Incumbent Position Partial Term, Jessica Hammon topped Dawn Weier with a 47 to 26 percent vote.

For the Judge of District Court 67-5A District Non-Incumbent Position,

Tabitha Marsh won over Torchio Feaster with a 56 to 27 percent margin. Mott Community College Board

In a field of seven candidates, Janet Couch and John Daly were both elected to serve six year terms on the Mott Community College Board of Trustees.

Flint School Board

A dozen candidates competed for three positions on the Flint School Board for a six year term. The winning candidates were newcomers Joyce Ellis-McNeal, Anita Moore and Laura Gillespie-MacIntyre. For in-depth coverage of the candidates and the issues facing the Flint Schools see Harold Ford's coverage in the current East Village Magazine.

Other local elections

In addition, the cities of Linden, Davison, Montrose, Mount Morris, and Swartz Creek elected mayors and/or city councils. The villages of Lennon, Otter Lake, Gaines, Goodrich and Otisville also elected their officials. Flushing and Linden schools also had bond issues and millages on their ballots. Many local school districts also elected school board members.

Townships

Genesee County includes 17 townships and they all elected their officials on Nov. 3. More information on all of the other local election results is available on the Genesee County Clerk's website gc4me.com.

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Lead/galvanized tainted pipes replaced so far in Flint: 9,769

Because of the governor's order, no pipeline replacements were conducted in April or May, but work has resumed. Totals as of October 2 were 9,769 lead or galvanized pipes replaced, 26,232 pipes excavated. A total of 16,463 pipes have been discovered to be copper service lines.

... Takeaways

(Continued from Page 3.)

increasing number of both went Republican this year.

5. With Trump gone, what changes?

Will the Republican Party remain the party of Trump, or will it return to its traditional roots? Will the Democratic Party remain



Voter at polling station on election day supporting candidates
Photo by Paul Rozycki

unified when they don't have a Donald Trump to oppose? Will we see a return to a more civil politics between the parties? What role will Trump play, if any, in the Republican Party, or national politics? Without Trump, where will his supporters go?

6. Will the way we vote change?

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed much in our lives. This year we saw a dramatic increase in absentee or mail-in voting. Even after the pandemic is history, will this continue? This year, even with last minute rule changes and the need to adapt quickly to the new voting patterns, most state and local clerks did an admirable job, and there were few major problems nationwide. The absentee or mail-in vote allows voters to study the ballot in more detail, and gives them the flexibility to vote according to their own schedule, aiding those who might have work or other commitments on Election Day. It also provides a paper record of the vote, in case there are challenges. Several western states use mail-in voting with success and other states may take a second look

at a larger use of the mail-in voting option.

7. Is the south changing?

While the traditional Midwestern, Democratic 'Blue Wall' may be fading to purple, several Republican states seem to be shifting in the same purple direction. Georgia, North Carolina and Arizona, once solid Republican states, all were considered tossup states this year, with Biden having a small lead in Arizona and Georgia.

8. What will happen in the next two months?

While Biden has won, he won't take office until Jan. 20. What will be the reaction of the Trump administration? Will they accede to a peaceful transition or something else? Will Trump finally concede, or will he continue to claim that the election was fraudulent? Will he issue last minute executive orders or pardons? So far, there have been no violent demonstrations over the election. Will that hold for the next two months?

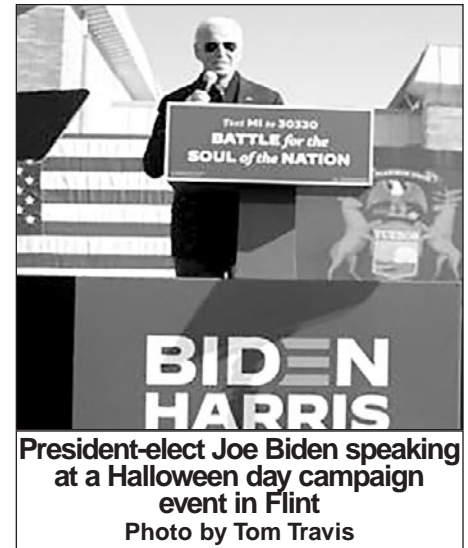
9. How will Biden deal with the major challenges he faces?

As we move to the new administration, the nation faces two major challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic is spiking in nearly every state, hospitals are reaching their limits, and it looks like the second (or third) wave of the pandemic will be worse than what we have seen in the past nine months. While a vaccine is on the horizon, it not here yet, and it may be many months before it's widely available. Parallel to the COVID crisis is the economic crisis. Not only are millions still out of work and businesses closed, but the financial relief needed to fight the pandemic, will cause large budget problems for both the state and national governments, limiting their ability to deal with other issues. As he tries to resolve these crisis, Biden may be dealing with a divided government.

10. Can we restore trust in our major institutions?

Perhaps the major problem that we face after this election is dealing with the lack of trust in governmental and non-governmental institutions. In

recent decades there has been declining trust in many organizations, and Trump's presidency played on that, and increased the distrust in the Congress, the political parties, the FBI, the military, medical professionals, the media, and the Postal Service, among



others.

Elections are the heart of democracy and Trump's unfounded charges that the recent election was a fraud only makes matters worse, as few Republicans were willing to challenge him on his charges of wide-spread vote cheating and corruption. As we know all too well in Flint, once that trust is lost, it can take a very long time to restore it.

And finally, will we as a people, begin to restore trust in each other, and heal the partisan divisions of the nation? That may be our own task as much as Joe Biden's.

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

**COLLEGE CULTURAL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
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Stay home, stay safe!

Watch for meeting updates at
www.eastvillagemagazine.org

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

THESE MONTHS IN THE VILLAGE

We're publishing a double issue this time due to the election, so we've renamed this calendar "These Months..." just this one time. It's a selection of events available to our readers — beginning after our publication date of Nov. 19. It's not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling of opportunities in the city. To submit events for our January issue, email your event to pisenber@gmail.com by Dec. 20.

Flint Institute of Arts

Reopened July 6.

Open Mon. through Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sun. 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

For guidelines regarding COVID-19 restrictions, check the FIA website before your visit. The FIA Theater has new films on the schedule but are available only for virtual viewing. The galleries are open. "Pure Abstraction," abstract art in the Henry and Hodge Galleries runs through Jan. 10. "Art of Jade" runs through May 23 in the Ann K Watch-Chan Gallery. "Field of Vision," nature photography, in the Graphics Gallery is on display through Jan. 10. "The Dark, Krystle," a film montage in the Media Arts Gallery exploring 80s pop culture clichés ends Nov. 30.

Flint Institute of Art

1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint

For more info visit flintarts.org.

Flint Farmers' Market

Reopened June 15.

Open Tues. and Thurs. 9a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Safety measures are still in place and masks are required.

Flint Farmers' Market

300 East First St., Flint

For more info visit flintfarmersmarket.com.

Buckham Gallery

Reopened July 15.

Open Wed. through Fri. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sun. 1 to 5 p.m.

Masks are required by visitors and staff. Visitors are limited to 8 at a time. "A Climate of Change" features work by 24 artists. These members of the Buckham Artist Collective interpret current events of all kinds. Also featured is "Shadows," a print exchange of limited edition prints among the participants and also archived for Buckham Gallery to their collection.

Buckham Gallery

121 W. Second St., Flint

For more info visit buckhamgallery.org.

Flint Public Library

Reopened July 23.

Open Tues. through Thurs. 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Fri. and Sat. 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Masks and social distancing are required. Capacity is limited. Please plan on visiting one hour or less so that everyone gets a turn.

Flint Public Library

Courtland Center

corner of Center Rd. and Court St.

(temporary location during renovation)

For more info visit fpl.info.

Chess

On this site games can be played between people at the same level or played against the computer.

There are chess lessons and puzzles to solve. Chess news and championship games can also be watched.

The basic membership is free but there are premium memberships also available.

Visit chess.com for more info.

Shopping and Eating in Downtown Flint

Many restaurants and shops are open with restrictions for holiday shopping and eating, too many to list here.

For information on what's available, simply google "stores in downtown flint mi" or "downtown flint restaurants."

Convenient lists of these businesses will come up showing their addresses, ratings, websites, hours, services, and phone numbers for each business.



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

Democracy Beat *Flint City Council votes in new leadership: Fields and Davis*

By Tom Travis

After a contentious five-hour meeting and acting only on two pieces of city business, the Flint City Council voted to recess until Thursday at 5:30 p.m. The meeting did result in an upending of council leadership, with Kate Fields (4th Ward) elected president of the council by a 5-4 vote, replacing Monica Galloway (7th Ward).

Voting for Fields were councilpersons Maurice Davis (2nd Ward), Santino Guerra (3rd Ward), Fields (4th Ward), Allan Griggs (8th Ward) and Eva Worthing (9th Ward). Jerri Winfrey-Carter (5th Ward), Herb Winfrey (6th Ward) and former City Council President Monica Galloway (7th Ward) all voted for Galloway to continue as president. Eric Mays (1st Ward) voted for himself as president.

Maurice Davis was elected vice president with a 5-4 vote. Davis, Guerra, Fields, Griggs and Worthing voted for Davis. Winfrey-Carter, Winfrey and Galloway voted for Galloway. Mays again voted for himself.

“Major changes in the rules I want to turn the tide (on the council).” says Fields.

In a phone interview with EVM on Tuesday morning, newly elected City Council President Kate Fields said, “I want some major changes in the rules. One of the techniques being used is council members using point of orders to get the floor when it's not a legitimate reason for a point of order.”

Commenting on the phone about Fields hopes to accomplish as council president she said, “I want to try and turn the tide and have city council meetings become more focused on what is actually germane and not focused on personal agendas. To eliminate some of the dysfunction of our meetings so we can really concentrate on those problems that affect our ability to keep the public safe.”

Council's annual meeting to elect officers begins in chaos and contention

The regular city council meeting began with chaotic arguing, and a contentious mood held sway until 7:30 p.m. when the council moved to have prayer and moment of silence. It was the annual City Council organization meeting, and as estab-

lished by protocol, the City Clerk, Inez Brown, chairs the meeting to allow the nine council members to vote for officers.

Council officers include president and vice president and chairpersons for the various committees: Finance, Government Operations, Grants, Legislative and Special Affairs.

Residents call in during Public Speaking with scathing criticism of council's behavior

During the public speaking portion of the meeting members of the public called in to voice their comments. First to speak was 1st Ward Pastor Freelon Threlkeld. “I've been listening since 5:15 this evening and I have one thing to say, www.how-dumb-can-we-be. All I can do is pray and cast my vote.

“I admire Brother Mays. I stand behind him even though he's not right all the time but he's the man for the job. You all should show some courtesy. The city of Flint is where it's at because of

... Restoration

(Continued from Page 7.)

when we don't live our lives as commercial beings,” Kildee reflected.



**Flint River-Swartz Creek Confluence: Flint River front/right meets Swartz Creek on the left; Atwood Stadium in the background; view from the south.
Photo by HC Ford**

“We're human beings, and we ought to be able to think about the quality of the lives that we lead and think about what this would mean.”

“The money's there,” Kildee asserted. “The question is if we're going to use it for weapons of destruction, or to rebuild the earth. We have a stake in that and we ought to invest in it.”

Reclamation of “a really cool spot”

“I'm a Flintstone, born and raised here all of my 62 years,” Kildee reminisced. He said he'd driven by the site of the proposed development on W. Kearsley Street a “thousand times...but I'd never been out to that point, and when I stood there, I said, ‘Wow, this is a really cool spot...It just

begs for someone to help restore it so it can be an asset for people who live here.”

“This is a way for us to reclaim the river as a natural asset,” said Kildee.

“For too many decades, too many cities treated rivers like open sewers and they are, and can be, really beautiful assets that people are naturally drawn to ... With a little bit of help, nature has found a way to take that back, and that's what I see happening here.”

“When you walk out onto the point,” Fedewa said, “You really get a sense of how everything ties together and how great an amenity this will be for all the residents in Flint.”

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... Council

(Continued from Page 14.)

the leadership. And in that council the spirit of the fabulous five has returned. [Referring to Councilmembers: Davis, Guerra, Fields, Griggs and Worthing]."

Rev Threlkeld's comments were echoed by several other public speakers. More than ten public speakers called in to address the council. Most of them raised complaints about the behavior of the council.

Flint residents, Barbara Moore and AC Dumas, called in, both stating, "I am appalled," Moore said, "This is a mockery."

Dumas, a 3rd Ward resident, said, "It sounds like a dictatorship with Ms. Fields. I want to caution Mr. Mays because she is just waiting to throw you out of the meeting."

No committee chairs chosen yet

The council voted in March to cease committee meetings. Not all the

council members agreed on that decision. Mays (1st Ward) often suggests that the council should begin having committee meetings again. Fields often argues against reinstating the committee meetings, during the pandemic, due to the extra work and increased coronavirus exposure the City Clerk office staff would endure to prepare for the meetings.

Along with Monday's vote for president and vice president, the council discussed who would lead the various committees, but newly-elected president Fields asked for more time for the council to consider potential chairs.

After four hours with no city business completed, the council recessed until Thursday.

Appointments approved for the Downtown Development Authority

At Thursday's electronic meeting, the council appointed two Grand Blanc residents to the DDA: Robert Kittel and Louis Hawkins. Legal counsel for the

DDA Damion Frasier added support by phone for the appointments.

Frasier explained that Kittel, while living in Grand Blanc, has been a long time Flint property and business owner and has an interest in the development of downtown Flint. Hawkins told the council that even though he lives in Grand Blanc he "does almost everything in Flint."

Mays argued the make up of the governing bodies in Flint should be made up of "Flint people."

The council approved Kittel 6 to 2, with Winfrey-Carter and Monica Galloway voting no. Mays had been removed from the meeting at the time. Kittel will serve a two-year term ending in October 2022. The council approved Hawkins 7 to 1 with Winfrey-Carter voting no. Hawkins will serve a three-year term ending March 2023.

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... Heresy

(Continued from Page 16.)

made the cut: I was with my husband, my stepson, my step-daughter-in-law and my step-grandson, Jackson. This is part of the family I've made, the circle of people with whom I share important history. There's not a blood relative among us, except that Jackson, who's six, is the biological son of his doting mom and dad.

Labels get so complicated these days. Eliot's my stepson but not Ted's, since he's the son of my first husband. I suppose we could call him Ted's stepson-in-law, etc., but that gets cumbersome. It's all a bit anxiety-provoking. What should we tell my step-grandson to call my second husband?

He has a grandpa already who's lustily involved in his life, his biological Grandpa Danny. Since that's my first husband and we're divorced, it feels disloyal to suggest that Ted would be called Jackson's grandpa. Then there's Grandpa Danny's wife, and then there's his maternal grandma, who showers him with love and gifts and yearns for more.

So Jackson calls him Mr. Ted. The sobriquet that suits me most is "Aunty," and I would be happy being Jackson's old aunty, but for now, he just calls me Jan.

Before going to the diner, Jackson and I had spent part of the morning sitting at the kitchen table talking about birds and things we might like to invent. I can't remember either of our ideas, but it doesn't matter now. It's so much fun when anything is possible. A woodpecker landed on the Bradford pear tree – a big red-headed one, and we were both thrilled to see it.

Happiness abounds

Anyway, in the corner booth at Olympic we all started talking about happiness. How much happiness can one expect to have? In the spirit of the season, we noted our incredible good fortune: we have shelter, we all found houses to buy that we could afford, we do work we like. We get to eat food every day. We can breathe the air. Sure, we worry about our bodies. We have too many bills. We

have existential moments when this life seems too brief, when fear keep us awake at 4 a.m. But still.

I turned to Jackson, who was nibbling his syrup-drenched waffle. I asked, "What makes you happy?" He twiddled his fork and took another bite.

"I have no idea," the kid said cheerfully, entirely in the moment: the moment of the waffle. I swear he's a six-year-old Dalai Lama. I love this kid.

"Well, you know what makes me happy?" I said, turning back to my egg-white veggie omelet. "It's sitting here next to you."

It made him shy. But in a minute, he recovered. For the third time, he told his favorite joke. I knew what was coming, and I couldn't wait to hear his wonderful pealing laugh after the punchline. Here it is: What smells, is invisible, and is in a museum?

It's ... "fartwork."

You're welcome.

Happy Holidays.

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Village Life

From 2015, a secret heresy — maybe holidays without families won't be so bad?

By Jan Worth-Nelson

As EVM rounds out this special year-end edition after an incredibly difficult 2020 for us all, and as Jan Worth-Nelson steps down officially as editor, we decided to include one of her previous Village Life essays as a retrospective. In a year that has had few lighthearted moments, this essay from December 2015 describes the “downside” of holidays – back in that distant, long ago time BEFORE. Could it be that the pandemic, with all its limitations, could SAVE us from our families? Might it be a secret serendipity, a surprise gift from this otherwise awful plague?

The trouble with holidays, really, is families. The trouble with holidays is how society arm-wrestles us into facing who begat us. Sitting around various dining room tables, the menu rife with clichéd dishes and family histories – and so often histrionics – every year we play out, once again, what we're like when we're together. Who doesn't dread it: the worn-out in-jokes, the one over-exuberant drunk, the prickly narratives of hurt feelings – when she did ... what was it again? – the predictable tiresome opinions, everybody taking exactly the same position they did last year, the ancestral cookie recipe that never quite turns out right, the hushed whispers about reversals and betrayals, and oh, yeah, that molded Jell-O salad loaded inexplicably with shaved carrots and cottage cheese. The way Uncle Boopie slurps his pumpkin soup.

I was at one family dinner where somebody choked on a hunk of turkey and threw up on his plate. And another one where somebody was so drunk by dinner he conked out at the table and his head fell into a pile of squash.

You know what I'm talking about

The vagaries, dear friends, of togetherness.

It's bad enough when you're a kid in your late teens, let's say, just back

from college or other adventures away from the Mother Ship: the overpowering effect of what it was you thought you got away from.

Then you come home and it's all still there: your embarrassing mother, the dowdy furniture, your father's aghast disappointment with your new politics, how nobody notices you've slimmed down and gotten a stylish new haircut. How you really are the middle child and that's your role – apparently until The Rapture – and your kid brother seems to be high on meth.

Just sayin'

But it's even worse when you're the grownup in the room, and, looking around that table or that overheated living room, everybody sitting there nodding off on carbs, you realize you are face to face with your own culpabilities. Who are these people you call family? What did you do to make them like that? Is there any hope for any of them? How can you possibly apologize enough?

And what of your own half-forgotten dreams? Is it your fate when all is said and done to make that green-bean casserole every year from now on, hoping somebody, anybody, will say it was good? And is that all there is? What about your dreams of music, or that secret of sneaking off to New Orleans to see what it's like, or the itch that keeps coming up telling you to learn Tai Chi?

We'll all be doing well to get out of this with any psychic dignity.

On the other hand:

We love each other. We need each other. When the day is done, we forgive each other – one hopes. In our human loneliness and doubts, we are extravagantly, desperately in need of kindness, compassion, understanding

and Lord Almighty, a few good laughs.

So this is a time to be grateful for that circle of loved ones we've gathered around ourselves to keep us warm through the winter. Whoever that is. Sometimes we aren't even “related.” Our lives can accommodate many brothers and sisters, nurturers and those we nurture alike.

My own nuclear family, though my childhood years were replete with drama, has shrunk by now to just my brother and me, and we are two thousand miles apart. But I do have a family, a collection of dear and varied souls with whom I've shared good and bad with passionate engagement over the years. So I don't have to claim the aches of solitude unless I choose to go there.

We can make our own families

I'm so glad the boundaries of what makes a family have expanded over the years. The fact that gay marriage is legal and marriages and remarriage – though complicated – can now re-arrange us into a Tetris of love – makes us luckier now, if we have the sense to embrace them, to enjoy some reassuring counter-arguments against isolation and hatred.

A tale from the Olympic Grill

So, here is a story about my family – the one my real life created for me.

I was sitting in one of the big corner booths at Olympic Grill, savoring the relief of diner food the day after Thanksgiving.

When I'm in the corner booth, I feel important and fulfilled, because you can't just sit in the corner booth alone: I think there's a five-person minimum. I

(Continued on Page 15.)