

the Westsider

Fall 2019



PRESENTED BY THE

Westside Neighborhood Association



WELCOME TO THE WESTSIDE!

Hello West Side,

I hope that you got much enjoyment during the summer months. Welcome to fall and the picturesque transition to winter. Or what some call it the hibernation season, when we don't see our neighbors as much.

A couple of neighbors you do see are the ever helpful Ken and Jeannine Beachnau. We were first really introduced to these two when the snow on our sidewalk mysteriously disappeared. Jessi and I had much discussion about who could have done that. And when it was discovered that it was Ken and Jeannine, Jessi made soup. I humbly and thankfully presented it to them with words of gratitude.

Our first year in the West Side Neighborhood had a lot of new for us. A new baby, the older two were in new schools, Jessi was in a new position at her job, and we were all in a new neighborhood trying to find our bearings. Each gift of snow removal was a welcome reprieve from the chaos of it all. We soon came to realize this type of generosity was the West Side Way. It is most welcoming.

This fall and winter I hope you remember to say hi to your bundled up neighbors. And when you provide a little assistance, rest assured it is always very much appreciated.

Have a wonderful and safe winter and holiday season. And thank you for continuing with your welcoming West Side Way.



~Metro Melik
VP of the WNA Board

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Neighborhood Picnic Brings Out Nearly 400 Attendees

The Neighborhood Picnic, held on July 10, 2019, was a wild success. The WNA, partnering for the first time with Northwest Initiative and the First Presbyterian Church, worked together seamlessly.

We met several times to coordinate the picnic and related activities and then put on an event worthy of great praise. Numerous activities were planned for both the adults and the children, including a menu of walking tacos, a potluck organized by the WNA, a magician, a balloon animal maker, a face painter, animals from the Potter Park Zoo, representatives and books from the Capital Area District Library, a piñata (always a highlight for the kids), the food truck from Northwest Initiative, and much, much more!

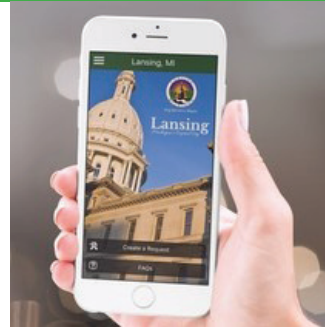
After the picnic, one of the summer concerts sponsored by the City was held. The musical group was “Full House” and their music was great fun, adding to the community feeling generated by the day’s earlier events. Approximately 400 people participated in the two events and a great time was had by all.



LANSING CONNECT

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The Lansing Connect mobile app is available for free on iPhone and Android smartphone devices. Using the “App Store” search for the term “Lansing Connect.” Then download the free app.



Riddle & Sexton *Updates*

Riddle School has about 200 students. The faculty and staff nurture a family-oriented atmosphere. Students are also nurtured with many special programs. For example, "Read to Succeed" is a program that brings MSU students to the school twice a week. The goal is to improve lifelong reading and writing skills.

Caterpillar Corner is a before and after school program that is especially beneficial to many working families. Students may also participate in an off-campus YMCA program. A bus is provided to transport them.

As with Sexton, Riddle has a "Clothes Closet" that includes not only clothes, but also a cupboard that is stocked with non-perishable food. All of this is possible through donations from the community and grants. The school also provides computers that are available to families. Another amenity for the community is a washer and dryer. Families may avail themselves of this free service in exchange for one hour of volunteering at Riddle.

Sexton has undergone major changes this year. There is a new principal, Dan Boggan, and two new vice principals, Broderick Williams and Jami Williams. We are hopeful that the new administration will assist the PTO in recruiting new members, both parents and especially teachers. It was a good start when all three administrators attended the PTO's first meeting on September 25, 2019. Unfortunately the PTO Coordinator position has been eliminated, which makes it more difficult for the PTO to organize activities. Two Sexton staff members, counselor Pearl Johnson and registrar Renee Motley, have been tasked with the job of assisting the PTO and we look forward to their involvement.

Also, the Communities in Schools program was eliminated from the Lansing school district. This is a huge loss to the school. Neighbors and teachers are trying to find space in the building to set up the Clothes Closet. There is very little space available because the overflow students from Eastern High School have been sent to Sexton and the school is bursting at the seams. However, the neighborhood is determined to see the Clothes Closet re-open. It helped clothe innumerable students the past two years, especially refugee students who arrive in this country unequipped for our wintry weather. If space is found, the WNA may be called upon to help staff the Clothes Closet during school hours. Contact a Board member if you are interested in volunteering for this effort.



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*Greetings From Westsider
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LETTS SENIOR PROGRAMS

Our daily Senior Program meets 10:00am – 1:30pm., Monday through Friday here at Letts Community Center. The Tri-County Office of Aging nutritional meals are served at 12 noon, Monday through Friday, a \$3.00 donation is requested for persons 60 and older; a \$5.00 is requested for persons less than 60 years of age.

Transportation arrangements can be made through Spec-Tran by calling 394-6230.

WESTSIDE *BLACK HISTORY*

Michael Burton and his family grew up in the inner city of Lansing at the corner of St Joe and Everett when Lansing was described as a General Motors town. Oldsmobiles rolled off the assembly line, where many of Michael's family members worked. For him, automobiles were a family tradition and an American alphabet soup - literally. Michael practiced spelling by reading the backs of cars as they drove down his street - C-H-E-V-R-O-L-E-T, B-U-I-C-K, or O-L-D-S-M-O-B-I-L-E. When he wasn't spelling the cars, he was drawing them.



Michael Burton always knew what he wanted to do. When he was barely in his teens, Michael wrote a letter to General Motors and included some of his sketches. He never thought he'd hear back. But he did. One of GM's HR representatives wrote a personal letter encouraging Michael to keep drawing, along with advice about how to break into the car design business. It was advice Michael took to heart.

After his high school graduation and along with his good grades, Michael received a (Ford) scholarship to attend the College for Creative Studies (CCS). Michael once said, "Since I was a young child I had the ambition, the drive, and the passion to become an automotive designer." After his acceptance into one of the greatest schools in the country at CCS, Michael began to share and create his own ideas on paper, along with achieving his goals of hard work and dedication. The CCS Industrial Design program is for those students who have the passion and the understanding to work hard in order to achieve their goals to become a great automotive designer within the automotive industry.

In graduating from CCS, Michael had received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Industrial and Product Design. Michael's journey after college started with the Ford Motor Company from 1978-1980. At Ford, his creativity and ability contributed to the 1979 Ford Mustang program as well as with the 1980 Ford Thunderbird. From advanced Lincoln concepts to the Ford truck studio, Michael had become a bright and shining star in the automotive world of design. Michael once said, "Artistic talent and passion for cars make me very focused." After Ford, Michael started working for the Chrysler Corporation; during that time, he became one of the first African Americans to work with many other and great design studios along with Chrysler design team members. At Chrysler, he was also the lead and senior exterior and interior designer on many projects. He would later become a part of the administration that developed popular internship programs, an accomplishment of which he was very proud. This allowed him to help students to achieve their goals and dreams in automotive styling.

As Michael's career continued, he would start to design great looking exterior and interiors for General Motors. Michael's passionate ideas began to come through with

design contributions for the 2004 Cadillac SRX exterior, 2007 Saturn Outlook, GMC Acadia interior, Buick Enclave, 2007 Buick Enclave Show Car, and the 2007 Chevrolet Traverse interior, and many others. Michael eventually became the design manager for the exterior for the Cadillac XLR program and later Global Director for Buick interiors.



Michael Burton had many other great talents, such as doing voice over work for both television and radio production. He was also the consultant in Tiger Woods' Buick webcast production that featured interviews with the former No. 1 golfer in the world. Michael was also a gifted musician. At the young age of 59, Michael Burton, automotive designer lost his battle with cancer on July 27, 1996.

Pet Spotlight: DUKE



Duke (prior alias: Dude) is a 6-year-old Husky-German Shepard mix that makes his home near Harry's Place on West Shiawassee. He moved to the Westside 3 years ago following a stint at Kreachter Konnections, a foster based no-kill rescue group. Certain members of his family are always on the lookout for a furry sibling!

A svelte 70 pounds, Duke attributes his physique to a diet of mostly broccoli, asparagus, and Brussel sprouts (and dog food when his humans insist). He maintains a strict bedtime routine, and freely shows his

disgust when they fail to accompany him to bed at his appointed time. To maintain his youthful demeanor, he's a self-taught yoga practitioner, which includes sleeping upside down with his feet in the air.

When he's not on a walk, sunbathing at the front window, or at Soldan Dog Park, he can be found eating water (it is very confusing for him), reluctantly allowing himself to be cuddled, giving that one skunk a third chance to be his friend (the first two tries didn't go well), and going on adventures (he still tells the story of his epic escape. He would have made it if he hadn't gotten stuck in that pesky fence 500 feet from home.)

The nature of Duke's previous career in law enforcement is still classified for national security reasons, but sources close to him say that his bark is so powerful that he realizes he can only use it on rare occasions.

You can find him on Instagram at [duke_da_dawg13](#), where his hot takes and creative contortions are causing a viral sensation.

Neighborhood Angels Support Food Bank

Members of the Westside Neighborhood have stepped up in a big way to ensure those who need food assistance have access to resources from the food bank at Letts Community Center.

The food bank is supported by food provided by the Greater Lansing Food Bank and the WNA chips in about \$200 per month to cover the delivery costs to bring the food to our neighborhood. The monthly cost can vary based on the weight of the food being delivered.

In 2019, the WNA put out a call asking neighbors to sponsor months to help cover this delivery cost, and they have stepped up! These “angels” are a big help, particularly since the WNA as a whole has did not have the chance to put on a big charity fundraiser in 2018.

We have successfully secured donors to support the food bank through April 2020! Thank you to all of the neighbors who committed to chip in to help pay for food delivery! We will reach out next year for May and the months following--or you can make a note and pledge for one of the months now.

Last year (in 2018) there were some anonymous donors, but those we are allowed to report as donors include:

- Amy Sarah/Campbell Therapy Services
- Merry Rosenberg
- Brad Vauter/law offices Bradley Vauter & Associates, PC
- Christine Caswell, J.D.
- Chris Johnson/Karl Rodgers
- Tom Shutler and Colum, in memory of wife/mom Holly

For 2019 the following folks have volunteered to cover the first four months (at \$175 a month)

- Brian Pyles/Gregorio Quiroz
- Marilyn Wiley and Joseph Wiley
- Diane Thompson
- Lindsay Tarrant

LOOKING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Are you committed to sharing your time and talents to help make the neighborhood a better place? Are you willing to be an enthusiastic advocate for the organization and encourage others to get involved? If you answered yes, maybe you'd consider joining the WNA Board of Directors or volunteer to chair a specific committee. Serving as a board member empowers you to advocate directly for real change in our communities.

If you are interested in helping to make a difference where you live, please contact the WNA Board of Directors for more information.

- **Do you have enough time for board service?**

Being on a board entails great responsibility and time. Just going to the board meetings will not be enough. You'll be serving on one or more committees, preparing for meetings, representing the organization at community affairs, and fundraising.

- **Do you enjoy collaborating with others?**

As a board member, you'll need to work with others, come to mutual decisions, work out disagreements, and get along with everyone.

- **What committees does the board have?**

Committees include programming, fundraising, liaison for Sexton and Riddle schools, crime and safety, communication, nominating committee, neighborhood watch, and events.

Join the Crime & Safety Committee

On the fourth Tuesday of every month Neighborhood Crime and Safety Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. at Letts Community Center, 1220 West Kalamazoo. These meetings are free and open to anyone with an interest in increasing safety in our community.

The content of these meetings changes each month. Creating and maintaining a healthy, vibrant community means that the community comes together to solve problems as well as to celebrate.

Over the years, these meetings have covered a variety of topics such as Safe Holiday Tips, Vacant Property Issues, Car Theft Prevention, Senior Abuse, Identity and Fraud Prevention, How to File a Complaint with the Lansing Police Department. Many guest speakers, experts in their field, have shared valuable information with attendees. Representatives from the Lansing Police Department, Animal Control, Homeland Security, and a variety of city and state officials have offered useful information on how to make neighborhoods safer. Most recently the newly minted Lansing Police Chief Daryl Green was our guest speaker.

In addition to discussing neighborhood issues, the meetings are a great way for you to come out and meet other people in the neighborhood who may not live on your street. Getting people together is a great way to get to know each other better and together improve our community.

Hopefully we will see you at the next Crime and Safety Meeting.

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES!

The American Red Cross is conducting FREE smoke alarm installations and inspections. If you don't have alarms, or alarms that work, if you don't have alarms on every floor of your home, or if your alarms are over ten years old, call the American Red Cross at (517) 702- 3315.

Michigan History Story: STORY CORPS

It was crazy cool when I received a email from Tobi Voigt the community engagement director at the Michigan History Center asking if I would be willing to a guest in their StoryCorps Michigan History Center partnership.

I only knew a little about StoryCorps having heard snippets on National Public Radio. My task was to find someone who I would feel comfortable interviewing me about me. Being one that is usually doing the interviewing, I was anxious about being interviewed. I had to push that feeling aside because I saw an overview of importance about sharing my story. Not so much as ego but more as a perspective that I have with my place in time of what we call these United States of America. I asked a good friend and business colleague to do the interrogation. We had a short discussion about the process and their expectations.

I always enjoy arriving to the Michigan History Center. It is a grand building, and anyplace that has a tree growing within it's walls is super cool. Being that the StoryCorp process is a new venture for the center, there were representatives from the StoryCorp division of NPR as well as facilitators from the center. Once Paul and I signed our release forms we were brought into the newly built state of the art recording studio. And we had a lively conversation. I was perfect combination of poignant as well as personal. It was also one of those rare moments in time that I spoke freely about my own history. It was kind of liberating.

There was a bonus to being involved with this. Not only was I going to be in the StoryCorps archives but our interview will also be included in the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which is a Smithsonian Institution museum located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in the United States. I found that to be super cool. I have often wondered what would be said of me and my place in history. Now I know at least part of my story will be told by me. Thanks StoryCorps and the Michigan History Center. And thank you to Paul for challenging me to share what I normally don't. Let me know if you would like to hear the interview.

~Metro Melik



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Make your story part of Michigan's story.

The Michigan History Center welcomes you to share and preserve your story for future generations by participating in a StoryCorps interview.

A **StoryCorps** interview is 40 minutes of uninterrupted time for meaningful conversation with a friend or loved one. After your interview, you may choose to have the recording archived at the **American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress** and the **Archives of Michigan**. You will also receive a copy of the recording to keep. Participating in an StoryCorps interview is **100% free of charge**. Interviews can be conducted at a time and location convenient for you.

SCHEDULE NOW

Schedule your StoryCorps interview with the Michigan History Center today!

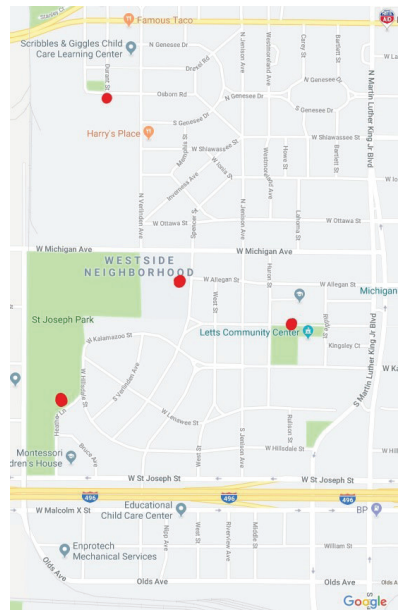
1. Invite a close friend or family member to participate with you.
2. Email GrossS3@Michigan.gov to schedule a date and receive a Participant Packet with more information to help you prepare.
3. Get excited!

GRANTS UPDATE

This year, in addition to applying for and receiving grants from the City for the neighborhood picnic and to support communications efforts, the WNA Board secured two grants to erect permanent structures. Five dog waste stations were purchased for installation around the neighborhood, and three have been installed so far—one in St. Joe's Park by the playground, one by Sexton HS, and one in Osborn Park by Scribbles and Giggles. The other two will be coming soon—by Letts Community Center and a location TBD. The bags in the dispensers will be replenished regularly, and we hope that they will be used to keep the Westside looking clean and beautiful!



Additionally, the City awarded us a grant to erect a bike servicing station outside Letts, which was installed in mid-October. The station has a bike pump and all of the tools necessary to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance. The tools are attached to the stand with stainless steel cables, and a hanger arm allows a person to rotate the bike's pedals and wheels freely while making adjustments. Existing stations around the city—on the river trail at Kalamazoo and in Foster Park—have been met with great enthusiasm and interest. We hope that this exciting addition will make what was already a bike-friendly neighborhood even friendlier. And if you have ideas for future grants, please pass them along to the Board!



THUNDER IN THE STREETS: Sexton revives homecoming parade

A sea of red and white could be seen marching down Michigan Avenue Oct 4th as Sexton high school students, coaches, alumni, and family members participated in the second annual Homecoming Alumni Parade.

The parade stepped off from the intersection of McPherson and Washtenaw Streets and ended at the football field. Members of the marching band and other school groups decked out in the famed red and white school colors, either chatting among themselves or squeezing in some last minute music or routine practice prior to the parade's start, were excited to be participating in this year's event.

On the lawns lining the parade route, WNA residents stood outside waiting to watch it go by, calling out to marchers they knew, or standing on the curb to snap pictures. It was the first parade to march through the neighborhood in several years.

From the sound of the starting drum beat of Bro. Saleem Shabazz, the 2019 Homecoming Alumni parade was an incredible event led by the Grand Marshall, Wanda Sulskis, a graduate of Sexton's first graduating class of 1943!

Her dear friend Coach Mike Major, who coached at Sexton from 1987-2005, escorted Wanda. Wanda and Mike cruised the parade route in a 1964 Mustang provided and driven by old friend Tom Meyer. Following Ms. Sulskis were Sexton's newest principal, Dan Boggan, Assistant Principal Broderick Williams, newly minted Lansing Police Chief Daryl Green, Natasha Atkinson representing Mayor Schor's office, Ingham County Register of Deeds, Derrick Quinney, the Little Reds of Riddle Elementary, the Lions of Willow Elementary, Acting Superintendent Mark Coscarella, Ed.D., Kappa Express Youth Football Team, and Big Red Alumni from 1943-2018! Alumni played in the marching band and thanks to Cherron Basey, the alumni cheerleaders found they are still the first ladies of the JDubb school spirit!

Special recognition is given to Senior Advisor Holly Herner Howard who inspired the senior class to design and build their first school float.



It is believed that when schools actively involve parents and engage community support, they are able to respond more effectively to the needs of their students. Without community support, this parade would not have been possible. The students are indebted to the volunteer

drivers: Tony Cox, Jim Lovitt, Desiree Quinney, Ray Johnson, Chuck Jennings, and Sheehan Chevrolet; Parade announcer, Michael McFadden; Tailgate DJ, Dr. Mae-Mae (Ralph Riddle); WNA Supporters, Amy Castillo, Emily Berquist, and Laura Angus Hall; Big Red Alumni Band and Cheerleaders, the VFW, and all the Big Red Alumni

who volunteered in every way possible.

Mitzi Allen, 1968 Alumni, and Holly Herner-Howard, 7/8 Grade Assistant Athletic Director, chaired the Homecoming Alumni Parade Committee.



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Tips for a Safe and Happy Westside Halloween

Halloween is quickly approaching, and when little goblins and ghouls are out for treats, we want to ensure Westsiders are ready to ensure everyone has a safe and spooky time! Trick-or-treating will run from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, October 31.

A few reminders from the Lansing Police Department for trick-or-treaters:

- Map out your trick-or-treat route ahead of time.
- Establish a meeting spot with your group in case you get separated.
- Pick costumes with bright colors or add reflective tape to make sure drivers can see you.
- Always have an adult accompany younger children.
- Go over safety rules with children, reminding them to never enter a stranger's home, always stay with their group, and to not eat candy before it's inspected by an adult.
- Use sidewalks and use crosswalks when crossing the street. Remember to always look before crossing. If no sidewalk is provided, walk against traffic so you can see cars approaching.
- Do not cut through backyards, alleys, parks or heavily wooded areas.
- Only go to houses that are well-lit.
- When inspecting candy, throw out candy with ripped or open wrappers, fresh fruit, and homemade candy or treats.



Thanks to all who help ensure the Westside Neighborhood is a safe and welcoming place for trick-or-treating, and happy Halloween from the WNA!

RACER Trust Update on Remediation Activities

RACER Trust continues to implement a biosparge system to address the lower 1,4-dioxane plume at its Lansing Township sites. The plume extends from Plant 3 (north of Saginaw) to Plant 2 (south of Saginaw.) The Plant 3 portion is operating; wells for Plant 2 are being installed. Other components will be installed in 2020. The Trust also continues to sample and evaluate data for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS.) Results have been submitted to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), Ingham County, Lansing, Lansing Township and the Lansing Board of Water and Light (LBWL).

RACER's continued groundwater monitoring for PFAS at Plants 2, 3 and 6 will allow for evaluation of possible migration and concentration trends. Drinking water is provided to the area by LBWL so there is no risk of exposure to area residents to site-related PFAS present in shallow groundwater and storm sewers.

Among RACER's recent findings:

PFAS in on-site groundwater is in excess of Michigan criteria for perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA); PFOS and PFOA exceed the drinking water criteria of 70 parts per trillion at several locations along the eastern boundary and southwest section of Plant 6. PFOS and PFOA have not been observed off-site at concentrations above groundwater criteria.

PFOS concentrations exceed surface water quality criteria in the Osborn and Verlinden storm sewers.

PFOS is above surface water quality criteria at one of two locations where storm water leaves Plant 2 and enters the Ingham County Drain.

Going forward follow-up work will occur at Plant 6, including installation of additional monitoring wells and evaluation of options to reduce PFOS impacts to off-site storm sewers. And, sampling at Plant 2 (results pending) will help identify and evaluate remedies to reduce discharge of PFOS into the Ingham County Drain.

Information on the activities and results can be found at: <http://www.racertrust.org/lansing18>



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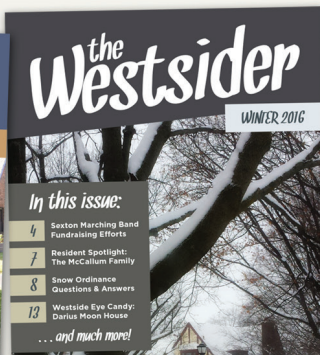
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