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# 10 Years of City Pulse - A timeline

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*By City Pulse August 18, 2011 Publication: Lansing City Pulse (MI) Word Count: 6203*

## 2001

Aug. 15:

CityPULSE is launched by publisher Berl Schwartz.

“Its mission is to provide a journal of news and opinion on civic, social and political issues as well as arts and entertainment in Greater Lansing.”

“Who the Hell is Berl Schwartz?”

Berl Schwartz is the owner and publisher of City Pulse. Why in the world did he do that to himself? Well, he was at a crossroads. He was ready for a change. And so was Lansing. So he jumped in and started the paper you are reading.

Here's his history, without all the details, because that would take forever:

Berl Schwartz started as a copy boy at The Blade, his hometown paper in Toledo. Schwartz, 55 [in September 2002 – you do the math], was general manager and editorial adviser of The State News, the student newspaper at MSU, from 1994 until 2000. He was Washington bureau chief of United Press International, executive editor of the York (Pa.) Daily Record, managing editor of The Knoxville (Tenn.) News-Sentinel and a Washington correspondent for the Louisville (Ky.) Times and Scripps Howard News Service. He was also a reporter for the Philadelphia Bulletin. Schwartz was a visiting professor of journalism at the University of Oklahoma. He was an adjunct faculty member at the School of Journalism at MSU. He earned a degree in political science from the University of Pennsylvania.

Schwartz, unlike other local newspaper publishers, lives in downtown Lansing.

First news story: Residents oppose plans to build Ranney Skate Park in East Lansing. The story boasts two more firsts: the paper's first “pun” headline (“Half-pipe dream”) and first spelling error (a skater is described as “airborn” in the photo cutline).

First arts story: Lansing's Bethlehem Temple Church is to be converted into the Temple Club, an entertainment venue. In October 2006, five years later, the club closed.

First issue news item: The Lansing State Journal will shrink in size by 7 percent in January.

Aug. 15: City Pulse flaunts its self-aware style in an ad meant for prospective advertisers: “248,481 readers every week! (We wish)...By our own approximation, we're a great paper. We'd pick City Pulse up if we were average

consumers. We might read other local newspapers, too, but we'd like City Pulse the most. And we'd shop at your store."

Aug. 29: The paper's first investigative story probes 140 pages left out of an Ingham County Health Department report on surface and groundwater resources.

The second Beaner's Gourmet Coffee franchise (now Biggby) opens in the MSU Union. 10 years later, Biggby had over 100 franchises in the United States.

Sept. 12: First election story covers 4th Ward Lansing City Council race between Geneva Smith and Lester Stone.

Sept. 26: City Pulse unexpectedly tumbles deeper into its alternative role with coverage of 9/11 and its fallout, beginning with cover story, "Between storms: Lansing copes with the unthinkable." Swimming against the overwhelming tide of calls for military retribution and "national unity," a cross-section of community leaders and citizens fear over-reaction by the United States and curtailment of civil liberties. Other stories cover Muslim appeals for understanding and a peace teach-in at MSU.

Nov. 7: Lansing Mayor David Hollister is re-elected to a third term; City Pulse caricatures Hollister as a king with robe and scepter.

Nov. 14: Lansing's BioPort Corp., North America's only manufacturer of an anthrax-specific vaccine, sprouts concrete barriers and concertina wire in the wake of 9/11. Cover story, "The Spore Next Door," airs safety concerns. "How safe is it really for us if a plane hit the building?" asks a nearby resident.

Dec. 5: Cover story, "Gimmee [sic] Shelter," is first of many City Pulse stories on the homeless in Lansing. A community services worker offers an estimate of 600 homeless people in the metro area.

2002

Jan. 3: "GM to Westside: We don't care!" Story by Brian McKenna: "Baseball players at Sexton High School, on Lansing's west side, are often seen sprinting from the diamond to a nearby building. But they're not exercising. 'We're running away from General Motors' fumes,' said Tim Nault, 17. 'They smell like paint thinner. Opposing baseball teams hate to play us.'"

Apr. 3: Sordid details emerge from a report on alleged sexual harassment by Lansing Councilman Lou Adado. In the report, Council employee Heather Eman claims Adado bought her underwear and asked her to return them soiled. He gives her a birthday card, reprinted in City Pulse, that reads "Have you swallowed your protein today?" The suit was settled out of court in December 2003.

May 1: Cover story, "Fear & profits vs. the people's health," assails Mayor David Hollister's zeal to seal a deal with General Motors over pollution from its Craft Centre on the west side. The latest in a salvo of stories on the issue from Brian McKenna compares Lansing's "company town" mentality to the polluted spa in Henrik Ibsen's "Enemy of the People."

After the story hits, Hollister orders city employees not to speak to anyone from City Pulse.

"It makes the mayor look small," says an editorial by Berl Schwartz in the May 8 issue. "This too shall pass." It does, in late July, when Hollister rescinds the order after consulting with the city attorney. Hollister sends letters announcing the reversal to Schwartz and Henry Silverman, president of the Lansing branch of the state ACLU and City Pulse columnist, who had asked for a clarification of the mayor's policy.

May 22: Daniel Sturm follows up on the GM/Westside story with another cover story, "Fatal Handshake," comparing Lansing's deal to keep GM with the handshake between Social Democrats and East German Communists in 1946 to "conform to a single party regime."

Meanwhile, city employees keep on refusing to talk to City Pulse, at Hollister's order. Berl Schwartz responds in the May 22 issue:

“City Pulse made a little fun of Hollister last November when it portrayed him in a crown and regal robe after he was elected to a third term. Nothing much was meant by the cover at the time. The non-Democratic way that Hollister has chosen to deal with his critics has given that illustration considerably more meaning today.”

Jul. 31: Gannett, the Lansing State Journal’s parent company, announces the launch of “mid-Michigan’s first alternative weekly,” then dubbed Real Life.

In an editorial, City Pulse publisher Berl Schwartz sees the launch as part of a strategy to “drive City Pulse out of business and thus restore the State Journal’s monopoly in the Lansing market — so that Gannett can once again call the tune for print advertising here.”

"We're confident that City Pulse has a fighting chance in this game." —Berl Schwartz

City Pulse runs a phony employment ad for Real Life, re-dubbed “Real Lame.”

“If you come from a single-parent family, have a hard time staying in a committed relationship, can’t add or spell and don’t know anything that happened before 1970 at the earliest, then you can relate to this target market and we want to talk to you. You could be a part of the development of this exciting, new corporate product, as long as you’re not too creative and don’t show anybody up.”

City Pulse’s parting shot: “This position offers great pay and benefits, including unemployment for when you’re laid off when money gets tight for this Fortune 500 company.”

Aug. 14: City Pulse squeaks through its first anniversary, in part by holding its first and last fund-raising party.

Berl Schwartz writes: “We’re crawling like crazy and ready to walk. The coming year will decide whether we make it to our feet.”

The announcements keep coming for weeks. Arts and Entertainment editor Elaine Yaw keeps it light:

“We at City Pulse are pretty open-minded. The only rule I have for the night is: DO NOT PUKE ON ME. That is the one thing that will make me upset. If this happens, expect me to puke back. Puke makes me puke. Just so you know.” (Sept. 4, 2002)

The party is at Club Paradise, 224 S. Washington Square. Drew Howard, lead singer of The Weepers, emcees. Among items auctioned is a lipstick ammo belt from Bohemian Barber, a “beautiful, full-bodied” mannequin from Jacobsen’s Department Store, and a hardcover copy of “The Chain Gang,” a book about an alternative newspaper battling Gannett.

Aug. 21: MSU fixes its famous “Sparty” statue. City Pulse celebrates with a cover story by Daniel Sturm, “Inside Sparty’s Third Reich Roots.” We learn about the sculptor’s Austrian-German descent, his time studying in Germany during the rise of Hitler, and the warrior cult aesthetic going back to Sparta itself. Sturm implicitly links Nazi rallies to Spartan sports:

“Hadn’t Sparta been a state system, which intentionally raised children as war machines?” The cover features Sparty in the middle of Nazi architect Albert Speer’s “Cathedral of Light,” Nuremberg-style.

“What is this ‘emo’ thing?” asks music writer Justin Smith. Groups like Dashboard Confessional, Jimmy Eat World, Thursday and Saves the Day “expanded the stale hardcore sound to include epic and melodic element that accompanied deeply impassioned and personal lyrics.” The problem is that the term is vague and “almost no one wants to be called it.”

Sept. 24: Local voices react to the first anniversary of 9/11. Mayor David Hollister: “There isn’t a single part of city government that hasn’t been impacted [by 9/11]. Whether it’s worry over anthrax coming through the tax forms, security at City Hall, extra precautions at the zoo, or training more police and firemen. There are monthly meetings with regional leaders.”

Hollister also reveals: “The FBI called my office to profile people of Muslim heritage, a small number of 15 people

in October 2001.”

Oct. 2: “Buh-bye Octoberfest; here comes BluesFest instead” Old Town’s 8-year-old Octoberfest, a rock festival featuring local bands, is replaced by Blues Fest. For some, the change is a harbinger of Old Town’s drift from grass-roots, bohemian art center to a tamer retail and festival “destination.”

Oct. 9: A story by Daniel Sturm confirms that 15 women at MSU underwent a “humiliating decontamination process” after an anthrax scare at Linton Hall Oct. 12, 2011, stripping in front of a male crew of police officers and firemen.

Four years later, a jury awarded the women \$480,000 in a federal lawsuit against the East Lansing Fire Department.

Oct. 30: Cover story, “The Case Against the War,” appears on the eve of Operation Desert Storm.

“Five years ago we were in the process of de-escalating the Cold War, dismantling missile systems. Redirecting the money towards urban areas and health care seemed to be disengaging from a war mentality.”—Lansing mayor David Hollister

Nov. 20: City Pulse reaches some kind of high-brow peak when Daniel Sturm’s cover story, “On Death and Dying in Lansing,” explores taboos about discussing or accepting death with reference to the Renaissance concept of ars moriendi (the art of dying) and Leo Tolstoy’s “Death of Ivan Ilych.”

Nov. 20: John Peakes, BoarsHead Theatre’s founer and artistic director, and Judith Peakes, the managing director, announce they will leave Lansing. “BoarsHead is at a sort of crossroads,” John Peakes tells City Pulse’s Ute von der Heyden. “Tremendous growth is possible.” BoarsHead closed in Dec. 2009, after a string of personnel upheavals and financial setbacks.

2003

Feb. 26: Columnist Anne Tracy dies Feb. 14, 2003, after a battle with liver cancer chronicled in her City Pulse column. Her friend, Penny Gardner, writes a farewell column at her request:

“I miss her physical presence and appreciate all that went before in our lives that brought our paths together here in Lansing, as lesbians, as scholars, as feminists, as friends. So I bid you my goodbye from Anne and wish for you, gentle reader, a continued presence of her brave and loving spirit in your lives.”

As part of a worldwide protest against impending war in Iraq, over 600 readings of the ancient Greek anti-war play “Lysistrata” by Aristophanes are held in 39 countries. Lansing’s reading takes place at the Creole Gallery.

Apr. 2: “Last weekend the Pentagon announced that coalition forces have thus far dropped 6,000 precision-guided bombs on Iraq in the effort to rid the world of a regime that the Bush administration claims possesses ‘weapons of mass destruction.’ The irony has not been missed by three Michigan nuns.” Lead of a cover story by Daniel Sturm on antiwar nuns

May 14: “State Sen. Virg Bernero’s decision to run for mayor of Lansing took even close associates by surprise.”

Oct. 1: “Some critics are saying that the Common Ground festival obviously appeals predominantly to the 45-year-old white male... Festival director Kevin Meyer said critics needed to be patient, since the festival was still growing.” Story by Daniel Sturm on Common Ground’s diversity problem

Oct. 8: “There’s a very good reason to go whole hog on health care reform rather than choose incremental proposals: You don’t really get into substantial cost savings until you have truly universal coverage.” From Howard Brody’s Health column

Nov. 5: “Benavides survives surge by Virg.”

Incumbent Lansing mayor Tony Benavides narrowly defeats state senator Virg Bernero in a special election by 258 votes.

Dec. 10: “If the Democrats really want to win the White House, they need to go with somebody who has the ability to inspire those who ordinarily would stay away from the picture. That’s why I can win.” Dennis Kucinich, interviewed by Daniel Sturm

2004

Feb. 4: “The absence of Kerry signs, stickers and buttons was striking. A foreigner who stumbled upon the scene might have concluded the candidate was someone named Tommy Hilfiger.” Lawrence Cosentino describes Ted Kennedy’s rally for John Kerry at MSU

May 5: Cover story by Daniel Sturm looks at Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s invitation to speak at MSU’s commencement May 7 and the role of MSU President Peter McPherson in the re-building/occupation of Iraq. The cover draws a parallel to MSU’s controversial role in the Vietnam war by posing Rice as a cheerleader with an MSU banner, just as Madame Nhu, the wife of South Vietnam’s president, was depicted in the April 1966 cover of Ramparts magazine.

May 19: U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers says American firms can expect a new “gold rush” of expanded markets in Iraq.

Jun. 2: “Lansing’s food desert: Inner-city residents campaign for a grocery store” by Daniel Sturm is the first of many City Pulse stories on this theme.

Aug. 18: City Pulse moves from Old Town to new offices at 2001 E. Michigan Ave. “Thousands of people will see us daily at the corner of Michigan and Clemens in the block that is in the heart of the commercial revival of Lansing’s east side,” Berl Schwartz writes.

Oct. 6: “Kowtowing to Dow,” a cover story by Brian McKenna, questions corporate influence at public universities, focusing on Dow Chemical’s ties to MSU.

Oct. 20: “When they want to hand the forest over to the timber industry, they call it the Healthy Forests Act. When they want to destroy the Clean Air Act, they call it the Clear Skies Bill. But most insidiously, they’ve put polluters in charge of the agencies that are supposed to protect Americans from pollution.” – Robert F. Kennedy Jr., in an exclusive interview with City Pulse

Nov. 3: Appolonia Rosas, mother of slain Pvt. Richard Rosas, speaks against the Iraq war at a Critical Mass event at East Lansing’s Ranney Skate Park.

Dec. 15: Michigan’s anti-same-sex-marriage amendment, passed by voters in November, goes into effect. “Writing Fear Into Law,” cover story by Thomas P. Morgan, airs fears over potential loss of domestic partner benefits. “For a lot of people, this is a dark time” – Chris Swope, executive director of Michigan Equality, later to become Lansing city clerk

2005

Drama writer Tom Helma’s diary appears in City Pulse during his son Gabe’s tour of duty in Iraq.

From Helma’s April 20 entry: “We joked a lot at Christmas; non-violent father to non-violent son, remembering how Arnold Schwarzenegger’s character in ‘Terminator II’ had been reprogrammed to only shoot people in the leg. He promised, faced with the option of choosing, to wound rather than to kill.”

Jun. 8: A survey published by Capitol newsletter MIRS finds Virg Bernero among the 10 least effective senators in Michigan, possibly due to a perception “that he focuses too much on Lansing issues and not on state issues,” according to MIRS editor Kyle Melinn. Bernero was making a second run for mayor of Lansing.

Jun. 15: One of the most widely distributed stories in City Pulse’s history whistles up an unexpected tempest from a teapot. Fox News, the Wall Street Journal’s Opinion Journal, the Drudge Report and the National Journal’s Hotline pick up a City Pulse story on a protest gone awry by MoveOn, the liberal political action committee. On June 1, about 20 MoveOn demonstrators mistakenly showed up at the office of Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton, to protest his

financial ties to House Majority Leader Tom Delay, when the target of the protest was actually Mike Rogers, R- Ala. City Pulse takes heat for fueling the scorn of right-wing bloggers, but makes up for it by sampling rabid right-wing blogs with grammatical errors left intact.

Aug. 3: “Benavides on ropes after ringing Bernero win.” Virg Bernero outpaces Lansing mayor Tony Benavides by 20 points in primary election.

Aug. 10: Lansing city attorney Margaret Vroman lets local theater group Sunsets With Shakespeare mount a bloody production of “Titus Andronicus” in a Lansing park after another official, parks and recreation director Murdock Jemerson, refused permission because there would be too much “spewing of blood.” The story by Thomas P. Morgan reports that “Titus Andronicus” contains “14 killings, six severed members, one live burial and one instance of cannibalism.”

“Titus” was so polarizing it inspired City Pulse to run its first and only set of “dueling reviews”, by Tom Helma (negative) and T. E. Klunzinger (positive), Aug. 24.

Helma: “Drunken fraternity students doing a read-through at an MSU fall mixer could have done a better job.”

Klunzinger: “A ‘Titus’ of truly memorable proportions.”

Bob Trezise, CEO of Lansing Economic Development Corp., kept this Oct. 5. 2005, City Pulse cover in his office to spur him to work harder on downtown redevelopment deals, including the redevelopment of the Ottawa Street Power Station into the world headquarters of the Accident Fund Insurance Co. of America.

Oct. 12: Tom Helma brings his son, Gabe, to the Lansing airport to continue his tour of duty in Iraq: “At the airport, I watch him taking the stairs, bounding up to the loading gate. He waves, shouts out with a smile, ‘Just two more months.’ I wave back, then salute him, turning away quickly, trying vainly to hold back tears.”

Oct. 19: “Muffitt, symphony make local music history.”

Timothy Muffitt, the second of four guest conductors vying to replace Lansing Symphony Music Director Gustav Meier, looks like a winner with a pounding Prokofiev Fifth: “A watershed, coming-of-age-night,” reviewer Lawrence Cosentino writes. The following spring, Muffitt gets the maestro job.

Nov. 2: Mary Cusack reviews “The Penis Project,” a display of 100 ceramic penises by artist Sue Long.

“Small, big and enormous; erect and flaccid; thick and thin; straight and crooked, circumcised and uncircumcised; pierced and pink polka-dotted; dressed up in business suits, faux fur, feathers, beads, capes, or nothing but a smile — every conceivable preference is represented in this provocative show.”

Nov. 9: Virg Bernero is elected mayor of Lansing by a nearly 2-to-1 margin over Mayor Tony Benavides. Ingham County Commissioner Chris Swope defeats City Clerk Debbie Miner.

Dec. 21: Tom Helma writes of the imminent return of his son, Gabe, after a year of duty in Iraq. “A welcoming ceremony for the unit is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. There is talk of whether Purple Heart medals will be given out, one posthumously, others for wounds incurred during patrols... Finally then, he is ours to enjoy.”

2006

Jan. 11: Ingham County launches a land bank “that will enable the county to jump ahead of prospective slumlords and acquire rundown houses, repair them, and then sell them to low- to-moderate income families.” Cover story by Thomas P. Morgan.

Williamston Theatre launched, Jan. 11, 2006.

Feb. 8: In a cover story, “LCC’s other drama department,” Thomas P. Morgan writes that the resignation of Lansing Community College President Paula Cunningham “was just the exclamation point on an internal struggle between the president and the Board of Trustees that stretches back to the winter of 2002, less than two years after she took

office as president.”

Feb. 15: Hopes for good relations between the Lansing City Council and newly elected Mayor Virg Bernero founder when Bernero calls Council Vice President Brian Jeffries “a pathetic piece of shit” for blocking the nomination of Bob Trezise as director of the Lansing Economic Development Corp. Bernero apologizes and Jeffries accepts the apology.

Apr. 12: Cover story, “Virg finds the rough,” sums up Bernero’s rocky first 100 days as mayor. Dennis Preston’s cover has Bernero on a golf course, costumed as a superhero, battling a fire-breathing, multi-headed City Council dragon led by frequent Bernero antagonist Carol Wood.

Apr. 26: Eight reporters contribute to Thomas P. Morgan’s panoramic cover story on Neo-Nazi rally at Capitol steps  
April 23: “Protest, shock, curiosity and indifference greet National Socialist Movement.”

Jul. 12: “When the sound grenade detonated at her feet on June 30, Lansing resident Loretta Johnston knew that it was a sign to run.” Daniel Sturm’s cover story follows Michigan Peace Team members from Lansing to the West Bank village of Bil’in, where Israeli soldiers counter protesters with sound grenades, tear gas and rubber bullets.

Jul. 19: City Pulse’s first 10 years were marked by a string of requiems for closing bookstores and music stores. This week, Readmore News Center on Cedar Street. closed after 30 years. “When Barnes and Noble on Saginaw moved in, things started changing,” owner Carolyn Kramer said. “Then came the Internet, and the GM closing. Meijer offered the new Harry Potter book at 50 percent off.” One customer, Mike Sharkey, got a Chicago Tribune at Readmore every day for 30 years and married the girl behind the counter in 1978.

Oct. 18: U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton, interviewed by Berl Schwartz.

Schwartz: If one of your kids were gay, would you call that a lifestyle choice?

Rogers: I would call that a lifestyle choice.

Schwartz: And you would have voted the same way [in support of Michigan’s anti-same-sex marriage amendment]?

Rogers: I would have voted the same way. That doesn’t mean I would have loved my children any less at all, but I believe when you’re taking what is a lifestyle choice into the public arena, into the courtroom like that, it has ramifications, and I just don’t think that would be the right direction for us to go... We tell people who can drive a car. And we give marriage licenses. And we’ve decided that the best cornerstone for that level of acceptance in American society is that marriage should be between a man and a woman.

Oct. 18: The Temple Club, a key Lansing venue for touring rock bands and other events, closes. An attorney for the club tells employees the business was “hemorrhaging money every day.” In its brief heyday, the club hosted well-known acts like the Gin Blossoms, the Reverend Horton Heat, Animal Collective, Cursive and KRS One.

Dec. 6: Rachel Zylstra’s cover story on Lansing’s “food deserts” — where residents have limited or no access to full-service grocery stores — is neither the first nor the last time City Pulse spotlights the problem. A survey shows that 32 percent of northwest Lansing residents pick up some or all of their groceries at gas stations, liquor stores or convenience stores, where junk food predominates.

Dec. 20: The Lansing City Council passes a human rights ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on “irrelevant characteristics,” including sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar crafted the ordinance and shepherded it through Council. Dunbar wrote a piece for City Pulse addressing commonly heard objections to the ordinance. One of them was the dread of cross-dressing men in the workplace.

“Let’s get real for a moment. Gender dysphoria is extremely rare. There weren’t thousands of men sitting at home waiting to this ordinance to pass so they could put on their pantyhose and go to work the next day dressed like Mrs. Doubtfire.”

2007

Feb.21: The never-ending friction between Mayor Virg Bernero and his City Council nemesis, Carol Wood, played out in dozens of City Pulse stories over the decade. When Bernero called Wood supporters to discourage them from going to a fundraiser, politics columnist Kyle Melinn suggested the mayor calm down, “show up [at the fundraiser], cut a \$100 check and wish Wood luck this November. As the old adage goes, ‘Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer.’”

Mar. 7: Lansing goes into shock when Old Town pioneer, artist and Creole Gallery owner Robert Busby is murdered by Ramon Garcia, an itinerant handyman he befriended. Garcia killed himself as police closed in on him in Clinton County.

Cover story, “A Love Supreme, A Loss Supreme,” traces Busby’s life from his years as a line worker at Oldsmobile to his early rehabbing of Old Town buildings in the 1970s to his status as “mayor of Old Town” and leading figure in the art and music renaissance there.

The story ends with a public memorial led by Mayor Virg Bernero at Lansing Community College’s Dart Auditorium.

“In the seats were city officials, factory workers, musicians, artists, gays, straights, men, women, young, old, black and white...It wasn’t a still life in oils or a box of dolls and broken glass, but Busby was a multimedia artist. This diverse crowd, full of grief and swelling with a will to keep him alive any way they could, was his final creation. It was perhaps his most lasting.”

Apr. 11: “His administration has been a catastrophe.” - Former Michigan Governor William G. Milliken, interviewed by Dave Dempsey, on George W. Bush.

Milliken also comments on the state’s deficit problem: “Simply cutting expenditures and costs will not solve the problem...That means also finding new revenues as well as some hard budget reductions.

May 2: “We’re all going to get to know the ‘Cut’ Family very well — K-12 Cut, Public Health Cut, Police Cut, University Cut, Fire Department Cut and Prison Cut, not to mention the extended family members.” - From cover story by Kyle Melinn on Michigan’s budget deficit

Aug. 8: “I am not moving, and I am not giving up Council. When you take on a job, you finish it. My mother taught me that. She expects me to finish this campaign. She expects me to be re-elected. And she expects me to do my job.” - Councilwoman Carol Wood, interviewed by T. M. Shultz after Woods’ mother, neighborhood activist Ruth Hallman, was murdered in her Lansing home July 26.

Oct. 10: Cover story, “Phoenix Rising,” tells the inside story of the biggest redevelopment coup in Lansing’s history. After almost 20 years of false starts, a deal is announced that will transform Lansing’s derelict Ottawa Power Station into the world headquarters of the Accident Fund Insurance Co. of America. The \$190 million project will save a national landmark, spark a downtown revival, and inspire dozens of stories in City Pulse on its many phases of construction over the next three and a half years.

Oct. 17: In a second big development announcement, the city makes a deal with developer Pat Gillespie to build a new City Market next to the river and raze the old market to make room for Gillespie’s mixed-use condo-and-retail development. This time, public reaction is mixed. Another stream of stories in City Pulse will follow the debate on the City Market’s problems, the merits of the old building, and the motives of the parties.

Oct. 31: Lansing’s elusive downtown performing arts center floated like a ghost through dozens of stories in City Pulse, first its first year to its latest. “Don’t forget an arts center,” by “Urban Matters” columnist Gretchen Cochran, made a twofold cultural and economic case to build one: “it is time to invigorate our performing arts community with a place to do what it does best.”

A series of plans, from the early administration of Mayor David Hollister on, came to naught.

Nov. 7: The rise of the Peppermint Creek Theatre Co. and its founder and artistic director, Chad Badgero, roughly parallels the rise of City Pulse in the 2000s, and is the frequent subject of enthusiastic ink from drama reviewers. Cover story follows Chad Badgero from neighborhood plays on his parents’ patio in Mason to the thick of Lansing’s

theater scene. Badgero: "I know it's a grand thought, but our ultimate goal is that people are better after seeing our shows."

Cover story by Bill Castanier on reunion of 1960s radicals at MSU: "[MSU Trustee and former SDS radical Colleen] McNamara is going to the reunion, although she will have to work it in to her daughter's soccer practice."

2008

Jan. 23: MSU unveils the winning design for the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, endowed by the biggest gift in the university's history, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning U.K. architect Zaha Hadid. "If you build what we recommended, you will need a bigger airport," competition juror and Frank Gehry protégé Edwin Chan says. Cover story by Lawrence Cosentino describes the winning design as "a crouching beast of pleated metal plates, not in the same architectural universe as anything else on the MSU campus, or, perhaps, in the entire Midwest."

Mar. 5: As the housing crisis hits Lansing, reporter Neal McNamara visits an Ingham County foreclosure auction, where 35 to 60 houses a week are being auctioned off, up from two or three per week 10 years ago. Outside the courthouse, activists from Community Defense Against Poverty demonstrate for relief. "The dream of becoming a homeowner has become a nightmare," activist Chris Alexander says.

In the coming months, foreclosure announcement inserts in City Pulse run to 20 pages of fine print, almost doubling the paper's thickness.

Aug. 6: Barack Obama visits Lansing for the first time and speaks before 2,000 people at the Lansing Center on his 47th birthday, Aug. 4. "There's no place I'd rather be on my birthday than Lansing, Michigan," he tells them. Obama touts potential jobs from wind and biomass energy and urges the nation to wean itself from foreign oil imports.

Ticket lines to the rally snake for blocks. Obama returned to the Capital area one more time during the 2008 campaign, addressing a rally at MSU Oct. 2.

2009

Feb. 4: As an alternative to the Board of Water and Light's proposed new \$1 billion coal plant, James Clift of the Michigan Environmental Council presents "Plan B," a mix of natural gas and renewables. "It's uncertain how Plan B, a midnight-oil job by overworked and under-funded environmentalists, will stack up against the sophisticated BWL plan, a sophisticated computer model crafted by Ventyx, Inc., a global software and technology giant," writes Lawrence Cosentino.

Two years later, after a contentious public debate, BWL drops plans for the coal plant and adopts a new plan, relying primarily on natural gas, that a BWL exec admits is very similar to Clift's Plan B.

Feb. 18: In City Pulse's 10-year history, Michigan lurched from highly publicized arts initiatives to draconian funding cuts that kept the state at or near the bottom of the nation in arts funding. "From 'cool' to cold: Governor reverses commitment to arts and culture," by Eric Gallippo, reports that Gov. Jennifer Granholm wants to slash the state's arts budget by over 80 percent, and triple the grant application fee from \$300 to \$1,000. "You read stuff like that and say, 'Why do I live in this state?'" asks Emily Sutton-Smith of the Williamston Theatre.

Apr. 15: "Lansing development stars: Where are they now?" Reporter Neal McNamara revisits a wilted bouquet of seven downtown development projects whose start date came and went without event because of the economic downturn: The Lenawee, Capitol Club Tower, Ball Park, City Center Studios, Lansing Gateway, Sobi Square and Market Place.

Apr. 22: City Pulse's 2009 Top of the Town awards featured a bizarre category — Best Movie Role for Virg Bernero. After all the trouble we went through to make a phony poster, Bernero didn't show up at the banquet to pick it up.

Jul. 8: Actor, director, Spotlight Theatre founder and City Pulse theater critic Len Kluge dies July 1 at age 63 of multiple myeloma.

"In a service scripted by Kluge himself and left to his closest companions to carry out, friends and family took the

podium between prayers and the music of the Beatles and Bob Dylan to pay homage to their husband, friend, colleague, neighbor and teacher,” Eric Gallippo writes in a cover story.

Nov. 4: Virg Bernero defeats challenger Carol Wood in a landslide, winning his second term as mayor of Lansing. “Say what you will about Virg Bernero,” writes Kyle Melinn. “He’s bombastic. He’s quick-tempered. He rocks the boat too much. Lansing voters said Tuesday they love him for it.”

Nov. 18: Cover story, “Curing Sprawlitis,” hammers one of the most insistent themes of City Pulse’s 10-year run: “Lansing’s urban landscape is afflicted with the disease of urban sprawl.” Amanda Harrell-Seyburn and Neal McNamara lay out the principles of New Urbanism, including slower car traffic, multi-use zoning and on-street parking, beginning in the Stadium District.

Dec. 16: When readers open up this week’s City Pulse, a 44-page foreclosure listing falls on the floor. Treasurer Eric Schertzing tells reporter Neal McNamara the list of properties heading toward tax foreclosure is over 1,500, compared to 800 last year.

Dec. 23: “I’m Pat Gillespie, your downtown development angel ... I need God to give me a tax incentive, or I can’t build my new loftominiums, and the only way I’ll get it is if I show you it’s a wonderful Lansing!” –From “It’s a Wonderful Lansing,” comic strip with Virg Bernero in the Jimmy Stewart role of the Christmas classic, with story by Neal McNamara and Eric Gallippo and art by Dean Stahl.

## 2010

Feb. 24: Over 5,000 attend a Tea Party rally at the Capitol steps to hear a series of angry speakers, including Joe “The Plumber” Wurzelbacher. “The front of the Capitol dome hadn’t seen this kind of turnout since the Michigan Education Association’s teacher rally in 2005,” Kyle Melinn writes.

May 19: “The curtains closed on BoarsHead Theater Monday night as the Lansing Community College Board of Trustees voted not to pursue a partnership with the now-bankrupt company,” James Sanford reports. Lansing’s oldest professional theater, BoarsHead opened in 1966.

Jun. 9: “The rather unscientific and mostly anecdotal research done by one totally square breeder/drag hag reveals that the gay bar scene in Lansing has never been stronger.” Mary Cusack, “Getting out,” a history of Lansing LGBT nightlife.

Jul. 21: Lansing’s Board of Water and Light scraps plans to build a new \$1 billion coal plant and announces it will build a \$182 million natural gas-powered co-generating plant in REO Town. “Had they moved forward with the coal, it would have been a nightmare, a slugfest,” former Lansing mayor David Hollister comments.

Sept. 15: California sculptor James T. Russell says that “Inspiration,” Lansing’s new 24-foot-tall public sculpture on the Grand River downtown, is a union of the male and female “principles.” “This sculpture is almost climactic in that sense,” Russell says. After it’s installed May 12, 2011, wags take to calling the sculpture “the Vaginis.”

## 2011

Jan. 12: Sidewalk to nowhere? A proposed sidewalk connecting two Lansing parks stirs unexpected controversy ending in charges and counter-charges of race-baiting and alleged threats. Political commentator and “livid property owner” Bill Ballenger says the \$1.3 million sidewalk would be used by “power-walking women” and notes that “lower-income, largely African-American” folks use the path now. Mayor Virg Bernero, the Clergy Forum of Greater Lansing and others sharply criticize Ballenger’s comments. Ballenger, in turn, accuses the mayor of “fanning the flames of racial hatred” and says he has received threats.. “If anything happens to me, it is on [mayor Bernero] and on you,” he writes to City Pulse and WILS-AM radio. Reporter Andy Balaskovitz takes a bike ride on the stretch in question, and columnist Kyle Melinn recalls a “near-death experience” there. “Lansing Township isn’t ‘nowhere,’” Melinn writes. “It’s a collection of neighborhoods and some business. Just like Lansing...but without sidewalks....” Melinn predicts “the sidewalk will inevitably follow.”

Feb. 23: MSU student activists demand the administration set a date to wean itself from burning coal. MSU’s T.B. Simon Power Plant is the largest on-campus coal-fired power plant in the nation. “MSU is preparing students for a

21st-century work force using 19th-century technology,” an activist says.

Mar. 23: Kyle Melinn’s cover story, “Is Anybody Listening?” finds angry backlash against the policies of newly elected state Republicans to be largely ineffectual.

“Carpenters, plumbers, police officers, firefighters, autoworkers, retirees, teachers, college students, high school students...have all congregated at the center of Michigan state government to say no to [Gov. Rick] Snyder and the Republican majorities in the House and Senate. Maybe not since the days of Tent Cities in the early 1990s with then-Gov. John Engler called for the elimination of general assistance has Lansing seen such a consistent flow of voices coming to the Capitol dome. What impact are these voices having on the maker of many of these proposals, Rick Snyder? Not much.”

Mar. 30: City Pulse publishes the biggest issue in its history, a 52-pager featuring “Phoenix Risen,” a 28-page section on the newly completed restoration of the Ottawa Street Power Station into the world headquarters of the Accident Fund Insurance Co. of America.

May. 4: Despite the reluctant support of Mayor Virg Bernero, a millage increase is defeated by 220 votes, leading to widespread layoffs of Lansing police officers, firefighters and other budget cutbacks.

Jun. 8: Cover story, “State of Tarnished Pride,” tracks ongoing legal, psychological and economic fallout of Michigan’s anti-gay-marriage amendment, with bitter testimony from people who have already left the state or want to. “I’ve been all around the country, and Michigan is the most beautiful state in the United States, but I would leave it in a heartbeat,” Lansing resident Dennis Hall says.

Aug. 17: City Pulse celebrates its 10th year of publication.

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## Lansing City Pulse (MI)

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