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February 2023



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Commentary
Dysfunction and Democracy from Flint to Washington.
Is Flint a model for the nation?

By Paul Rozycki

For much of the 20th Century Flint was a leader for much of what mattered in the nation. It was home for one of the largest manufacturing corporations in the world. It was the place where one of the most progressive and influential labor

difficult to for the U.S. House to produce any meaningful policies? At the moment it seems the likely prospect. To win the speakership, McCarthy gave up a lot of power to a small cluster of Republicans who may limit his options for the future. After 15 votes on what normally is a routine process, will they be able to agree on any major policies? The last time the House took this long to pick a speaker was just before the Civil War.



A vehicle city arch in downtown Flint. The historic Durant Hotel in the background

(Photo by Tom Travis)

unions in the nation stood up to that corporation and negotiated a labor agreement. It was known for its premier public school system. It was where a major foundation built a Cultural Center that rivaled many larger cities. It was where the first Black mayor of a major city was chosen.

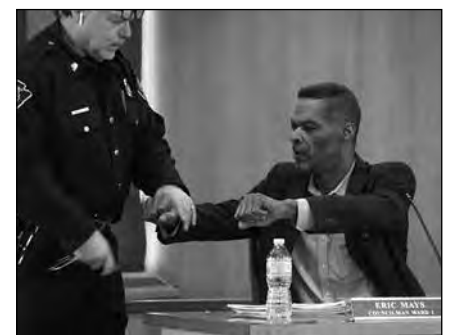
Dysfunction nationally

Today that reputation as a leader may still hold true, but in a very different direction. In recent weeks, we watched the U.S. House fumble for four days, in its attempt to pick a speaker, as Kevin McCarthy sold his soul to a handful of Trump loyalists. Yet, the dysfunction we see in the national government has been part of Flint politics for some time.

Will the turmoil over choosing a speaker make it more

Dysfunction locally

The Flint City Council has become a poster child for governmental dysfunction and conflict as meetings drift into the early morning hours with endless requests for "point of information" as members accuse each other of racism, and some are led out in handcuffs by police.



Councilperson Eric Mays (Ward 1) putting his hands out to be cuffed after he was removed from a city council meeting

(Photo by Tom Travis)

Perhaps learning from the city council, the Flint Board of Education has shown similar

(Continued on Page 7)

Cover: Factory One on Water St. in the Carriage Town District



Photo of the Month: For the Warming Winter Fire (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

## Education Beat Analysis ***New leadership team for Flint Board of Education all first-timers***

*By Harold C. Ford*

*“Sometimes you’ve got to pivot.”* – Melody Relerford, newly-elected Flint Board of Education trustee, Jan. 11, 2023

A new leadership team was impaneled at the annual organizational meeting of the Flint Board of Education (FBOE) on Jan. 11, 2023.

Newly-elected members of a five-person electoral slate were chosen to fill three of four executive officer positions. Four of five slate members – Melody Relerford, Dylan Luna, Terae King, and Michael Clack – along with non-slate candidate Claudia Perkins, filled a single board vacancy and swept four incumbents from their positions on the panel. New officers:

- Clack was picked to fill

the board president position by a 4-3 vote over Relerford. Voting for Clack were Perkins, Clack, and returning board members Laura MacIntyre and Joyce Ellis-McNeal. McNeal, who nominated Clack, and MacIntyre are the only holdovers from the previous iteration of the board; they are not up for reelection until their terms end in December, 2026. Voting for Relerford were King, Luna, and Relerford.

- King will fill the vice-president position during 2023. King nominated himself; Ellis-McNeal was nominated by Perkins who seemed to align herself with Mac-

Intyre and McNeal to form a voting bloc during this first meeting of the newly-constituted FBOE (see below).

- Perkins was unanimously chosen as the panel’s new secretary following her nomination by MacIntyre and Relerford’s declination of a nomination made by Luna.

- Luna was chosen by a 4-3 vote to fill the position of treasurer; he was nominated by King. McNeal gained three votes following nomination by MacIntyre. Thus, all four of the executive officer positions were filled by

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Education ...

(Continued from Page 4)

newcomers who were not members of an often-tumultuous panel in recent years. New officers Clack, King, Perkins, and Luna are all serving their first terms on Flint's education board.

### Emerging voting blocs?

It's early, but Flint board-watchers are paying attention to how the new panel lines up in terms of voting blocs. After only one meeting, it's too soon to tell. However, during the election process, newcomer Perkins often aligned with incumbents MacIntyre and McNeal during the new board's first meeting:

- McNeal nominated Perkins to chair the election process. Eventually, Superintendent Kevelin Jones was unanimously chosen to chair the election process until the selection of Clack as board president.

- Perkins nominated McNeal for the vice-president position. Perkins, McNeal, and MacIntyre all voted for McNeal who finished second to King.

- After Relerford declined the nomination for secretary, Perkins was voted into the position by a 7-0 vote following her nomination by MacIntyre.

- MacIntyre nominated McNeal for the treasurer position – a nomination that received support from MacIntyre, McNeal, and Perkins during the voting process. MacIntyre had declined a nomination by McNeal. Luna won the position with votes from all four of the members who ran as a slate in the Nov. 2022 election.

Other less visible positions were also filled during the meet-



**Michael Clack being sworn in**  
(Photo by H.C. Ford)



**Terae King being sworn in**  
(Photo by H.C. Ford)



**Claudia Perkins being sworn in**  
(Photo by H.C. Ford)



**Dylan Luna being sworn in**  
(Photo by H.C. Ford)



**Melody Relerford being sworn in**  
(Photo by H.C. Ford)

ing. MacIntyre, a self-nominee, and the only nominee for the assistant secretary/treasurer position, won all seven board votes. Tish Wolf, controller for Flint Community Schools (FCS), was unanimously chosen as the assistant secretary-treasurer to represent FCS administration. By a 6-1 vote, Clack was chosen to serve as FCS representative to the Genesee County Association of School Board Members, a position that typically goes to the board's president; McNeal will serve as an alternate.

All new board members were sworn into their positions by 67th District Court Judge Tabitha Marsh at the Dec. 6, 2022 and Jan. 11 meetings.

### "No more drama"

During time for commentary from the public, Paul Jordan, former FBOE member from 2005 to 2009, addressed the public's perception of the FBOE as dysfunctional.

"My greatest hope for you is, we see ... no more drama ... Do the people's business as well as you can," Jordan said. "This isn't a job for anyone who seeks glory."

The laundry list of challenges for FCS is prodigious: a depleted staff; deteriorating infrastructure; legal challenges; a looming debt/deficit crisis when COVID relief funds disappear; the need to downsize the district's building lineup; low standardized test scores; retention of student population; a few dozen abandoned properties and buildings; and lagging staff morale (see below).

Board members and other

(Continued on Page 6)

## Education ...

(Continued from Page 5)

speakers referenced the challenges during public comments:

- Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley proposed a “robust partnership” between the city and the school district by working “together in a more robust way ... You have a tremendous responsibility and you need help.”

- Lottie Ferguson, chief resilience officer, City of Flint, asserted, “If we build a net of resilience around our kids ... we can ensure that they have exactly what they need to have the potential ... that they can grow to.”

- King, new FBOE vice



(L-R) Michael Clack, Melody Relerford, Terae King, Emily Doerr, Dylan Luna; all but Doerr are now Flint Ed Board members  
(photo by HC Ford)

president, said, “Let’s work together to build our district ... Let’s move the district forward.”

- Perkins, new FBOE secretary said, “I’m an advocate to help get our community back on the right track ... Unity is the key and respect is at the top of the list.”

- Relerford, new FBOE trustee, said, “Sometimes you’ve got to pivot, and I hope everyone’s prepared to pivot at certain times.”

- Luna, new FBOE treasurer, acknowledging the sweep of all FBOE incumbents from office



Flint Board of Education with newly elected members seated  
Photo taken in January 2023.

(Photo by Tom Travis)

in the November, 2022 election, said, “I think that speaks to the desire for change.”

- Clack, new FBOE president offered a concise goal: “Bring trust ... a sense of pride ... back into the district.”

### “To teach in Flint can be demoralizing.”

If Flint schools are to restore “a sense of pride” they have some work to do. The public testimony of an FCS graduate and current staff member Nadia Rodriguez indicated the mountainous task ahead for the new board in a short speech she titled “To teach in Flint ... a glimpse into a day in the life”:

- “It’s deciding whether to fill my car with gas or if I’m go-



FCS educator Nadia Rodriguez  
(Photo by HC Ford)

ing to buy snacks for my hungry students.”

- “Ants are going to create anthills through the floor tiles overnight while I’m gone.”

- “Mold is going to be growing and it’s going to make me sick after the third burst pipe in my classroom in five years.”

- “It’s the purchase of a fire extinguisher because there aren’t sprinkler systems in our rooms.”

- “It’s keeping baseball bats in your room because the district won’t protect you from parents threatening to or actually assaulting you on school property.”

- “It’s carrying a phone charger because there aren’t working phones in our classrooms for emergencies.”

- “It’s buying and storing extra clothing ... for my students for days that go on and on without heat.”

- “To teach in Flint can be demoralizing.”

Future FBOE meetings are scheduled for the following dates: Jan. 18; Feb. 8 (Committee of the Whole or COW); Feb. 15.; Mar. 8 (COW); Mar. 15; Apr. 12 (COW); Apr. 19; May 10 (COW); May 17; June 14 (COW); June 21. Meetings are held at Accelerated Learning Academy, 1602 S. Averill St., Flint, MI 48503. Meetings can be attended virtually; interested persons should visit the FCS website to register.

EVM Education Beat reporter Harold Ford can be reached at [hcford1185@gmail.com](mailto:hcford1185@gmail.com).

## **Rozycki Commentary ...**

*(Continued from Page 3)*

discord and dysfunction, as members assault each other, and spend endless hours bickering over small issues as the Flint schools crumble and enrollment drops.

At the University of Michigan-Flint it remains to be seen how they will deal with the proposed changes to their curriculum amid protests from faculty, staff, and the local community. Many

turmoil we've seen on both the national and local level. After all, a story about a train wreck is more exciting than one about a train pulling into the station safely and on time.

But that dull meeting over the budget (and similar topics) is the real business of government, and the dysfunction has led to a dramatic distrust in all institutions. That distrust can have profound implications for the future of democracy.



**Some of numerous broken chairs in the city council chambers at City Hall**

*(Photo by Tom Travis)*

are worried that, in spite of all the community forums, the University will pursue its own agenda in remaking the campus. Some fear that the survival of the campus is at stake.

### **What does it mean for government?**

What does all this mean for the trust we have in government and its institutions?

On one hand, it may be entertaining to watch members of Congress assault each other, see Kevin McCarthy's poker face as he endures 15 frustrating ballots, Eric Mays being led out of council chambers in handcuffs, or two school board members punch each other out during a meeting.

Sitting through a meeting that reviews the annual budget line-by-line or examines new zoning regulations is almost certainly less compelling than the conflict and

### **The threat to democracy**

Yes, democracy can be a messy process, but in the end we expect it to deliver the goods. While it may be entertaining, exciting, and interesting to watch all the chaos and conflict at all levels of government, that conflict poses some real dangers. We expect something from a well-run democratic government, and when it can't deliver, it's natural to turn elsewhere. That 'elsewhere' is often a dictator or an authoritarian ruler who promises "Only I can do it, if you give me the power." As government grows more dysfunctional and less trusted, the tendency is for the public to drop out and become less involved. As distrust grows, it becomes easier to believe the wildest conspiracy theories floating around social media. And as distrust grows, some turn to violence, as we have seen with the

attempt to kidnap Michigan's governor, and threats against election officials.

Trust in the government has been declining for decades. In the mid-1960s, 77 percent of the public felt that government would do the right thing "just about always or most of the time." Today that number is about 20 percent. We've seen that with the Flint water crisis; local voter turnout has declined, we've grown more cynical of what government can do.

We are learning that the events of Jan. 6, where an organized mob tried to overturn the 2020 election were hardly unique. The recent events in Brazil and several European nations have seen a similar rise in right-wing actions and distrust of democracy.

There were many reasons for the rise of Hitler in Germany in the 1930s, but the dysfunctional Weimar Republic of the 1920s, and the Great Depression, helped set the stage.

### **Any signs of optimism?**

For as divided as the nation is today, there are some glimmering hopes that the partisan divisions are wearing thin, and the nation just might be willing to move in a more positive direction. Increasingly some candidates are promising to work across the aisle and the word "bipartisan" is showing up more frequently as they make their pitch for votes. Words are one thing. Action is something else. We'll see if the words lead to real cooperation.

On the local level, the Flint Board of Education has just elected five new members, defeating all the incumbent candidates. Melody Relerford, Claudia Perkins, Dylan Luna, Terae King, and Michael Clack were elected, and they have pledged to work together. All of the new officers of the board are

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## Rozycki Commentary ...

(Continued from Page 7)

newly elected members. They are: President Michael Clack, Vice President Terae King Jr., Secretary Claudia Perkins, and Treasurer Dylan Luna.

With his recent reelection and State of the City address, Mayor Sheldon Neeley has made an attempt to reach out to those on the council that he may have offended, and has indicated his desire to work with them in a more productive way.

While the Flint City Council and the Flint Board of Education often divide along racial lines, Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson stepped out of his riot gear and walked with the “Black Lives Matter” protesters as Flint avoided much of the turmoil of that summer two years ago.

The University of Michigan – Flint is at least holding focus groups and town halls to listen to community concerns about the changes planned for the Flint uni-

versity, and an independent group of faculty, staff, students, and alumni also have been sponsoring town halls. We’ll see how well



**Gov. Gretchen Whitmer**  
**October 2022 campaign event**  
**in Flint**

(Photo by Tom Travis)

university officials listen and what actions are finally taken.

On the state level, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has a Democratic majority in the legislature for the first time in 40 years. But it is a narrow majority and she will often need to work with Republicans to get things done. With a potential budget surplus this year, there seems to be some real conversation between the



**U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C.**

(Photo source Architect of the Capitol website. [www.aoc.gov](http://www.aoc.gov))

parties over the budget and taxes in Michigan.

The federal level may be the most challenging. Already the Republicans in the U.S. House have begun to prepare investigations of Hunter Biden, the Jan. 6. committee, the FBI, and Pres. Biden’s classified documents. In that atmosphere, bipartisan cooperation may be difficult to achieve. One critical decision is the need to extend the debt limit, to avoid a serious economic crisis. Maybe, just maybe, that threat may bring some bipartisan co-operation.

If Flint’s local governments can begin to work together and rebuild trust, could Flint again be a model for the nation?

It’s at least something to hope for.

*EVM political commentator and board president Paul Rozycki can be reached at [paul.rozycki@mcc.edu](mailto:paul.rozycki@mcc.edu).*

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# **UM - Flint Chancellor gets 15% raise; dozens top \$100K in diverse salary picture as Strategic Transformation decisions appears close**

*By Jan Worth-Nelson*

The University of Michigan – Flint’s top executive, Chancellor Debasish Dutta, received a 15% pay raise for the 2022-23 fiscal year, bringing his yearly salary to \$469,000, according to publicly available sources.

On average, the rest of the university faculty and staff received raises of about 3-5%. The overall University of Michigan pay raise for 2022-23, was 4.1%.

Asked for a response from UMF administration about Dutta’s salary increase, Robb King, UM – Flint director of marketing and communications, confirmed the amount is correct.

He said the increase was related to Dutta’s action to eliminate one of the UM – Flint’s executive positions, vice chancellor for business and finance, in Fall, 2021, as Dutta described in a December interview with *EVM*.



**UM-Dearborn Chancellor Domenico Grasso**

(Photo source: UM-Dearborn website)

King noted Dutta “personally took on responsibility for the related units, increasing his own direct reports from seven (7) to 15 and reducing payroll by more than \$275,000 per year.

“He did this new and expanded

job for a year without additional compensation,” King said.



**UM-F Chancellor Deba Dutta**

(Photo source: UM-F website)

“Now in the second year, his fall 2022 salary includes the 4%-5% annual raise (for administrators) and an adjustment for the substantial increase in his workload.”

Dutta’s pay compares to UM – Dearborn Chancellor Domenico Grasso, who is receiving \$468,400 for 2022-23. UM President Santa Ono was hired last year at a base pay of \$975,000.

What UM – Flint employees get paid is one of many factors under scrutiny as the downtown campus studies itself in a major effort underway since September, 2022, aimed at addressing a series of serious challenges, a process the university is calling “Strategic Transformation.”

As detailed in earlier *EVM* stories, those challenges include a 30 percent drop in enrollment since 2014, an “unacceptable” six-year graduation rate of 35 percent, a deficit of \$7.3 million in the last fiscal year, and losses or declines in demand for programs in liberal arts.

The campus is a major downtown employer.

According to data from the UMF’s Officer of Institutional Analysis and the UM Human Resources Information System, as of Nov, 1, 2022, UM – Flint employs 1,013 people, with 717 (71 percent) full time and 296 part time (29 percent).

Of those 494 are Faculty, in the following categories:

- 195 Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty (which includes 23 Academic/Administrators who are tenured faculty members and 1 Emeritus Faculty who is actively working)
- 228 Lecturers
- 8 LEO-GLAM (Librarians, Curators and Archivists)
- 63 Clinical and Adjunct Clinical Faculty”

In addition, there are 445 staff, including “all nonbargained-for staff,



**UM President Santa Ono**

(Photo source: UM Facebook page)

and supplemental, 74 graduate student research assistants.”

In the 2022-23 UM – Flint annual operating budget of \$116.5 million approved last June, salary, wages, and benefits account for almost half,

*(Continued on Page 10)*

## UM - Flint ...

(Continued from Page 9)

at \$56 million. That operating budget total is down from \$154 million in 2021-2022.

The revenue picture for the campus includes \$25 million from state appropriations for 2022-2023, up about 784K from last year.

Who gets paid what varies widely.



French Hall on the UM-Flint campus in downtown Flint

(Photo by Tom Travis)

The average UM - Flint full-time salary, according to 2021-2022 numbers from [umsalary.info](http://umsalary.info), was \$69.8K, with Dutta exceeding the next-closest employee, Provost and Vice Chancellor Sonja Price by more than \$100K; 13 others had pay of \$200K or more in 2021-2022.

Among that group are two former chancellors, Ruth Person and Sue Borrego, who stayed at UM - Flint after their departures from the chancellor's suite. They took "retreat rights" as would have been negotiated in their original hiring terms, into their professional departments — Person as professor of management, and Borrego as professor of education.

In an update on request from *EVM*, a university official clarified Jan. 27 that both Borrego and Person were faculty members in 2021-2022. Borrego's salary that year was \$274,308. Borrego left the University in summer 2022 and thus was not on the 2022-23 salary list. He said Person is still a faculty member, with a current salary of \$236, 085.

Close to 100 more UM - Flint

employees are pulling in between \$100K and \$200K, as of 2021.

The lowest full-time UM - Flint pay recorded for 2021-2022 was \$31,200.

The salary distributions — even among faculty and among the UM - Flint's six colleges, are radically diverse, with some non-tenure-track faculty getting \$100,000, while some full professors in liberal arts arenas make thousands less.

The amounts paid have created an economic class structure, some in-house commentators say, and also point to competitive hiring demands, where faculty in management, health sciences, and technology get paid much more than those in the liberal arts.

For some segments of the staff and non-tenure-track faculty, salaries are negotiated by their respective unions. In the case of the non-tenure-track faculty, for example, the Lecturer Employees Organization (LEO) struck a deal in the last contract for 3 percent yearly pay increases starting from a full-time minimum base of \$18,000.

### Proposal to cap administrative pay ignored so far

One group concerned with economic equity, among other issues

at UM, is One University (1U); it has participants from all three campuses.

Participants in that group in December presented a proposal to the Regents for capping all administrative salaries at UM at \$150,000. So far the Regents appear to have ignored it, 1U participants report.

The 1U proposal states,

"In the last few years, the Regents and Central Administration have not provided sufficient resources to UM - Flint and UM - Dearborn to stem the tide of cuts, layoffs, and program reductions. UM - Flint recently put the Africana Studies program on moratorium. Dearborn has slashed Applied Music.

"This proposal seeks to remedy the financial distress causing these cuts by setting a \$150,000 cap on administrative salaries and saving UM - Flint \$1.29M per year and UM - Dearborn \$1.66M. These funds can be repurposed toward the central educational mission of these campuses."

"On the Flint campus, roughly 14 administrators earn more than \$150,000. We estimate their total salaries, excluding benefits, to be \$3.5M. The marginal earnings above \$150,000 is roughly 1M. The fringe benefits, calculated at 20% of salary, was determined only on the marginal income above \$150,000, resulting in roughly \$1.3M in savings per year."

Asked about the silence from the Regents, 1U participants jointly responded, with requests for ano-

(Continued on Page 11)



Strategic Transformation protesters gather on the UM - Flint campus

(Photo by Tom Travis)

## UM - Flint ...

(Continued from Page 10)

nymity, “This isn’t exactly news but [we] think it’s relevant...that it genuinely spoke to the culture on our campus. [We’re] guessing that the proposal could come across as snarky but [we] don’t think that was the intention. Many of us truly believe that we need mission-driven leadership

from ITAC, the Huron Group is engaged in conversations with additional members of the Flint community and school district superintendents. They are providing us with valuable insights about how they interact and would like to work with the university now and in the future,” Dutta stated.

Coordination of the Strategic Transformation process has been in the hands of the Huron Group, a national

are a Steering Committee made of up UMF’s top executives, and the Innovation and Transformation Advisory Council (ITAC), comprised of 13 representatives drawn from the UMF’s six colleges, staff council, and student government.

### ITAC group received “synthesis,” expresses concerns

On Jan, 19, the Huron group presented a draft to ITAC, a “synthesis of findings” of the market analysis, program economics, and stakeholder feedback they have collected. “At the same time, our schools and colleges have begun to develop academic transformation plans with the data available to them to date,” Dutta predicted.

Participants who received the ITAC presentation, including Associate Professor of English James Schirmer who represents the College of Arts and Science (CAS) in the group, expressed concerns about what they heard, where the process is heading and about whether ITAC’s input is making a difference.

“ITAC is no closer to understanding its role since this process began,” Schirmer said. “Charges and charts have shifted in unhelpful ways, and so have timelines and expectations of effort. Council members are disappointed with the lack of clarity and guidance from the chancellor and frustrated by Huron consistently ignoring our concerns and questions.

“Still, ITAC wants to be constructive and so intends to put together its own ‘deliverable’ (despite the chancellor and Huron stating that is not necessary or wanted),” Schirmer said.

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Photo taken from the third floor of the UM - Flint Library looking north across the Flint River and the William S. White building on the north end of campus

(Photo by Tom Travis)

and that seems like one of the things lacking at our institution.”

### Process moving toward final recommendations?

In a Jan. 18 update on the Strategic Transformation website, Dutta stated that the Strategic Transformation consultants and university planners will “move toward our goal of completing the academic program phase by the end of the first quarter of this year. Soon, we will also begin work on the broad range of academic and student support services that will be necessary to ensure student success and a vibrant academic environment at UM-Flint.”

“Based on the feedback received at the Dec. 9 town hall and

consulting firm hired by UM last year which has been a source of controversy because of its work at other institutions, where “slash and burn” decisions in some cases decimated liberal arts and humanities programs and led to major faculty layoffs.

So far, specifics about what is to come at UM – Flint are unclear, and many involved in the process are complaining about a lack of transparency by the Huron Group and doubts that their feedback and ideas actually are being incorporated into the findings.

Two appointed groups have been ostensible in-house channels between the consultants, Dutta’s administration, and the rest of the campus — to pass along information, audit progress reports, and most of all provide input. The two groups

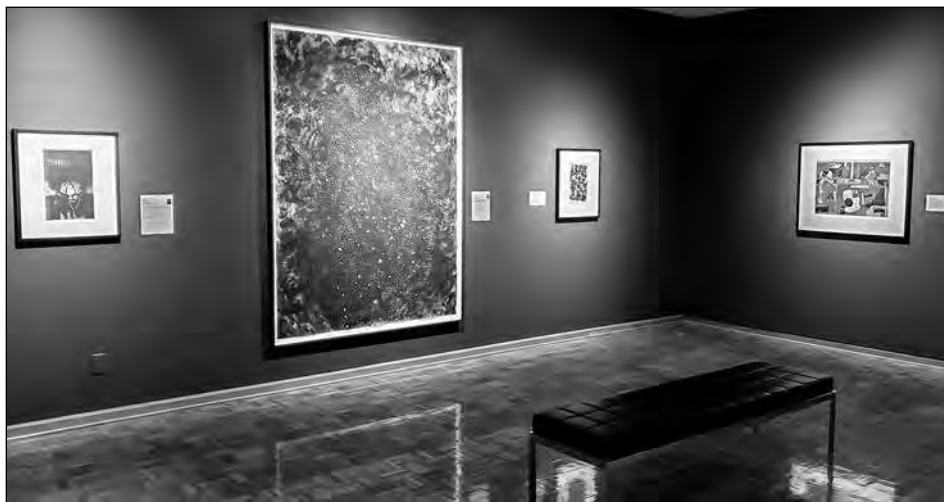
# African-American artwork celebrated in three galleries at FIA

By Tom Travis

Three exhibits honoring and celebrating work by African-American artists will be featured at the Flint Institute of Arts (FIA) over the next few months.

The FIA's Contemporary wing will exhibit works from the FIA's permanent collection of African-American artists and art of the African diaspora.

In the Graphics gallery, the exhibit Expressions will be on display until April 16. Expressions presents a selection of works on paper by African-American artists acquired by FIA over the last decade.



**Expressions exhibit in FIA's Graphics gallery**  
(Photo by Tom Travis)

And finally, in the Hodge and Henry galleries, an exhibit titled Ways of Seeing – The Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at the University of Alabama opens Jan. 29 and will continue until April 23,

EVM toured the exhibits with the FIA's associate curator Rachael Holstege, who's been at the FIA for five years following an 2017 art history degree from Grand Valley State and an arts administration degree from the University of Michigan – Flint.

## Contemporary Wing – African-American artists and artwork of the African Diaspora

How these artists are experimenting with different techniques and methods of expression makes this exhibit “really interesting,” Holstege said.

“There is strong personal narrative to these pieces. Each artist is trying to say something with their artwork. Many of them approach art from what we might call a ‘non-traditional’ way.

Holstege explained the artists are a mixture of up-and-coming, new artists and long-established artists.

She pointed to a work by Purvis

Young, after his incarceration, when he would ride around the neighborhoods gathering materials and inspiration for his artwork, i.e., scraps of paper, restaurant menus, discarded doors, wood and metal to be used as his canvases.

“Young's paintings and drawings became his voice of protest... Although he was considered the unofficial historian of Overtown, the themes in his work are universal to the Black experience.” [Overtown is a suburb of Miami where the artist lived.]

“The artist is not only using the artwork to say something, but also the materials used say something as well,” Holstege explained.

The FIA has been collecting artwork by artists of color since 1969 and today the collection includes more than 320 artworks. The gallery highlights some of the most important artists from the mid-twentieth century to present through paintings, sculpture and mixed



**Overtown Street Concert by Purvis Young is displayed in the Contemporary wing of FIA**

(Photo by Tom Travis)

Young (1943-2010) called Overtown Street Concert, (1980) a piece described as mixed media on found wood. The artist, Young, was incarcerated for three years and during that time he studied art books.

“It was during this period that he experienced a shift in consciousness in which he realized that he could use his art to express himself and his grievances with the world, depicting accurate and honest observations of the fissures in society,” according to the provided description of the piece.

media. Working in styles ranging from realism to abstraction, these artists tackle issues both personal and shared, including themes related to history

(Continued on Page 13)

## FIA ...

(Continued from Page 12)

and place, identity and representation, social justice and self-expression, according to an FIA brochure.

The first installation of this gallery will feature new works to the collection, including Keith Duncan's Funeral Repass purchased with funds raised by the Community Gala in 2022.

### Graphics Gallery – features works on paper

FIA's Graphics Gallery will feature "Expressions" featuring a selection of works on paper by African-American artists from the Flint and Detroit area. The artwork in the exhibit have been acquired by the Flint Institute of Arts over the last decade.

Several of these artworks were created through traditional techniques such as drawing, woodcut, lithog-



**"Epoch" by Whitfield Lovell, charcoal on wood and found objects**

(Photo by Tom Travis)

raphy, screen printing, and etching. Despite their differences in method, all of these works can be seen as personal expressions of the artists who created them, according to the FIA brochure.



**"The Funeral Repass" by Keith Duncan in 2015 was acquired by FIA for its permanent collection using funds raised in last year's Gala event.**

(Photo source: FIA)

### Ways of Seeing – The Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at the University of Alabama

The Hodge and Henry galleries will exhibit Ways of Seeing – The Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at the University of Alabama beginning Jan. 29 until April 23. The Paul R. Jones (1928-2010) collection includes one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of twentieth century African American art in the world. The collection includes art in a variety of media from more than 600 artists, including Emma Amos, Jack Whitten, Sam Gilliam and more.

The Paul R. Jones Collection includes one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of 20th century African-American art in the world, amassed over decades by Paul Raymond Jones, who was described by Art & Antiques magazine as "one of the top art collectors in the country."

Jones donated the 2,000-plus piece collection to the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Alabama in 2008. The collection includes art in a variety of media from more than 600 artists, including Emma Amos, Jack

Whitten, Sam Gilliam, Howardena Pindell, Romare Bearden, and Jacob Lawrence, all of whom are represented in this exhibition. These selections display the breadth and depth of the collection, showcasing artists working in a variety

(Continued on Page 15)



**Sheila Turner, American, 1961-2018, "Raisin' the Dead," 1999 Gelatin silver print, 25 1/4 x 19 1/2 in. The Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at The University of Alabama, PJ2012.1350**

# THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

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

## Flint Institute of Arts

**African-American artwork is being displayed** featuring two special exhibits and the permanent collection (contemporary wing) in the next few months. The Graphics gallery's exhibit is featuring "Expressions," works on paper. In the Hodge and Henry galleries "Ways of Seeing \_ The Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at the University of Alabama." The FOMA film series continues with "Triangle of Sadness" Feb. 13-15 and 18. Then Feb. 20-22 "Peaceful" will be shown. Free glass demonstrations can also be seen on Saturdays and Sundays.

Flint Institute of Arts

1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint

For more info visit [flintarts.org](http://flintarts.org) or call 810-234-1695.

## MW Gallery (MW) Guided Tours

Weekly on Thurs. Fri., and Sat., 12:00 p.m.

These are led by knowledgeable gallery staff. Discuss and learn general themes related to current works on display. The Mott-Warsh Collection, a private collection of fine art created by artists of the African diaspora and others who reflect on it.

Guided tours are limited to 10 people.

MW Gallery

111 E. Court St., Flint

For more info call 810-835-4900.

## Firebirds OHL Hockey at Dort Financial Center

Feb. 8, 18, and 25 are games at home.

Games are Wed, Fri. and Sat. at 7 p.m., Sun. at 4 p.m.

Come cheer the Flint Firebirds on.

Cost \$15, \$18, \$21 and \$26 per person.

Dort Financial Center

3501 Lapeer Rd., Flint

For more info visit

[ticketsmarter.com/p/flint-firebirds-tickets](http://ticketsmarter.com/p/flint-firebirds-tickets)

or call 810-744-0580.

## Where Did All the Birds Go?

Sat., Feb. 22, 10 - 11:30 a.m. and 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Learn why birds are so quiet. Many leave in winter, but, for many, For-Mar is their home all year. Dress to be outside and even make a bird feeder. For ages 7-12. Pre-registration required by Feb. 21.

Cost \$5 per student.

For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum

2142 N. Genesee Rd., Burton

For more info visit [exploreflintandgenesee.org/event](http://exploreflintandgenesee.org/event)

or call 810-736-7100 for more info.

## St. Cecilia Society of Flint Concert

Sun., Feb. 12, 2 p.m.

Cynthia Butcher, soprano

Lateena Martin, Soprano

Dilek Engin Stolarchuk, violin and viola

Tom Travis, tenor

Sun., Feb. 26, 2 p.m.

St. Cecilia Student Awards -

Winners Program, featuring young

musicians, ages 6 to 18

MacArthur Recital Hall at the FIM

2025 E. Kearsley St., Flint

For more info call 810-767-0418

or email [larmacd@yahoo.com](mailto:larmacd@yahoo.com).

## The Rep presents "The Future Is Female"

February 3-19, 2023

This comedy was developed in The Rep's New Works Festival. Set in the not-too-distant future and, once there, they discover that freedom may not mean the same thing to all of them. This timely satire explores a possible reaction to the rolling back of reproductive rights. Contains strong language and adult themes.

Flint Repertory Theatre

1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint

For more info visit [flintrep.org](http://flintrep.org)

or call 810-237-1530.

For tickets visit [tickets.thewhiting.com](http://tickets.thewhiting.com).



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

## Village Life ...

(Continued from Page 20)

ty is in places you keep returning to.”

Love, true, meaningful love can elude us. The dating world seems to be designed with “smoke and mirrors.”

Yes, I’m blissfully single, unhitched and uncuffed (yuck, I hate that word) yet there are many places I feel loved in different communities I’m a part of around town. For instance, I’m not so much addicted to my daily espresso but I find love, acceptance and camaraderie in the people I drink coffee with or have a shot of whiskey with -- regulars at a local watering-hole where I find community.

So rather than wishing you all a Happy Valentines Day I challenge you to find true love, find your people, find a place or multiple places where you’re loved, accepted....that’s a love that keeps on giving.

EVM Managing Editor Tom Travis can be reached at [tomntravis@gmail.com](mailto:tomntravis@gmail.com).

## FIA ...

(Continued from Page 13)

of materials and styles from the 1930s to the present day, according to the Paul R. Jones website.



**Hayward Oubre, American, 1916-2006, Self Portrait, 1948, Ink on paper, 26 1/2 x 20 3/4 in., The Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at the University of Alabama, PJ2008.0925**

## What is a curator?

Holstege explained that “The curator is responsible for taking works that are in our collection and creates shows or makes changes with the different works already displayed in the galleries. Once the works to be displayed are chosen, I’m responsible for doing research and writing labels that our visitors will read as they tour the gallery.”

## Visiting the FIA

The FIA is open 10 a.m to 5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday, and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free for children 12 years and younger and for Genesee County residents and FIA members. For all others the cost is \$10 for adults and \$8 for senior citizens. Every Saturday is free admission for all through a grant from Huntington Bank.

More info about the FIA can be found at their website at [flintarts.org](http://flintarts.org)

EVM Managing Editor Tom Travis can be reached at [tomntravis@gmail.com](mailto:tomntravis@gmail.com).

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## Unclassified Ad

### Apartment for Rent

Large apartment for rent, four bedroom, three story, 2 1/2 baths, full front porch, high ceilings, refrigerator, range, dishwasher, washer, dryer. In the center of it all on cul-de-sac Avon near Kearsley. Walk three blocks or less to downtown, Farmer’s Market, UMFlint, MCC, Cultural Center, four parks. Easy freeway access. Great space for responsible, mature tenants. On site management. References and credit check requested. \$1050 a month plus electrical. Heat and water included.

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

Apartment  
Box 7  
720 E. Second St.  
Flint MI, 48503.

PLEASE JOIN US

# Artwalk

**February 10**  
**Carla Harden**  
**Mixed Media using recycled materials**

**March 11**  
**The Fiber Art Guild**  
**Mixed Media using showing 20-30rugs**  
**The Norton Male Chorus**

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
711 S. Saginaw Street • Flint, MI 48502  
(810) 234-8627

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

# Village Life

## *Blissfully single in community*

By Tom Travis

It's called "cuffing season." I quite hate that term. The term "cuffing" refers to the restrictive and restraining purpose of handcuffs. If you don't know about "cuffing season" it begins sometime in October and culminates on the egregiously named Valentine's Day.

The intention of "cuffing" happens when single, unhitched people begin to prow around for a partner, a lover or someone to date. Their hope is to find a person to "be with" "to date" during the profusion of holidays that are celebrated between Halloween and Valentine's Day.

The hoped-for outcome in getting "cuffed" is to have someone to cuddle with during the bleak and shadowy winter months. Also, having that special person, your "date," to accompany each other to those sometimes abhorrent and dreaded family holiday gatherings. And to have a person's hand to hold while wandering through a barrage of parties, events and celebrations.

If this all sounds rather objectifying up this point...it is (at least to me it is).

I describe myself as being "blissfully single." Meaning I'm enjoying being single. I have a freedom that I've never really enjoyed so much as when I'm single. To say or think of being "cuffed" into a dating relationship seems oppressive and honestly a big turn off.

What are all of us are looking for?...love. That word is one of those words that is overused and misunderstood like nice, great, cool...what do those words actually mean? Love-shmove, what does love mean?



This banner hangs in Peoples Church of Flint  
(Photo by Tom Travis)

Lyricists and song-smiths have attempted to describe what love is. William Shakespeare tried in his famous Sonnet 116 with these words:

*"Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
O no! It is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never  
shaken..."*

*"An ever-fixed mark"?*  
Well, I don't know about that.

The musical "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing," with its theme song of the same name offers this description of love:

*"Love is a many splendored thing  
It's the April rose that only grows in  
the early Spring  
Love is nature's way of giving  
a reason to be living..."*

*Once on a high and windy  
hill, In the morning mist  
Two lovers kissed and the  
world stood still  
Then your fingers touched my  
silent heart and taught it how  
to sing  
Yes, true love's a many splen-  
dored thing."*

Okay, there is something there about true love. Being with that special someone, a soul-mate, a lover, it does seem that at times the crashing world around us seems to disappear and our hearts are lifted by the love created in those wistful moments. While I and millions of others are "blissfully single" I think each of us are always looking for love. The kind of love where "the world stood still" or the kind that "looks on tempests and is never shaken." What an alluring discovery, finding a love where tempests and our sad world are no match for a heart enraptured in love.

The truth is that millions of single people find love in some wonderful ways - deep friendships, a community of love at social gathering places like bars, places of worship, cultural group gatherings. Someone once said, "Your communi-

(Continued on Page 15)