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10 Years of City Pulse

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The very week I moved to East Lansing from Germany, my wife introduced me to this “great local weekly called City Pulse.” I had begun looking for a job, and having seen my journalistic work in Germany, she must have sensed that it would be a good fit. Germany did not have a tradition of alternative newsweeklies, but I had been working as a reporter for the city of Leipzig’s alternative monthly magazine, Kreuzer (Cruise Ship), which, aside

from offering the city's best illustrated events calendar, made itself a name for breaking stories that shed light on local government corruption, as well as in-depth coverage of the alternative arts and entertainment scene. In addition to Kreuzer, I had also worked for several national and German regional daily newspapers.

When I arrived in East Lansing in 2002, Ingham County Commissioner Lisa Dedden's exposé "The Case against the Pipeline" had just hit the newsstands, as well as Brian McKenna's "The Hollister/GM Offensive," a stinging news analysis of General Motors' new permit to increase its already shockingly high levels of air pollutions. Wow, I thought, here's a newspaper that takes seriously Mother Mary Jones motto of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. And that's why, in a nutshell, this "newspaper for the rest of us" appealed to me.

City Pulse publisher Berl Schwartz offered me a staff writer position over coffee in Lansing's Old Town (where the office was then located). Berl's curiosity for topics near and far wasn't just an expression of a professional mind set. It was part of his open-minded and worldly personality. Berl brought together other qualities that were instrumental in keeping this fledgling newspaper afloat: a nose for the news, drawing from 30 years in mainstream journalism and academia, natural business savvy, and the ability to build and maintain a loyal public. I enjoyed working for a newspaper that attracted illustrators and writers like Justin Bilicki, Lawrence Cosentino, Brian McKenna and Kyle Melinn.

The City Pulse is celebrating its 10th anniversary, and I am proud to have been part of the paper for a little more than two years. I will miss the City Pulse's tenth birthday party, but I will feel never distant from this great newspaper that's for "the rest of us."

Daniel Sturm is German journalist who moved to East Lansing in 2002. He lives in Baltimore with his wife, Angela Jancius, daughter Ruby and two chickens (Yin and Yang). Daniel works for a national nonprofit in D.C. that helps refugees and other immigrants adjust to life in America.

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