



# East Village Magazine

November 2024

Photograph By

*Edwin D. Carter*



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**Reporters** Canisha Bell  
 Christina Collie  
 Harold C. Ford  
 Madeleine Graham  
 Patsy Isenberg  
**Columnist** Paul Rozycki  
**Photographer** Edwin D. Custer

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720 E. Second St.  
Flint, Mich. 48503

**Website:**  
eastvillagemagazine.org

**E-mail:**  
eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com

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## Commentary

# How Trump won: 10 key takeaways from the November 2024 election

By Paul Rozycki

In the November 2024 election, former President Donald Trump won a second term, taking both the Electoral College and the popular vote. It was only the second time that Republicans have won the popular vote since 1988.

What does it mean when a nation elects a convicted felon who promises to be a dictator and arrest his enemies; claims Haitians are eating pet cats and dogs and wind farms cause cancer; and says he will “protect women whether they like it or not”? I can’t say for certain. But I can break down 10 reasons Trump’s campaign came away victorious.

First, Trump increased his winning margins in traditionally Republican rural areas, doing better than he did in his 2020 bid. Yet, surprisingly he also boosted his margin in urban areas as well.

Second, Vice President Kamala Harris did slightly worse than Joe Biden did in 2020 in traditionally Democratic urban areas, seeing an 8 point move to Trump compared to 2020. A number of traditional Democratic groups turned out at lower than expected rates.

Third, the old James Carville maxim of “It’s the economy, stupid” worked against Harris, as did Trump’s campaign trail question, “Are you better off now than you were four years ago?” In many ways the economy is in good shape. The stock market has seen record levels, jobs are available, and the economy is

growing. But inflation is an issue that hits everyone when they go to the grocery store or the gas station, and as an incumbent vice president, Harris was blamed for the “poor economy” in spite of all the good news.

Fourth, issues that would have been fatal to other candidates had no significant impact on the polls. Trump insulted women, Hispanic people, disabled people, and veterans; was convicted of 34 felonies; paid hush money to a porn star; and threatened reporters and those who opposed him with violence, but none of it seemed to hurt his candidacy in the voting booth.

Fifth, the abortion issue that was so powerful for Democrats in the 2022 midterm seemed to have less impact this election. Since the overturning of Roe v. Wade, a number of states moved to protect the right to abortion, and some Republicans have tried to distance themselves from an absolute anti-abortion stance. Of those voters who said abortion should be legal in most cases, the vote split 49-49 in November. In the 2022 midterms, Democrats won those same voters with a 60-38 margin.

Sixth, the gender gap, where women are about 10% more Democratic than men, didn’t grow larger as Harris became the Democratic nominee. In particular, suburban Republican women, who many thought would shift to Harris, didn’t do

*(Continued on Page 6)*



**Photo of the Month:** An old truck is dressed for fall on Fenton Road. (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

## Education Beat

# **A \$690k lawsuit settlement, censure vote at the Flint Board of Ed**

*By Harold C. Ford*

The Flint Board of Education’s (FBOE) fall meetings revealed two prior closed-door votes: a \$690,000 settlement of a 2021 lawsuit brought by former Superintendent Anita Steward, and a rare vote by six FBOE members to censure a seventh member – Trustee Melody Relerford.

### **“A dirty deal”**

For many members of the public, including this reporter, FBOE Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Laura MacIntyre was the first to unveil some details about the settlement of a 2021 lawsuit filed against the FBOE by Steward.

“We were wrongfully sued,” MacIntyre claimed at an Aug. 14 committee of the whole meeting. She called the lawsuit – settled for \$690,000 in favor of Steward – “frivolous, unmerited, unwarranted ... a dirty deal.”

Steward’s now-settled suit accused the board of violating the

Whistleblower Protection Act and Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, charging “tortious interference with her employment agreement and engaging in acts that constituted ‘gross negligence.’”

Steward, a product of Flint schools herself, began her career in the district in 1998 as a sixth-grade teacher. She was later promoted to the role of assistant principal and then principal in 2010 and 2011, with Steward’s ascent up the administrative ladder culminating in her superintendent post in July 2020.

Carol McIntosh, then-board trustee, gleefully dubbed Steward the “homegrown girl” upon her appointment to the top spot by a 5-0 vote of the FBOE.

But a glowing, “highly effective” evaluation of Steward’s performance in December 2020 deteriorated into a 4-3 reprimand vote by June

2021. Among other charges, Steward’s FBOE critics claimed that she failed to keep the board informed about the Flint Education Continuum (FEC) – a massive plan to boost Flint schools supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and sixteen other potential partners.

The FEC never became a reality, and Steward was replaced by Kevelin Jones in September 2021. He became Flint’s eighth superintendent in 16 years.

While MacIntyre called the settlement frivolous and unwarranted, Steward’s attorney, Tom Pabst, told East Village Magazine differently.

“Nobody pays \$690,000 on a non-meritorious claim,” Pabst said in a November 5 interview. “They’d fight it to the death.”

Pabst called Steward “a star” and “a quality person who really cared about the kids” and noted that “nobody

# Education Beat ...

(Continued from Page 4)

with a brain could look at the situation and not realize that Anita Steward had a meritorious claim.”

He maintained the district settled for \$690,000 “because they worried the arbitrator might settle for \$1.5 million.”

“The kids of Flint deserved to have Anita Steward,” Pabst said. “It’s tragic what the kids lost.”

## “Egregious conduct”

Another behind-the-scenes drama also worked its way into the spotlight with a very public censure of Trustee Melody Relerford at the FBOE’s meeting on September 18.

During that meeting, the public learned that the censure was approved by all six of Relerford’s board colleagues during a closed meeting one month earlier on August 22. Only Relerford voted against the measure.

At the September 18 meeting, FBOE President Joyce Ellis-McNeal read a statement citing “three separate complaints [that] were submitted by three separate long-time employees of the district [that included] a senior administrator, a building principal, and a senior administrative assistant.”

Charges against Relerford included “spreading false and defamatory rumors about these employees creating a toxic work environment [that] undermined their ability to serve the district.”

Ellis-McNeal said that an investigation of the charges utilized “an independent law firm with expertise in third-party investigations.” The firm submitted a report to the FBOE in June that found “all three complaints were substantiated.”

The report found that “Relerford violated numerous Board policies including the Board’s workplace safety policy, the Board’s anti-harassment policies, and the Board’s ethics policy.”

MacIntyre called Relerford’s conduct “egregious” and issued an apology to offended parties on behalf of FBOE members.

“She [Relerford] is wrong in fact and wrong in sentiment,” said MacIntyre. “As board members, the worst we can do is sanction another Board member. We have voted to sanction Trustee Relerford for making false and harmful statements.”

MacIntyre said the cost of the investigation into Relerford’s conduct was “almost \$40,000.” ●

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<p><b>Mannheim Steamroller Christmas</b> December 10 • 8:00pm Whiting Auditorium</p>	<p><b>Holiday Pops</b> December 21 • 7:00pm Whiting Auditorium</p>
<p><b>Home Free’s “Any Kind of Christmas” Tour</b> December 12 • 8:00pm Capitol Theatre</p>	
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## Commentary ...

(Continued from Page 3)

so in the expected numbers. The vice president's margin among women was only 8 points, the smallest since 2004. On the other hand, Trump made specific appeals to motivate young male voters.

Seventh, minority voters, who have long been a critical part of the Democratic Party, didn't turn out in the numbers expected for the first minority woman presidential candidate. Young Black and Hispanic males still voted Democratic but saw a larger than usual fraction of their votes go to Trump. Exit polls showed that Trump won 46 percent of the Latino vote, the highest in half a century.

Eighth, in Michigan, the dissatisfaction over the Biden administration's support of Israel cost the Democrats their traditional support among Arab Americans. Early

results showed Harris winning only 36 percent of the vote in Dearborn, while Biden won 68 percent four years ago. Those results showed Trump winning Dearborn by 6 points, while Green Party candidate Jill Stein was pulling 18 percent.

Ninth, as an incumbent vice-president, Harris was facing an anti-incumbent electorate, skeptical of all current officeholders. She got the blame for anything anyone didn't like about the Biden administration – such as immigration policy, the economy, and foreign crises. Voters who said they didn't like either candidate gave Trump a 26 point margin. Historically vice presidents often have an easy time winning their party nomination but rarely get elected. Some voters objected to the fact that Harris didn't go through the primaries to win the nomination, as well.

Tenth, the Blue Wall – those

union, industrial, states that were supposed to belong to Democrats – crumbled. In 2020, Biden carried Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. In 2024, Trump won all of them. In five swing states where there were races for the U.S. Senate, Harris underperformed the Democratic Senate candidates by almost 4 points. Those results suggest a possible realignment of the two parties as Republicans pick up increasing numbers of working class voters, and Democrats find increasing support among college graduates.

So, while I can't be sure what it means that America has chosen Trump, there are some explanations for his victory. As for what happens next, with a Republican Senate, a possible Republican House, a Supreme Court with Trump appointed justices, and Project 2025, there will be much to watch. ●



Candidate signs outside of UAW 651 on Longway Boulevard.

(Photo by Edwin D. Custer)



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**5:15 p.m. | Tree Lighting Ceremony**  
 Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus, Mayor Sheldon Neeley, and Steve & Rosanne Heddy in Durant Plaza

**The Sloan Museum of Discovery**  
 FREE Admission to all four primary galleries | Museum Store open for Holiday Shopping | Hot Cocoa at the Coffee Beanery Café

**Longway Planetarium**  
 5:30-8 p.m. | FREE sampler shows of Cosmic Christmas Light Show

**FIM Whiting Auditorium**  
 5:30-8 p.m. | FREE photos with Mr. & Mrs. Claus (line closes at 7:30 p.m.)

**Flint Institute of Arts**  
 5 & 6:30 p.m. | Free family-friendly short films Glass-blowing demonstrations | Make-and-take art projects in the Arts School

**Additional free entertainment and activities at:**

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- Flint Cultural Center Academy**
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We are accepting donations at Holiday Walk for the Old Newsboys of Flint. Visitors can drop off donations of hats, gloves, coloring books, or crayons in donation bins at each building during Holiday Walk.

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# THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

*Below is a selection of events available to our readers, beginning after our publication date of November 4. To submit events for our December issue, email information about your event to [eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com](mailto:eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com) by November 22.*

## **African American Film Series**

Thursday, Nov. 14 | 5:30 p.m.  
Communities First, Inc. (CFI) will open its 10th Annual African American Film Series with *Butterfly in the Sky*. The event features a free dinner at 5:30 p.m. with the film following at 6:30 p.m. with discussion afterward. The series continues monthly through February 2025. For more information visit CFI's social media pages.  
Flint Institute for the Arts  
1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint

## **Totem Books' Open Mic Night**

Friday, Nov. 15 | 5 p.m.  
Totem Books hosts a monthly open mic night every third Friday of the month. Come to participate or just enjoy!  
Totem Books  
620 W. Court St., Flint

## **Italian Art Songs Meet Jazz**

Sunday, Nov. 17 | 4 p.m.  
Three professional musicians and UM-Flint professors – Frank Pitts III, bass soloist, Brian DiBlassio, composer and pianist, and Joe Wright, woodwind specialist – will present traditional Italian arias with a jazz twist. Tickets \$12 or \$5 for students. MCC and UM-Flint students are free with school ID.  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
711 S. Saginaw St., Flint

## **Turkey Giveaway**

Friday, Nov. 22 | 4 p.m.  
The Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village invites families in the Flint, Mich. area who could use a helping hand during this holiday season to come and collect a free turkey to enjoy with their loved ones.  
Insight Institute of Neurosurgery & Neuroscience  
4400 S. Saginaw St., Flint

## **Wreath Crafting Class**

Friday, Nov. 22 | 5-7 p.m.  
Just in time for the holidays, MarySam's Gardens will host a wreath crafting night! The evening will feature a live wreath making demonstration and the opportunity to design a wreath to take home. Snacks will be provided. Register by texting or calling MarySam's Gardens at 810-308-2311 or emailing [marysams-gardens@gmail.com](mailto:marysams-gardens@gmail.com).  
The Local Grocer  
601 Martin Luther King Ave., Flint

## **Mott Park Turkey Trot**

Thursday, Nov. 28 | Races start at 9 a.m.  
The 68th Annual Mott Park Turkey Trot is a fun run for all ages! All proceeds from the race will directly support the birthday fund for foster youth at Whaley Children's Center, creating unforgettable birthday celebrations and special memories.  
Registration is \$5 to \$10. More information at [shorturl.at/1J1Sb](http://shorturl.at/1J1Sb).  
Mott Park Recreation Area  
2701 Nolen Dr., Flint

## **Inclusive Holiday Party**

Thursday, Dec. 5 | 3-5 p.m.  
Join The Disability Network for its annual free and inclusive holiday party. Enjoy an evening of dancing, dinner, crafts, and more.  
St. Michaels Conference Center  
609 E. Fifth Ave, Flint

## **Strange & Wonderful: An Indie Author Showcase**

Saturday, Dec. 7 | 3-6 p.m.  
Hear a selection of authors read pieces of their work as you browse their books. Meet your next favorite author, and buy a new book for your special someone just in time for the holidays!  
Flint Local 432  
124 W. First Street, Flint







Halloween on Calumet Street  
 (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

# Seeking Writers

East Village Magazine is searching for community journalists! Ideal candidates are curious, engaged Flint residents who want to help keep their neighbors informed of the local news that affects them most. EVM writers receive free training, story writing and editing support, and payment for each published story. (We also have pretty great snacks at our monthly writers meetings.) If you're interested in getting involved, please email us at [eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com](mailto:eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com) with the subject line "Community Journalist."

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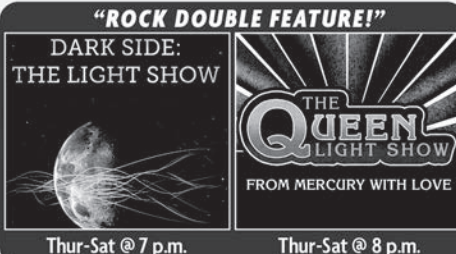
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# As demolition begins on Old Flint Farmers' Market, City of Flint seeks redevelopment partner

By EVM Staff

With the demolition of the Old Flint Farmers' market underway, the City of Flint plans to spearhead redevelopment of the five-acre property at 420 E. Boulevard Drive.

Uptown Reinvestment Corporation (URC) has leased the site from the City of Flint for \$1 per year since 2009. According to a City of Flint press release, that 20-year agreement was signed by then-Acting Mayor Michael Brown, who was appointed Emergency Manager by Governor Rick Snyder in 2011.

standing between the City of Flint and URC, a contractor will complete the demolition of the former market property, and URC will work cooperatively to identify and preserve historical elements of the building, including the original steel support joists, for reuse on a future project.

The demolition will be completed with appropriate backfill in preparation for future redevelopment.

"URC's lease on the former Flint Farmers' Market property

as entertainment opportunities and retail," according to a November 6 City press release.

As for possible site uses post-demolition, the site is zoned "City Corridor" in the Imagine Flint Comprehensive Plan.

That plan describes city corridors as situated to "leverage the economic potential of traffic and help minimize land use incompatibilities by containing a variety of uses in manageable areas of the City." City corridors, according to



The demolition of the former Flint Farmers' Market is underway at 420 E. Boulevard.

(Photo by Kate Stockrahm)

According to the lease agreement, as tenant, URC must pay all costs of insurance, repairs, maintenance, and capital improvements. However, after the construction of the new Flint Farmers' Market downtown, attempts to repurpose the former market site for new development were not successful. "As a result," the City's release reads, "the buildings on the old site have deteriorated and now are a public safety hazard. An engineering assessment shows major structural problems with the buildings."

The release also noted that, per an executed Letter of Under-

will terminate with the demolition of the structures on the site," said Tim Herman, President of Uptown Reinvestment Corporation. "We look forward to supporting the City of Flint in future redevelopment opportunities as they pursue a new vision for the site's next chapter."

The City of Flint Department of Business and Community Services will issue a Request for Proposals for a redevelopment partner before the end of 2024.

"The City envisions a vibrant and dynamic mix of uses, including multifamily housing attractive to different ages and incomes, as well

the plan, have "amenities such as sidewalks, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, and landscaping that make it easy for residents and visitors to walk along the corridor.

City corridors can also host a range of commercial uses, "including grocery stores and large format retailers" and "mixed use development consisting of multi-family uses above ground floor commercial uses."

Any questions about the site or coming bidding process can be directed to Emily Doerr at the City of Flint at [edoerr@cityofflint.com](mailto:edoerr@cityofflint.com). ●

## **Darkness ...**

*(Continued from Page 12)*

frame interesting doors, brick steps, trellises, roof angles and climbing ivy.

We wouldn't so much notice these in daylight, when many details blend together in equalizing swathes of sunbeams. That is, we see things differently in different kinds of light.

Part of the magic is it's never really dark.

Yet night light is different from the light of day - the variegated oranges, ochres and ambers of artificial light, the silvery moonlight through canopies of hardwoods. It is elegant, nuanced, etched in mystery.

We pick blocks to stroll that have the best streetlights, and our progress from one cone of light to another is rhythmic and metered. Like

a good poem, we move from dark to light to dark to light.

One night Vickie said when you walk the neighborhood after dark, it looks like every family is happy. The quality of inside light, enjoyed from our outsiders' view, is serene. It's possible to imagine that lovely light means lovely life - it's possible to imagine, a cozy, hopeful visual illusion.

*Part of the magic is it's never really dark.*

When we walk by the lit-up houses they make us happy. That's a kind of truth, a trick of the darkness and the light we all provide to counter it.

Saint John of the Cross's poem "Dark Night of the Soul" describes

a journey of the soul from its bodily home to its union with God. It's instructive that that trip of the spirit takes place at night. Saint John's pilgrimage involves the "purification of the senses" - a step the darkness accommodates very well.

At night we rest our bodies from the daylight stimulations of eyes and ears, the way in yoga class we sometimes roll soft eyewraps around

our heads to give the brain a break. People need a rest from daylight.

What we find at night can be a journey rich with gifts.

Even in Flint, there can be a happy darkness. ●

### ***Dear EVM Reader,***

We all hope to leave a legacy, an impact that exists long after we make the investment.

Since its inception in 1976, East Village Magazine has kept residents informed and officials accountable. Our articles regularly feature local political commentators, artists, book and theatre reviews, and editorials as familiar as an old friend. EVM also serves as Flint's very own J-School, teaching journalism fundamentals to community members who want to help keep their neighbors informed on the issues that impact them most.

As one of the city's oldest nonprofit publications still in operation, EVM is driven by donations and the volunteers and reporters who see value in tackling hyperlocal issues from a resident-focused lens.

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Thank you for being a part of our village. We're so grateful to serve you.

***Sincerely, Your EVM Team***

# Village Life

## Can there be a happy darkness?

By Jan Worth-Nelson

*This Village Life column originally appeared in the November 2010 issue of East Village Magazine. It is reprinted from Jan Worth-Nelson's book, "That's My Moon Over Court Street: Dispatches from a Life in Flint," which is available at Totem Books, Sloan Museum, Amazon.com, Flint Institute of Arts or by donating \$50 or more to EVM for a signed copy.*

Lately, I've been renegotiating with the dark. Darkness gets a bad rap, including in my own mind. Each year I dread the coming on of longer nights, culminating in the anachronistic switch from Daylight Savings Time. By then, it's dark when I leave for work in the morning and dark when I get home. This long winter darkness is so claustrophobic for me, so depressing, that anticipating it is almost as bad as actually putting up with it.

The literal darkness of winter merges with metaphorical darkness - that "dark night of the soul" that 16th century mystic Saint John of the Cross first defined.

Some of the hardest, most fearful moments of my life have coalesced at roughly 4 a.m. when the world seems most terrifying, most unpromising, most dark.

I know of course that darkness harbors danger. Evil hides in unlit corners - as our faithful neighborhood watch teams rightly point out. It's not just nocturnal critters like possums, raccoons and bats showing up, rattling our nerves and trash cans.

There are human critters all too ready to capitalize on the dark - stalkers and thieves and pyromaniacs, sneaking around with their badass intentions where we can't quite see them.

But it's not really the dark's fault. Back in the day, we feminists used to parade around once a year or

so on Take Back the Night marches, including several through downtown Flint, and though our efforts only seemed to apply when there were a dozen of us or more, it did feel good to shout out that the night belongs to everybody.

At the heart of that movement was a call for safety. For me, there also was a less strident song - that there's something beautiful about the night, something primally necessary to reclaim.

We spend half our lives in darkness. Life is short. Why should I squander half of it in a state of fear

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and resistance? Wouldn't it seem that nature's effect on humans, the yin and yang of day and night, might have an up side?

Why should daylight get all the good press?

Could there be such a thing as happy darkness?

This question bubbled up over friendship - a friendship built on walks and a restless baby.

My neighbor Vickie figured out a stroller ride calmed newborn Frannie and asked if I'd like to come along. We'd meet after dinner and, with a baby buggy between us, explore many streets in the neighborhood.

As Frannie gaped and cooed at passing details, Vickie and I talked about everything, including the languorous sun drooping behind the silver maples of Maxine, Beard, Woodside, Lynwood, Calumet, Blanchard, Kensington. We went wherever we

felt like going.

Eventually Frannie learned to go to sleep without her daily wheeling, but thanks to her daddy holding down the fort, her mom and I kept walking.

As the days shortened, we found ourselves starting out in dusk, each night noting decreasing minutes of light. When finally our whole walk was in the dark, I thought we couldn't keep it up.

There are all kinds of logical arguments, after all, for not going out after dark. It flies in the face of everything we've been taught as women.

We've been marooned in fear. But we enjoyed our nightly strolls so much we didn't want to stop. So we didn't.

We take sensible precautions, but we've found it quite possible to feel at home, in the neighborhood that is our home, even after dark.

Spending three or four hours a week meandering into the night like we own it has been exhilarating and liberating.

It is a luxury. It's an antidote for claustrophobia. It's a guarantee, almost always, of a better night's sleep.

After dark, the neighborhood yields a remarkable glowing magic. This matters to my sense of our place, which so often saddens and worries me.

At night, the houses look calm and inviting, their rectangles and orderly panes of indoor light distinct and intriguing. We appreciate particular front porches, where porch lights

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