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HAPPY THANKSGIVING



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Leading in Diversity, Empowering Communities and Changing Lives


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7th Annual Adelante Awards and Hispanic Hall of Fame Dec. 3 Latino Banner, PG LB 3



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Obamacare Lives, For Now, Despite Election

Op-Ed by Mike Thompson

Publisher Note: This was written before Nov. 8, but it still holds true. Obamacare Affordable Care Act enrollment for the health care uninsured remains open until Dec. 7. Call Great Lakes Bay Health Centers (989) 753-6000 while Barack Obama still remains president.

With health care for ourselves, and for our loved ones and friends, we should think of two main sources of support when income is low:

(1) Affordable Care Act. There are many news reports about Obamacare problems, especially rate hikes for some patients, and also insurers dropping out of the program. Bear in mind that just about any major anti-poverty outreach in our past -- Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, unemployment comp -- had startup "bugs" that needed to be resolved.

2) Great Lakes Bay Health Centers, the former Health Delivery, Inc., serving 46,000 annual patients in mid-Michigan and the Thumb, is a best-kept secret in public awareness that took root and grew long before Obamacare. We all should make the most of their available services.

The Great Lakes Centers CEO, Dr. Brenda Coughlin, provides information and insight that may prove very important to you and yours.

THE FACTS ON OBAMACARE

Dr. Coughlin supports the Affordable Care Act. While we learn lessons, we will need to adopt changes, big and small.

"My main viewpoint is, don't eliminate it," she says, referring to recent election debates. "The number of people who are uninsured has been reduced from 18 percent (before Obamacare began in 2009) to 9 percent. Some come to us with health problems that have been neglected for years. Once we make progress in addressing these problems, health care costs and emergency room costs should gradually begin to come down."

She notes that the states facing the largest hikes in insurance premiums are those whose

governors and legislatures resisted President Obama and rejected expanded Medicaid, even though this would have cost their state budgets no money. In other words, states could have benefited financially and citizens would have benefited, both medically and financially, by taking simple steps for basic federal support under the Affordable Care Act. This means no small group insurance products and only about 3 percent of the individual insurance products have rate increases higher than 10 percent. (Many folks will recover higher costs via larger tax credits.)

In effect, the State of Michigan under Governor Rick Snyder -- much maligned on other issues, most notably Flint's water crisis -- chose a wise economic outlook under the Affordable Care Act rather than a self-destructive political nay-say approach.

Other good news is that Great Lakes Bay Health Centers receives added funding from the Affordable Care Act for growth that began under David Gamez during the Health Delivery years that started under President Johnson. The budget is \$40 million -- \$33 million from insurance and patient reimbursement, \$7 million from federal and state grants.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

If you have long-time health insurance, or if you were added under Obamacare, or if you remain uninsured -- or if you know somebody in these circumstances -- an ideal first step is to contact one of the Great Lakes Bay Health Centers listed below.

-- You will receive options for low-cost doctor visits and meds, as affordable as \$10, to cope with such everyday challenges as high blood pressure or Type 2 diabetes.

**CHECK THE NEXT EDITION FOR
PT. 2 OF THIS PIECE**

Remembering
BROTHER
ROOSEVELT AUSTIN II



APRIL 14TH, 1952

~
NOVEMBER 21ST, 2010

BELOVED HUSBAND,
FATHER, SON, BROTHER
AND UNCLE

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The Michigan Banner operates and serves as a print and online media venue committed to educating, informing and enlightening our readership regarding events and news that directly and indirectly affect the communities regionally and globally. Furthermore, to serve as a catalyst and a link for cultivating young adults as entrepreneurial and business leaders for the future.

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THE LATINO BANNER

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Vamos Adelante



WHAT NEXT?

2016 Presidential Election Outs Dems Victory Prizes: Republican White House and Congress

The Latino Banner and The Michigan Banner are asking community folks for election reaction and what's next for Saginaw, the state of Michigan, the U.S. and the world. The Republican overwhelming victory at the polls on Tues. has resulted in the most electric voter turnout in recent history -- and the most incredible upset of Democratic political leadership. What is your opinion? What's next for both Republicans, Democrats, third parties, the U.S. Congress and communities in Mid Michigan?

Share your thoughts and ideas. Your comments about the 2016 election, president-elect Donald J. Trump, and the future of America and Michigan will be considered for publication in the next and future issues into 2017. Please email comments, 400 words max, with your full name and phone number to publisherthemichiganbanner@gmail.com

We will contact you prior to publication.

Thank you.

---Editor

What Happened?

Op-Ed by Monica B. Reyes



Monica Reyes | Courtesy Photos

After a day of grieving, I was wondering: "How could this happen?" At first I was searching online, trying to figure out what my Latino and Latina brothers and sisters did. But then I started watching the social media feed and found that a lot of my brothers and sisters actually voted for Donald J. Trump. I really didn't understand why they would vote for a man whose platform was "Building the Wall". So I asked some, despite the tone of his campaign; divisiveness, disrespectful and scary, they still voted for him. Why? Because of one issue, PRO LIFE. This was the one and only reason they voted for Trump. It's their belief and is strong in their mind, so they voted for Trump despite everything else. We have to realize

three major groups came out to vote for him: Pro-Lifers, Uneducated White Men and Women, and of course, those who supported his negative campaign issues.

And finally, Latinos voted 2 to 1 for Clinton, but Latinos only accounted for 11 percent of the total votes. Latinos -- WHY? Even though he demonized Mexicans and unauthorized immigrants, he gained more with those who supported that stand and mobilized white voters, than he lost by alienating Latinos. To my dismay, Latino voters stayed home. It is estimated that 12 million Latino voters stayed home. This means only 48 percent of Latinos eligible to vote came out. WHY? I don't understand! But that is another commentary.

As it turns out the "sleeping giant" this year was not the Latinos, but those who were unhappy with the current state of politics and Washington. A vote against Clinton, was a vote against the status quo. And yes, let me be one to say it out loud, there were a lot of racists who were inspired to vote.

I heard President Obama this morning say: "We are not Democrats, we are not Republicans, we are Americans." This really resonated with me.

Today I am starting to recover from my shock and disbelief that this could happen in 2016. I am focusing on our local elected officials, who I know have our best interests at heart, and will ensure that all American citizens are treated as equals.

WHAT HAPPENED, JUMP TO PG LB 4



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We encourage readers to send letters, story ideas, comments and questions.

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7th Annual Adelante Awards and Hispanic Hall of Fame Dec. 3



Julian & Ave Gonzalez

David Points

Dr. Carlota Ortega

Raymond DeLeon



Courtesy Photos

Sarah Fetcher

Frank Rodriguez

Dr. Raquel Ontiveros

Santos & Gloria Cruz

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN – La Unión Cívica Mexicana will present the 7th Annual Adelante Awards and the Saginaw Hispanic Hall of Fame at 6 p.m. at the Dow Event Center's Red Room on Saturday, December 3, 2016. Red carpet arrivals of the recipients and the new Unión Cívica Queen Destiny Flores, are expected to draw an animated crowd for photo ops and cocktails from 5 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. in the Atrium of the Dow Event Center, 303 Johnson St. in downtown Saginaw.

Celebrating 71-years as a non-profit advocacy group, the Unión Cívica in the last six years added a new tradition of recognizing Hispanic contributions -- past and present -- to the Great Lakes Bay Region. These awards are in recognition of community involvement, cultural display and achievement. The following seven individuals will be honored.

The Saginaw Hispanic Hall of Fame will induct posthumously two illustrious women well known and beloved by the community:

- Dr. Carlota A. Ortega - A doctor of education who utilized her degree to assist in educational attainment for all students, Ortega developed, implemented and supervised the Title VII, state and summer migrant pro-

grams. She was the administrator of Bilingual Programs for 13 years and received the 1990 Michigan Outstanding Hispanic Educator of the Year by the Michigan Dept. of Education. For her migrant education program, she also received the "National Exemplary Model" for her initiatives to improve education of disadvantage children" from the U.S. Department of Education.

- Dr. Raquel Ontiveros - stepped into the realm as an educational administrator at a time when very few Latinas considered the field. She paved a path for other Hispanics as one of the first Latina principals when she led Jerome Elementary for the Saginaw School district. She received numerous awards, including the prestigious Hispanic Caucus Fellowship Award in Washington, D.C. and served on the Hispanic Advisory Committee to the State Legislature and on the Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs for Michigan in the early 1980s.
- Adelante Culture Award - Frank Rodriguez is a Saginaw musician promoting Tejano music for over 30 years with his love for the genre. He formed his band Desastres and

is a favorite in the Great Lakes Bay Region and throughout the Midwest. A singer and guitar aficionado, Rodriguez and his band are in great demand by Tejano fans and have offered their services for benefit dances and celebrations.

- Adelante Faith Award - Pastors Julian and Ava Gonzalez are young pastors of Greater Dimensions Ministries — a non-denominational church located at 5545 McCarty Rd. and serving Saginaw County. Through their life experiences, they felt a calling from God to evangelize others to Jesus Christ. Their ministry has continued to grow with their down-to-earth, transparent style touching lives — especially young men, woman and couples seeking spirituality and understanding of the promises of Christ.
- Adelante Education Award - Raymond DeLeon is president of the Mexican-American Council, Inc., a non-profit working to improve educational attainment for disadvantage students.

ADELANTE AWARDS, JUMP TO PG LB 4

WHAT HAPPENED, FROM PG LB COVER

Who will listen when I have concerns, and will thoroughly investigate the issue and not be blinded, but take a good look? Senator Ken Horn is one of those people who represent us in the Michigan Legislature. He is a Republican, but he's an American first. Sen. Horn will work across the aisle to address concerns.

So I will breathe each day, love my family, go to work, do my community service and work to make our region a wonderful place to live, that is inclusive and supportive. I will continue my work to groom young Latinos and Latinas, to become involved in their community and have a voice through the Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Institute. But most of all, I will always work to assure that our Latino children know that this is America and it is our home. We were born here, as were thousands of other children

and grandchildren of immigrants from around the world. Each one of us has a responsibility to make our lives and the lives of our loved ones unfold fully in a safe and wonderful place to live. Each one of us has a voice and we have to use it wisely, effectively.

Big changes are going to happen, there is no doubt, but this is still America. Just as those before us who defended their rights: Cesar Chavez, Delores Huerta, Martin Luther King, Jr., Conce Olvera, Daniel Soza, Jr., Dave Gamez, Ollie Zuñiga, my parents, your parents, all before us, fought for social rights and dignity -- I will, too. Because this is America. This is our home. Yes, there was a lot of divisive rhetoric, but I am fortunate enough to know that not all people are prejudiced, hateful -- they're truly good people. So it's time for me to put my big girl chones (Spanish abbrev. for "calzones", women's

underpants) on, and move forward. Those who know me, know I will.

The silver lining to this paradigm shift may be that we all now know now there are genuine issues facing America. It's out in the open and there is a lot of work to be done. All our community leaders acknowledge that this election has exposed some thorny issues that turned ugly and split our hearts apart. Let's get together to deal with it...not only for the next four years, but as long as there is an America to fight for.

-- Monica B. Reyes is the director of Disability Services at Saginaw Valley State University (www.svsu.edu/disabilityservices). She is also the director of the Great Lakes Bay Region Hispanic Leadership Institute (<http://www.glbhispanicleadership.org>). Email: mbreyes@svsu.edu

ADELANTE AWARDS, FROM PG LB 3

"Bobby" retired from Saginaw Public Schools where he worked with on truancy issues and other programs geared to serving primarily Latino students such as Project Pride and the Hispanic Coalition for Quality Education. DeLeon has also worked diligently with young people and gangs in the Saginaw area to guide them on a better path in life.

- Adelante Business Award - Sarah Fechter is a health and fitness enthusiast who has captured the attention of the community with her tenacity and savvy marketing. Founder and owner of Sara Fechter Fitness, 6315 State St., she received a bachelor's degree in exercise science in 2007 from Saginaw Valley State University and was honored last month as an outstanding SVSU alumnus (see story on pg. 21). She's the first Latina in this area to create her own health and fitness brand while providing the professional guidance to help others develop better health and workout practices. Her name is synonymous with exercise and eating right, along with her high-energy workouts that are attracting throngs of followers ready to work on their bodies towards better fitness.
- Adelante Legacy Award - Santos and Gloria Cruz are the proprietors of Cruz Kitchen, a Mexican grocery store and mini-deli at 1200 Martha Street since 1969. The

couple owned several other businesses through the years providing authentic Mexican foods and goods. They also dedicated themselves to working with the Saginaw American G.I. Forum on fundraising for annual scholarships and supporting students' desires for a college education.

The coronation of Miss Flores will take place during the ceremonies, culminating with her \$1,000 scholarship award from the Unión Cívica Mexicana.

A Red Carpet Cocktail hour will precede the ceremony at 5 p.m. The event will include dinner, music and entertainment. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased by calling 989-274-5074. The Cívica invites the public to help us celebrate a night of Hispanic Culture, Heritage and History.



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Social Security's Gift to Children is Security

By: Vonda VanTil, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist



Each year parents get Social Security numbers for thousands of children.

This is the season of caring. No matter your religion or belief, December is also considered a time to focus on the children we love. Whether we are wrapping Santa's gifts, buying Hanukkah treats, decorating the house in celebration of Kwanzaa, or volunteering for a toy drive, children add joy to the holiday season and we at Social Security definitely know a thing or two about helping children.

Often overlooked in the paperwork that prospective parents fill out in preparation for a child's birth is an application for a Social Security number and card. Typically, the hospital will ask if you want to apply for a Social Security number for your newborn as part of the birth registration process. This is the easiest and fastest way to apply. The Social Security card typically arrives about a week to ten days after that little bundle of joy! You can learn about Social Security numbers for children by reading our publication, Social Security Numbers for Children, available at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.

A child needs a Social Security number if he or she is going to have a bank account, if a relative is buying savings bonds for the child, if the

child will have medical coverage, or if the child will receive government services. You will also need a Social Security number for a child to claim him or her on your tax returns.

If you want to apply, you will have to visit a Social Security office and you will need to:

- Complete an Application For a Social Security Card (Form SS-5);
- Show us original documents proving your child's U.S. citizenship, age, and identity; and
- Show us documents proving your identity.

Remember, a child age 12 or older requesting an original Social Security number must appear in person for the interview, even though a parent or guardian will sign the application on the child's behalf.

Visit www.socialsecurity.gov/people/kids to learn more about all we do to care for children. Caring for the next generation is a central part of securing today and tomorrow, during the holidays and all year long.

Vonda VanTil is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov



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WASHINGTON, D.C.---The Social Security Administration launched a new Health IT initiative this month with the Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) that enables all Social Security disability case processing sites to receive medical records electronically from all VA facilities faster than ever before. Veterans will receive a faster decision on their Social Security disability claim, speeding them and their dependents through this new process. Both agencies will save time and money with an automatic request through the eHealth Exchange.

“President Obama has said, ‘we must maintain the sacred covenant we share with our veterans by ensuring they have the care and

benefits they deserve,’ and I could not agree more,” said Acting Commissioner of Social Security Carolyn W. Colvin. “We are committed to providing our veterans with the world class service they so richly deserve and improving the speed and efficiency of our disability program.”

The new Health IT program was tested successfully at Social Security locations around the country. The eHealth Exchange went live on Veteran’s Day, November 11, to all Social Security disability processing sites.

Social Security requests nearly 15 million medical records annually from healthcare providers and organizations to make medical decisions on about three million disability claims.

Medical documentation is essential to make a disability determination. Historically, the agency obtained medical records through a manual process (mail, fax, secure mail). This new national initiative puts in place an automated process to obtain medical records electronically without human intervention.

“VA is currently improving quality of life by enabling veterans to share their health information with federal partners and integrating their data into a safe and secure health-related consumer application,” said Dr. David Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health of the Dept. of Veteran Affairs.

Shulkin went on to describe the previous process when eligible veterans applied for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits the average wait time for Social Security to receive paper records from VA took months, in some cases.

“This partnership allows Social Security and VA to share the veteran’s health information electronically in minutes,” said Shulkin. “The Social Security and VA partnership allows VA to continue to be a leader in interoperability efforts among federal partners while improving overall quality of life for our veteran patients.”

This partnership adds the VA to Social Security’s more than 50 other Health IT partners, including the Dept. of Defense, in approximately 7,000 facilities across the U.S. providing electronic health records. Social Security’s goal is to continue expanding the number of healthcare organizations and federal agencies providing electronic health records within a safe and secure environment.

To learn more about Health IT, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityssi/hit.

Social Security offers two other programs to expedite disability claims filed by veterans. Wounded Warriors and veterans with a VA disability compensation rating of 100 percent Permanent & Total have their Social Security disability claims treated as high priority and receive expedited decisions. For more information about these programs, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/people/veterans.



from the
MICHIGAN BANNER

Happy
Thanksgiving

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AND I WILL HONOR HIM WITH THANKSGIVING.
PSALM 69:30



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AT&T Donates \$25,000 to SVSU for STEM camps

20 Underrepresented High Schoolers Benefit



SAGINAW, MI — More local area kids will have the opportunity to attend educational summer camps thanks in part to a \$25,000 contribution from AT&T to the Saginaw Valley State University Foundation. The contribution will allow 20 Great Lakes Bay Area high school students to attend a one-week residential camp at Saginaw Valley State University devoted to helping students hone and further develop their science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills.

“Thank you AT&T for doing your part to see that local students, especially those from populations underrepresented in STEM fields, have the opportunity to attend this camp,” said Carolyn Wierda, executive director of the SVSU Foundation. “It’s critical that our area’s youth are inspired and empowered to pursue STEM education and careers, and this contribution will make a big difference in that unceasing effort.”

The camp will be facilitated by SVSU faculty, student mentors and STEM professional who will expose students to engineering opportunities in

robotics, virtual reality, coding, 3-D printing and mathematics.

“We are proud to support any effort facilitating young adults to reach their full potential in math and science,” concluded AT&T president Jim Murray. “Providing support that enables children to pursue careers in these fields is simply a part our unending effort to drive innovation.”

AT & T executives joined SVSU Foundation staff at the Cardinal’s Nest Tavern on Pierce Rd. across from the SVSU campus for a check presentation on November 11. The \$25,000 donation marks the first time AT&T has sponsored the STEM camp effort. Several local state representatives were invited to be present for the event along with Wierda. Among the dignitaries championing the financial and educational investment are:

Gavin Goetz, AT&T executive director of External Affairs; John Kaczynski, SVSU director of Government Affairs; State Rep. Charles Brunner (D-Bay City); State Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw Township); State Rep. Edward “Ned” Canfield

(R-Sebewaing); State Rep. Vanessa Guerra (D-Saginaw).

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Photo Credit: SVSU

Saginaw Valley State University recognized seven of its graduates and one future graduate who are excelling in their careers and improving their communities at its annual Alumni Celebration Friday, Oct. 28. Five alumni were honored with the 2016 Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest award presented by the SVSU Alumni Association. In addition, the Young Alumni, Veteran Alumni and Future Alumni awards were bestowed.

The Distinguished Alumni Award is presented to an SVSU graduate in recognition of distinguished service and accomplishment in any field of human endeavor that enhances the prestige of the university.

In the College of Arts & Behavioral Sciences, David Points received the 2016 Distinguished Alumnus honor. Commander David S. Points is the former Director of the Joint Information Bureau, Joint Task Force -160 in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He was recalled to active duty and worked as a public affairs officer on the “U.S. Navy’s

Napalm Outreach Team” in several states and was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal. Points completed a bachelor’s degree in 1976; he later completed a law degree and a Ph.D. His public service includes a term as a Michigan state representative. Points is currently the sole owner of Mahon Communications, Inc. which owns and operates WFJX AM, FOX Radio 910 in Roanoke, Virginia.

In the College of Business & Management, the 2016 Distinguished Alumnus award was given to John Stadwick. He began his career with General Motors in 1984 and has served in various leadership positions, including a stint as vice president of GM China. He is currently the global customer experience officer for GM. Numerous organizations and publications have recognized Stadwick for his professional accomplishments and community service. In 2013, Forbes magazine named him to its “Global Meets Local” list of top influential leaders of global corporations. Stadwick

completed a bachelor’s degree in business management in 1983, and was a two-time All-American member of SVSU’s national championship track and field teams in 1982 and 1983.

In the College of Education, Robert Loftus received the 2016 Distinguished Alumnus honor. He received a football scholarship to play at SVSU, and had a memorable and inspiring playing career. Loftus played for SVSU’s first football coach, the late Frank “Muddy” Waters, and was named one of the captains for the team his junior and senior year. Loftus graduated in 1981 with a bachelor’s degree in secondary education. He has held teaching, coaching and administrative positions within secondary education. Currently he is the owner and president of Loftus and Associates, income development specialists for the auto industry.

In the Crystal M. Lange College of Health & Human Services, the Distinguished Alumna award was given to Sarah Fetcher.

SVSU ALUMNI, JUMP TO PG 25

Delta College Selects Downtown Saginaw Site

#1 – Artist's rendering of Delta College potential building.

#2 – Delta site identified on the map along with other buildings and businesses in the vicinity.



Delta College has selected a location in the 300 block of East Genesee Avenue (at Franklin, Tuscola, Baum), to construct a new building in downtown Saginaw to serve the educational needs of students from the City and surrounding County. Key reasons the team selected this site, from the nine sites considered, were:

- Ideal site availability with great feasibility for construction
- Economical to acquire and develop
- Close proximity to urban amenities, including Hoyt Public Library and the future SVRC Marketplace
- Convenient access to the STARS public bus terminal, with six routes passing the new site
- Abundant public parking resources nearby
- Convenient transportation linkages, including I-675 interstate access and other major urban circulation routes
- Prominent frontage and visibility on Genesee Avenue

- Ready access to utilities and infrastructure
- Potential to contribute to the downtown character

Delta College's Saginaw Center will include eleven classrooms, basic science and computer labs, technology and special use training rooms. It is a priority to improve the educational environment of Delta's Saginaw location, to more appropriately match that of other higher education facilities, according to college officials.

In 2016, 41.2 percent of Delta College's enrollment is from Saginaw County and it is the largest population center of Delta's three county service area of Saginaw, Bay and Midland Counties. Although enrollments are down slightly at Delta College - and indeed across Michigan - improved facilities and program offerings at the Saginaw Center is expected to help increase enrollments.

As proposed, the building will be 24,000 assignable square feet (35,000 gross square feet)

with a future maximum enrollment of 1,250 people. It is anticipated to take a number of years to increase to that level.

By investing in a building, rather than continue to lease space, Delta is planning for the next two or three decades of service delivery," said Dr. Jean Goodnow, Delta College President.

"We will offer close-to-home educational classes for many students making their first strides into the post-secondary educational realm. This educational magnet will support student aspirations, whose success affects not only themselves, but their entire families. And, Delta's ability to deliver the highest caliber college education and work force training will be greatly enhanced," she added.

The estimated cost of the construction is \$12.739 million. In June 2016, the state of Michigan approved a \$100 planning authorization.

DELTA DOWNTOWN, JUMP TO PG 23

DELTA DOWNTOWN, FROM PG 22

Following a subsequent appropriations process in 2017, the State will provide 50 percent of the total cost, or approximately \$6.4 million. The remainder has been saved by Delta College to meet the 50 percent match requirement.

Since the site property chosen is City-owned, the agreement will need to be approved by the Saginaw City Council at its Monday, November 21 meeting. Then, there are many more steps to complete before the building will open. Delta College has engaged WTA Architects of Saginaw to provide architectural and engineering services for the Saginaw Center.

Additional dates are:

- January 2017 – Hire construction manager to work with the project team
- March 2018 – Start on the construction phase (weather dependent)
- March 2018 to May 2019 – Construction continues on the project

- May 2019 – Building occupancy

When combined with other data, Delta has identified plenty of people to serve with a new Saginaw Center. Research of the demographics show a large number of potential students within a close radius of the chosen location:

- 4,700 high school students
- 4,450 people aged 18 to 24 years old
- 8,750 people aged 25 to 44
- 9,450 people 45 to 64 years old
- And others may have a degree, but need some retraining

“Delta College is committed to serving all of its taxpaying communities and is pleased to be addressing a need in the region where a majority of students live,” Board Chair Michael Rowley said. “While located in the Downtown area, it will be within easy access for everyone in Saginaw County and beyond.”

The centrally-located site at the 300 block of Genesee Street can attract students from the

City, but would also attract from all 19 Saginaw County school districts. The Saginaw Center will serve as an entry point for health care and skilled trades, housed on main campus. It will also supply higher education to local residents through dual enrollment, as well as certificate and degree programs.

As Delta builds its new facility, the College will also build partnerships with other community assets already in place. A few of those include: the Public Libraries of Saginaw, the Castle Museum, the Temple Theater, the Dow Event Center, FirstMerit Event Park, the CMU Medical School, the Saginaw Art Museum and the upcoming SVRC Farmers Market.

Within this safe environment, many first generation students will find success, which can lead to a continuing cycle of education. This will provide an investment in individuals, ensuring they’ll have career opportunities affecting future generations.

SVSU ALUMNI, FROM PG 21

Founder of Sarah Fetcher Fitness, located at 6315 State Street in Saginaw, she has helped members of the community achieve a better and healthier life. She’s received multiple awards such as the Great Women of the Great Lakes Bay Region, Business of the Year in 2013, and most recently a RUBY Award. Fechter’s business continues to grow and evolve; she currently employs a team of 14 including five SVSU kinesiology students. Fechter completed a bachelor’s degree in exercise science in 2007.

In the College of Science, Engineering & Technology, John Tolfa received the Distinguished Alumnus honor. Upon graduating from SVSU in 1985 with a degree in chemistry and a minor in mathematics, Tolfa was hired by CPI Engineering Services Inc. in Midland, where he worked on research and development. In 2010, Tolfa co-founded Xaerus Performance Fluids International, a company that develops, manufactures and exports specialty lubricants around the world. Two of the senior chemists at Xaerus are also SVSU alumni. His company provides internship opportunities for SVSU students. Tolfa is an inventor of several patents related to synthetic lubrication and bio-based industrial chemistries.

The Young Alumni Award recognizes an individual who has graduated within five years, contributed to student and campus life, has a strong affinity for and connection to SVSU, has been recognized for a strong work ethic, and has shown evidence of professional achievement and civic service. The 2016 recipient is Chunchun Tang, who arrived at SVSU from Shenyang, China and graduated in 2011 with a bachelor’s degree in English literature. In 2013, she earned a master’s of science in international education development from the Ivy League’s University of Pennsylvania. Tang’s high skills in international exchange and cross cultural education led her to pursue an internship with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, known as UNESCO. She currently serves as director of international programs at Oxford Community Schools in Oxford, Michigan.

New in 2016 is the Veteran Alumni Award, presented to an outstanding alum who served in the military. The inaugural award’s recipient is Matthew Schiebner, who graduated from SVSU with a bachelor’s degree in nursing in 2004, and earned his master’s degree in nursing as a nurse

practitioner. He started his nursing career in the United States Air Force as a medical officer. Schiebner was presented with a company grade officer of the quarter honor for his outstanding leadership during wartime while training new recruits and caring for the active duty and veteran soldiers in the hospital setting. He is currently practicing primary care for all ages at Great Lakes Medical Center in Bay City. Schiebner has been employed at Covenant Med Express since 2011, where he provides his services in an urgent care setting.

The Future Alumni Award is presented to an SVSU student of junior or senior class standing who meets the same criteria as the Young Alumni award. The 2016 recipient is George Copeland, a business administration major and communication minor from Southfield who is expected to graduate in December. While at SVSU, Copeland has served as a resident assistant in M.J. Brandimore House, and has been an active member of several student organizations. Copeland is also the youth pastor for The Nations Church in Saginaw, where he strives to help people reach their goals and fulfill their purposes.

Transfer Agreement Helps Students Graduate at Delta College and Lake Superior State University

Delta College and Lake Superior State University (LSSU) have entered into a regional partnership designed to increase the number of students who complete degrees at Michigan colleges and universities.

The “reverse transfer agreement” creates a process whereby students who transfer from Delta College to LSSU can be awarded a community college associate’s degree with the help of credits earned at the university. Qualifying students must have already earned 24 credits at the community college prior to transfer. The reverse transfer agreement provides a way for transfer students to receive an associate’s degree when the necessary requirements are met, so as to more fully represent their academic success.

“I’m very pleased that through this agreement, our students have another opportunity to earn their associate’s degree,” said Dr. Jean Goodnow, President of Delta College. “Workplace

statistics show an associate’s is a valuable credential offering increased employability and earning power.”

“It’s important recognize all the degrees students have earned, whether it’s at the university or the community college,” said LSSU Interim Provost David Roland Finley. “We’re pleased to work with our community college partners to ensure that credits earned at LSSU can be used (transferred back) to provide students with their well-deserved associate’s degrees and to have those degrees awarded by the community college.”

The agreement formalizing the partnership was signed on October 26 at Delta College.

LSSU is the state’s smallest public university with an enrollment of about 3,000. LSSU is located in Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula



LSSU Interim Provost David R. Finley Delta College Pres. Dr. Jean Goodnow | Courtesy Photo

overlooking Lake Superior, about 238 miles north from the main Delta College campus in Bay County. For more info, check out www.lssu.edu

SVSU Students’ Giving Spirit Shared at National Conference



Eliza Lanway | Courtesy Photo

Saginaw Valley State University recently drew national attention for its students’ dedication to helping their fellow students financially.

Eliza Lanway, a communication major from Gaylord and the current Student Life Program Board coordinator at SVSU, spoke at

the National Association for Campus Activities Conference in Covington, Kentucky last month.

Lanway presented the new and improved program plan for SVSU’s annual Streetfest event at the national conference.

Traditionally, Streetfest has been a day of fun for SVSU students to relieve stress as they prepared to take final exams. During the Streetfest

2016 in April, students also raised money to benefit Forever Red’s Student Giving Campaign, which ultimately provides scholarships to SVSU students.

Tony Cianciolo, SVSU assistant director for Student Life, said that Lanway was one of the students leading the charge for change.

“Eliza had an immense drive to change SVSU’s already very successful Streetfest from a purely entertainment-focused event to adding a whole new side to the event,” he said.

Cianciolo added that Lanway’s ultimate goal was to make the event about fundraising for student success.

Program Board reached out to local businesses and other campus organizations seeking sponsorships. Sponsors’ business names and logos were placed on lawn signs as well as Streetfest t-shirts. The idea was to preserve the integrity of the event while also giving it a new purpose.

Because of her involvement in the communication program at SVSU as well as

experiential learning through Student Life, Lanway was well-prepared for her speech at the conference.

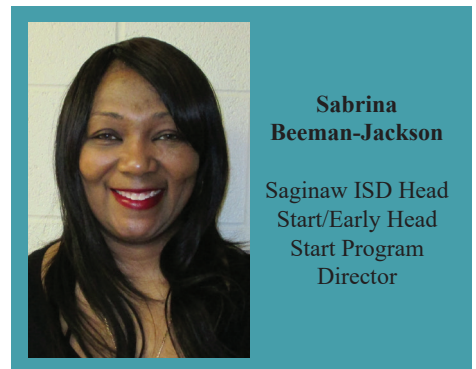
“I feel a lot more comfortable leading meetings, setting up programs for other people – things like that,” she said. “I really appreciate having those skills now.”

Lanway said she is proud to be a part of what they have accomplished, as she prepares to graduate in December.

“It’s super exciting because I’m leaving it in a good place,” she said.

Streetfest 2016 was a trial run of this new structure, and set an ambitious goal of raising \$12,000 through sponsorships and advertising. They raised more than \$4,000 for student scholarships the first year and will work to build on that amount.

“This is a long-term growth process and that’s something I wanted to relay in my presentation,” Lanway said. “We’re already in the process of setting up for this year’s event and selling a little bit earlier.”



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'A Raisin in the Sun', America's Classic Play at SVSU

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Chicago matriarch Walter Lee Younger (played by Donté Green, a theatre major from Detroit) clashes often with his sister, Beneatha (played by Jayla Gaskins, a communication major from Detroit), over the family's fortunes and future, during a recent rehearsal of SVSU's production of "A Raisin in the Sun." Photo credit: Mike Randolph, SVSU

You could say Tommy Wedge has been preparing for this moment since the day he first opened the pages of "A Raisin in the Sun" while in high school. The Lorraine Hansberry classic has informed every play written in the last six decades, said Wedge, now an experienced theatre professional.

Still, the celebrated story of a struggling black family in 1950s Chicago continues to surprise Wedge even today as he prepares to direct an adaptation for the stage at Saginaw Valley State University.

"This is a play that touches on race, and here I am, a white man from South Dakota, directing this pillar of black literature," Wedge said. "It's been a wonderful learning experience for me, trying to honor that."

The adjunct instructor of theatre said the time was right for SVSU to host "one of the best plays of the last 60 years."

"We have such a talented pool of actors of

color," Wedge said of the production's largely black cast. "We have some fun things in mind for lighting and the setting, but a lot of this production is going to showcase the very realistic and naturalistic elements of the play. This is a daunting play to produce because it's so richly-written, but the cast members are really showing their acting gifts."

Donté Green, a theatre major from Detroit, will play the lead, Walter Lee Younger, the patriarch of the black family featured in "A Raisin in the Sun."

He brings a lot of gravitas and confidence to the role," Wedge said of Green, whose previous SVSU roles include Cassio in "Othello" and Brom Bones in "Sleepy Hollow."

Walter Lee Younger was perhaps most famously portrayed by Sidney Poitier, who was cast both in the Broadway production from 1959 to 1960, as well as the 1961 Hollywood film.

"It was an extremely popular play, and the

first black play that really punctured the American experience," Wedge said of Hansberry's tale. "It was universally popular for all audiences."

The plot follows members of the Younger family as they clash with racial politics — and each other — after being offered a substantial sum of money to sell their home in an effort to ease the anxieties of white neighbors.

"It's a serious play but it has some very lighthearted moments too," Wedge said. "It's about the journey of a family. No matter what your experience, you'll be able to identify with the story and enjoy it."

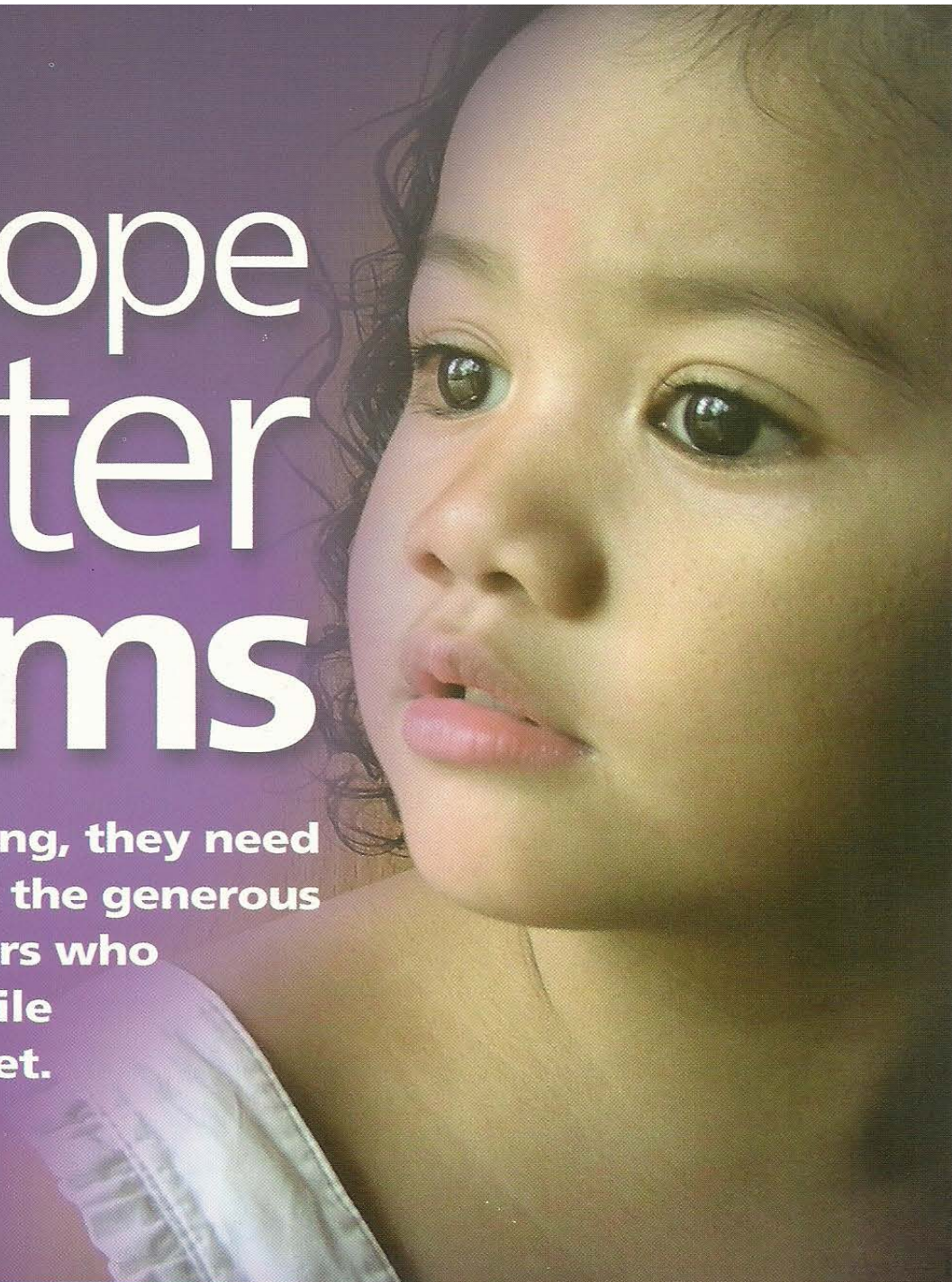
While Wedge has never been involved in a production of "A Raisin in the Sun" before, he is familiar with the play's world. In spring 2015 at Saginaw-based Pit & Balcony Theatre, he directed an adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Clybourne Park," which takes place in the formerly all-white neighborhood where the Younger family lived 50 years earlier.

Both plays are challenging, sometimes uncomfortable character studies that allow Wedge and his cast to explore — and learn — more about the human experience, he said.

"During rehearsals, there have been a lot of moments where I'm helping the cast try to find these truthful moments they can capture," Wedge said. "They're learning a lot about themselves and I'm learning a lot about myself as a director. It's been a pleasure being part of that."

Wedge hopes audiences are similarly pleased after the curtains open for "A Raisin in the Sun" during showings at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday to Saturday, Nov. 16-19, and 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 20, in SVSU's Malcolm Field Theatre for Performing Arts. Tickets are \$13 for the general public and \$10 for students or attendees 60 or older.

For more information or to order tickets, contact the SVSU box office at (989) 964-4261. Tickets also are available online here: http://purchase.tickets.com/buy/TicketPurchase?organ_val=22481&schedule=list



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“Girls’ Night Out” at The Temple Theatre

SAGINAW, MICH. – The Temple Theatre’s Girls’ Night Out on Nov. 15 drew fun-loving women whose family members-most often male-take off during hunting season leaving the females up to their own devices. Thus, the tag line of “deer widows” was born.

“Bridesmaids is the perfect addition to the Temple Theatre Movie Series presented by WNEM,” said Stacey Gannon, executive director of the Temple Theatre. This event has become an annual tradition for the hundreds of women who are invited “to come and join the Temple Theatre for a relaxed evening before the holidays filled

with laughter, shopping and the possibility to win some great prizes,” she said.

For starters, the event included a 7:30p.m. showing of the Oscar-nominated comedy Bridesmaids for \$1 as part of the Temple Theatre Movie Series presented by WNEM. The women also explored small business vendors from around the Saginaw community before the movie. Vendors such as the Saginaw Art Museum, Omoni Boutique, Portraits by Gregg, and Pure Barre Saginaw were among the businesses showcased during the evening’s festivities and gave away door prizes.

For more information on the Temple Theater Movie Series, call (989) 754-7469 or email at office@templetheatre.com. For a full list of shows go to www.templetheatre.com. Tickets can be purchased in person, over the phone, or online. Box office hours are Monday-Friday from 9 a.m to 5 p.m. and Saturdays 3 hours before shows. Parking is available at the Dow Event Center parking structure. Concessions are available on a cash only basis. Look for more info on [Facebook@TempleTheatreMI](https://www.facebook.com/TempleTheatreMI).

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19 FREE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24 CASTLE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 LUNCH & LEARN – TOY PIANOS – NOT JUST CHILD’S PLAY

Noon

Barry Rindhage’s interest in toy pianos began even before his first purchase in Phoenix about 25 years ago. As a collector, historian and musician, Barry will enlighten and entertain us with his knowledge and showcase these fascinating musical instruments from his collection.

Castle Museum President Announces Retirement



Ken Santa | Courtesy Photo

There comes a time for everyone to hang it up...and my time has come. After seven great, rewarding years here at the Castle Museum and the Historical Society of Saginaw County, I have

decided to retire at the end of this year.

It’s not a decision I take lightly. I have made tons of wonderful friends in my time here and met a lot of fantastic people from whom I’ve learned a great many things. This job has been one of the most rewarding of my career and I’m very thankful for the time I’ve spent here.

I give thanks to our Board of Directors who gave me liberal room in managing the Castle Museum and I want to express deep appreciation to our staff ... some of the most talented and creative people I’ve had the pleasure to work with.

Lastly, I thank all of you, the members of the Historical Society of Saginaw County. Without your support, this museum would never have become the success and the destination it is today. Remember, good is the enemy of great...never settle for second best.

Ken Santa

President & CEO

Castle Museum of Saginaw County History
Historical Society of Saginaw County

*Interested candidates in the President and CEO position should respond by November 18, 2016 with a resume and cover letter to: Search Committee, Castle Museum of Saginaw County History
500 Federal Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48607*

Transracial Adoptees Need The Strengths Of The Black Family

By *Veronica Maria Brown-Comegys*



*Veronica Maria Brown-Comegys /
Courtesy Photo*

When I was seven years old, I spent three months living with my blue-eyed, blond, best friend, Janet P., and her seven siblings. Our parents made this arrangement so that I could

continue at St. Theresa Catholic School, while my mother relocated for her new job.

One afternoon, Janet and I were playing on the porch, when three African-American children stopped in front of the house. They shouted, "What's she doing there? She doesn't belong there." Enraged, Janet hollered, "Yes she does. She's just like us." The debate shutdown.

When the school year ended, I joined my mother in Highland Park, Michigan, where we lived about eight blocks from my godparents, uncle, aunt, four cousins and grandmother. Thus, back in an "African-American world," I learned strategies to function in a white-dominant society.

On the other hand, black children who are adopted by whites live a reverse scenario. Rhonda M. Roorda was adopted when she was two years old. Roorda said, "When we leave white homes, which are places of privilege, we lack a skillset. We weren't raised to understand race matters."

However, within the black family, there are many teachable moments where survival skills are communicated not only by conversation, but by looks and other intangible ways, according to Vanessa Brooks, Clinical Assistant Professor

at the Michigan State University, School of Social Work. Professor Brooks' family includes a biological child, and a adopted biracial child. Furthermore, over the years, she and her husband have cared for between 15 and 20 foster children. "A kid needs what I can offer," she said.

Whites do not undergo the racist and microaggressive encounters that blacks face. But, the white parents can have conversations with the black child about these incidents. However, survival lessons learned within a black family involve actual, shared experience and emotion, and are therefore more powerful and profound, according to Prof. Brooks. She recalls telling her class about microaggression, which can be subtle. "I said, 'I experience them everyday.' Then they got it."

Although, Professor Brooks is not opposed to transracial adoption, she does not agree that it is necessary. "It is workable, convenient, even reasonable," she said. "But, history has proven that families of color can be recruited," Professor Brooks said.

In addition, Social Services guidelines regarding income have been adjusted. Income versus debt is considered. In the past families with a modest income were ineligible. However, children have been raised on various income levels. "An hourly worker can adopt," the professor said. She said, "Everybody doesn't have to own a sport's car. You can get by on the bus." Furthermore, the definition of "good home" has evolved. "We should not use monetary criteria," said Prof. Brooks.

The placement of children is governed by two federal provisions. They are the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, and the Interethnic Placement Act (IEPA) of 1996. "The MEPA and the IEPA legislation, simply put, says race doesn't matter, and should not be included in the adoptive parent preparation," said Cheikh A.B. Mbacke, Ph.D, Treasurer of the Michigan Association of Black Social Workers. He said, "However, race matters on a multitude of levels."

Some adoption agencies provide race-related classes, but it is not required, according to Prof. Brooks.

MEPA and IEPA also require states to recruit families from the communities that represent the children in care. "Few do, however, that portion of "the law" has never been enforced, only the hammer on race," Dr. Mbacke said.

According to Dr. Mbacke, research demonstrates that MEPA and IEPA have done nothing to improve adoption opportunities for children who wait in foster care. "It has, however, contributed to an increase of young (0-5) African-American children being adopted by white families," said Dr. Mbacke.

In general, white people, who adopt children of another race, are open to diverse experiences, according to Prof. Brooks. "They have a big heart to embrace children," she said. However, the parents need to be proactive. They must insure that safeguards are in place, so that the child will have positive interactions, according to the professor.

For example, the parents must be alert to the attitudes of other relatives. "I found that some extended family members may not be as welcoming as the nuclear family," Prof. Brooks said. "There might be more tension around grandparents or uncles and aunts," she said. The extended family should be positive. "If the child has to be secluded, he or she is not going to have a rich experience," Prof. Brooks said. The child should get a balanced view of the world, according to the professor.

"Inside Transracial Adoption," by Beth Hall and Gail Steinberg includes a transracially adopted child's Bill of Rights. Among the 19 rights are: Every child is entitled to parents who know that this is a race-conscious society. Every child is entitled to parents who know that if they are white, they benefit from racism. Every child is entitled to parents who did not adopt him or her to "save" him or her, or to improve the world.

TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION, JUMP TO PG 33

TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION, FROM PG 32

Every child is entitled to parents who accept, understand, and empathize with his or her race and culture. (p. 285-286).

Hall and Steinberg are co-founders of Pact, An Adoption Alliance, which provides support for adopted children of color, including adoption placement, lifelong education, support, and a community for adoptees and their families on issues of adoption and race. Hall is the mother of an adopted Latina daughter, and an African-American son, now adults, and she was raised with an adopted sister. Steinberg is the adoptive mother of four grown daughters and sons. Her family has Korean/Native American, African-American, and white members.

“Parents need to learn that it is not just about providing a good home and school, but more-so about making sure the children are grounded, and also prepared for questions and comments by others,” said Rina Risper, President and Publisher of The New Citizens Press, a multicultural newspaper in Lansing, Michigan. In addition,

Risper said, “I come from a multiracial family; we are from all over the world. With that being said, I believe that transracial adoption is beneficial to the family and the child, if the parents still keep the child involved with his or her cultural heritage.”

“I’m okay with transracial adoption, as long as they let a kid be a kid; as long as they don’t try to turn a black kid into a white kid,” said Dorris Tilmon, co-owner of Amour Bridal and Prom, in St. Clair Shores, Michigan.

Shocking to Prof. Brooks, were the problems that arise from hair-care. In addition, Roorda said, “But wow, you shouldn’t put a mixed kid with nappy hair into a home where the parents don’t know how to deal with, or want to deal with that type of hair.” Prof. Brooks has even offered a presentation entitled, “Another Bad Hair Day: Life in the Child Welfare System.” “Problems of ‘self-regard’ might develop if the child thinks, ‘if my hair looks crazy, I’m not as good as someone else,’” the professor said. “A few times, I have seen adoptive parents just cut the hair of a black

female child,” said Risper.

Furthermore, according to Prof. Brooks, the white, biological child might have issues because of the black child’s hair. In one family, the white child began acting-out when her mother was tending to the adoptee’s hair. She felt her mother was taking a long time, time that should have been spent with her.

Yet, Mario Aguilar, a Hispanic, thinks transracial adoption is a beautiful thing. “We can have unconditional love for anyone; it is awesome,” Aguilar said. On the other hand, he is against the “intermixing” of people. Aguilar said, “that’s not racist; we should keep our culture; we should keep our culture alive.”

Veronica Maria Brown-Comegys is a former freelance writer for UPI in Rio de Janeiro, and State Net in Lansing. She has been enrolled in the Michigan State University Department of Anthropology MA/PhD Program. Other articles by Brown-Comegys may be viewed at TUDO JOIA - Everything’s Great www.facebook.com/VeroniWrites. Follow her on Twitter.

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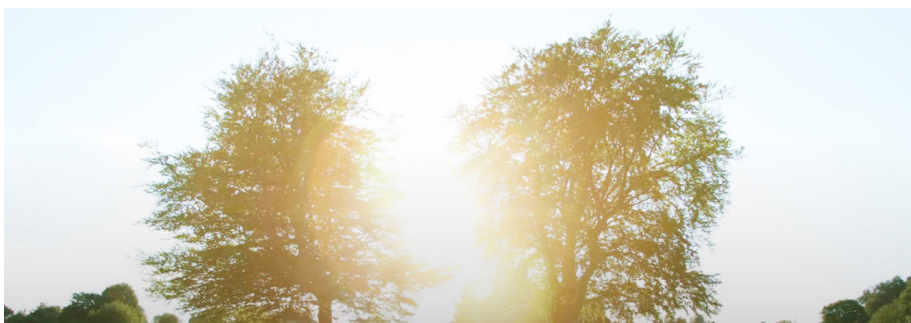
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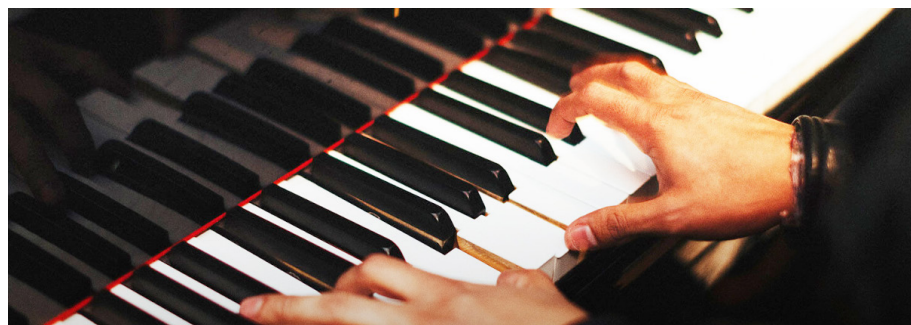
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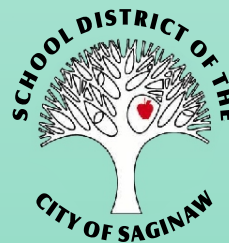
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POLITICS & PUBLIC POLICY

Trump Card

Op-Ed by The Watchman

There is a new game on the table. The cards have been dealt and the "pot" ante'd up. Now that the 2016 Presidential Election is a fait accompli (done deal) where to from here? There are many possible scenarios.

It is obvious by the populace's reaction that there are a good number of dissatisfied voters. What will President-elect Donald J. Trump do? Candidate Trump campaigned on what can be viewed as a racially dividing platform. He is opposed to the current refugee entrance program and vigorous against the Hispanic (Mexican) immigration policy. He has also proffered the banning those of the Muslim religion from

entering the country. He has openly voiced his perception of the black condition in America which is dismal, if not outright gloomy. Sad to say that Donald Trump's support from Republican voters tends to come from (white) men, seniors and those having a high school education or less, according to early results from an online NBC News/Survey Monkey of more than 3,000 GOP primary voters. Trump also has widespread ideological backing from Republicans -- as he gets the most support of any candidate from moderate, conservative and very conservative GOP primary voters. In the closing days and nights of the primary campaign, Trump was leading in almost every major voting group within the primary electorate, but he ran

particularly strong with white evangelicals (20 percent), men (24 percent), seniors (24 percent), and those with a high school education or less (26 percent). The general election results mirrored those numbers, plus.

The Trump political platform boasted of the elimination of the business as usual attitude towards government. He said he would make certain that the heretofore much needed, but ignored,

policy changes would be dealt with by his administration. He has openly admitted making sizable donations to various politicians from both sides of the aisle and that there is much corruption in the nation's capital. Mr. Trump campaigned on the fact that he has made many contributions to various politicians and has gained sway in his businesses. And assuming he has enough money (does any politician ever have enough?) and cannot be bought, will he step on the wrong toes as Head of State? What happens if he offends the wrong people?

Mr. Trump has commented that there needs to be significant tax reform. If he intends to make certain reforms, for example, tax dollars going to general assistance recipients, that security blanket may come under close scrutiny, which may adversely affect a number of welfare beneficiaries. Will there be a great upheaval and civil unrest? Would martial law be declared? Will those Archie Bunker doppelgangers demand forced detentions? What will he do? From the other side of the aisle comes Democratic Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid who ripped into President-elect Donald Trump on Friday, calling the New York businessman a "sexual predator who lost the popular vote and fueled his campaign with bigotry and hate. The election of Donald Trump has emboldened the forces of hate and bigotry in American." If that statement has any truth to it, what does that say about the attitude of most of America? The above mentioned concerns are but a few areas of concern this country's new commander-in-chief will have to face.

The new President-Elect: will he be America's Trump or Joker?

The Watchman is the pseudonym of a long-time resident observer-commenter who offers perspectives, insights and analysis of the world in which we live and the human condition.

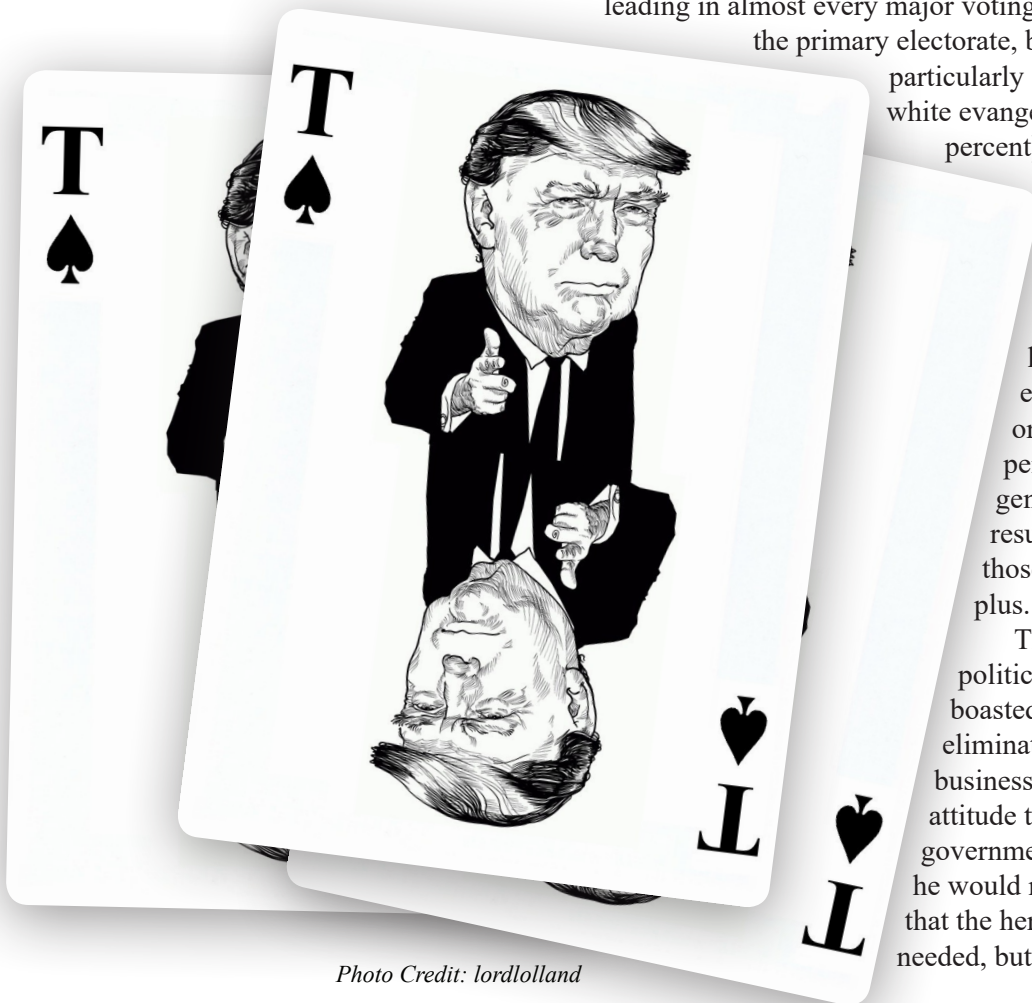


Photo Credit: lordlolland

Rebuilding Michigan Cities; State Economy

by State Sen. Ken Horn, 32nd District



Senator Ken Horn | Courtesy Photo

Just a decade ago, during a single U.S. Census period, a half-million people packed up and left the State of Michigan for jobs in other states. After a lot of hard work, Michigan's economy is recovering, jobs are being created, and personal incomes are on the

rise. We've invited people to come home — and they're coming.

I Chair the Senate Economic Development and International Investment Committee and my colleagues and I have continuously voted to improve Michigan's economy and get people back to work. The committee recently unanimously approved a package of bills that would create the tools we need to both revitalize cities across the state and to take Michigan's economy to the next level.

I am honored to represent Saginaw, a city with a rich heritage and a proud past. It is also one of many cities across our great state that suffered from declining populations and disinvestment. I've often said that Saginaw is to the Saginaw Bay

Region as Detroit is to Michigan; our fortunes and futures are intertwined.

As we're discovering, the strength of our state is tied to the strength of our urban centers. As private investments leave a community, government investments fill the gap, one way or the other. So, if we do nothing about our crumbling cities today, we'll have nothing but crumbled cities tomorrow. We can, and must, do better.

The State of Michigan needs to find private developers looking to make truly transformational investments. Private development so significant that it can fundamentally transform the attitude of a community.

For more than thirty years we've struggled to find a way to develop the Saginaw River with livable spaces and downtown, riverfront activities. This legislation gives Michigan a fighting chance to deal with hulking abandoned buildings and empty brownfields in communities just like Saginaw.

As we crafted this economic development tool, we applied the "but for" test. This is designed for projects that would not happen "but for" the tax increment financing (TIF) that only the state can apply. An empty property, which earns nothing today, could gain up to 75 percent more in tax revenue. Once the funding gap is satisfied through the tax capture, it goes away.

We have gone out of our way to protect state taxpayers, while giving private developers the

incentives they need to help put our cities back on the path to prosperity. The legislation requires a demonstrated "net gain" for the state and because the state puts no money up front, it protects the School Aid Fund, local revenue sharing, road and bridge funding and everything else that you and I think are very important. The protections are built right into the legislation.

The multi-million dollar risks are all on the private sector, just the way it should be. If a development fails, only the developer loses. This is not a handout for developers, but a handy tool for cities and large towns all across Michigan.

Only five "transformational" projects would be allowed statewide, meaning only the best developments with the best shot of success and the best return on investment will be selected. Only one per community, per year, as well.

There are a lot of people in the media saying that this package is only about helping Detroit. Passage of these bills will bring billions of dollars of investment to cities like mine, all over our state. That's why the legislation has support from groups and lawmakers from every corner of Michigan.

This legislation is pro-Michigan, pro-community and pro-growth at precisely the time young professionals, engineers and skilled tradespeople are looking to move back into Michigan. Michigan has a bright future, Senate Bills 1061-65 makes sure of that.

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