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June 2022

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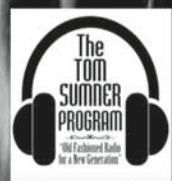
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Reporters Harold C. Ford  
Madeleine Graham  
Patsy Isenberg  
Coner Segren  
Columnist Paul Rozycki  
Photographer Edwin D. Custer

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720 E. Second St.  
Flint, Mich. 48503  
(810) 233-7459

Website:  
eastvillagemagazine.org

E-mail:  
eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com

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## Commentary The legal road to Roe v. Wade and back: It's more than just a court case

By Paul Rozycki

Perhaps nothing illustrates both the legal and personal sides of the abortion issue better than two unrelated recent events. A few weeks ago, we learned that the U.S. Supreme Court is likely to overturn a half century of protection for abortion rights, and, in the same week, we learned that the lack of baby formula is reaching a crisis level.

ant implications for what might follow an overturn of the Roe case.

### Earlier abortion laws and restrictions

Prior to late 19th century abortion was legal in most states, at least until "the quickening", when the mother could feel the movement of the fetus. There were a few laws on the books, aimed a prohibiting the



Protestors at a Defend Roe March in downtown Flint on Saturday, May 14  
(Photo by Tom Travis)

Based upon a leaked court opinion, (Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, 2022) it appears that the U.S. Supreme Court is on track to overturn the 1973 Roe v. Wade case that provided a constitutional guarantee for a woman's right to an abortion.

While the Roe v. Wade case was a landmark case, the legal basis for it wasn't created in 1973. Some of the key principles in the case were laid down years earlier, and have import-

sale of dangerous abortion drugs, but enforcement was spotty.

By the mid-1800s, the American Medical Association supported limits on abortion mainly to eliminate competition from midwives or other non-medical practitioners, and by the end of the 19th century most states banned abortions. By the early 1970s legal abortion was only available in Washington D.C. and five states, Alaska, California, Washington, Hawaii, and New York.

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Cover: Flint Public Library after renovations Grand Opening



**Photo of the Month: Patrons explore the new Children's Learning Center at the Flint Public Library**  
(Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

## Education Beat

### **May Flint School Board meetings: EDEP dismissed; no school closings or staff layoffs; infrastructure woes continue; intra-board tensions ongoing**

*By Harold C. Ford*

The May 11 and 18 meetings of the Flint Board of Education (FBOE) – together lasting nearly 12 hours – began with purported good news that Flint Community Schools (FCS) had been released from the imposition of an enhanced deficit elimination plan (EDEP) by the Michigan Department of Treasury.

Any euphoria elicited by the EDEP-dismissal announcement soon evolved into a parade of FCS constituents anxiously and unanimously urging the district not to close schools – specifically Pierce Elementary and the Accelerated Learning Academy.

Ongoing infrastructure woes at its aging buildings continued to plague the district with reports of

crumbling masonry at Doyle-Ryder and an inability to start up newly-installed air conditioning units at Pierce and Freeman due to electrical grid shortcomings.

The May meetings revisited an all-too-familiar theme of board disunity.

#### **EDEP disappears, not so indebtedness**

“I received a call from Treasury (Michigan Department of Treasury) yesterday,” said Kevelin Jones, FCS superintendent, at the start of the May 11 meeting. “In that call, Treasury let me know that our district will no longer need to submit an enhanced deficit elimination plan.”

Jones’ announcement generated

three rounds of smiles and applause by FBOE members. “This means ... the state won’t be looking over our shoulder,” he said.

The district had been under the watchful eye of Michigan’s state government – specifically its Department of Treasury – for many years. Most recently, two amended EDEPs were sent to Treasury by FCS in calendar year 2020.

“This doesn’t mean Flint doesn’t have a deficit,” Jones cautioned.

Jones’ caution has often been expressed by others:

- “The district projects to remain in deficit until Fiscal Year 2035-36.” –Michigan Department of Treasury, September, 2020

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## **Education ...**

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- “You’re definitely not going to be in excellent financial shape for a long time.” –Holly Stefanski, assurance manager, Plante Moran, an auditing firm then serving FCS, January, 2022

- “This (COVID relief funding) gives us the appearance that we are not operating in a deficit. I want to stress ... we are still in a deficit.” –Ayunnah Dompheh, then-FCS director of finances, February, 2022

#### **ESSER funds provide temporary solvency**

Jones said dismissal of the EDEP “is due to the work ... done as it pertains to our ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Relief/ COVID relief) funds and having a fund balance. We are in a position that our fund balance is in a space where we need to be at the time.”

The positive FCS “fund balance” is achieved, temporarily, by ESSER funds from the federal government that total \$144 million, an amount confirmed by Keiona Murphy, FCS assistant superintendent, in a recent interview with East Village Magazine (*EVM*).

“We still need board members to eliminate some debt,” Jones warned. “We still need to make sure we are fiscally responsible.”

Representatives of Plante Moran advised the FBOE in December 2021



**The Flint Board of Education listen to members of the public speak during a recent meeting**

*(Photo by Tom Travis)*

that unless affirmative measures were undertaken to address systemic shortcomings – particularly declining student enrollment – by 2024 FCS would likely circle back to a familiar bleak financial profile that has existed for nearly two decades.

[A more complete overview of the FCS financial profile can be found in a May 16 online posting by *EVM*.]

#### **“To close or not to close?”**

“To close or not to close?” asked a Pierce teacher during a time for public comment, “That is the question tonight.”

Jones had said “two of our schools (are) in consideration of closure.” He was referencing reports and rumors about the possible closures of the district’s Pierce and ALA buildings.

One day prior to the FBOE meeting, on May 10, WNEM Channel 5 and ABC12 News reported on the possible closure of Pierce. Rumors had ALA’s nontraditional students being relocated within the Southwestern building alongside traditional students as a school within a school.

“No decisions have been made about any or which schools will be closed,” advised Chris Del Morone, FBOE assistant secretary-treasurer.

Nonetheless, 30 speakers paraded to the microphone expressing concern about the possible closures. Pierce is located on Flint’s near east side in the so-called College Cultur-

al Neighborhood close to the city’s college and cultural center. ALA, an alternative school serving students in grades 7-12, is also located on Flint’s east side at 1602 S. Averill Ave., across from Dort Federal Event Center, near the Evergreen Estate community.

At the conclusion of its May meetings no building closures or accompanying staff layoffs were announced.

[Excerpted comments from most of the speakers opposing the school closures can be read in a May 16 online posting by *EVM*.]

#### **“All of our buildings gotta be renovated.”**

Danielle Green, then-FBOE treasurer, reflecting on the condition of Flint’s aging school infrastructure, said in August 2021, “All our buildings gotta be renovated.” Her statement has proved prophetic.

New reports of crumbling infrastructure – literal and figurative – were brought to the board’s attention at their May meetings.

#### **Doyle-Ryder**

According to Pete Medor, FCS director of operations, the masonry – mortar and bricks – of four roof chimneys on the 121-year-old Doyle-Ryder building need repair. The needed repairs – unexpected and not included in the previously-approved budget for black mold remediation and roof repair – would amount to just more than \$31,000.

“I worked in that school for several years,” recollected Joyce Ellis-McNeal, FBOE president. “Everything is falling apart there.”

Due to the presence of black mold, Doyle-Ryder has been closed to students most of the 2021-22 school year; its students are currently attending Potter.

FBOE approved the funding request by a 6-0 vote margin.

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## Education ...

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### Pierce, Potter, Freeman

For some two years, Johnson Controls has been attempting to upgrade HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) systems in six of Flint's school buildings at a price tag that exceeds \$15 million. The electrical infrastructure in three of those buildings –Pierce, Potter, and Freeman – did not pass a recent electrical inspection that would permit operation of newly-installed HVAC infrastructure.

According to Medor, the problem at 70-year-old Pierce was “minor” and would require no additional funding to resolve.

The electrical problems at 70-year-old Potter and 71-year-old Freeman were deemed “major” and would require significant additional funding to repair: \$62,104 at Freeman; \$75,295 at Potter.

“The service that comes into these buildings is not adequate,” Medor said. Johnson Controls told FCS administration that service on both buildings needed replacement; they would deliver a so-called change order (cost adjustment) to the district.

Installation, when started, would take three weeks. Hot spring temperatures – already reaching the 70s and 80s – are heating up FCS buildings.

A motion petitioning Johnson Controls to “honor the contract ... without the change order” was passed by a 6-0 margin. Additionally, the board will seek legal counsel on the matter.

### Intra-board tensions

Tensions between and among its members have been a constant in the nearly six years this reporter has covered FBOE meetings. The most dramatic instance, in March 2022, was an alleged assault of FBOE Treasurer Laura MacIntyre by Green, then-FBOE president, who has been



**Handmade sign held by parents and students at the Flint Board of Education meeting**

(Photo by Tom Travis)



**Durant-Tuuri Mott school on University Avenue near Kettering University**

(Photo by Tom Travis)



**Freeman Elementary school in the south end of the Flint Community School District**

(Photo by Tom Travis)

barred from board attendance for several months via issuance of a Personal Protection Order requested by MacIntyre.

The nearly 12 hours of May meetings offered more evidence of FBOE tensions:

- May 11: The board's president and vice president, McNeal and McIntosh respectively, engaged in a nearly hour-long brouhaha that featured tense verbal exchanges, name-calling, raised voices, constant interruptions, and accusations of dishonesty. These behaviors can be witnessed in the final hour of a YouTube recording of that meeting or in a shorter, excerpted version that was published online in May by *EVM*.

- May 18: Board members

sparred over board policies. And Trustee Allen Gilbert, a pastor at Bethel Apostolic Church in Flint, said near the end of the 5.5-hour meeting: “I came (tonight) with the intent to have one of our board officers removed from their office ... The Holy Ghost has condemned me that I should not do that.” A short time later he admonished McNeal: “Don't send them emails to me about sister Carolyn, Boose, Chris, or anyone else ... This is what's poisoning our board.”

Plentiful online resources address intra-board cooperation such as a site managed by GDP Consulting. GDP's site includes an article titled “7 essential components to insure intra-board cooperation...” The first component – “Commitment to resolution of the issue” – reads, in part: “Some issues are just nuisances. Boards want them to go away. One way to make that happen is to engage other entities in the problem-solving process.”

The FBOE has, in fact, been visited by other nonprofit organizations – including Michigan Association of School Board representatives and members of the Pontiac School District's (PSD) board – that rendered counsel about effective management of a school system.

In November 2021, Shaniqua Smith, PSD treasurer, told Flint's board: “It doesn't look good when you're divided ... It makes you look dysfunctional.” MacIntyre's response: “We're not going to present a united front as if everything is OK, because it's not OK.”

### “Due diligence”

FCS administration and FBOE members wrangled over service contractors – food services, auditors, custodial and maintenance. – for more than an hour at its May 18 meeting.

Carol McIntosh, FBOE vice president, led the charge against acceptance of contracts that had been vetted by the FCS administration

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## FPL architect says “Libraries are the greatest act of love you can give your community” as area residents pour in

By Jan Worth-Nelson

When Kay Schwartz and her crew of 31 staff and the library's board of trustees began the planning process seven years ago for the Flint Public Library's major renovation which culminated with a three-day opening celebration May 19-21, one value emerged over all others.

“We wanted it to be a welcoming community space above everything else,” Schwartz said, walking around the capacious new layout the day before the public opening of the dramatically made-over 60-year-old Kearsley Street structure.

“We're providing space, and people can decide what they want to do with it,” Schwartz said. “We have opportunities for people that they never had, different types of seating, different types of meeting space — we hope they'll do some exciting things with it.”

Among many “welcoming” moves, the library added automatic doors and a filtered water system; new seating of different “postures” has been added so that people of any size or shape can find a comfortable place to sit.

The staff have added art by local artists, including the new mural by Kevin “Scraps” Burdick visible through huge windows from both of the main floors.

To facilitate family uses, every restroom has a changing table. The children's section has been expanded, a first-time storytelling room has been added, with a “child scale” restroom attached. There is even a snack area now — a big departure for library management.

From the start, all these changes and more fell to the project's architects, OPN of Cedar Rapids IA, to listen and



**Rebuilt facade of the FPL, first look at the \$30 million renovation on Kearsley Street**

(Photo by Tom Travis)

to translate that value into brick and mortar that would communicate openness, accessibility, and even pleasure. The result, according to Toby Olsen, associate principal of OPN and major architectural domo of the Flint project, reflects a commitment to democracy and love.



**Toby Olsen, associate principal of OPN, and FPL Director Kay Schwartz**

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

That philosophy is most evident in the library's exhilarating use of light — both a physical joy to move around in and a metaphor for a public library's role.

“One of our big goals was to open [the space] up. There are so many windows, and we made even more, adding especially to the east side of the building,” Schwartz noted.

And in addition, library designers lowered the bookshelves so people can see over them, making spaces feel

bigger and airier. They have added “face forward” shelving so that patrons can see the cover of a book as they browse.

“Wherever there is a window, there is either a meeting room, or seat-

ing. The designers pulled the collections in away from the windows, to give the windows to the public,” Schwartz said.

Olsen said he and his team strongly connected with the FPL's aims, both philosophically and architecturally. It's a specialty of the company: OPN has designed more than 40 libraries across the country.

Working on a library is “a project we love,” Olsen said after the ribbon cutting, surveying the shiny new look he had played a major role in.

“A library is one of the most democratizing of all spaces,” he said. “Libraries are some of the last few spaces where you can go where there's no expectation to spend money.”

In a library, “Whoever walks through the doors is treated the same way, and that is truly amazing,” Olsen said.

Libraries are safeguards to democracy, he said, “safeguards to making sure we aren't devoid of free thinking, free thought. In a library we make sure we have access to materials, and you can come and immerse yourself.

“Those ethics go hand in hand with the mission of libraries that intrigue us, and then you pepper in the community gathering aspect, the ability to have discussions freely and openly — it's worthy of thinking and hard work.

“We firmly believe libraries are the greatest act of love you can give your community They're a space where everybody is welcome, no matter your

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## Commentary ...

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### The right to privacy and the Roe v. Wade case

In the 20th century, a few states went further and banned the sale and use of contraceptives. In 1965 in the case of *Griswold v. Connecticut* the Supreme Court found Connecticut's ban on contraceptives unconstitutional, as a violation of the "right to privacy" implied in the 14th Amendment.

The ruling establishing a right to privacy set the stage for the *Roe v. Wade* case in 1973, which overturned the existing abortion laws in the country. In their ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court divided pregnancy into three trimesters. In the first three months of pregnancy, the decision on having an abortion was totally up to the woman.

In the second trimester, the state could regulate, but could not forbid abortion, and in the third trimester a state could forbid an abortion for a fetus that could survive on its own, except to protect the life of the mother. The 7-2 ruling was written by Justice Harry Blackmun, was based in part on the right to privacy. Blackmun was chosen to write the opinion, in part, because of his legal background working in the medical field.

He wrote:

*"This right of privacy, whether it be founded in the Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action, as we feel it is, or ... in the Ninth Amendment's reservation of rights to the people, is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether to terminate her pregnancy."*

### Reaction to Roe

In short order, the pro and con reaction to the Supreme Court's ruling broke down generally along partisan lines. With some exceptions, Democrats supported the ruling, and, with some exceptions, Republicans opposed

it. By the late 1980s those divisions became hardened in both camps, and the abortion issue became a major cultural issue dividing the two parties.

In the decade following the *Roe v. Wade* case, a number of states attempted to pass laws prohibiting or limiting abortion, and most of those were overturned based on the rulings in the *Roe* case.

However, two cases in the late 1980s and early 1990s opened the door to more restrictions on abortion. In 1989 in the case of *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, and in 1992 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the court upheld the *Roe* decision, but did away with the trimester distinctions, and said restrictions on abortion could be upheld if they did not place an "undue burden" on a woman obtaining an abortion.

While the *Roe* decision stood, it opened the door to many restrictions from the states. In the years that followed, many states began to require waiting periods, various medical tests, specific requirements for doctors, particular physical requirements for clinics, and other restrictions that made abortions more difficult to obtain. In light of the *Casey* and *Webster* opinions, more than a few of those barriers were upheld. Those cases encouraged many states to pass "trigger laws" that would ban abortions, if and when, the *Roe* case was overturned. Today at least 24 states (including Michigan) have laws that would effectively ban abortions if the court overturns *Roe*.

### The impact in Michigan

In Michigan, overturning the *Roe v. Wade* case would reinstate a 1931 law that bans abortions in all cases, except to protect the life of the woman. It reads in part,

*"Any person who shall willfully administer to any pregnant woman any medicine, drug, substance or thing whatever, or shall employ any instrument or other means whatever, with intent thereby to procure the miscarriage of any such woman, unless the*

*same shall have been necessary to preserve the life of such woman, shall be guilty of a felony, and in case the death of such pregnant woman be thereby produced, the offense shall be deemed manslaughter."*

Even under that restrictive law one key question remains. What is meant by "preserve the life of the woman"? Can an abortion be performed only if the woman is certain to die with a pregnancy? If there is a one in 10 chance of dying? A one in 100 chance? What if a woman needs to end a pregnancy to take chemotherapy? It's obviously not clear, and few doctors would take the chance of facing criminal charges.

### Michigan's response: A ballot proposal, a lawsuit, and limits on prosecuting

In Michigan there have been several responses to the expected Supreme Court ruling.

There is a ballot proposal supported by the ACLU and Planned Parenthood that would amend the Michigan Constitution to guarantee the reproductive rights in the *Roe v. Wade* case.

Gov. Whitmer has filed a legal challenge to the Michigan Supreme Court ruling that could overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision that protects a woman's right under the U.S. Constitution. Her lawsuit argues that the right to abortion should be protected by the Michigan state Constitution rather than the U.S. Constitution.

If the suit is successful it would block the 1931 law. Based on a similar Planned Parenthood lawsuit, the Michigan Court of Claims has issued a preliminary injunction that blocks the immediate implementation of the law, but further legal action is likely.

A third response has come from Michigan's Attorney General Dana Nessel, who has said that she would not prosecute anyone under the 1931 law. At least seven county prosecutors, including Genesee County Prosecu-

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## Commentary ...

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tor David Leyton, have also said that they would not prosecute anyone for performing an abortion under the 1931 law. However, there are 83 county prosecutors in the state, and there is no guarantee the others would defer prosecution.

Protests have been held around the nation and in Flint, to support a woman's right to choose and almost certainly it will be a key issue in the upcoming midterm elections.

### The implications beyond abortion

While the issue of abortion and a woman's right to choose is the essential issue in the *Roe v. Wade* case, the implications of overturning it go beyond the abortion issue.

The idea that there is a constitutional right to privacy has been the basis for a number of other court rulings that might also be in jeopardy if *Roe* were overturned. The list is long, but a few of the more significant cases have involved:

- Allowing parents to decide if their children learn a foreign language. (*Meyer v. Nebraska*, 1923)
- Upholding a parent's right to send a child to a non-public school. (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 1925)
- The right to use contracep-

tives. (*Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965)

- The right for individuals to marry someone of another race. (*Loving v. Virginia*, 1967)
- The right of individuals to make their own decisions about ending life-prolonging medical treatments. (*Cruzan v. Missouri Department of Health*, 1990)
- Overturning laws that criminalized gay sex. (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003)
- The right for same sex couples to marry. (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015)

### Where do we go from here?

While the release of the draft of the Supreme Court's opinion has energized and shocked many, it's not a complete surprise. There were many who thought that *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned in 1992 with the *Casey* decision. Only a last minute change by one justice prevented that from happening. The three conservative Supreme Court appointments made during the Trump administration made the reversal much more likely.

It's also worth noting that the draft opinion is simply that, a draft, and while it's unlikely to change, it's possible that the final opinion could be different, when it is released in late June or early July.

Public opinion is clearly on the side of those who support a woman's

right to choose. Most polls show that about two thirds of the American public feel that the *Roe v. Wade* case should not be overturned, and that abortion should be legal in all or most cases. While 24 states have passed laws to limit abortions, at least 15 have gone in the other direction, and have expanded protection for a woman's right to choose.

But the energy seen in recent protests shouldn't be wasted. The protests need to continue, but there should be more than protests. Get registered and turn out to vote. Midterm elections have a lower turnout than the presidential years, and that traditionally favors Republicans. Take the time to sign the petition that would amend Michigan's Constitution to protect a woman's right to choose. If it gets on the ballot, it may be the strongest protection for that right. Vote to support it.

And finally, share your story with others. As Jan Worth-Nelson and others have done in the *East Village Magazine*, let people know that this isn't about some obscure legal principle for lawyers and judges. It's not even about Democrats and Republicans. And it's about a lot more than baby formula. It's a very human and personal story that can touch all of our lives.

EVM Political Columnist Paul Rozycki can be reached at [paul.rozycki@mcc.edu](mailto:paul.rozycki@mcc.edu).



(Photo by Mike Naddeo)

Visit the Genesee County Health Department website at: [www.gchd.us/coronavirus](http://www.gchd.us/coronavirus) for information on COVID testing, COVID vaccination and COVID information and statistics.

## Flint honors “Heroines and Humanitarians” in sculptures at City Hall

By Paul Rozycki

It’s been a long and winding road, but the sculptured busts of the six women honored as “Heroines and Humanitarians” have now found their way to a permanent home in the Flint City Hall.



Sculptor Jane Trotter (left) with Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha  
(Photo by Paul Rozycki)

In a well-attended ceremony at Flint City Hall April 28, the statues of Claressa Shields, Edith Prunty Spencer, Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, Sybyl McPeake Atwood, Frances Willson Thompson and Olive Beasley were formally installed as a central part of the front lobby.

The project began more than three years ago, under the direction of Flint sculptor and Flint Art Institute instructor, Jane Trotter. Nearly 15 years ago, Trotter sculpted a bust of the late Flint community powerhouse Sybyl Atwood, and in the years that followed realized that Atwood was not the only woman who had contributed much to the community and deserved recognition.

Working with her sculpture students at the Flint Institute of Arts, Trotter selected six women who were the “Heroines and Humanitarians” who have made a major difference in the Flint community.

Yet, even as the clay models were made three years ago, it would take some time, energy, and money to convert those models to the final bronze sculptures and find a home for them. The COVID pandemic added more delays.

Over the last three years, before the Flint City Hall was chosen for the display of the six busts, suggestions were made that they be placed in the new Flint Public Library, or with the Chamber of Commerce, or among several potential locations in downtown Flint. In the end the goal was to keep all six together and the lobby of the Flint City Hall was chosen as their permanent home.

Mayor Sheldon Neeley welcomed those attending by saying that the women richly deserved to be honored, and that even though April wasn’t Women’s History Month, that “every month is Women’s History Month.”



Mayor Sheldon Neeley speaks about the lives of the Heroines and Humanitarians  
(Photo by Paul Rozycki)

Flint City Council members Dr. Ladel Lewis (2nd Ward) and Allie Herkenroder (7th Ward) read a proclamation from the City of Flint recognizing the achievements of the six women and praising their contributions to the city.

In addition to the efforts of sculptor Jane Trotter and her students, one of the other active forces behind the “Heroines and Humanitarians”

project was the Court Street Village Nonprofit, led by Doris and Norma Sain, who described the history of the project and some of the barriers and challenges it faced over the last three years.

Each of the “Heroines and Humanitarians” was introduced by a colleague or friend, and most had a chance to respond to the honor.

- **Claressa Shields**, was introduced by Pastor Robert McCathern, who described her as an inspiration to many. The Flint boxer is a two-time Olympic gold medal winner and holds 12 professional titles and the only boxer in history to be an undefeated two division champion. She has become a model for many young people in Flint and Genesee County. Sculptor Dee Moreno created Shields’ sculpture.

- **Edith Prunty Spencer** was introduced by Flint Public Library Director Kay Schwartz who spoke of

Spencer’s many years of commitment to the library. Spencer has been a leader and active member of the Flint NAACP for more than 60 years. Her plaque describes her as an advocate for justice, equal opportunity and voting rights. She had served on at least 14 civil and charitable organizations that promoted education. Jane Trotter completed the bust of Edith Spencer.

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## Sculptures ...

(Continued from Page 10)

- **Mona Hanna-Attisha, M.D.**, was introduced by Ingrid Halling. Dr. Hanna-Attisha became one of the first voices for those harmed by the Flint water crisis. By challenging her critics both within and outside of the city, she became a leader in the campaign to deal with the Flint water crisis. She advanced efforts to mitigate the effects of lead on the children of Flint. Artist Jan Hanson did the statue of Dr. Hanna-Attisha.



Dale Weighill, Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Mott Community College introduces the Sybyl McPeake Atwood bust  
(Photo by Paul Rozycki)

- Dale Weighill, Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Mott Community College, described his working relationship with the late **Sybyl McPeake Atwood**, at the Resource Center.

Atwood worked for more than 40 years to advocate for the poor, the sick, and the elderly. In her role with the Resource Center she motivated and organized countless volunteers for causes and projects that improved life in Genesee County. She is remembered with the SYBYL Award given to those who make a difference in their community. It was Jane Trotter’s completion of the Atwood’s bust that began the project.

- **Karima Amliani** was scheduled for the introduction of **Frances Willson Thompson**, but Sue Peters, vice president of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, filled in. Frances Willson Thompson was a donor and philanthropist for many

causes and projects in Flint, particularly those with the University of Michigan -Flint. She had been the major motivating factor behind the Frances Willson Thompson Library, and the Critical Issues Forum at the UM-Flint. As her bust was completed, her granddaughter Susie said of her, “She loved Flint so much and was so thankful for all that Flint had given to her family and her that she wanted to give back.” Trotter sculpted the Thompson bust.

- **Olive Rankin Beasley** was described by Ernelle Taylor, who

described Beasley as one of the major leading in civil rights in Flint. She had been called the “matriarch of the civil rights movement in Flint,” and devoted her life to racial equality and racial harmony. She championed the efforts to make Flint the first city to pass a fair housing ordinance. Carole Goyt is the sculptor who did Beasley’s statue.

In concluding the event both Mayor Neeley, Doris Sain, and Jane Trotter thanked all those who supported the project with both their time and money over the last three years. Many of those who were involved in the project attended and shared their experiences and thanks personally after the formal presentations.

The busts will remain on permanent display in the lobby of the Flint City Hall.

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

## Education ...

(Continued from Page 6)

via the RFP (Request for Proposal) process. “I don’t vote on stuff I ain’t got no information for,” she said. “It’s 150 percent irresponsible.”

Jones countered that “due diligence” had been exercised by his administration during the RFP process – that FBOE members could attend – and that contracts were available by the time of the board meeting as promised. “It gets a little difficult to where we have to now figure out how to start over.”

“It’s a no for me,” McIntosh continued. “I’m not votin’ for nothin’ and I don’t have the information.”

The board tabled a decision on the \$2,550,000 custodial and maintenance contract to a future meeting by a unanimous 6-0 vote. The contracts with providers of auditing and food services were both approved by 5-1 votes; the lone dissenter was McIntosh.

Only seven days earlier at the board’s May 11 meeting, McIntosh successfully campaigned to pay an attorney assisting the district’s counsel, Charis Lee, in an appellate matter. Zero information was provided FBOE members: no invoice; not even a name. Nonetheless, the McIntosh motion passed by a 4-2 vote of the board.

The next scheduled meetings of the FBOE: June 8 (Committee of the Whole/COW); June 15 (regular meeting). Meetings take place at Accelerated Learning Academy, 1602 S. Averill Ave., Flint, MI 48503. Special meetings are frequently scheduled; interested persons should check the FCS website for updates.

Meetings normally begin at 6:30 and can be seen remotely by registering, in advance, at the district’s website. Recordings of meetings can be viewed on YouTube.

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

## Libraries ...

(Continued from Page 7)



**Claire Marshall was entranced by the Bubbleman show at the FPL opening. Her favorite part: "When he made a bubble bear"**  
(Photo by Paul Rozycki)

station, creed, or aspect of your life."

"Love and democracy need to be together," he said.

Olsen said the Flint project was "incredibly unique" in part because it



**Nathan, Susan, Amir, Ailden watch the entertainment at the library's grand opening**

(Photo by Paul Rozycki)

was pre-pandemic when it started — and also one of the largest renovations OPN has done for an existing library.

"It's a big building, and it was amazing that we were able to make it 'like new' in every square inch of the interior," he said.

The swathes of windows accomplish many key elements.

"Especially with institutions funded with public dollars, there is a

a metaphoric and symbolic reason for windows — that's inherent in [the design]. Making the building transparent allows people to see what's going on.

"It's like like advertising what's going on inside a jewel box," he said. "Even if you're not a frequent visitor to the library, you will be able to go by and see what it is. You know it's not a school, not an office building, not an apartment building."

At night, he predicts, the building "becomes a jewel box that glows, highlighting the collection inside and the people in there."

The design shows off what happens in a library.

"Libraries aren't just a warehouse for books, they are like a multi-pronged Swiss army knife that enables so many things," he said.

And course, he noted, there's the connection between light and knowledge — and a library being "a beacon and a place of hope." The library sets patrons

(Continued on Page 13)

## Libraries ...

(Continued from Page 12)

off on a journey — from cradle to grave, with something to be discovered and learned at any age, he said.



**Nicole Strickland (left) and Anyah Coleman check out the aquarium in the Children's department of the new library**

(Photo by Tom Travis)

Olsen, who came to Flint almost monthly over the past several years, said he and his Flint team of five respected and loved the city from the start, never seeing it in the light of its sometime notoriety in the outside world.



**Bill Baker and Tracy Krumm take in the whole renovated library. Krumm said he was most impressed with "the open spaces and well lit areas"**

(Photo by Paul Rozycki)

people care," Olsen said. "Yes, they've been through hell and high water, but this is still a place where good things happen, and good people deserve good things."

Olsen and his OPN team are wrapping things up at the library, taking care of a few odds and ends. "It's bittersweet for us because we've been so close to it but ... now it belongs in the hands of the public. This is the part where it's time for the library to be gifted to the people who deserve it most.

Sweeping his gaze over the library one more time, he said, "This is

## Kevelin Jones ...

(Continued from Page 16)

"So, we have to have votes from the board for that to happen. I am pleading with our board to have the conversations necessary to get this done. I know we can get it done."

Jones's own son is in fifth grade at Doyle Ryder Elementary, a building closed and the students moved to another school in August, 2021, because of a black mold infestation. Jones said he almost took his son out of the district, but his son protested because he loved his teachers and wanted to be with his friends.

"Our scholars know nothing of politics. What they know about is where they are currently learning. Kids are about creativity and opportunity to learn, and it's the people that they love. But some of our buildings they don't have air conditioning — there are so many problems."

As summarized in numerous *EVM* articles over the years, the district's 11 school buildings average 70 years old, with infrastructure problems including "HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) systems; electrical grids unable to support HVAC systems; yet-to-be-installed hydration stations or smart water fountains; unreliable internet capabilities; outdated plumbing; crumbling athletic facilities; leaky roofs," according to a 2021 *EVM* education reporter Harold Ford overview.

When the black mold led to teachers walking out of Doyle Ryder and the students moved out during a \$400,000 cleanup, Jones said his son poignantly asked, "Dad, are we going to get new buildings?"

And I said, 'Son, yes, we are, but it's going to take some time.'

"And so I took this walk to remind myself of why I'm here. It's time for me to pick the bricks up," he said.

*EVM consulting editor Jan Worth-Nelson can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com.*

**THE rep** FLINT REPERTORY THEATRE PRESENTS

REIMAGINED LANDMARK MUSICAL

**THE FANTASTICKS**

Sponsored by JOHN P. MACDONALD

Flint Rep reinvents the classic musical. With a fresh new rewrite by book writer and lyricist Tom Jones, in collaboration with director Michael Lluberes, the young lovers at the center of the story are re-imagined as two young men. The *Fantasticks* is a funny and beautiful allegory about falling in love and growing up. We couldn't be more excited to share this new interpretation of the longest-running musical in history.

Book & Lyrics by **Tom JONES** Music by **Harvey SCHMIDT**  
Directed by **Michael LLUBERES** Choreography by **Brad WILCUTS**  
Musical Direction by **Brian E. BUCHNER**

With Jason Briggs, Ben Cherry, Janet Haley, Diane Hill, Neil McCaffrey, Richard Payton, Jeremiah Porter, Catherine Shaffner

**JUNE 3 - 19**

INFO & SHOW TIMES  
[FlintRep.org/the-fantasticks](http://FlintRep.org/the-fantasticks)

TICKETS 810.237.7333 or [FlintRep.org/tickets](http://FlintRep.org/tickets)

Genesee County Arts & Culture  
This program and/or service is funded in whole or in part by the Genesee County Arts Education and Cultural Enrichment Millage funds. Your tax dollars are at work.

Major Funding for the Flint Institute of Music is provided by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Learn more at [Mott.org](http://Mott.org)

This activity is supported by the MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS.  
This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.



**Redesign of the entrance lobby and circulation desk area opened up access and added new, brighter lighting**

(Photo by Paul Rozycki)

They have stayed in local hotels and eaten in local restaurants, Cork on Saginaw and the new Sauce at the Hilton Gardens among their favorites.

And the Cultural Center, including the library, is "incredibly unique" for a city the size of Flint: many U.S. cities have nothing comparable, he observed. Architecturally, this added an additional plus to the library design — the building has "parks" on two sides.

"This is a community where

totally citizen goodness happening."

As of May 21, the official opening day, the library, at 1026 E. Kearsley St., will be open five days a week: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. More information is available at 810-249-2038, [www.fpl.info](http://www.fpl.info).

*EVM consulting editor Jan Worth-Nelson can be reached at janworth1118@gmail.com.*

# THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

A selection of events available to our readers is highlighted — beginning after our publication date of June 2. It's a sampling of opportunities in the city. To submit events for our July issue, email info about your event to [pisenber@gmail.com](mailto:pisenber@gmail.com) by June 26.

## Flint Institute of Arts

May 14 through Aug. 28  
 "Being Human: Contemporary Art from the Rubell Museum" Photography, painting, and sculpture depicting themes that make us human.  
 Admission free for FIA members Genesee County residents, children under 12 and all visitors on Saturdays. Regular admission is adults \$10, students, and seniors \$8.

Flint Institute of Art  
 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint  
 810-234-1695 or visit [flintarts.org](http://flintarts.org).

## The Fantasticks

June 3 through June 19  
 Performances Fridays (8 p.m.), Saturdays (2 and 8 p.m.), and Sundays (2 p.m. June 5 and 19 or 7 p.m. on June 12)  
 The longest-running musical in history rewritten Michael Lluberes in collaboration with the play's original author Tom Jones, featuring many locals.  
 Tickets: adults \$25, senior 60+, and teens \$18, child 12 and under \$16.  
 The Rep's Elgood Theatre  
 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint  
 810-237-1530 or visit [flintrep.org/the-fantasticks](http://flintrep.org/the-fantasticks) for more info including COVID-19 policy.

## Black Wallstreet Vendor Event at Flint City Hall

Fri. June 17  
 There will be vendors, food, music and education.  
 For more info call 810-210-5045 or visit [flintjuneteenth.com](http://flintjuneteenth.com)

## "Still We Rise!" Juneteenth Community collaborative meeting

June 18, 1 p.m.  
 Part of Juneteenth celebrating Annual Festival.  
 For more info call 810-210-5045

## Flint Institute of Music presents Family Fun Day Celebrating Juneteenth

Sat. June 18, 3 to 10 p.m.  
 This will be a fun-filled celebration with food, live music, DJs and kids activities throughout the day. RL & Q will host

James Fortune, Midnight Star, and Big Daddy Kane. Gates open at 3 p.m.  
 Bring your own blanket or chair.  
 Admission is \$40 for adults but kids under 12 are admitted free.  
 Early access (2:30 p.m.) adult admission is \$50.  
 Berston Field House  
 3300 Saginaw St., Flint  
 810-787-6531 or visit [thefun.org/june-teenth-family-fun-day-celebration](http://thefun.org/june-teenth-family-fun-day-celebration).

## Genesee Parks Events

Tues. June 7, 10 to 11:30 a.m.  
**Ready, Grow! Seed Bombs**  
 This is held at the mud kitchen in the Dewaters Building at For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum. The objective is adding color to flower gardens. It's for ages 6 and older. Dress for a mess. Pre-registration by June 6.

## Nature Photography Hike at Bluegill Boat Launch

Sat. June 18, 9 to 10:30 a.m.  
 This is a leisurely hike along a paved accessible trail at the shores of Mott Lake. Bring your digital cameras or phones. For ages 12 and older. Pre-registration required by June 17. Participants will meet in the parking lot.  
 Cost: \$5 per person

## Ikayak-- Mindfulness Paddle

Tues. June 21, 6 to 8 p.m.  
 Seniors and the disabled will learn and experience mindfulness, a form of meditation, while kayaking. Equipment and staff support provided. Pre-registration required online at [kayakflint.org](http://kayakflint.org). For questions call The Disability Network at 810-742-1800.

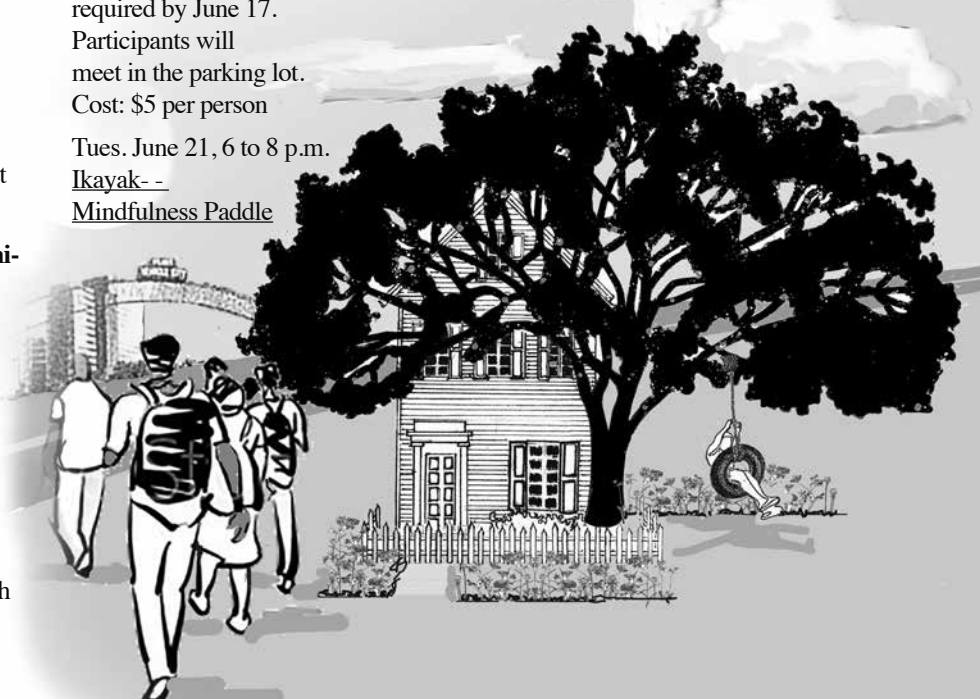
For more info on these outdoor activities visit [geneseecountyparks.org/calendar](http://geneseecountyparks.org/calendar).

## Capitol Theatre

Fri., June 24, 7 p.m.  
 "Pulp Fiction," R rated  
 Tickets: Adults \$10 (50% discount for Genesee Cty. residents)  
 The Capitol Theatre  
 140 E. 2nd St., Flint  
 810-237-7333  
 For more info visit [capitoltheatreflint.com](http://capitoltheatreflint.com).

## Mott Park Recreation Area

Grand Opening of the renovated Mott Park Clubhouse  
 Sat., June 25, 4 to 8 p.m.  
 Residents are invited to the grand opening of the freshly painted and renovated club house.  
 Mott Park Club House  
 2701 Nolan Dr., Flint  
 For more info visit [facebook.com/pages/Mott-Park-Recreation-Area](https://facebook.com/pages/Mott-Park-Recreation-Area).



**COLLEGE CULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
 Sign up to get notices of meetings at [cnaflint@gmail.com](mailto:cnaflint@gmail.com)

## Unclassified Ad

### Apartment for Lease

Two-bedroom second story apartment for lease on Avon near Kearsley St. Available in July. Can be partially furnished. Has a large upper deck, off-street parking, washer, dryer, storage. Walk three blocks or less to U of M-Flint, MCC, Cultural Center, library, downtown, Farmers' Market, three parks, and bike paths. Easy freeway access. References and credit check requested. \$650 per month plus utilities.

E-mail [ecuster@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ecuster@sbcglobal.net) or write:

Apartment  
 Box.11  
 720 E. Second St.  
 Flint MI 48503.

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\*(Source: Marketo)

## Happy Father's Day!



**Sunday, June 19, 2022**

**Parade Schedule**

Start in Max Brandon Park (3606 Dupont St., Flint, Michigan 48505) for Family Reunion from 12:00pm - 5:00pm  
 Marshal @ 5:00pm  
 March to Riverbank Park (328 Saginaw St. Flint, MI 48502) for Juneteenth Concert from 6:00pm - 9:00pm

**TRADITIONAL FLINT JUNETEENTH PARADE REGISTRATION**

Use link to register:  
<https://bit.ly/FlintParade>

For more information:  
 DeWaun E. Robinson (313) 258-8967  
 Reggie Davison (517) 885-5803

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June 10, 6-8:30p

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 mixed media

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 baritone bass

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## Village Life

# Flint Schools Superintendent considers library opening: “We got next”

By Jan Worth-Nelson

After the joyful ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Flint Public Library May 19, Flint Community Schools Superintendent Kevelin Jones slipped away alone across the parking lot from the glossy new building to the empty wreck that is the former Flint Central High School, closed in 2009 and now crumbling, tagged, vandalized and boarded up just a few dozen yards away.

The contrast could not have been more pointed.

“Today was emotional,” Jones said. “As I walked through the library and I looked over at Flint Central, well, I took the walk on purpose, I took the walk because I’m imagining our scholars being able to take that walk.”

Jones picked up a piece of brick fallen from the vacant high school, which stands starkly abandoned and far removed from its one-time bustling and vigorous life at the hub of Flint’s public education. Several proposals for its disposition have been floated, none acted upon.

For Jones, who grew up in Flint and attended Flint public schools all the way through, the grand re-opening of the \$30 million library — its hundreds of cubic yards of windows, people-friendly new furniture, renovated infrastructure systems from the ground up — came with an intense vein of exasperation and sadness for his beleaguered district.

“I took a piece of the brick,” he said, wiping his eyes. “This brick is going to be on my desk to remind me that this is my job. I’m sorry for my tears,” he said, while gathering his thoughts.

“This brick is a reminder of

what I’m supposed to do.”

In his remarks under the tent at the ribbon cutting, Jones congratulated the library for its accomplishments, and then said, referring to his beleaguered public schools, “We got next.”



**Superintendent Kevelin Jones holds a brick fallen from the boarded-up Flint Central High School, (in background), closed and deteriorating since 2009, just a few dozen yards from the newly renovated Flint Public Library**

(Photo by Jan Worth-Nelson)

The public library has been able to remake itself, with \$16 million in support from the C.S. Mott Foundation and other major donors, along with another \$12 million from a bond approved by 68 percent of voters in 2019.

But the Flint School District has floundered, enrollment down to barely 3,000 students and its buildings in increasingly dire disrepair. The Flint Board of Education has so far declined to act on a \$200 million “Memo of Understanding” offered by the Mott

Foundation to build new schools, a plan detailed in 2021 by *EVM* education reporter Harold Ford.

Even with \$32 million in federal COVID funds landing in its coffers, the FCS faces serious financial problems. Without the one-time COVID boost, the district faces a \$21.5 million annual deficit, according to FCS officials.

But the FCS board has struggled to come up with a plan to cover the deficit or deal with what experts both internal and outside, have termed urgent needs for infrastructure repair.

“I’m encouraged today to keep fighting,” Jones said, cupping the Flint Central brick in his right hand. “I’m gonna fight for our scholars to have new schools, to have the best education possible, and to ensure that the time I spend in the FCS is going to be spent doing that.

“Our scholars need to be able to take this walk. They need to be able to look back and say, that is my school. Right now, they can’t say that. With all this greatness around us, we need to be a part of it.

“The Mott Foundation has been adamant about a relationship with the Flint Community

Schools,” Jones noted, despite the board’s reluctance to move forward on the proposed partnership, tabbed the Flint Education Continuum.

In June of 2021, Mott Foundation President and CEO Ridgway White appeared before the board to plead for consideration of the partnership, but a majority of board members have not only resisted the plan, but declined even to put it on the agenda for discussion.

(Continued on Page 13)

LIX: 5 (709 issues, 8,036 pages)