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BUSINESS



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BUSINESS, PG 43



NYESHA CLARK-YOUNG SPEAKS OUT AGAINST WATER SHUTOFFS

Group protests water shutoffs, but also opposes agency aid for debtors

By **MIKE THOMPSON**

Saginaw's primary water shutoff issue is basic. City leaders believe customers in arrears should lose their water service if they will not or cannot arrange payment plans. Members of a protest group, Community Alliance for the People, say no shutoffs, under any circumstances, should be carried out.

Clear enough? And protesters have gained their first partial victory with a city staff pledge to halt shutoffs at least until July 15, and then extend warnings to at least one week instead of 48 hours, via red door-handle notices used in the past.

A second concern is more murky. Members of the Saginaw power structure say a key part of their avoid-shutoffs-if-we-can approach is to

seek funds from local anti-poverty sources to help qualifying low-income debtors pay their overages. Protest organizers respond that this is none of City Hall's business, and that monies overdue simply should be covered by upcoming federal aid funds, no questions asked.

"It is not up to residents to seek assistance when millions in federal assistance is on the way," wrote Carly Rose, who identified herself as Carly Hammond when she ran for the state House 95th District seat last summer. She referred mainly to \$52 million in covid relief aid that is targeted for Saginaw, a sum that is higher than even the 1960s War on Poverty grants, adjusted to inflation.

CONTINUES ON PG 2, WATER SHUTOFFS



From harvesting farm fields to growing Latino leaders

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Most Saginaw marijuana marts will open this coming fall

COMMUNITY, PG 12



At W-3-Soul, Dante's first day wasn't so smooth

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Cover, water shutoffs

The water-bill aid plan is "passing the buck to individuals and nonprofit organizations," she added, after she helped to organize a "Stop Environmental Genocide" protest rally on June 28. The event on City Hall's front steps took place hours after city leaders reacted to the protest plans by calling their own press conference to announce formation of a Utility Payment Assistance Collaborative (UPAC) that includes United Way, the Saginaw County CAC and the First Ward Community Center.

City Hall keeps teamwork

City leaders did not react to being accused of complicit mass murder via genocide. They merely explained that, in effect, UPAC is a formal name for what city staffers say they have been doing ever since covid-19 was followed by a 16-month shutoff moratorium, during which personal water-sewer bill debts ascended as high as \$3,000, with a majority of major ar-rears standing at about half that amount.

Among 18,000 Saginaw customers, roughly 4 percent, or 720, were originally ID'd in these circumstances, making them liable for shutoffs or in extreme cases, loss of their homes.

Their combined debt was pegged at nearly \$1 million.

More than half of the 300-plus originally contacted made arrangements between June 15 and June 28, said John Stemple, neighborhood services director and leader of city staff procedures under Manager Tim Morales. Then, when UPAC offered open enrollment June 30 until July 2, another 300-plus arranged plans.

"I'm glad that the city could be the channel to assist in bringing many citizens to the local organizations that have the funds available to assist them," said Mayor Brenda Moore, who joined staff in the open enrollment arrangement.

Still, Community Alliance members vow to keep pushing for no shutoffs at any time, especially after the July 15 moratorium expires. They say federal monies should cover all debts, including separate funds apart from the covid aid.

Vacant houses shut off

In addition, city officials now say they believe many of the shutoffs from June 15 to June 28 were issued to recently vacated properties. There is no explanation why they didn't figure this out sooner.

In a sample scenario requested by The Michigan Banner, keeping the customer's name secret even from our staff, a resident owed \$1,327.21. The individual received \$521.32 via the CAC, supported by federal

funds, and agreed to an \$805.89 payment plan, with sums tacked onto future monthly bills, according to research by Finance Director Lori Brown.

City Hall is doing a good deed, not the disservice that Carly Rose described, said Audra Davis, Saginaw United Way president and CEO. She said teamwork is a win-win both for city bill collectors and for indebted customers.

With "an incredibly hard-working city staff," she said, "we are able to assist with many different programs you may not be familiar with."

Untapped water-bill aid

During 16 months of covid times, said Davis, United Way has released \$504,000 in utility assistance across Saginaw County, including \$79,319 specifically for water-sewer bills issued to City Hall in city customers' names. Almost all the county's suburbs and small towns also rely on the city's Lake Huron pipeline, each in charge of their own billings.

United Way recently assembled millions in added federal funds for assistance, Davis said, but to her surprise, a scant 66 customers applied during the first week. This shows why city bill collectors should inform customers about potential help from United Way and other sources, she said.

Representatives from CAC and First Ward Center were not present.

The water-bill payment line is 759-1540, but Davis said the best answer for debtors is to call the United Way's universal 211 number in cooperation with an array of non-profit providers, but she conceded that "satisfaction is not immediate" with the mutual aid because of personal info requirements required to avoid misallocation of funds.

One of the protest speakers, NyeSha Clark-Young, hit on that point when she said, with sarcasm, that assistance providers "want me to give them all my business, even my blood type," drawing applause from about two dozen attendees on the City Hall steps.

She added that a water shutoff not only could leave families homeless, but create a prospect of parents losing their children to foster care.

One sticking point was not discussed during the initial controversy. City staffers late in June revealed that health codes for safe homes would require them to enact fines on property owners without water service -- \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second, and \$400 thereafter, and in the ultimate a lien on the property.

Protesters described this revelation as piling onto the burdens of customers who already are facing troubles, and that shutoff penalties in the name of public health cause self-ful-

filling harm to health. For example, they say, water is required for the hand-washing that is deemed vital to combating covid.

Councilwoman switches

To enact changes, the Community Alliance would need votes from at least five of the nine City Council members.

Council members offered unanimous backing for the shutoff policy during meetings on May 14, June 7 and June 21, but Monique Lamar Sylvia has transformed her position in favor of the protestors, and she joined them on June 28.

"Those affected are the poorest of the poor," she said.

She tearfully described her feelings when a constituent called and asked "what to do," while at the same time she heard city employees in the background as they carried out a shutoff, which made her feel personally responsible and "ashamed" at the city's actions.

"I'm here today because of you guys," she told the protestors. "When you represent the people, you have to listen to the people."

She also offered a theory of why at least some of the water debts spiraled.

"A lot of us didn't know whether we were going to live or die" when the covid pandemic began, she said, "so why are we going to pay a bill?"

Sylvia's first opportunity to publically confront her council peers, and vice-versa, will occur at their next meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 12.

Meanwhile, Community Alliance leaders vow that they also will be present, even while their social media notes draw skeptics who note that thousands of others in hardship have found self-sacrificing steps to cover their water bills, or to at least seek help, not using the pandemic as an excuse to stop honoring basic obligations. Protest organizers respond by urging critics to avoid disarray within the group, and not to judge other people's circumstances.

Council members and staff "don't care," Jeffrey Bulls told the protestors at the City Hall entrance, while Councilwoman Sylvia stood in support. "What are we going to do?"

"Stand up," Carly Rose interjected, adding "Water is a right."

(FOOTNOTE: Be aware that local TV news often "arranges" the coverage at these types of citizen action events, be they protests or celebrations, marches or charity walks. The City Hall proceedings on June 28 began slowly, with news media outnumbering participants for a while, until late-coming citizens arrived. Media from Channels 5, 12, 25 and 66 all took part, and when the first folks arrived with protest signs, camera operators immediately guided them where to stand, and how to hold the placards, for the best angles. These types of posing instructions repeated for the full 90 minutes. This observation only causes me to desire more trust in what we see on TV at 6 and 11 o'clock.)

MICHIGAN BANNER

301 E Genesee Ave, Suite 201B
Saginaw, MI 48607
989.992.2600
publisher022@gmail.com

CEO/COO

Jerome Buckley
publisher022@gmail.com

PUBLISHER

Jerome Buckley, Jr.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Michelle McCoy
editor@michiganbanner.org

EDITOR EMERITUS

Rae Lynn Buckley

**THE LATINO BANNER
PUBLISHER**

Jerome Buckley
thelatinobanner@gmail.com

OMBUDSMAN

Elaine Gregory McKenzie

MISSION

The Michigan Banner, Latino Banner and Youth 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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Congratulations to Jerome Buckley and the Staff of The Michigan Banner on 19 years of successfully "Spreading the News"!

My husband, Henry Marsh now deceased, and I have been encouragers and supporters of Jerome (our 'son' from another mother and father) for many years. Jerome has worked untiringly to keep the Michigan Banner dream alive and I salute him for his effort and pray for his continued success in this endeavor. Congratulations again!

Ruth Claytor Marsh



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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Nineteen years ago, in the year 2002, Halle Berry and Denzel Washington made history by winning Oscars for Best Actress and Best Actor, respectively. No Black woman had ever won the coveted top acting honor from the Academy. The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones and Spider-Man were the three biggest films of the year. Vice President Dick Cheney served as acting president for just a few short hours while then President George W. Bush underwent a colonoscopy and United Airlines, the second largest airline in the world filed for bankruptcy. I was a bit surprised to learn that a Campaign Against Climate Change march in London which ended at the U.S. Embassy made headline news. As a very loyal fan, I wish I could report that the Detroit Tigers had won the World Series that year – or since - perhaps this year – it could happen. Another very significant event happened in the year 2002 – The Michigan Banner grew from vision to reality and has continued to flourish, providing positive news and information to the Great Lakes Bay Region and beyond. Somewhere along the way we were compelled to add The Latino Banner which has withstood all the challenges a new publication faces in its early inception and is still going strong. Thank you all for almost two decades of continued support and patronage.



In this edition, we will share salutations from groups and individuals who have advertised their businesses; from local clergy who have shared stories of encouragement and hope; from colleges and Universities seeking to inform students of the quality educational opportunities available to them right here in our own back yard; from the non-profit and community-based organization leaders who have kept the public abreast of various funding and services available to those in need; and from readers who have found this publication to be a source of information they have been able to count on. I thank all of you for taking time out to pen words of inspiration to myself and The Michigan Banner staff.

Over the years, many gifted writers, contributors, and staff have come and gone. Too many to name and I know better than to name just a few. I would like to acknowledge the late Rae Lynn Buckley without whom the vision could not have come to pass. Her many contributions are recognized at the annual Heart of the City Awards Luncheon each year in the form of a scholarship to deserving high school graduates majoring in journalism.

Again, I offer my sincere and earnest thanks to the Great Lakes Bay Region. You have helped to keep this dream alive. We, at The Michigan Banner look forward to continued growth in this age of digital news coverage and publications. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome Buckley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

Jerome Buckley
Publisher, Michigan Banner

Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE



FACEBOOK.COM

Saginaw deejay jams the tejano box on social media

By MIKE THOMPSON

"It's Fri-Yay! Today is June 25th, 2021. I invite you to join me today for all your favorite tejano conjutto cumbia jams."

And Saginaw's own Jesse Sanchez Jr., aka DJ Jammin' Jess, is on the air again.

He has earned a vast array of listeners, enough to achieve his recent honor of top "Deejay Internet Personality" at the All-Star Tejano Music Awards banquet and ceremony in San Antonio. He spins his Tex-Mex magic on tejanolippz.com late in the afternoons on Wednesdays and Fridays, 2 p.m. until 5 p.m.,

CONTINUES ON LB PG 3, SANCHEZ JR.



ALBERTO FLORES

From harvesting farm fields to growing Latino leaders

By MIKE THOMPSON

Scalding summer afternoon, 1962. Thermometer rising near 100, ready to pop it's top.

Ten-year-old Alberto Flores is laboring with his farmworker mom and his siblings, picking potatoes in a Munger field.

He looks up and sees a nearby oasis. A manicured lawn surrounds a backyard swimming pool. Privileged kids his age are diving and splashing to cool themselves, taking breaks under canopied tables to sip iced glasses of lemonade.

He never will forget. The memory now is metaphor.

"The green grass, the swimming pool, the lemonade," Flores says. "That's what I want for myself, and for my people."

His pathway to that parable is a statewide Latino organization gradually becoming known as LLEAD, Latino Leaders for the Enhancement of Advocacy and Development.

He organized the group nearly a decade ago, closing a career in service roles that concluded as the Latino Liaison at the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

He's the founding president, with Saginaw's Daniel Soza III as veep, and Gil Guevara and Bobby Deleon from the Mexican American Council as board members. Other start-up chapters are in Lansing, Grand Rapids and Holland, with plans to add more locales.

Symbols into action

For LLEAD, the green grass might symbolize progress in criminal justice, and the swimming pool could represent gains in reducing school dropouts. The lemonade might mark more job opportunities for the population better known as "Chicano" during the early 1970s, when Alberto became involved in

CONTINUES ON LB PG 2, LLEAD

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Continued from LB Cover, LLEAD

student organizations at Saginaw Valley State College and then at the University of Michigan.

His San Antonio parents chose to settle out of the migrant stream and move to the Saginaw Valley, starting during the early 1950s, in poverty, in Bangor Township, Bay City's main west suburb.

Flores recalls coming from one of only three Mexican American families in the school district. He graduated from John Glenn High School in 1970, with simple thoughts of becoming a Spanish teacher or whatever, anything to save himself from following his older siblings into the drudgery of the Bay City Chevy Parts Plant.

His goals became more refined in college, and he graduated U-M with a master's degree in public administration.

When he reached the state civil rights department near the close of his career, experience had taught him that justice and progress require more than simply working to settle individual grievances. Therefore, he took steps beyond the standard civil rights complaint process. He set up local outreach meetings, asking, "How do we address these larger overall issues?" And in 2014, LLEAD established its non-profit "Michigan Articles of Incorporation" status, its bylaws and its governing board, later to obtain "501 © (3) IRS status.

People may ask, why set up another statewide group? Flores and his board will respond that others are worthy and do great work, but

with specific purposes, or what he calls "having a targeted mission" The American G.I. Forum, for example, deals mostly with Latino military veterans' concerns. LULAC, the League of United Latin American Citizens, focuses on Latino scholarships. And LCLAA, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, works on labor issues and most recently to get Latinos registered to vote.

Ultimately, LLEAD's goal is to function as an overall unifying group for the various "big picture" concerns, similar to the NAACP or the ADL, Anti-Defamation League.

"We're like babies, compared to NAACP and ADL," Flores says, responding to a question. "We're at the "learning to-walk stage with the current political climate pressing us to lean on and collaborate with other Latino organizations or fill service voids that previous Latino agencies and organizations used to support and supply."

He adds, "It's a monster, all the concerns that come at us."

To stay in focus

One of the challenges in tackling major issues is that indeed they are major. Progress on such entrenched concerns as school dropouts, for example, may seem as slow as dropping a skinny garden hose to fill that swimming pool. Therefore, Flores and LLEAD encourage both leaders and followers to also take more achievable smaller steps, such as running for local school boards and town

councils, or volunteering for community cleanups and voter registration drives.

"In many cases," he says, "people do not realize the power and the potential in what they can do."

The same goes for learning Latino history. For example, lynching murders of African Americans are fairly well recognized as hatefully tragic tools to uphold slavery and to combat civil rights. Fewer folks know that in the Southwest, similar numbers of Mexican Americans were killed in nooses for the purpose of overtaking their land in such territories as Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and California. LLEAD secured a small funding grant to oversee showings of a video documentary of the true story regarding the lynchings, entitled "The Head of Joaquin Murrieta," directed by MSU Professor John Valadez.

On the bottom line, Flores pronounces LLEAD simply as "LEAD," not with the hesitation that "L-LEAD" would create.

Top activities for the Saginaw LLEAD branch, which has a Facebook page, have been to spread the word on COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, to provide gift baskets to health care workers during the pandemic, to, serve traditional meals to elders in need, and to conduct an election 2020 candidate forum.,

To join LLEAD and/or donate funds, citizens may visit www.llead.org to learn more.

Continued from LB Cover, Sanchez Jr.

when he is free from his career work duties as a GM facilities supervisor.

"Internet radio allows me to reach people from Saginaw to Detroit, from Texas to California, really all over the world," Sanchez notes. "Some people will hook up on their car radios, while others will send notes back and forth on Facebook while they are tuned in."

Jesse now resides in Lake Orion, near Pontiac. He played trumpet in school bands at South Middle and then at Arthur Hill High, where he graduated with the Class of 1989. He always has been a fan of all kinds of music, and during his younger adult years, pre social media, he made himself available as a deejay for weddings, graduation open houses and birthday parties, and the like. He would record cassette tapes to help him practice and perfect his craft.

At the same time, he often hung out at the Texas Latin Records downtown shop on

Second at Federal streets, learning music and life lessons from the owner, Louis Flores, who died last December 2nd, three days short of his 79th birthday. Flores also was an AM radio host with a Midwest reputation, promoting countless musicians and deejays during his 40-plus years in the spotlight.

A friend, Richard Castenon Jr. (since deceased in 2017) hooked him up eight years ago with a chance to apply his hobby on the internet. They gathered upstairs at Richard's house and plugged in.

"It showed one listener, and then two, and then more," Sanchez recalls. "I said to Richard, 'Wow!' And then I started to get nervous."

Any jitters were short-lived. Jesse had found a home for his friendly, positive personality. This was reflected when a new fan from Seattle paid him a fee, along with expenses, to host a major Latino event in the

Pacific Northwest.

Accordion-driven tejano songs appeal to all age groups, he says. Prior to her tragic youthful death, megastar Selena told a reporter, "Tejano music is a very relaxing style, and it reminds me of my family."

Still, Jammin' Jess aims for excitement in the mix.

"My style is more cutting edge," he explains. "Mostly I promote newer artists, not so much the mainstream, bigger names."

In the process Jesse Sanchez Jr. is making a bigger name for himself in a new space where many of today's music lovers congregate.

And if someone seeks a deejay host for an old-fashioned get-down party, his contact info is right there via tejanolippz.com, on Facebook or via jsanchezjr24@gmail.com.

SEEN ON THE SCENE: LATINO LOONS NIGHT

On June 25, after a rain delay, the Great Lakes Loons went on to win 6-3 at the 2021 Latino Loons Night. The event was sponsored by Team One Credit Union and the Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership Institute with Midwest Tejano Radio.





ELVIS MACHUL
Finance Director
Garber Buick Saginaw

(989) 497-4444 ext.1605
emachul@garberbuick.com



JULIO RODRIGUEZ
Sales Consultant
Garber Buick Saginaw

(989) 497-2222 ext.1622
j.rodriguez@garberbuick.com

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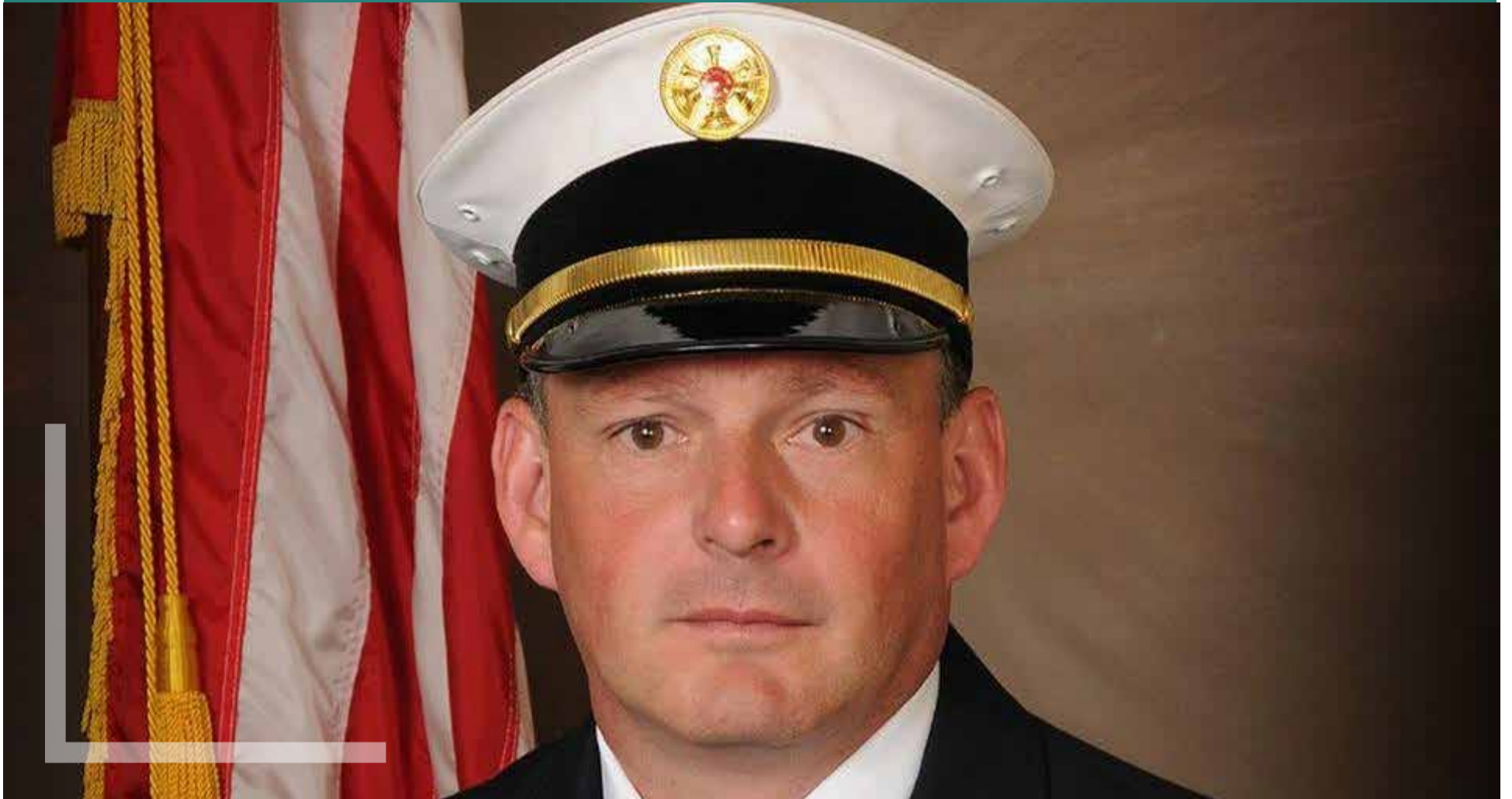
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+ COMMUNITY



THOMAS RAINES

Thomas Raines appointed as new Saginaw Fire Chief

Saginaw, MI – City Manager Tim Morales has appointed Thomas Raines Fire Chief effective Friday, July 2, 2021. Tom has served on the Saginaw Fire Department for 27 years and as Acting Fire Chief of the Saginaw Fire Department since May 2021.

Chief Raines began his employment with the City of Saginaw Fire Department in 1994 as a Fire Fighter. He was promoted Fire Chauffeur/Engineer in 1997, Fire Lieutenant in 2006, Fire Captain in 2011, Fire Battalion Chief in 2014, and Acting Fire Chief in 2021. Fire Chief Raines earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in Fire Science from Delta College and has served in the United States Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve.

After serving on the department for nearly three decades, Raines is humbled and honored to step into the role of Fire Chief. "I feel very fortunate to have this opportunity. I know how committed this

team is to our community, and I am excited to lead them into the future."

As Acting Fire Chief, he was responsible for the overall operation of the Fire Department. His responsibilities included the development and administration of the Fire Department's budget, management of the department's grant program, and oversight of all fire operations, fire apparatus, fire prevention, and fire training activities. Fire Chief Raines has served as the team leader of the Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Team, he has managed the department's self-contained breathing apparatus program, and he has assisted with the development and implementation of the Fire Department's standard operating procedures.

Throughout his Fire Department Career, Raines has received numerous commendations which include two Chief's Special Recognition awards, a Distinguished Service award, four Unit Citations

and five Meritorious Service awards. Fire Chief Raines was selected as the Saginaw Fire Department Fire Fighter of the Year in 2010.

Raines, who has lived in Saginaw for over 30 years, commented on serving in the City of Saginaw. "My wife and I have raised 4 children here in this community. We love our city and are proud to call Saginaw our home."

"The city has already greatly benefited from Tom's commitment to the fire service in Saginaw," said City Manager Tim Morales. "His enthusiasm for improvements to safety and additional resources has made him an excellent candidate for the position. We know he will excel, and we look forward to what he will continue to bring to the city."

For additional information, please contact Tim Morales, City Manager, at 989 759-1401.

+ COMMUNITY

Most Saginaw marijuana marts will open this coming fall

By MIKE THOMPSON

This bud's for you, but it's not a brew.

It's a small bud from a marijuana plant, as Saginaw by September joins self-designated communities across the state and the nation where cannabis now is legally for sale.

In reality, this bud's probably not for you, because only 12 percent of Americans describe themselves as regular or social reefer imbibers, according to a Gallup Poll, compared to more than 50 percent who consume alcohol at least on occasion.

Therefore, the pot legalization movements of recent decades have been mostly about stopping the punishment of users, moreso than to join them. And now the results are upon us, and most opponents are accepting the change. Their dissent is not as strident as before.

The buds appear similar to broccoli florets. They easily are made loose to roll into a cigarette, or to pack into a pipe. Or to sprinkle into the mixes to bake brownies or cookies.

Those are the old ways. Nowadays a customer may purchase chocolate bars, even gummies, that don't taste like dried leaves are included. Juices also are on the menu.

Or if someone still wishes to toke without all the smoke for quicker effect, there are concentrated vapors and extracts, some with THC concentrations listed, ranging from 20 percent all the way up, up, and away to the 90 percent dimension.

Costs to patrons will vary widely, but the baseline price of partying -- or simply pondering, whatever the case may be -- would seem only slightly steeper, adjusted to inflation, than the golden era from a half-century ago.

Someone who pitched in a buck or two during their carefree younger times might fork over nearly \$10 during their elder years, but then, the buying power of a 1969 dollar has increased to beyond seven dollars.

Some of the products are high-end and far more costly, of course, akin to the Courvoisier's of cannabis.

Compared to Bay City

Saginaw will begin with 17 so-called "dispensaries" if all the vendors follow through on their \$4,000 application fees and set up shop. Bay City, with two-thirds the population but triple the progressive outlook, according to artsy critics, already is home to 16.

Twelve in River City are on the West Side: 3446 State, 3307 Davenport, 700 Gratiot, 1014 Gratiot, 2030 North Mason, 2617 Bay, 1215 Court, 1321 Court, 2205 North Michigan, 2301 North Michigan, 1519 South Michigan, and 2348 South Michigan.

Five are on the East Side: 2219 Webber, 2401 East Holland, 2740 East Holland, 910 East Genesee, 1843 East Genesee.

The East Side also will be home to a pair of growing sites, at 1705 Boxwood and at 1504 Cumberland.

Unlike booze or beer buyers, many customers will begin by seeking advice, especially at the start. A long-time smoker may ask about edible and vape alternatives. A newcomer (because now it's no longer against the law) may seek start-up info. Drinkers, including some who may desire to cut back on alcohol or to dry out cold turkey, may inquire about differences in the effects.

Trained and educated staffers will be on hand to answer all questions, providing in-depth consultations and advice on product selections, says Aaron Rasty, founding owner and CEO of Sozo Health, which is adding Saginaw to its retail footprint in Cheboygan and Muskegon, and soon in Flint and Warren.

"We offer many varieties, with differences in the effect profile, duration and price," he notes.

Initial questions commonly are medical compared to recreational, or inhalable versus edible.

"Security" also is key, Rasty says, both at the retail locations and with the quality of cannabis products. A main selling point is that state-regulated legal products are subject to rigorous testing and analysis, to ensure that all products sold are free of harmful chemicals or other impurities that are



COURTESY PHOTO

prevalent in the unregulated illegal market, which still thrives despite being subject to criminal prosecution.

Locations and rules

Sozo Health will locate at 2617 Bay, the white-bricked home of former small offices at the intersection with Weiss, which is at the city limits. Michigan's vast majority of prosperous communities, including Saginaw Township, have rejected opening their boundaries to marijuana. In contrast, cities ranging from liberal Ann Arbor to conservative Grand Rapids are allowing go-aheads, figuring some folks will imbibe no matter what, with revenue at least providing some bandages for their bare-bones urban budgets.

Michigan is home to 533 cities, townships and villages. After 2018 statewide voter approval of legalization, leaders of 130 of them approved local cannabis sales based on administrative zoning and permits. Although these governing decisions are intended as final yes-or-no scenarios, some are subject to ongoing debate, which many legalizing advocates consider to be after-the-fact.

The new law allows flexible choices for local decision-makers, says Christopher Johnson, legal affairs counsel for the Michigan Municipal League, MML, the member group for which Saginaw Mayor Brenda Moore served as board president. They are free to reverse decisions to either allow or prohibit sales, either way.

Saginaw's City Council moved slowly, finally deciding in October 2020 on a set of

**CONTINUES ON PG 13,
MARIJUANA MARTS**

+ COMMUNITY

Continued from pg 12, marijuana marts

administration oversight procedures and site restrictions that include at least 1,000 feet distance from schools, 500 feet from hospitals and 100 feet from churches. Planners said they desired longer distances, especially from churches, but these would have made virtually the entire city not eligible.

The City Planning Commission bears the final duty to enforce the standards, which is what took place with protests more than 1,000 feet from Saginaw High School. As a result, there was no public dispute in front of the elected Council, despite the objections, when a dispensary on Webber at Sheridan received an official go-ahead.

One question, many answers

Monique Lamar Silvia is among three new Council members elected within weeks after the Saginaw standards were set, meaning she had no voice at the time. She inquired about the location on East Genesee near Janes, asking whether a dispensary at this specific site near downtown's edge might harm nearby businesses and neighborhoods. She quickly learned the rules against hand-picking one eligible site over another, and so she posted a Facebook survey.

Responses were a basic blowback against any sort of ban. For example:

- "They've got liquor stores on every corner. I'd feel safer with a dispensary rather than another liquor store."
- "Liquor destroys many more lives."
- "The new 7-Eleven."
- "Hell, people smoke pot all over town already."
- "It's by my home and it's not a problem to me, and I don't smoke."
- "Can I get a J-O-B?"
- "Yeah, bring it here, so that I don't have to go to Bay City."

Councilwoman Silvia responds that she appreciates public sentiment, but that her concerns continue.

"This is so close to older people, so close to houses, close to churches, so close to so many places," she says.,

Taxes and donations

Other respondents to Monique's missive answered that Saginaw finally should begin to reap the often-perceived big amounts of taxes to be gained by allowing marijuana enterprises.

However, a Lansing budget analysis shows that state government gained a mere \$31 million last year in reefer revenue, an impressive number but only 0.05 percent of the \$62 billion budget. In contrast, the lottery contributes \$1.18 billion

Bay City reaped a mere \$84,000 during its first year as a legal reefer hub. That's nothing to sneeze at, but only enough to pay, train, equip and insure one starting police officer or firefighter, for example.

Even the lottery, despite all the promises, has had scant overall impact on the hard-pressed state general budget. Marijuana proceeds will increase during the early years, but evidence proves this will not provide any sort of saving grace for local budget hardships, be they urban or rural.

Regardless of amounts, the dollar intakes will continue as a public relations point among dispensary applicants.

"Saginaw will benefit from the increased tax revenues," says Rasty, who aims to expand Sozo Health into about a dozen Michigan communities. "Beyond the tax revenues generated, we partner with local organizations to support many vital community activities, assisting with food, educational and housing security for the most vulnerable. We are very serious about being good neighbors."

For a sample of what Saginaw residents will encounter, visit sozo-life.com.

(The Michigan Banner's first report last winter is viewed at <https://michiganbanner.org/2021/03/marijuana-for-sale-in-saginaw-sooner-or-later/>)

Cannibas 'grow' sites won't look like farms

BY MIKE THOMPSON

Saginaw will serve as home to a pair of marijuana "grow" operations, along with 17 "dispensaries" that will sell cannabis products to customers, some aiming to start as soon as September.

Does that mean we will see pot farms, with reefer plants growing in rows, like sugar beets or strawberries?

No.

We won't even see greenhouses, but simply small manufacturing buildings, the same as those that have been on our local landscapes for years.

Approved grow sites in the city are Revive Cannabis, 1705 Boxwood, and Summer Sunshine Properties, 1504 Cumberland. Both companies are based in the Metro Detroit northwest suburbs.

Revive Cannabis proprietor Robert Jondy says a building makeover will create four or five rooms, each equipped to produce up to 300 plants with indoor lighting and climate controls. The aim is to maintain a non-intrusive facility in a low-traffic area, while still maintaining an attractive exterior for the few who may cruise through.

Virtually the only motorist who would have cause to enter the vicinity would be someone taking a shortcut along Roberts Street after doing business at Wanigas Credit Union on Bagley.

During a recent afternoon at the location, he recalls only one car passing by.

"That's the beauty of it," Jondy says, explaining his view that Revive Cannabis will benefit the community while avoiding any disruptions in the quality of life for residential neighborhoods.

He aims to start by creating about 20 jobs, with an ultimate goal of more than 100, all while supporting local worthy causes.

This is his family's first major venture into the new cannabis legal economy.

We attempted to reach Summer Sunshine proprietors, without success. They are located in a moderately heavy traffic area on Cumberland that is south of East Holland, in a building formerly known as G.D.P. Meat Processors, a block across the street from the U.S. Postal Service branch.

"Grow" operations do not sell directly to the public, but serve as wholesale suppliers to dispensaries. The only outdoor growing may take place in highly secluded areas, such as in northern lower Michigan or in the rural Upper Peninsula.

+ COMMUNITY



ORGANIZER SHANTARIA SMITH AND HER DAUGHTER NIYA WITH JUNETEENTH CENTER OWNER TARSHA WORKS



U.S. SENATE JUNETEENTH PROCLAMATION SECURED BY LULA BRIGGS GALLOWAY, JUNE 10, 1997

Celebrating Juneteenth locally

BY RUMI WILSON

In northeast Saginaw's First Ward, Fifth Avenue these days is still a one-way. Through the ebb and flow of time, Fifth Ave. has seen its ups and downs. On this day, Saturday, June 19, 2021, it is a street of low traffic, many empty lots and structures, reinforced by the threat of rain and despite it all, an air of undampened optimism and hope. Vendors, organizers, celebrants have assembled in the parking lot of the Juneteenth Center, on an afternoon suddenly made a Federal Holiday, just passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden. In the small parking lot of the Saginaw Juneteenth Creative Cultural Center and Museum, created by Lula Briggs Galloway, eighteen years ago, the gathering grows.

Ms. Galloway had chosen this spot in 2003 to open the Juneteenth Center for its central location in the old Black Community. Right here stood the "big house" where Steveland Morris had spent time as a young child, blinded, and as the sole commemoration in the city of Saginaw of Stevie Won-

der's connection to his birthplace, a stone monument and plaque were placed there in 2005.

Event organizer Shantaria Smith remembers how her grandmother used to bring her to this site for Juneteenth observances. She wanted to restore some of the memories she experienced and help pass them on to another generation who do not comprehend the meaning of the day (June 19, 1865) marking when Texas slaves were finally told the Civil War had ended two months earlier and the Emancipation Proclamation had officially freed them January 1st, 1863. How profoundly the legacy of slavery clouds American skies, yet Juneteenth also represents a day of jubilation and triumph. This particular Saturday, Shantaria and Reggie Smith's daughters, Niya and Reginae, are rays of sunshine on a gloomy day, not much older than Shantaria was back with her grandma.

At the voter registration table, volunteers representing Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and the League of Women Voters ask spectators if their voter registration is updated. Lisa Coney, social worker and Transition Coordinator for the

Saginaw Intermediate School District, circulates through pockets of people, inquiring politely if they are registered and voted recently. Vanessa Guerra, the new Saginaw County Clerk, is present with the volunteers, emphasizing the contested importance of voting and elections. Theresa Doyle, longtime Saginaw area educator, feels encouraged by the historic moment as well as the young organizers and youthful energy involved in organizing the day's activities.

Tarsha Works, author, consultant and business owner, acquired the long vacant Juneteenth Center building and property. She plans to revive the site for workforce development and to train, coach and inspire business entrepreneurs through Tarsha Works Consulting and her nonprofit Ahsrat Co. The Saginaw High School and Michigan State University alum seeks to promote opportunities for at risk youth and budding business creators in

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JUNETEENTH**

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the community. Ms. Works hopes to help mentor a future generation of business minded creators in Saginaw.

A few steps away, near the white stone Stevie Wonder historical marker, the youngest entrepreneur, Aiyana Bobo, age 11, is celebrating both Juneteenth and the one-year anniversary of her own business, Bobo Kids Kosmetics. She hawks her top sellers, Croc shoe charms and sneaker house shoes. Saginaw Mayor, the Honorable Brenda Moore, congenially stops by to encourage and congratulate Aiyana.

Finally, by midafternoon, the sun breaks through, and the day brightens. An original part of the creation of the Juneteenth Creative Cultural Center, longtime local resident, community activist and professional photographer Maximus Kareem Jabbar reflects on the legacy of what Lula Briggs Galloway and others, like himself and Eldora Plowden Davis, had desired in developing the Juneteenth Center at this location on the corner of Fifth and Farwell. "It was all about education and history back then, and it still is," says Mr. Jabbar, welcoming the recent recognition of the federal holiday honoring the historical significance to the nation, and remembering decades ago when Saginaw hosted the first Juneteenth celebration of its kind in Michigan. "Lula's vision to raise Black consciousness of what our ancestors went through to get to where we are now makes me question, are we truly consciously Black and united in our current situation?"

Lula Briggs Galloway, who died in 2008, led a kind of crusade for decades to gain national commemoration for the significance of Juneteenth, writing a book "Juneteenth, Ring the Bell of Freedom", going to Washington, D.C. to help pass a Congressional joint resolution, even securing support from white Republican political conservatives like Mississippi Senator Trent Lott. "She did not know quit," laughs Mr. Jabbar. He holds precious keepsakes, photos, proclamations from the long struggle, at his home, just two blocks from the Saginaw Juneteenth center.

Saginaw native Stevie Wonder persevered, with the help of others, to enact Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday. Ironically, the memorial to Stevie Wonder at Fifth and Farwell rests most days relatively unrecognized. Today it sits at the center of attention for the assembled. Lula Briggs Galloway, of Saginaw, helped lead a fight for Juneteenth remembrance. Amazingly, now Juneteenth has become a federal holiday, bursting upon the entire nation, only a few days before the sun finally broke through the clouds on June 19, 2021, to shine upon the gathered faithful at the intersection where Mrs. Galloway originally envisioned her dream.



YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AIYANA BOBO WITH SAGINAW MAYOR BRENDA MOORE



MAXIMUS KAREEM JABBAR AND MICHIGAN STATE FIRE MARSHALL INSPECTOR RALPH MARTIN



SANDRA HOUGHTON, SAGINAW COUNTY CLERK VANESSA GUERRA, AND THERESA DOYLE STAFFING THE VOTER REGISTRATION TABLE

+ COMMUNITY



Everything starts with an idea. And most really good things start with an audacious idea. What audacity to think that someone could start up a media source - not just a "newspaper," but a forum for the sharing of thoughts and concerns, prayers and pride - that was so badly needed by a community of friends and fellow citizens who might otherwise feel sadly isolated from one another. Now, nearly two decades later, it's hard to imagine our community without the Banner. Congratulations to my friend, Jerome, and his colleagues for imagining, creating and sustaining the vital and much needed institution the Banner has become.

Eric Gilbertson

Third and longest-serving President of
Saginaw Valley State University



515 N. Washington Ave., 3rd Floor | Saginaw, MI 48607
P 989-752-7161 | info@saginawchamber.org

www.saginawchamber.org

On behalf of the YMCA of Saginaw and Emmaus House of Saginaw, thank you to the hundreds of spectators who came out on June 17th for the first Annual Concert for a Cause!

Save the date for next year:
June 16, 2022!

Special mention to the following sponsors and supporters:

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MICHIGAN BANNER
SERMONETTE SERIES

Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God

(2 Thessalonians 1:4)



By PASTOR RODRICK A. SMITH
ZION MISSIONARY BAPTIST
CHURCH

The people of God should always talk the church up rather than putting it down. Even though the people of the world put the church down, even they will occasionally speak well of it. What people of the world occasionally do, we should do consistently. We are not to boast about ourselves, but it's good to boast about others. Remember, Proverbs 27:2 says, "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips." It is a blessing from God to have church members that we can boast about. And we ought to thank God for them, because it's really not them but the grace of God that's with them. Salvation is by grace, and so are all the things that accompany salvation. When the saints are growing in their faith we should talk them up and give God thanks. When their love for one another is increasing we should talk them up and give thanks to God. When they are being steadfast in the faith we should talk them up and give thanks to God. When they are walking by faith and not by sight, especially in the midst of persecutions and afflictions, we should talk them up and give thanks to God. As we talk them up and give thanks to God for them, we pray that God would send more believers who are like them. These are the ones who get ministry done.



Congrats to The Michigan Banner for its outstanding coverage on local, state and federal news. Today's unbiased news sources are difficult to find and even more difficult to trust but I've found the consistency from the Michigan Banner refreshing. Congrats and please continue providing great news for the masses. You're needed!

Jimmy E. Greene
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SCF grant supports Neighborhood House preservation attempt

By MIKE THOMPSON

An effort to rescue Saginaw's Neighborhood House community center has received a boost with a \$25,000 award from the Saginaw Community Foundation, entitled as a Community Improvement Initiative Grant.

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan changed its name to "Samaritas" in 2017 in an effort to demonstrate that services are provided to all people, not restricted to those of the Lutheran faith, and this led to a Neighborhood House name change.

Samaritas administrators closed the center late in 2020, citing shortages of funds for overall statewide operations. A group of nine former childhood South Siders under the name "The Nabe" combined in mid-January to purchase the facility from Samaritas (Lutheran Social Services) for \$50,000, according to City Hall assessor records.

The nine granted a startup interview to The Michigan Banner, available in this year's Feb. 1 edition in online archives. They are Alvin Pratt, Michael Pratt, Tricia Pratt, Kevin Hayes, Greg Hayes, Jimmie Bentley, James Carthan, Roy Jones and Charlie Parks.

They have dedicated their efforts to a pair of Neighborhood House leaders from their childhoods, Ray Culpepper and Edd Roberson, both who passed away in 2011, a decade ago.

A highly rare opportunity exists for the Neighborhood House supporters to employ the Community Foundation gift to as a source of seed money for the rescue effort. The Saginaw School District, City Hall and Saginaw County government are in line for a combined \$154 million that is la-



FACEBOOK.COM

beled as "covid relief aid" but may be used for many sorts of general anti-poverty purposes, and the school board in May passed a resolution for top priority for youth activities and facilities.

Kevin Hayes summarized his youthful Neighborhood House years: "They were my big brothers, my mentors. If I acted up, they would get on me and let me know. It went down the line from there. Over the course of several years, as my generation grew up, we kind of got away from that because the generation after us had video games, and they kind of lost the culture of the community center being a gathering place.

"I take a look back at when we had the soup kitchen, and every day I went in there when I wasn't in school. I never really knew until I was at least old enough to understand how the soup kitchen shaped and molded me to understand the giving process. They were all about giving to the community and as a child, I was looking at what they did for us. Then when I grew up, I became a giver myself, one who just loves to give.

"That happened to a lot of people, where we've been through things together and it shaped and molded us. That's one of the biggest things that the Neighborhood House provided for all of us, because it was a house of goodness. Just for what it gave us, all the things it taught us about learning, teaching, camaraderie, mentorship, it goes on and on."

For information on The Nabe group's efforts, contact Alvin Pratt at ap1jams@yahoo.com or Michael Pratt at badeepratt@yahoo.com.

The Ombudswoman: Elaine Gregory-McKenzie

By RUMI WILSON

When Elaine Gregory-McKenzie says “We rise and fall together,” she could be talking about the Michigan Banner, the Great Lakes Bay region, the state, the country or the world. And she is.

Ms. Gregory-McKenzie thinks the Michigan Banner should be at the forefront of fostering the future for the Saginaw area. But not just Saginaw or the Valley or even Michigan. She sees only one reason, based on local resources, businesses, skills, educational institutions, why the Saginaw area might not build upon its current successes to be world competitive economically in more arenas. “Collaboration is the new competition,” she emphasizes. As the Ombudswoman for the Michigan Banner, Ms. Gregory-McKenzie keeps the organizational ship balanced, and helps shape both the product and mission.

An experienced legal research assistant (more than 30 years), and certified litigation paralegal, she’s worked with tier one firms in Detroit and New York, defending “high value” cases involving major corporations, pharmaceutical companies and hospitals. She’s defended municipalities and insurance companies. Elaine has managed and mediated cases in the Early Resolution Program for one of the major car companies headquartered in Michigan. Elected in 2014 to serve as a Charter Commissioner in Highland Park, Michigan, as chair in the charter revision process, Elaine helped shepherd a successful public approval of the new city charter.

Through it all, over the last fifteen years Elaine Gregory-McKenzie finds her role as Ombudswoman and journalist with the Michigan Banner to be gratifying, important and meaningful.

“When we say ‘Leading in diversity’ at the Michigan Banner it is not just a slogan. It means being an extension of the community, reflecting the best the community has to offer and being a problem solver.” Ms. Gregory-McKenzie points to the many business partner relationships the Michigan Banner has grown over the years. She wants to help the publication build on those relationships because she sees so much potential in the Michigan Banner and the Saginaw community.

In her role as Ombudsperson for the Michigan Banner, Elaine Gregory-McKenzie employs many skills she honed working for decades in the legal community as a paralegal with decades of diverse experience and



ELAINE GREGORY-MCKENZIE

expertise she garnered. Ms. Gregory-McKenzie worked for Legal Services, Wall Street companies, and most recently in the Detroit offices of Clark Hill, PLC, one of the top legal firms in the country. In addition, she has partnered to form two corporations, EduGreen and Greater Green Corporation. These experiences give Ms. Gregory-McKenzie multiple perspectives she brings to the table.

“We’d like to see jobs and people returning to the city of Saginaw,” Ms. Gregory-McKenzie states. “Let’s build on assets we do have in Saginaw and the Great Lakes Bay region.” Elaine feels Saginaw can build on models such as Detroit Future City, and recent trends where educated, pioneering spirited, younger folk are moving into urban areas and betting their lives and futures on making those communities flourish. Ms. Gregory-McKenzie would like to help Michigan Banner be an essential part of that collective mission. She thinks the Michigan Banner is positioned to play a big part.

As for the Michigan Banner’s future, Ms. Gregory-McKenzie is forthright in expressing what she knows are big ideas. “I would like to see us have more of an intergenerational thrust.” As an ordained chaplain who lives in Highland Park, a city surrounded by the City of Detroit, she knows through her own direct volunteer relationships and through countless conversations with friends, colleagues and her own grown children, that the younger generations are smart, they are aware and they are unique. Elaine feels “it is the engagement of the younger community that is so crucial” going forward. Since it is essential to include young, dynamic leaders at the front ranks, Ms. Gregory-McKenzie

thinks it is a particular responsibility of the Michigan Banner to inspire, seek out, and recruit some of young leaders, creators, and entrepreneurs.

A mother of two successful young adults, Elaine Gregory-McKenzie is dedicated to wider equity, pointing out that “what happens in the inner city of Saginaw affects the whole region”. “The Michigan Banner chose to become a ‘leader in diversity’ because as I repeat, we rise and fall together. We all live in increasingly diverse communities. The Michigan Banner is committed to making diversity into a strength.”

Sighting the large agricultural sector in the Saginaw Valley, Ms. Gregory-McKenzie looks forward to facilitating how the Michigan Banner can help shape the potential for urban farming, farm to table exchanges, as well as the greening of the economy—the big green new deal investments coming down the pike as examples. While the Michigan Banner acts as “an extension of the community, bringing good news, cutting edge information about concrete economic development, educational engines, social and cultural outlets,” Ms. Gregory-McKenzie points to her further optimism “that we, the Michigan Banner and our relationship partners, can play a pivotal role in helping overcome problems as well.”

Ms. Gregory-McKenzie notes the changes happening with the Michigan Banner as it evolves in the second decade of the 21st century. “As we are trying to create a broader appeal with our format, content and focus, we want to create a broader audience and provide a forum for the future.” That means both more readership and more partners for the Michigan Banner.

She points out that the problems Saginaw experienced, industrial disinvestment by General Motors, population loss, and tax revenue base erosion are not just germane to Saginaw. “How can we support and spotlight local innovative businesses and create greater collaboration and linkages?”

Elaine Gregory-McKenzie hopes and believes her optimism and faith can manifest through her Michigan Banner Ombudsperson role. “Our greatest resource is what God gives us,” the ordained minister says. The question that challenges Elaine is “how do we create the multiplication of the best part of ourselves.” But she laughs because the answer is not hers alone.

“You can give and not love but you cannot love and not give.”

+ COMMUNITY



DANTE TOUSSAINT

At W-3-Soul, Dante's first day wasn't so smooth

By MIKE THOMPSON

Dante Toussaint's 50th anniversary of his first showcase on mid-Michigan radio airways is marked on this upcoming Fourth of July, and it was a personal "independence day" that he never will forget.

At that moment, he did not have time to think long-range of moving forward to ultimately join Saginaw's media legends.

He truly was on his own on July 4, 1971, independent to the max.

The scenario:

-- An urgent phone call arrives from new pal Don Wiggins to hurry to the WW-WS-FM 107 studio. The purpose is to sit in the deejay chair and to cover for Wiggins

for "only a few minutes."

-- Dante speeds downtown, kitty-corner from the Bancroft. Don Juan splits, but never returns as promised.

So how's it goin', Dante? On the air for the first time, with no warning and no prep?

"All I could do was to pick through the 45s (records), to play whatever I could find," he says. "This is a holiday. People are out there cooking, partying, drinking, with their radios tuned in.

"I must have played Michael Jackson 10 times. Well, maybe not 10 times, but a lot."

After a pair of Don Juan/Don Gone hours, 3-Soul's startup owner, Earl Clark, storms into the studio: "Where is Don? Don didn't have authority to do this." And

worse, with an irate stare toward Dante: "Who in the (bleep) are YOU? What are you doing at MY station?"

Then Clark calms himself, apparently rethinking what he had heard on his car radio on his way to the confrontation. He pauses and eyeballs the bearded young record-spinner: "You've got potential. Keep doing what you're doing."

To strike a chord

A main thing that 24-year-old Dante Toussaint was doing was to keep his poise, no matter what the happenstance that surrounded him or the misgivings he may have felt. Listeners that Independence Day heard only the calming, non-intrusive, deep-bass intonations that became his trademark.

Within a week, he was back on the air, mixing his new part-time job with his standard Steering Gear hours. He could bring his own growing collection of vinyl to the studio, with some of his selected longer-running jazz standards, ideal for 3-Soul's late shifts.

He might share several tunes in a row, saying nothing in between. Or simply, "That was Freddie Hubbard, preceded by Charles Earland," not always going with the biggest names such as Miles or Trane. Or, he would ID the listener who made the latest request.

"I was never a talker," he explains. "That's not me. The dull guy, some might say."

His growing legions of fans clearly didn't go for the "dull" description.

Dante's voice is not totally deep, simply low register but still friendly and conversational. Male listeners respected his tone, but among a good number of ladies, there was a stronger attachment.

"It's like I fell in love before I ever even knew what he looked like," says his wife, Sherry. They first encountered 12 years ago, when she was the successful "seventh caller" and was answered in-studio by Dante himself, for free concert tickets. She had been a loyal listener for years.

But it's not like his James Earl or Billy Dee mode always would have 'em swooning.

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"Some of the women would recognize my voice and they would respond, 'So YOU'RE the ones who plays that jazz. Eeeeeee-yuck,'" Dante notes, with a chuckle.

He explains: "People will tell you they don't like jazz, but if you don't say anything, they will say they really like what you're playing. I choose simply to say that I love and enjoy all kinds of music."

Childhood influences

Music entered Richard Ruffin's youth mainly through his older brother by eight years, Roosevelt Ruffin (1938-94), who enlisted with a Platters-style teen ensemble, The Five Arrows. The teens achieved a level of acclaim, but Roosevelt moved on to attain a Michigan State University Ph.D, followed by a career as a Saginaw educator, historian and civic leader, overall a local Renaissance Man.

As a kid, Dante-to-be would scan the radio dial during the 1950s and '60s era of 50,000-kilowatt stations from nationwide towns that would transmit most clearly late at night. Black music was difficult to discover, except for such crossover crooners as Nat King Cole. Black program hosts were more rare, but for a few years locally during the late 1950s Henry Porterfield had his own show, "Sounds for the Lounge."

Roosevelt was his little brother's top role model and Dante always felt a degree of similar social awareness, but not with the same pinpoint focus. He graduated Saginaw High School in 1964 and imagined various careers -- maybe teaching; maybe social work; maybe something in medicine. He started two stints at Delta College but he didn't follow through. The same transpired at downtown's Saginaw Business Institute. At times his main passion was baseball, as a speedy good-field/no-hit centerfielder in City Federation games at the old Vet's Park along Holland Avenue.

These repeated dropouts left him open to the Vietnam War draft, which indeed took place, except Dante says, by fortunate fate, an equally anti-war examining doctor reported results (high blood, etc.) that kept him out of the military.

He even envisioned packing his knapsack and heading for the West Coast to en-

list with Huey Newton and the Black Panthers in Oakland, until his progressive but protective mother, Oneeda Ruffin, warned him that she "couldn't help" if he somehow landed in jail.

He served a spell in the anti-poverty Model Cities program as a youth counselor, which in turn caused him to focus more upon his own future. His third enrollment at Delta College was in the Channel 19/WUCM media training program. He went so far as to record his own radio host demo tape.

And then along came Don Wiggins. Hello, radio. Within two years, Dante Toussaint advanced from part-time to full-time on 3-Soul and permanently away from his despised ultimate fallback, the auto plant.

The best years

Like many others across the nation, Dante carries nostalgia for the pre-corporate takeover years that gathered force at the turn of the millennium.

"Our best years at the station were during the middle 1970s all the way through 1999, very solid, with Kermit Crocker as station manager. And this went far beyond the music. We were deeply a part of the community," he says,

WWWS would offer hours of air time to promote worthy causes, such as OIC of Metro Saginaw. Election days would become 16-hour radiothons with local leaders taking turns at the mic, based in the gymnasium at Zion Baptist Church. Dante even teamed with Kermit Crockett to broadcast Saginaw High basketball games during the Charlie Coles and early Marshall Thomas eras.

But change gradually came into play. New technology steered many folks away from radio and into what became social media. When WTLZ bought out 3-Soul's ownership in 1999, Dante faced a midlife dilemma.

"They asked me to stay on, because by then I had fully gained experience in ad sales and in production," he recalls. "But with pretty much everyone else losing their jobs to layoffs, I couldn't go along with that, and so I was out of there too."

He tried looking elsewhere, especially in Florida where his grownup daughters

reside and at Detroit's WDZZ, but similar scenarios were unfolding. Many stations had resorted to repeat playing of recorded hourly streams of songs. If a segment sounded oddly familiar, that was because it was.

Dante finally had to make a pocketbook compromise. He returned from 2004 to his final step-down in 2013. His music content and occasional socio/political musings now were monitored, "but I learned how to sneak things in from time to time," he says with a chuckle.

Looking ahead

Dante's 75th birthday is July 15, only 11 days beyond his radio host startup 50-year anniversary.

His retirement years include encounters with his endless music collection. He follows the news, both national events and local happenings. He remains a fan of the Detroit Tigers, a team for which he proclaims he could have manned centerfield if only they had sent scouts to Vet's Park. He's an occasional Facebooker, speaking his pieces directly and compactly, as always.

Don Wiggins also has wandered into his senior citizen years, but he still takes credit for "discovering" Dante Toussaint. The story is not mutual. Dante responds that he actually was the person who first encouraged Wiggins to get into radio, and it was a two-way episode.

Even so, was Don attempting a clever favor when he tricked Dante into the Fourth of July on-air stint 50 years ago?

"No," Dante answers. "I think this was just his way to escape out of that studio on the holiday. Don wanted to head for the beach."

Is this some sort of backhand joke, or what?

Dante continues with a hint of sarcasm: "When I first heard Don Wiggins on the air, with that loud voice rambling on and on, I knew if he could do it, then easily I could do it."

And so that's the 50th anniversary story.

By the way, that Michael Jackson record on 7/4/71 was the Jackson 5's "I Want You Back."

Saginaw Promise Golf Outing



THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2021*
SAGINAW COUNTRY CLUB
(4465 Gratiot Rd, Saginaw MI 48638)



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES - REGISTRATION

Proceeds to Benefit Saginaw Promise Programming & Scholarships

EVENT SPONSOR **\$3,000**

- Foursome with carts
- Sponsor name displayed at event and recognized at dinner
- Opportunity to welcome & address golfers prior to "shot gun start"
- Opportunity to host a golf activity on course or display table near registration
- Name listed on Saginaw Promise website
- Hole Sponsorship

DINNER SPONSOR **\$1,500**

- Foursome with carts
- Sponsor name displayed & recognized at dinner
- Opportunity to welcome and address golfers at dinner
- Opportunity to host a display table at dinner
- Name listed on Saginaw Promise Website

LUNCH AT TURN SPONSOR **\$800**

- Foursome with carts
- Sponsor name displayed at "Lunch at the Turn" and recognized at dinner
- Opportunity to host golf activity or display table
- Name listed on Saginaw Promise website

CART SPONSOR **\$600**

- Sponsor name on golf carts and listed on the Saginaw Promise website

DRIVING RANGE SPONSOR **\$350**

- Name displayed at event and announced at dinner

HOLE SPONSORS **\$200**

- Sponsor name and or/company logo on hole and listed on the Saginaw Promise website
- Recognized at dinner

PRIZE DONATIONS WELCOME

All prize donations will be recognized at the event and listed on the Saginaw Promise website.

Sponsors: Please email your company logo to DSanchez@SaginawPromise.org.
EPS or hi-res JPG preferred.

REGISTRATION 8:45 - 9:45 AM • SHOTGUN START 10:00 AM

Four Person Scramble - Includes: 18 Holes with Cart, Driving Range, Hot Dog & Chips at the Turn, BBQ Chicken Dinner and Awards Presentation

GOLF PER PERSON - \$150

GOLF FOURSOME TEAM - \$600

Contact Name: _____ Contact Phone: _____
 Business: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Email: _____

Total Amount for Golfing	\$ _____	Team Name	_____
Total Amount for Sponsorship	\$ _____	Player #1	_____
I would like to make a Donation	\$ _____	Player #2	_____
I would like to Donate a Prize	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Player #3	_____
Total Amount ENCLOSED	\$ _____	Player #4	_____

Make Check Payable:
Saginaw Community Foundation, 1 Tuscola St. Suite 100, Saginaw, MI 48607 and indicate Saginaw Promise on the Memo Line

EASY ONLINE REGISTRATION / PAYMENTS (Credit Card Only)
https://SaginawFoundation.ThankYou4caring.org/promise_golf

*Saginaw Community Foundation is the fiscal agent for Saginaw Promise

For Questions, please contact Deborah Sanchez at (989) 755-0545 or email DSanchez@SaginawPromise.org

Deadlines ▶ **Sponsors:** Respond by August 9, 2021
Golfers: Sign up before August 13, 2021

+ COMMUNITY

Young Champions Association

Saginaw, MI – The Young Champions Association is a mentoring and community service youth group organization which plays an important role in the Saginaw community, helping to strengthen literacy efforts, social skills, character development and community service efforts of our local youth.

The organization was founded 26 years ago by William H. and Diane Johnson Donald, and continues to move forward under Mrs. Donald’s direction. The program is open to both males and females grades kindergarten through ninth.

Diane Donald, who is employed with North Saginaw Charter Academy and her daughter, Ms. Chantra Donald Williams, an Educational Consultant, wanted to do something special for some students this summer. They applied for and were granted the Dollar General Summer Program Literacy Grant. For the first time The Young Champions Association in collaboration with Dollar General Summer Program Literacy Grant formed "Summer Champions Read Reading Camp".

The program is hosted in Mrs. Donalds classroom sized basement, and is geared to help improve the reading attitudes and abilities of ten K-3rd grade students who are falling below grade level. They meet each Tuesday and Thursday for 6 weeks, 5:30-7:30 pm, and participate in one on one tutoring with peer tutors and trained instructors, physical activities and snacks. Her staff includes her three grandsons Ethan, Evan and Ellis Williams who serve as peer tutors and Mrs. Carlene Gradley, retired elementary teacher of 35 years.

We salute you, Mrs. Donald and staff. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to our youth through the Young Champions Association and the Summer Champions Read Reading Camp program.

For further information, to volunteer or to assist with financial support and donations, please contact: The Young Champions Association, 1845 Joy Street, Saginaw, Michigan 48601



COURTESY PHOTO

+ COMMUNITY

IN MY HUMBLE OPINION

Cannabis is the cure



By **KEN H. SIMMONS, II**
MANAGING DIRECTOR, KENZO
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The world is suffering from so many ailments, including a pandemic, economic crisis, climate change, food security, and despite the impact of COVID-19, populations are forecast to rise, especially in Africa. The growing population is not an ailment, but it is a source of pressure on the planet. Just like we have had to adjust to abnormal conditions as the 'new normal', we need to find unorthodox ways to create new solutions to address these issues.

I believe that we have had a solution all along, which many may think is controversial due to stigma, but in my humble opinion, Cannabis is the cure.

Hemp and marijuana are both the same plant species *Cannabis sativa* L. Hemp is legally defined as a *Cannabis* plant that contains 0.3% or less THC, while marijuana contains more than 0.3% THC. THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) is a cannabinoid molecule that is the main psychoactive ingredient in *Cannabis*; the substance that causes people who use marijuana to feel high. Due to their genetic similarity, hemp and marijuana have been confused with each other for more than 80 years. Other than their *Cannabis* name, hemp and marijuana are drastically different in many other ways, and its thousands of diverse uses became a threat to industries reliant on fossil fuels and forests.

Cannabis sativa L. is an important herbaceous plant species originating from Central Asia, which has been used in traditional medicines and as a source of textile fiber for more than 10 millennia. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) published an article many years ago entitled "The People's History" which states, "Archaeologists found a remnant of hemp cloth in ancient Mesopotamia (currently Iran and Iraq) which dates back to 8,000 BC. Hemp is believed to be the oldest example of human industry." It has been one of the most significant crops for mankind up until the last century.

In America the main crisis for hemp arose during the 1930's from propaganda created by companies that were vested in the new petroleum based synthetic textile industry. These large and powerful newspaper and lumber barons saw hemp as a massive threat to their businesses. Around that time, DuPont patented its new 'plastic fiber' made from petroleum based synthetic material, and was one of the lobbyists influencing the U.S. government to pass an occupational excise tax on hemp dealers (Marijuana Tax Act of 1937). By the end of 1937, hemp production was banned altogether.

There was a brief relaxation of the law during World War II when the U.S. government issued special permits to farmers to supply the war effort. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encouraged farmers to grow hemp during this period by releasing a film, "Hemp for Victory" and calling those that participated, "patriotic farmers". After the war, the ban on growing hemp remained in place until the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill). The USDA is leading the way to regulate the hemp industry, but further legislative advancements are needed at the FDA and DEA, and state levels.

Now that the origins, history, and modern-day challenges of *Cannabis* have been established, let's examine the diverse uses and benefits of hemp. Historically, hemp had over 25,000 diverse uses ranging from paints, printing inks, varnishes, building materials, canvas, paper, bank notes, food, medicine, government documents, and textiles. As a matter of fact, the original Levi's jeans were made from hemp cloth, and the Declaration of Independence was written on hemp paper. Uses have increased with modern technical developments to include composite boards, motor vehicle brake and clutch pads, plastics, fuels, bio-diesel, and eco-solid fuel. According to MIT, "anything that can be made from hydrocarbon (fossil fuel) can be made from a carbohydrate", and the fast-growing hemp plant (120 days seed to harvest) is an ideal source.

In 2019, Forbes Magazine admitted that industrial hemp is the answer to petrochem-

ical dependency in its article of the same name. The article starts by citing the tragic incidence of chemical fires for weeks at petrochemical facilities in Houston, Texas. It goes on to say those types of accidents reinforce the urgency of finding more human-friendly and environment-friendly solutions. The point of the article is made when it states, "Needless to say, a shift to these natural, biodegradable and recyclable hemp-based products could have significant benefits for the environment and human health. From reducing the nearly 8 million metric tons of plastic that infiltrate our oceans every year to allaying consumer concerns over petrochemicals in beauty and hygiene products to the role that hemp can play in removing toxins from soil, the benefits of a more hemp-driven industrial base are hard to ignore – to say nothing of the \$20,000 to \$50,000 per acre that hemp farmers can make, according to Bodhi Urban, CEO of leading seed supplier HGH Seed."

International environmental conservation organization, Earth Strike mentions on its Facebook page some additional benefits to the environment by planting and using hemp. Firstly, we can save trees as many of its applications can be replaced by hemp (i.e., paper, composites, fuel, etc.). Forests and biodiversity can be saved, which is a huge issue when it comes to deforestation. Secondly, an average acre of hemp will yield 5 – 10 tons of dried stalk, and each ton of hemp grown absorbs 1.63 tons of CO₂. Apparently, it takes 40 years for a tree to absorb 1 ton of CO₂. A bonus mentioned on the post is that hempcrete, used for construction, will continue to absorb carbon dioxide after installation, actually making the hempcrete more durable as it ages.

Regarding population growth, the UN reported in 2017 that the world population is projected to reach 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100. Africa's population is forecast to nearly double by 2050 from 1.3 billion to 2.5 billion, and its economic future will have a massive impact on the world's ability to combat climate change. So, in many ways, the future of the African continent is the future of humanity. The need for innovation is what led advocates and entrepreneurs on the continent to promote the use

CONTINUES ON PG 25, CANNABIS

+ COMMUNITY

Continued from pg 24, cannabis

of industrial hemp to help create economic opportunities without sacrificing sustainability. Global population growth, coupled with rising per capita disposable income, is expected to result in increased demand for high-quality cosmetics and personal care products as well as protein supplements and other health food products, which is likely to boost hemp-based product demand.

Cannabis also shows promise in fighting against COVID-19, largely due to its anti-inflammatory properties. One of the primary biological events that occurs in COVID-19 patients with severe acute respiratory distress is something called a cytokine storm, which is when the body experiences an extreme increase in proinflammatory cytokines (a category of proteins). According to Open Access Government, a digital publication with a wide range of prestigious contributors, including government ministers, European commissioners, members of European Parliament, industry associations, and charities, multiple studies support Cannabis and its cytokine storm fighting properties. The studies suggest that CBD, an active cannabinoid compound in Cannabis,

may work as part of COVID-19 treatment by reducing the cytokine storm and protecting lung tissue from inflammation and potential fibrosis. CBD and THC have also shown efficacy in treating pain relief and anxiety.

Hemp fiber and grain are the future. After cannabinoid production, hemp grain has become the second largest segment of the industry, which is largely fuelled by increasing demand for plant-based proteins. According to New Frontier Data (NFD), a leading Cannabis market research firm, "the hemp grain segment is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.5% over the next five years, to reach beyond \$144 million USD by 2025."

Hemp fibers have shown promising market potential for use in advanced carbon materials, according to research conducted by Dr. David Mitlin and his team at the University of Texas at Austin, as reported by NFD in February of this year. The advanced carbon market includes a huge range of industrial applications, like energy storage, carbon capture technologies, HVAC filters, water purification, and more. Given the ongoing environmental crisis and decreasing access

to clean water in the developing world, water purification has taken on a heightened importance. Hemp is an ideal precursor for these products, which require large amounts of precursor material, due to the ease and scale it can be produced. Competing precursor materials like coal and wood come with substantial environmental concerns.

The United Nations urges nations to recover better in its "COVID-19 Response" communication published in April 2020. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, "We need to turn the recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future". Patricia Espinosa, UN Climate Chief, said, "With this restart, a window of hope and opportunity opens... an opportunity for nations to green their recovery packages and shape the 21st century economy in ways that are clean, green, healthy, safe and more resilient".

The world's ailments and pressures can be alleviated now with the clever and controlled application of one of the most important herbaceous plant species known to humankind for more than 10 millennia – Cannabis is the cure!

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COURTESY PHOTO

MPSC launches public database on utility shutoffs, overdue bills

Lansing, MI – The Michigan Public Service Commission launched a new public resource for information and data related to customer protections – an outgrowth of the Commission’s efforts to strengthen customer aid and assistance programs as the COVID-19 pandemic bore down on the state.

The MPSC’s new COVID-19 Utility Customer Data site features a database of regularly updated information on the number of regulated utility customers whose service has been shut off for non-payment and customers who’ve had their service restored, as well as the number of customers enrolled in assistance plans and information on the number of customers who are 30, 60, 90 or more days past due on their utility bills.

MPSC Staff have created a video explaining the database, walking through how to use the portal and what data is available.

“Having this critical data available is meant to help inform decisions about policies and where to direct resources as Michigan works on recovering from a year of immense uncertainty and change,” MPSC Chair Dan Scripps said. “MPSC staff have worked diligently with stakeholders to make sure we could gather accurate, updated information, and we’re now making that data available in an easily searchable

database.”

The data is compiled monthly from the investor-owned utilities regulated by the MPSC and does not include customer data for rural electric cooperatives or municipally owned utilities. Utilities reporting customer data to the MPSC are Alpena Power, Consumers Energy, DTE Energy, Indiana Michigan Power, Michigan Gas Utilities, Northern States Power (Xcel), SEMCO Energy Gas, Upper Michigan Energy Resources, and Upper Peninsula Power.

In April 2020, amid swirling uncertainties about the nascent pandemic’s economic impact on the state’s economy and Michiganders’ household finances, the MPSC directed Michigan energy providers to take steps to ensure that customers maintained energy service. That included efforts to voluntarily pause shutoffs, offer payment flexibility, waive late fees, restore service to households that had been shut off and to boost customer energy assistance, education, and outreach as an influx of funding arrived from the federal pandemic stimulus.

In Case No. U-20757, the Commission also directed investor-owned utilities to file a monthly report detailing data on disconnected gas or electric service to occupied residences as well as tracking customer arrearages, or back-due bills.

Until now, the data had only been publicly accessible in filings in the Commission’s electronic dockets system. It is now available in a more open format: a continuously updated database. While the site is geared toward stakeholders such as social service providers, local and state government agencies, consumer advocates, utilities and others to help inform policy decisions, it is also available to any member of the public wishing to explore the data. The MPSC developed the database in collaboration with stakeholder groups and regulated utilities.

The MPSC has collected data on shutoffs for years, but with the arrival of COVID-19 upending the economy and daily life, the agency sought more detailed information than it had before, to help ensure customer safety during the pandemic and to help inform its decisions on expanding financial assistance programs meant to help households struggling to pay utility bills.

Throughout last year, the Commission enhanced its focus on providing additional energy assistance options and expanded eligibility for customers in need. The MPSC and MDHHS leveraged \$18 million of the federal CARES Act funding, in coordination with several utilities, to develop a special program called LIHEAP Energy Direct that streamlined energy assistance for nearly 41,000 low-income households behind on their utility bills. The Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) also awarded more than \$55 million in grants that provided energy assistance payments and self-sufficiency services to more than 55,600 low-income Michigan households.

Utility customers having difficulty paying energy bills should contact their utility to ask about flexible payment options and assistance. You may also find more information about State Emergency Relief and MEAP through MI Bridges at www.michigan.gov/mibridges. If you need help applying, call 211 and ask for a MEAP grantee near you for help. You also can find a local MEAP grantee at the MPSC’s MEAP information page.



What does it take to make vision happen?

I heard a leadership instructor tell us in a class that the difference between dream and vision is that dreams remain in the mind, but vision becomes reality. If a vision does not become reality, it is only a dream. Many great visions never leave the dream stage because of the hard work that it takes to make a vision become reality.

More than 19 years ago, the Michigan Banner was a dream of Jerome Buckley. If you had sat with him then, he would have been able to describe in great detail all of the things that he hoped the Michigan Banner would accomplish. It would impact the community. It would be a forum for rich ideas to be presented. It would be a wealth of information to keep the community apprised of political, economic, and social issues that affect the daily lives of the citizens of Saginaw.

19 years ago, something happened that made that vision emerge from the room of dreams into the world of reality. It was a step, that when we look back at it, took great courage because it was something that had not been done in the way that Jerome Buckley envisioned. It took great sacrifice of time and treasure. It was an expensive venture for his family. This moment would change the entire trajectory of his life, but he took it.

His dream went well beyond that moment, into the realm of vision. The path of vision is paved with challenges, personal investment, the support of others, and the acceptance of an audience that is not even real yet. The only way to understand the complete cost of the vision is by looking back over that path, only to discover that there was no way to see all of the things on that path while it was yet a dream.

What does it take to make vision happen? It takes courage. It takes discovery. It takes sacrifice. It takes one having the capacity for extremes; joy and pain, sunshine and rain. For the Michigan Banner, it also takes Jerome Buckley. Congratulations on this wonderful achievement. The truth is that real vision is never complete, it just keeps growing into the dream that created it.

Pastor Hurley J. Coleman, Jr., World Outreach Campus Church

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Former Saginaw school chief passes away

By MIKE THOMPSON

Gerald Dawkins, Saginaw's bow-tied school superintendent from the turn of the millennium, died at age 72 in his hometown of Grand Rapids on June 24.

He served from 2001 to 2008 as the successor to longtime superintendent and educator Foster Gibbs. His seven-year tenure was longer than average for an urban school chief, but after his departure for Shreveport, La., Saginaw schools endured a decade of turnover and troubles that the current board is striving to reverse.

Dawkins retired in 2013 from Shreveport's Caddo Parish, which was four times Saginaw's size, and returned home to Grand Rapids, where he had worked the first 30 years of his career, from teaching into the upper ranks of administration.

Under Dawkins, Saginaw schools passed a building and grounds millage in 2004, mostly for construction of the new Thompson Middle and Loomis Elementary near the district's borders. However,



DR. GERALD DAWKINS

major enrollment declines led to widespread closings of more school, mostly elementary buildings on the city's East Side.

While praised for his general good nature and innovations in student-centered

programming, Dawkins was criticized for moving not to Saginaw, but to a Bay Valley apartment while his wife, Gwen, continued her education career in Grand Rapids. He also raised eyebrows during the post-millage time of his tenure when he frequently interviewed for positions in cities that included Detroit and Pittsburgh. He eventually accepted the Shreveport post.

"My devotion to Saginaw has been 100 percent," Dawkins said in response to critics, adding that exploration of upward career options is common in all professions.

He was a Marine Corps veteran who grew up in Spartanburg, S.C., and attained a bachelor's degree from Knoxville College prior to his master's studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, which led to his career start in nearby Grand Rapids.

In semi-retirement, Dawkins worked as a K-12 education consultant, based on his reputation as a reformer in Saginaw and in Shreveport.



How extraordinary it is to be able to yet receive news we can use.

Thank you "Jerome Buckley" Michigan Banner and staff for continuing to bring news that can actually be used.

In these difficult times a news outlet that brings news that is uplifting, gratifying and educating.

Know that the Michigan Banner is appreciated!

Congratulations on 19 years of continuous, positive and informative news.

You are saluted. Keep up the extraordinary work for many years to come.

Barbara A. Campbell

+ COMMUNITY



COURTESY PHOTO

Ojibway to reopen, but not the circle drive

By **MIKE THOMPSON**

Ojibway Island is slated to reopen in late July. A parking lot will be installed within the gates, but the circular drive will be closed to motorists, and security cameras will monitor activities.

City Council members unanimously approved the \$11,000 plan on June 21 without public notice, other than placing the meeting agenda online three days earlier. The first chance for residents to air their views to the governing body will come at the next meeting, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 12

The April shutdown was ordered, with Council support, after cases of motorists driving on the grass "into large gatherings" took place during the first warm days of spring. Leaders expressed fears of injuries or deaths and displeasure, and costly lawsuits and damage repairs that could re-

sult. They also expressed covid transmission concerns, along with displeasure over widespread littering

Opponents have answered that the problems are no different than in past years and that moderate law enforcement could be deployed, adding that a handful of troublemakers should not be permitted to spoil park enjoyment for everyone.

Parking barriers will be temporarily removed for special events and large gatherings, such as family reunions, with pre-permit approvals.

"We feel this is the most practical and beneficial option that works year-round for the city," says Phil Karwat, director of public works. "It will create additional spaces at the front of the park for ice fishermen in the winter, and allow easy access for families and individuals to enjoy a run, bike ride or picnic during the summer. Much of the work can be completed with

our own city crews."

City Manager Tim Morales adds, "We understand that visiting Ojibway is a summertime tradition for many, and our goal is to properly complete these upgrades as quickly as possible."

Mayor Brenda Moore concludes: "It's time to move forward. We know that many, many citizens want to see the gates reopened, but we are not looking for a quick fix. We are looking out for the safety of our citizens. This plan will create a safe environment and allow everyone to enjoy this phenomenal park for many years to come."

Continuous updates regarding the opening of Saginaw's parks will be available on the City of Saginaw website saginaw-mi.com and on the City's Facebook page [facebook.com/cityofsaginawgovernment](https://www.facebook.com/cityofsaginawgovernment).

+ COMMUNITY

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ GET TO KNOW THE MICHIGAN BANNER STAFF

The Reporter: Michael Wallace Thompson

By RUMI WILSON

When he began his journalistic career, still shy of attaining his eighteenth birthday, Michael Thompson could not know a fateful phone call would turn into a lifetime of reporting. The call came from the Saginaw News sports department looking for someone from the Delta College Collegiate newspaper to work night shifts part-time in 1973. A recent St. Stephen's High School graduate, Mike accepted the position transcribing high school sports reports during the week, and by 1978 worked full time reporting sports and eventually local news assignments. Thirty-four years later, Mr. Thompson took a buyout from the Saginaw News in 2007, as newspapers everywhere were downsizing. Soon thereafter, he began working with the Michigan Banner as a freelance reporter.

Mr. Thompson also began learning about doing community organizing during the early 1970's. The heyday of Saginaw United Neighborhoods Association (SUNA) had inspired his interest. Mike began walking door-to-door in Northeast Saginaw, talking to residents about what issues impacted them in their neighborhood. He had grown up near Arthur Hill High School, but he found he could relate to the residents he got to know. Mr. Thompson even met his wife, Denise Culpepper, on 3rd Street, while canvassing the area citizens. They are still married, and Michael Thompson today is involved with the Houghton Jones Neighborhood association on Saginaw's east side.

Mike says community organizing is really somewhat like news reporting. A good organizer knows effective community organizing facilitation is about the actual residents and not the organizer, much as good reporting is meant to be objective, not about the writer's own opinions and ego. Still active, at both reporting and community involvement, decades later, Mr. Thompson can recall many great stories from his years reporting and being interested in Saginaw. He is a true treasure trove of detailed accounts about important Saginaw area news stories, as well as colorful anecdotes gleaned over the course of four, going on five decades in the news business.

"At the Michigan Banner we try to pick the most important stories and go with them," Mr. Thompson explained. "A recent example is how important the Covid 19 funds are. These monies represent potentially an-



MICHAEL WALLACE THOMPSON

other shot at the war on poverty. I think we (The Michigan Banner) did a better job than any other area news source explaining their significance."

The most recent millage vote for the Saginaw Public Schools was identified as another example of the major role the Michigan Banner plays in the community, according to Mr. Thompson. The nearly \$100 million dollar millage package passed overwhelmingly and Mike is proud of the detailed story he wrote, which explained the bond issue fully.

"One thing I am able to do in the Michigan Banner, and I want to do in the current era where people distrust media so much is to try and let people say what they want in as large a format as possible," Mike explained.

Two stories stood out as Mr. Thompson talked about his impact writing for the Michigan Banner. His coverage of the lead crisis locally, when Pam Pugh at the Saginaw County Health Department and a group of local ministers like Reverends Larry Camel, Marvin Smith, and Hurley Coleman joined together to significantly reduce child lead poisoning, stood out. For one Labor Day edition of the newspaper, Mike highlighted the impact of three giants of Black labor leadership in Saginaw: Harry Browne, Norman Osbourne and Henry Nickleberry.

Recent and ongoing challenges relating to criminal justice and law enforcement issues may be controversial topics but Mr. Thomp-

son feels the Michigan Banner is well-positioned to tackle them. In particular, being able to explore nuances such as police recruiting difficulties, police-community relationships, funding challenges, as well as capturing input from local people who can provide their perspectives, analysis and solutions.

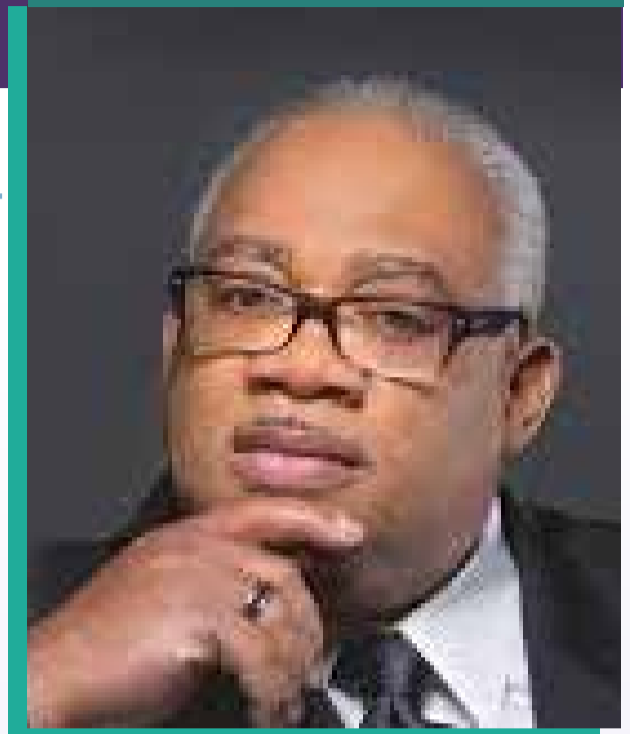
Mike wonders, as he currently composes stories on his computer instead of the electric typewriter he first used, how he ever did it in the old days. He thanks his high school typing teacher who saved him from even more work correcting copy had he been less of an accurate typist.

On the nineteenth anniversary of the Michigan Banner, Mike keeps pounding out the articles for the next deadline. The kid who transcribed sports for the Saginaw News late nights will soon celebrate 50 years in the news business. The old typewriters are antiques. Mike gained some grey hairs and girth as he freelances his way toward more narratives, but he is not outdated by time. Mike Thompson still reaches readers through the Michigan Banner with new, fresh stories about their local communities. He realizes local stories just get lost in a nationally focused news cycle. Working with words, working with people, somehow it worked out for him and for the audiences of people he can keep informed and entertained by his writing.

+ COMMUNITY

I'M JUST THINKING.....

By PASTOR HURLEY J. COLEMAN, JR., WORLD OUTREACH CAMPUS CHURCH



Time will tell

Have you ever really thought about what it takes to create a clock? A watch, a miniature clock, needs the same things in principle that are in a clock. All of the springs, gears, and minute connections that cause it to keep regular time are included in both, but on different scales. The size of the time piece doesn't change its mission or purpose. All clocks, watches, and timepieces have a singular purpose- to tell time.

The thing that got me in this conversation is that regardless of the size or purpose of the time piece, what is critical is that it tells the correct time. The bigger question is, what will time tell. In this season of the pandemic, we have seen time move very slowly and very quickly. We are already at the midpoint of the second decade of the 21st century. It is the last week in June of 2021 that I am sharing these thoughts.

We have seen the complete shutdown of most of our institutions because of a world-wide pandemic. We watched the President of the United States go through a second impeachment trial, and be found guilty by Congress, and exonerated by the Senate. We watched in unbelief as the capitol of the State was attacked by armed vigilantes. We saw the Congress of the United

States experience a true insurrection, and people died. We watched as the doors of the church, the gathering places of the faithful, were closed while the call for a greater faith went out over the digital airways.

Businesses were closed because of the risk of infection to both operators and customers. We watched children forced into digital learning situations, many without the necessary internet and equipment. We saw hospitals overwhelmed in the course of their business of saving and preserving life. We saw medical workers become the most exposed heroes in our daily lives, many of them dying to the very virus that they were fighting to save the lives of others from.

With the public execution of George Floyd, the inequities of law enforcement were brought front and center. The virus exposed the extreme health inequities in our society. The political environment exposed the critical inequities of the jurisprudence of government, the law, the economy, and education. The holes in the fabric of society revealed the torn materials that

had been loosely stitched to make our country, our communities, our world.

At this point it is easy to see that things have happened, but it is not easy to see what will happen. We do not know the results of the things we have learned about ourselves. We do not yet know the impact of the truths that have been uncovered by these things. We are not even sure what to think about our politics, regardless of which side of the political fence we are on. Time will tell..... I'm just thinking.



+ COMMUNITY

Remembering Andrew "Dr. Chris Banks" Parker

By **VICKI HILL**

RADIO GOSPEL ANNOUNCER AT
WTLZ-FM 107.1 FM

Andrew Parker, a Black radio pioneer known to listeners for decades as "Dr. Chris Banks," was a notable gospel radio announcer and a co-founder, along with Don Wiggins, of WWWS 107.1 FM, known then as W3 Soul. His voice and radio persona were well known among gospel music lovers throughout Saginaw, Flint and beyond.

"(He was) the voice of gospel music in the Tri-Cities an icon, a legend in the Saginaw area."

"Chris was the gospel announcer that I listened to as a teenager, I would have never in my wildest dreams have imagined that the man I admired so much that one day I would be walking in his shoes as the Gospel Announcer for WTLZ. Chris and I became friends he was my mentor he would give me advice on music and give me history that I didn't know. Chris saw my potential and he decided to introduce



DR. MICHAEL GAVIN

me to some of the movers and shakers of Gospel Music. He told me that I needed to get involved with the Gospel Music Workshop of America and also become a part of the Announcer Guild. The Gospel Music Workshop of America is designed for Gospel Artist to showcase their talents, as well as Record Labels to push the Artist that they represent. The Announcer Guild is

designed for Radio Personalities, Record Labels, Print Media, and TV Media, this is where we get our training to perfect our craft. In 2010, I was nominated for a Stellar Award so Chris and I traveled to Nashville to the Grand O'le Opry where the convention was being held, once I had arrived I received a call from one of the officials of the Convention to see if I had made it in. I had no idea that when I attended the Announcers part of the convention that I would be bringing home the Stellar Award, I was elated and so was Chris. Chris was right by my side and he told me that he was so proud of me. Chris had a spirit of excellence, if it wasn't right he wanted no parts of it. Chris was a giant in my eyes when it came to Gospel Music you see he had been doing the job since 1969. Chris has touched many lives along the way in his career and every life that he touched has become better. I will miss my friend Chris Banks but I realize that Its not Good Bye its simply See You Later.

The COVID-19 vaccine will save lives.

Kim was Gwendolyn's best friend. Kim caught COVID and passed away the day before her birthday. So Gwendolyn got the vaccine to honor her friend and to prevent others from losing their loved ones. She strongly recommends that everyone, especially in the city of Detroit, gets their shot. Let's join together to help save lives and get beyond this pandemic.

The vaccines have been tested for safety and are trusted by doctors.

Find your vaccine at
Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine.
Text your zip code to **438829** or
call **888-535-6136** and press 1.



WHY DID I GET VACCINATED?

**"BECAUSE MY BEST FRIEND COULDN'T.
SHE CAUGHT COVID AND PASSED AWAY."**

GWENDOLYN C. OF DETROIT, MICHIGAN

+ COMMUNITY

Water shut offs



By **JIMMY E GREENE**
CEO & PRESIDENT, ABC MICHIGAN

I've got a lot of friends that sit on Saginaw City Council and I understand the pressures of doing so. I respect each and every one of them as well. I truly appreciate those folks that step up to serve. But, I know that they do understand that with leadership comes criticisms and I hope this comes across as constructive. I confess that I am confused by their support of water shut offs for Saginaw citizens.

The optics of receiving some free \$52 million dollars in federal funding that specifically addresses the "lost revenue" from the pandemic and then turning off water for struggling families is a terrible one. As people are now starting to come out from this pandemic, city council using those monies to offset those water bills would seem to be prudent. Even Detroit is extending its water shutoff protections until 2022.

And redirecting citizens to non profit agencies might seem to be a good idea but I can tell you from experience, they're not sitting in the best positions either. Sometimes cities get to demonstrate it's character and this might be a great opportunity for the City of Saginaw to do just that. Especially using the monies from a pandemic that was created in large part by the same pandemic that afflicted those people. Park some of the money in a special fund for water and use it discriminatively.

Let's get these people back to work and free of some of the water burden bill they have show them a city that cares. Setting up zero tolerance payment plans after clearing that water bill is fair. Spending that "free" money isn't a bad way to do that and remember what you spend it on and what you don't will be closely watched. \$52 million free dollars is a lot of money to get alot of things done with some creative and caring thought.

*****And note: I'm talking about people that fell behind post pandemic. Chronic non payers pre pandemic, I got nothing for you. *****

Now before anyone gets carried away with the "people should pay their own bills" "fiscal responsibility" retorts I'm going to say 2 things 1) If your community doesn't need the money because they have a surplus ask them to give it back and 2) if you received any stimulus money as a result of the pandemic that you didn't give back...ssshhh. These are tough times we've all been through and if we can make the transition back to "normal" easier for those needy of us you can't put a dollar value on that.

For David Hall:

By **ERIC R. GILBERTSON**

If you've ever been to Arlington National Cemetery you've doubtless had the feeling that you were standing on hallowed ground. There rest the earthly remains of presidents and privates, the famous and the unknown, heroes all.

It's fitting, and touching, that there rest the earthly remains of our friend, David Hall – among those honored others who also served the American people and American ideals with courage and devotion.

The formal obituary printed on a page usually details the basic facts of a life – dates and places, offices and accomplishments, honors and affiliations. But the essence of a human life cannot be limited to words on a page. The essence of a life and the true qualities of a person can only be found in the hearts and memories of those left behind – those who knew and loved him best and those whose own lives he touched.

We left behind are surely among those whose lives have been made better by the crossing of our paths with those of our friend, David.

Several years ago, at SVSU, we created a special program for outstanding students who were destined for leadership in their careers and lives: the Roberts Fellowship Program. I wanted someone to teach the practical aspects of leadership to these students – someone who exemplified the most important qualities of a leader: intelligence and integrity, decency and dignity, courage and compassion. The first name that came to mind was, of He taught students in that Program for several years. They remember him today with gratitude and affection, for he brought them lessons from his own life's experience: that overcoming adversity and unfairness required patience and persistence; that success must only be accepted with humility; that organizing people was important but understanding them even more critical; that toughness was not incompatible with kindness; and that respect was not an entitlement but something to be earned.

At his retirement he was made the first "honorary Roberts Fellow."

His life and career were characterized by those qualities and lessons, but not those just. His life was also inspired and enriched by a deep love of country, of family, of faith.

A few years ago, at the memorial service for our mutual friend, Henry Marsh, Dave stood straight and tall in the pulpit and recited from memory a poem by William Earnest Henley – a poem which had special meaning for him: Invictus. I can still hear the echoes of Dave's voice in these lines:

"I thank whatever gods there be for my unconquerable soul . . . "

"In the fell clutch of circumstance I have not winced nor cried aloud. Under the bludgeonings of chance my head is bloodied but unbowed."

"I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul"

His soul is unconquered still, and it still inspires us and others. Thanks be to God.

Amen.



+ COMMUNITY

One Week, One Street

By MIKE THOMPSON

One Week, One Street volunteers tackled another project near Saginaw High School during its eighth annual cleanup and fixup campaign during the final week of June.

More than 100 volunteers from mid-Michigan churches and community groups blended their efforts on not one street but two, Beechwood and Elmwood, between Webber and the Gallagher/Hess one-ways. Their projects on abandoned properties included a large dump site on Elmwood, and they also assisted homeowners with minor home repairs, gardens and other tasks.

Past target sites have been along Roberts, Fulton, Harold, Ruckle and Elmwood.

Project organizers are Tamara Klida, outreach missionary from Auburn United Methodist Church in the small town between Bay City and Midland, and Pastor Roy Baldwin from New Beginnings Deliverance Ministries, located on East Genesee Avenue.

To learn more, see One Week, One Street on Facebook.



FACEBOOK.COM



Dear Michigan Banner,

Congratulations to the Michigan Banner, Rae Lynn and Jerome Buckley for 19 years of Service .

On behalf of a grateful Community , Through your dedicated service, you have ensured the continuation of unparalleled commitment to improving the lives of others through your Magazine.

Over the past 19 years both of your many hours of service strengthened the bonds of cooperation, and trust that bring people together, while helping our community to address some of the greatest challenges of our time.

Our Community's greatest strength's remain the compassion of our citizens, each generation you help write a new chapter of greatness and our community is proud of your commitment.

As we reflect on your many acts of kindness over the past 19 years, we draw inspiration from you, who have answered the call to help build this community.

Thank you for your enduring commitment to serving and keeping our community informed with honesty and integrity.

We trust that you will continue to work for the betterment of others and will have a even stronger future for all people you service.

We Congratulate you in all your future endeavors and stand with you and the Michigan Banner in continuing to bring the News and Community events to us.

**Abundant Blessings,
We are honored to call you our Brother and Sister in Christ
Sammy and Lisa Coleman**

+ HEALTH



COURTESY PHOTO

Tick season is here - Michiganders urged to prevent tick bites

Lansing, MI – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is encouraging Michigan residents to take steps to avoid tick bites when enjoying the outdoors this summer. Tick-borne diseases, particularly Lyme disease and anaplasmosis, are increasing across the state.

Lyme disease, caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, is the most common tick-borne disease in Michigan. Anaplasmosis, caused by the bacteria *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, is the second most common tick-borne disease in Michigan, and cases are increasing - particularly in the state's Upper Peninsula.

Both Lyme disease and anaplasmosis are transmitted by *Ixodes scapularis*, commonly known as the blacklegged or deer tick. The blacklegged tick is well-established in parts of Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas and has been found in new regions over the past few years. Information about Lyme disease risk by county is available at Michigan.gov/lyme.

"Preventing tick bites is the best way to prevent tick-borne diseases, including Lyme disease and anaplasmosis," said Dr. Mary Grace Stobierski, MDHHS Emerging & Zoonotic Infectious Diseases manager.

"If you find a tick attached to your body, promptly remove it. Monitor your health and if you experience fever, rash, muscle or joint aches or other symptoms, consult with your medical provider."

Signs and symptoms of tick-borne disease typically begin one to two weeks after a tick bite or being in wooded or brushy areas where ticks commonly live. Early symptoms can be non-specific and include fever or chills, rash, headache, fatigue and muscle aches. Early treatment with appropriate antibiotics can decrease the risk of serious complications.

Protect yourself and your family against tick-borne diseases by following these tips:

Avoid tick-infested areas:

- As ticks live in grassy, brushy, and wooded areas, walk in the center of trails to avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush and leaf litter at trail edges.
- Protect your pets - dogs and cats can come into contact with ticks outdoors and bring them into the home. Talk with your veterinarian about the best tick prevention products for your pet.

Use insect repellent:

- Apply repellent containing DEET or Picaridin on exposed skin.
- Treat clothes (especially pants, socks and shoes) with permethrin, which kills ticks on contact or buy clothes that are pre-treated. Do not use permethrin directly on skin.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when applying repellents.

Perform daily tick checks:

- Always check for ticks on yourself and your animals after being outdoors, even in your own yard.
- Inspect all body surfaces carefully and remove attached ticks with tweezers.
- To remove a tick, grasp the tick firmly and as closely to the skin as possible. With a steady motion, pull the tick's body away from the skin. Cleanse the area with an antiseptic.

Bathe or shower:

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Wash clothing in hot water and dry on high heat to help kill ticks in clothing. Not all ticks spread the same germs.

MDHHS can help to identify ticks you may encounter outdoors. Residents can email photos of ticks to MDHHS-Bugs@michigan.gov for identification. Michiganders can also submit ticks to MDHHS for identification free of charge. For more information on how to submit your tick and/or photos, visit Michigan.gov/lyme.

The MDHHS Emerging & Zoonotic Infectious Diseases Section has recently released a report "Michigan Trends in Tickborne Disease, 2016-2020," which includes up-to-date information on the types of ticks that are common in Michigan and the diseases they can carry.

Visit CDC.gov/ticks for additional information.

McLaren Bay Region and McLaren Bay Special Care lift visitor restrictions as COVID-19 infection rates and hospitalization decline

Bay City, MI – Due to declining positivity rate in the community and low COVID-19 hospitalizations, McLaren Bay Region and McLaren Bay Special Care will return to pre-COVID visitation policy effective immediately. The policy allows for two visitors per patient at a time in most areas.

"The safety of our patients, staff, providers, and community is always a priority at McLaren," stated Clarence Sevilian, President & CEO of McLaren Bay Region. "Since the beginning of the pandemic, McLaren has taken steps to protect

patients, staff, and physicians including screening for symptoms, increasing our already rigorous cleaning and disinfecting protocols, moving furniture to encourage social distancing, providing education on proper hand hygiene, following established guidelines from the CDC and working with the local health department to minimize the spread of disease. These protocols are still in place."

Visitors must be screened and are required to wear masks (covering mouth and nose) at all times, regardless of COVID-19 vaccine status. This includes in patient

rooms and throughout the facility. Visitors unable to mask or non-compliant with masking will not be permitted to enter the facility.

COVID positive or COVID suspect patients will not be able to have visitors except for end of life or exigent circumstances.

Visiting hours and other specific details may vary by department. For more information, please visit our website.

McLaren will continue to monitor and update the policy as necessary.

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ANYWHERE
ELSE."**

Rosalind Williams
Registered Nurse



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+ EDUCATION

Critical Issues



By **CRAIG DOUGLAS**
RETIRED EDUCATOR

As we approach the halfway mark of 2021, I thought it might be good to examine three of the top issues facing schools, educators and parents. I read a “blog” called, thephatstartup.com/blog that identified eleven “critical issues,” and I would like to extract three for your consideration. The truth be told, there are an endless list of topics and challenges facing education!

1) Health and wellness.

Where do we begin? Let’s start with the pandemic because much of our health and wellness concerns are focused there.

The vaccination and booster shots to prevent COVID from spreading, how will they shape education? As they are refined and developed, will these be the new “shots” to be required for students to attend school? Right now, we do not hear much about it, but the issue is right around the corner. Especially as new variants of the virus are discovered, vaccinations will be important for children.

What about their mental health? It is of huge concern! The stress on everyone has been immeasurable, and it will be a topic of study for years to come. To make my point, may I reference a study of holocaust-trauma conducted five years ago. It is a controversial study that concludes that the trauma from the holocaust may have been passed down through two generations of decedents, genetically. I still am amazed at the possibility that trauma might be genetically handed down. The premise, there-

fore, might be applied to families impacted by the pandemic.

My point is simply that right now, trauma and mental health of all in education, families included, must be considered as a critical issue. We must watch out for each other, support each other, as the pandemic has had an impact on everyone. I believe we must make mental health as important as physical health, especially with the deep and potentially lasting impacts of trauma associated with the pandemic.

2) Literacy level of students.

It blows my mind that in today’s world, learning how to read remains a critical issue facing education. With all of our knowledge, one would think this should not be the case.

But it is.

A quick search on the web cites articles, one after another, about lagging literacy rates worldwide, including here in the United States. One article claims we are 14th in the world, hard to measure for sure, but their point is made that it remains an issue for us in America.

What to do? Perhaps start by owning it. Recognize the challenge exists. Address it on a case-by-case basis by valuing books. Discussing topics found in them. Develop a love for reading and a curiosity for learning. Keep the momentum found in early grades going into upper elementary and beyond. Have an expectation for post-secondary education, whether it is college, military service, vocational training, or whatever.

How many of us have said, “my parents told me I was going to college...there was no debate.” This sort of expectation can now be generalized to say, after high school, there is no doubt I need to keep learning and growing. Embedded in such a belief is the need to be proficient in literacy. Reading, writing, speaking, all aspects of literacy are vital.

3) Politics.

Education in Michigan, in the United States, and in the world is impacted by political conversations, deliberations, and policy development. We have endured

countless programs and funding challenges in recent years.

Now is no different.

How government, at all levels, responds to the pandemic and all of its related issues will tell the story for educators.

Consider the shortage of certified teachers...the shortage did not happen overnight and is fueled by many factors, including an eroding of respect for teachers over time and the increasing demands placed upon them by society. A clear lesson the pandemic has driven home is how important teachers are! Generally, we have heard comments about home schooling, “I cannot believe how hard it is to teach.”

Bingo!

With this a common belief, how do we respond to teacher shortages? Do we make it more lucrative as a profession, and if so, how do we do this?

It can start locally, with the school boards in our communities by making sure teachers know they are valued and supported. Let them be reassured that they work in safe schools with strong leadership. When policies are developed, let their voices heard. Make sure teachers’ needs are identified and addressed.

This spirit can be transcended to state government, a level of government that impacts even more policy and of course, funding.

To wrap up, let’s agree that the first half of 2021 has been rugged, with unprecedented challenges and resulting issues. We can start by identifying these and other issues, and we can show our care and concern by addressing them.

Together. Collectively. With hope and promise for a better second half of the calendar year ahead and beyond.

References:

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+ EDUCATION

SVSU Board votes to increase tuition 2.9%

Saginaw, MI – The Saginaw Valley State University Board of Control voted to increase tuition by 2.9% for in-state undergraduate students during the Board's regular meeting Monday, June 21.

Last year, SVSU froze tuition rates. For the upcoming academic year, a Michigan undergraduate student taking 30 credits will pay \$11,130, an increase of \$317 over the prior two years.

"Our commitment to remaining affordable is undeniable," said Donald Bachand, SVSU president. "Not only do we continue to have the lowest tuition among the state's public universities, we also launched our Cardinal Commitment this year for families earning less than \$50,000. We secured the largest single gift in university history – \$6 million – all of which will go to scholarships, thanks to the generosity of the Thompson Family Foundation.

"We must also recognize that many of our current students and our incoming students have struggled to learn during the pandemic. We have a responsibility to provide them with the academic, social and emotional support they need to complete their degrees and build careers that will be essential to Michigan's economic

recovery."

Among the new services to be introduced for the upcoming academic year is a new Campus Mental Health & Wellness Center previously announced in February. (<https://www.svsu.edu/newsroom/news/2021/february/newon-campus-mentalhealthwellnesscenter/>)

The Board also approved promotions for 20 faculty members. The 12 individuals promoted to the rank of professor are:

- James Bowers, criminal justice
- Jennifer Chaytor, chemistry
- Colleen D'Arcy, teacher education
- Julie Foss, modern foreign languages
- Sherrin Frances, English
- Andrea Frederick, nursing
- Christopher Giroux, English
- Bonnie Harmer, nursing
- Rose Lange, nursing
- Jason Pagano, chemistry
- Rebecca Schlaff, health sciences
- Charles Weaver, health sciences

Eight individuals were promoted to the rank of associate professor. They are:

- neesha Gogineni, mechanical engineering
- John Herman, mechanical engineering
- Michael Heron, social work
- Kellie Konsor, economics
- Matthew Mitchell, social work
- Dennis Savard, criminal justice
- Aricka Schweitzer, occupational therapy
- Joseph Weaver, psychology

In other action, the Board:

- Passed a resolution to adopt changes to the SVSU Student Association charter.
- Approved a revised alcohol and other drugs policy for the 2021-22 academic year.
- Approved a revised death of a student policy.
- Modified the term of a previously authorized charter school, New Dawn Academy, located in Warren.
- Confirmed board members for previously authorized charter schools.
- Adopted revised Board bylaws.



To Jerome Buckley and the Michigan Banner:

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "To reach a port we must set sail – Sail, not tie at anchor. Sail, not drift."

It seems an apt description because you help our Great Lakes Region "sail" towards a "port" of a better way of life. That is leadership at its finest; thank you for your endless commitment and hard work.

Congratulations on reaching a terrific milestone. Happy 19th Anniversary to the Michigan Banner!

Sincerely, Craig Douglas

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Sabrina Beeman-Jackson

Saginaw ISD Head Start/Early Head Start Program Director

About Saginaw ISD HE/EHS

Established in 1965, Head Start promotes school readiness for children, ages three to five, in low-income families by offering educational, nutritional, health, social and other services.

Head Start programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families.

Early Head Start, launched in 1995, provides support to low-income infants, toddlers,

pregnant women and their families.

EHS programs enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Together Head Start and Early Head Start have served tens of millions of children and their families.

At Saginaw ISD Head Start our attentive staff is available Monday through Friday to answer all your questions and make every effort to ensure you are 100 percent satisfied.

Saginaw ISD Head Start
Claytor Administrative Building
3200 Perkins Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
Phone 989.752.2193
Fax 989.921.7146

Office Hours
Monday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Tuesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Wednesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Thursday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Friday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Sunday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

For additional information concerning Saginaw ISD Head Start visit: www.saginawheadstart.org

Source: www.saginawheadstart.org

“Head Start graduates are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to need special education, repeat a grade, or commit crimes in adolescence.”

Joe Baca, former Dem. Calif. Congrmn., Dist. 43.

“Our mission is to provide high quality services, developing school readiness and family empowerment for prenatal to age five children and families by working in partnership with parents and the community.”
-Saginaw ISD HE/EHS

+ BUSINESS



FACEBOOK.COM

Dow partners with THE MOST to provide solutions for the multicultural textured hair care market

Midland, MI – announced it will collaborate with THE MOST, a start-up company specializing in textured hair care solutions, to better understand and address the needs of the underserved multicultural textured hair care market. Through this collaboration, each company will bring a unique contribution to the table. THE MOST offers an unparalleled understanding of what constitutes a valuable and authentic hair experience for this consumer group. Dow provides access to the material science expertise required to transform ideas into business opportunities in the very competitive personal care market. In addition, with one of the broadest portfolios in the industry Dow is in a unique position to help develop ingredients to fill the void in this underserved market.

Dow approached this collaboration with The MOST by working closely with representatives of Dow's Employee Resource Groups (ERGS), such as Global African Affinity Network (GAAN), which

representatives continue to play crucial roles as key strategic contributors solidifying the collaboration.

"Our collaboration with THE MOST is a win-win collaboration that will address one of the world's oldest beauty needs for people with deep curly to highly coily hair," said Isabel Almiro do Vale, Global Marketing and Strategy Director for Dow Personal Care. "Strongly aligned with our values and commitment to collaborate to address the most challenging issues in society, we will not only partner to support THE MOST's endeavors but also expand our fundamental understanding of textured hair care to serve the needs of the underserved market and enable people of color to treat and style their hair with the proper attention and care."

THE MOST develops products that many major industry players lack the cultural insight to produce and serves as a marketplace for natural hair enthusiasts looking for the best in textured hair care

solutions. With its all-in-one styling tools, the independent brand empowers women of color to embrace their natural hair by cutting styling time, increasing convenience, and minimizing the invisible pain points in ethnic haircare. By leveraging Dow's material science expertise, THE MOST will have the opportunity to improve upon its renewable-based styling system, The Mint.

"THE MOST has a big vision for textured hair care and we need big partnerships to carry it through," said Dawn Myers, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of THE MOST. "We are thrilled to have Dow as a partner and look forward to this substantive collaboration and the exchange of cultural capital to better serve this industry."

Dow's collaboration with THE MOST highlights the critical need for inclusion and diversity in order to discover new opportunities to bring tailored solutions to the multicultural hair segment.



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+ FUNDRAISING GOODTIMES

Grassroots donor prospecting... Guess who?

By MEL AND PEARL SHAW

Grassroots organizations often struggle with the question of “how do we develop a list of people who could give to our nonprofit?” Many feel that they must have a list of people of power, wealth, and influence and they feel they don’t have the capacity to reach that type of constituency. Do you face this challenge?

Here’s what we have learned: your prospective donors are right in your midst. The people you already know can help you develop your donor lists, and more. Take time to consider these examples and add to the list based on your experience, who you serve, and where you are located.

The following are people who have access – and often intimate access – to people who can help grow your nonprofit’s finances, resources, and impact. They can do this through their own giving, fundraising, and volunteering. They can also do this through their networks. Consider those who work in barbershops and salons; postal workers; housekeepers; waiters; chefs; yoga instructors; fitness trainers; caregivers; and parents of every kind. Think about it – all of us interact with at least one of these categories or people, if not many. And these are people who know everyone. People confide in them. People trust them. They are a part of people’s daily lives. They are constantly meeting people from all walks of life.

These individuals are often overlooked when nonprofits look for volunteers. Yet many, especially those working as barbers and beauticians have a long history of organizing, mobilizing, and getting the job done in a relatively short period of time. They truly understand the importance of customer relationships. And when they believe in your organization, they can carry the word in a way that spreads like wildfire. Yes, we are talking about old-fashioned, person-to-



COURTESY PHOTO

person carrying the message.

Here’s another obvious point – many of these relationships cross “class lines.” Hard working people have close relationships with people who have more resources, money, and time. You can engage people of “power, wealth, and influence” when you engage with the people who interact with them.

These individuals are in a position to understand the personal priorities of a potential donor, they know what they like, and what they don’t like; due to their work they have influence in a way that others do not. Those who are parents are always in communication with other parents, organizing, and building networks. Tap into these!

In terms of research and getting the pulse of the community, the people we listed above have their finger on the pulse. They hear it, they know what people like, don’t like, and what they are supporting. They can also share insights with you for how you can enhance your organization because they often interact with those you serve or could serve.

What many of us overlook is that these are people who want to be involved. They’re hungry. Our message to nonprofit leaders is simple: invite this segment of our community to play an important role in your work. Don’t overlook them – don’t take them for granted.



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Mel and Pearl Shaw are authors of four books on fundraising available on Amazon.com. For help growing your fundraising visit www.saadandshaw.com or call (901) 522-8727.

+ CHURCH DIRECTORY

B



Bethel AME Church
Rev. Dennis Laffoon
535 Cathay St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-755-7011



Bethlehem Temple Church of the Apostolic Faith
District Elder Curtis E. Johnson, Pastor
3521 Webber St
Saginaw, Michigan 48601
989-755-8381



Bread of Life Harvest Center
Senior Pastor Rodney J. McTaggart
3726 Fortune Blvd.
Saginaw, MI 48603
989-790-7933

C

Christ Disciples Baptist Church
Founder Pastor Eddie Benson
Pastor Genevieve Benson
3317 Lapeer Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-2444

Christ Fellowship Baptist Church
Rev. Robert Davis, Jr.
818 N. Washington Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-4435
PastorD818@gmail.com



Christ Image Community Church
5501 Gratiot Rd
Saginaw, MI 48638
(989) 759-9161
christimage.us

F



Faith Harvest Church
Bishop Ronald E. Chipp
1734 N. Mason
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-799-4200
faithharvestministry.org
office@faithharvestministry.org



Faith Ministries Church
Dr. Anthony Revis
3420 E Ashman St.
Midland, MI 48642
989-837-7777
faithministrieschurch.org

G



Glimpse Of Hope Ministries
Pastor Leslie D Lewis
2211 S. Outer Dr.
Saginaw Michigan 48601
989-755-9237
g.ministries@aol.com

Grace Chapel Church
Pastor James Nelson
2202 Janes Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-755-3212



Greater Renaissance
Pastor Cedric R. Cheatham
1535 S. Warren Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-1455
260-515-6456

Greater Williams Temple
608 E Remington St
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-755-5291

J



Jacob's Ladder
Bishop Elect Dempsey Allen
1926 Fairfield Street
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-799-6601

L

Life in Christ Ministries
Pastor Dennis Cotton, Sr.
2915 S. Washington Road
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-401-4465
LifeInChristMinistries07@gmail.com

M

Messiah Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor Otis Washington
2615 Williamson Road
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-777-2636
Fax: 989-777-2640
messiahmbc@att.net
messiahsag.org



Mt. Olive Baptist Church
Pastor Marvin T. Smith
1114 N. 6th Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-8064

N



New Beginnings Deliverance Ministry
Pastor Roy & Evelyn Baldwin
2609 E. Genesee
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-777-8272
Pastorbaldwin@charter.net

New Beginnings Life Changing Ministries
Pastor Otis Dickens
2312 S. Washington Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-755-3650



New Birth Missionary Baptist
Pastor Larry D. Camel
3121 Sheridan
Saginaw, Michigan
989-327-1755



New Covenant Christian Center
Pastor Ron Frierson
2395 S. Outer Drive
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-8485



New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Willie F. Casey
1721 Tuscola Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-753-7600



New Life Baptist Ministries
Dr. Craig Tatum
1401 Janes Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-753-1151
newlifelcm.com

New Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Pastor Alfred "AJ" Harris Jr.
3610 Russel St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-0801

New Way Ministries
Pastor Dwight & Princess Dobbins
29200 Shiawassee St.
Farmington Hills, MI 48336
(248) 987-2434
thenewwayministry.org

P

Prince of Peace Baptist Church
Pastor Robert C. Corley Jr.
825 North 24th Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-2841

R



Resurrection Life Ministries Full Gospel Baptist Church
Pastor Carolyn L. Wilkins
2320 Sheridan Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-395-3142

S



Saginaw Valley Community Church
Pastor Richard Sayad
3660 Hermansau
Saginaw, MI 48603
989-752-4769



Saint Paul Baptist Church
Rev. Dr., Vincent D. McMillon
120 North 15 St.
Saginaw, MI. 48601
stpaul2@yahoo.com
Facebook: St Paul MBC Family Connection



Second Baptist Church
Pastor-Elect Marcelle T. Smith
1770 W. Youngs Ditch Rd.
Bay City, MI 48708
989-893-8631

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church
Pastor Carl Ballard
915 Federal Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48607
989-754-0489
stjohnlutheranelcasaginaw.weebly.com

T



Transforming Life Ministries
Pastor William Brown
523 Hayden
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-9573



True Vine Baptist Church
Pastor Paul E. Broaddus
2930 Janes Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-0751

U



United Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. Cedric Nickson
4290 Lamson Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
Church: 989-759-9411
Pastor 810.223.2987

V



Victorious Belivers Ministries Church
Pastor Chris V. Pryor
624 S. Outer Dr.
Saginaw, MI
989-755-7692

W



World Outreach Campus of Greater Coleman Temple Ministries
Supt. H.J. Coleman Jr.
2405 Bay Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-752-7957

Z



Zion Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor Rodrick Smith
721 Johnson
Saginaw, MI 48607
989-754-9621

+ SPORTS



BRAD FLYNN

Saginaw Spirit welcomes Brad Flynn as associate coach; announce adjustments in hockey operations

Saginaw, MI – Saginaw Spirit general manager Dave Drinkill announced today the organization has hired Brad Flynn as Associate Coach and has made adjustments to the Hockey Operations Staff.

“We are thrilled to welcome Brad Flynn to the Saginaw Spirit family,” said Drinkill. “Upon speaking with Brad, we feel his coaching philosophies line up extremely well with our staff. We are excited to get him to Saginaw and get started on next season.”

The 36-year-old native of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Canada joins the Spirit after three seasons as an assistant coach for the Red Deer Rebels of the Western Hockey

League. Previous to his work in Red Deer, Flynn has been a head coach and director of hockey operations in the North American Hockey League and an assistant coach in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League and Manitoba Junior Hockey League.

Brad and his father, Danny, are the first ever father and son to coach in all three leagues of the Canadian Hockey League.

Danny Flynn is one of the most successful coaches in all of Canadian Major Junior history. He is a Memorial Cup Champion, a two-time OHL Champion, a three-time QMJHL Champion, and was the recipient of the Ron Lapointe Trophy twice for QMJHL Coach of the Year. He is currently

an Amateur Scout for the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Flynn enjoyed a playing career that included three years of USports hockey while attending Brock University and one season with the Huntsville Havoc of the Southern Professional Hockey League. With coaching in his blood, Flynn retired from playing at age 29 to follow his dream of teaching the game.

“I am elated to join the Saginaw Spirit,” said the incoming associate coach. “I am looking forward to working with Dave (Drinkill), Chris (Lazary), Jesse (Messier), and our players to build on the previous successes of the organization. I’m excited to move to Saginaw and become a part of their wonderful hockey community.”

Drinkill also announced the return of Assistant General Manager Brian Prout and Assistant Coach Jesse Messier. Prout will also continue to assume the role of Head scout in the United States.

In the scouting department, Drinkill has promoted South-Central Triple A Hockey League (SCTA) scout Greg Hammell to Head scout of Ontario. The 2021-22 season will be his fifth year with the franchise.

To fill Hammell’s previous role as SCTA scout, Drinkill has tabbed Jordan Selinger. Selinger is currently the Director of Hockey Operations for the Collingwood Blues Jr. A and has previously spent time as General Manager of the Oakville Blades Jr. A.

“Along with the addition of Brad Flynn, we are excited to announce the return of Brian Prout as assistant general manager and head U.S. scout, and Jesse Messier as assistant coach. Both have done a great job for the hockey operations and coaching staff, respectively. Greg Hammell has earned the promotion to head scout of Ontario after four seasons scouting the SCTA. We are proud to welcome Jordan Selinger to our scouting staff to fill Greg’s previous role. All in all, these moves solidify what we believe to be an exceptional hockey operations staff heading into this 2021-22 season.”

The hiring of Brad Flynn is dependent on the approval of immigration paperwork.



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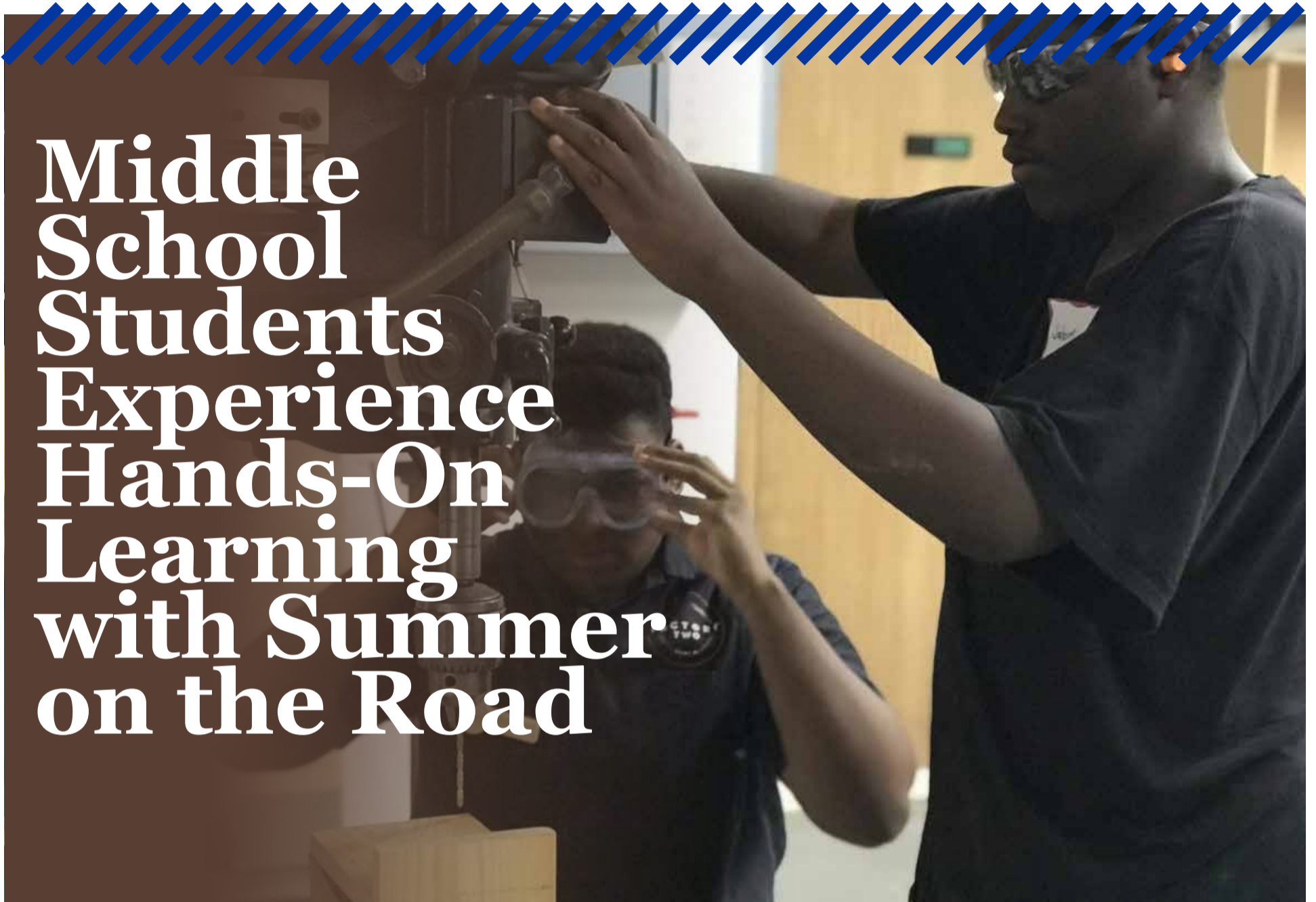
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MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 13

Middle School Students Experience Hands-On Learning with Summer on the Road



COURTESY PHOTO

Flint, MI – YouthQuest students will have a special opportunity this summer with Summer on the Road at Genesee Career Institute (GCI). From July 12-21, up to 50 preteens will gain experience with job training programs, learn about future career opportunities and practice leadership and team-building skills.

“We appreciate the continued partnership with Genesee Career Institute,” says Nefertari Jones, program director of after-school education at Flint & Genesee Education & Talent. “This experience allows us to help prepare Flint youth for 21st-century careers.”

GCI is a career-technical education

center serving 11th- and 12th-grade students across Genesee County. GCI allows students to start training in their intended career field with programs including health career fields, information technology, automotive, electrical and cosmetology.

“At GCI, students can explore future careers and gain the skills they need to enter the workforce after graduation,” says Deborah Davis, principal of Genesee Career Institute. “By hosting YouthQuest students, we can expose them to future careers and show them the opportunities GCI offers.”

During Summer on the Road, students will participate in the following programs:

- The Power of Print – Screen Printing and Dye Sublimation
- Digital Photography
- Introduction to Construction
- Mechatronics and Robotics
- Base Camp Adventure Camp

Summer on the Road is available to students who attend YouthQuest at International Academy of Flint (IAF) in sixth through eighth grades. If your student attends session at IAF and is interested in participating, contact your site team leader or call (810) 600-1422.

ON THE JOB:

**Teshia
Smith**

COURTESY PHOTO

Flint, MI – Flint Southwestern Classical Academy graduate Teshia Smith is following her passion by building her own graphic design and branding business called Artish Design.

“It started when I was in college,” says Smith, who graduated from Marygrove College with a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration on graphic design. “I posted my artwork on social media and my friends started requesting designs on t-shirts and phone cases.

In my senior year, I was contracted to do freelance work for the university and started getting new branding projects every week or so after that.”

However, it took Smith some time to get the courage to take her career full time. While working as a human resources manager for AMC Theaters, she continued to do freelance work until she worked up the nerve to leave and pursue her business full time.

“Now my business is going very well,” says Smith. “I have an average of 30 to 50 clients each month. I am busy enough that I just hired an assistant to help me keep up

with emails and tie up loose ends.”

Smith plans to continue growing her business by securing a brick-and-mortar location and hiring a team of designers within the next two years.

What does a typical day look like for you?

After starting work, I check my emails and texts and focus on responding to pending clients. Then, I always have some sort of design work to do, whether it’s working on business cards, websites or logos. And then I work on any type of marketing work I have.

How did the lessons learned in TeenQuest help you on your journey?

The main things I learned were work ethic and how to speak with people. It gave me an advantage in college compared to peers who didn’t have a program like TeenQuest.

What is your favorite memory?

Our facilitator. He was like one of the kids, but we all respected him. The way he worked taught me that you can still have fun, but you need to have respect.

What advice would you offer current TeenQuest students?

Take every opportunity that comes from the program. When I left for college, I would still get emails with opportunities for jobs. Make sure to keep up with that and know the opportunities are available.

What is your proudest moment since graduating TeenQuest?

Gaining the courage to leave my full-time job and focus on my business. It almost took me a year to leave, but when I did, my business increased three-fold. Blessings come when you go after the goals that scare you most.



PIC OF THE WEEK

Earlier last month, **Gloria Wilson** celebrated her 80th birthday at Horizon conference center with family and over three hundred guests.

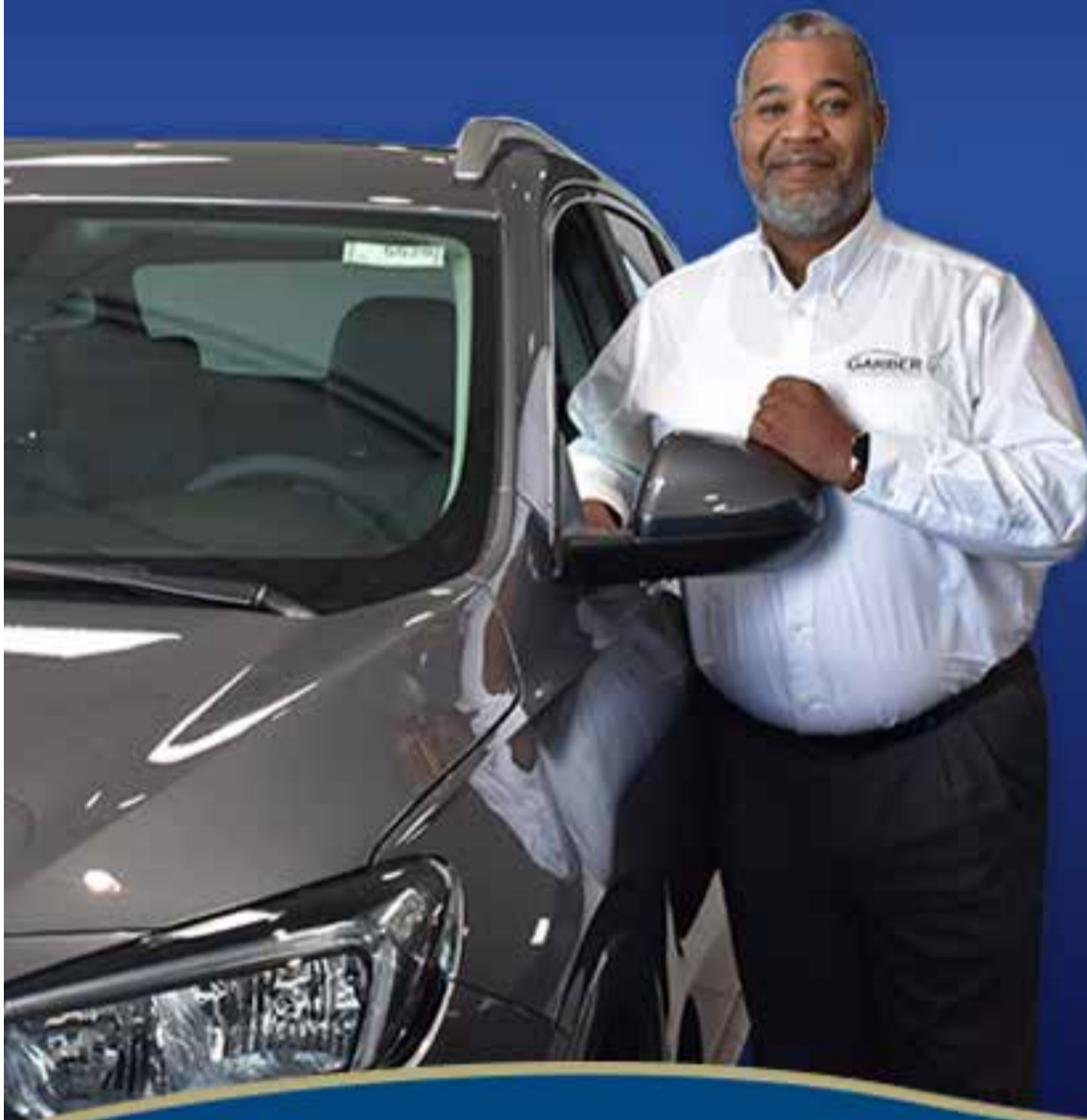


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Whatever your dreams, whatever your goals, your professors and friends at SVSU will fly with you every step of the way.

Since age 11, India Pernell has had a passion for expressing herself through writing. Yet, when she first enrolled in college, choosing a major proved to be elusive for the Oak Park native. "I was 'major hopping' until it finally occurred to me that I always enjoyed writing and that I was good at it." Now a published author, Pernell has her sights on a career in grant writing, publishing or the film industry. In fact, she has nearly completed writing a movie script. **Her confidence is nurtured by her positive attitude and accomplishments at SVSU.**



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