



East Village Magazine

January 2025

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Business Manager Nicholas Custer
Contributing Writer Jan Worth-Nelson
Reporters Canisha Bell
Christina Collie
Harold C. Ford
Madeleine Graham
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

Deadlock and Dysfunction: Flint City Council and beyond

By Paul Rozycki

I don't know if the Guinness Book of World Records awards the longest series of votes by a government body that resolved nothing, but, if it does, Flint City Council should be in the running.

Within the last few months the council voted 449 times in an attempt to select a presiding officer and failed to do so, as reported by Mid-Michigan Now. It also failed to fill the vacant seat of Councilman Quincy Murphy, who passed away in late September, after 131 rounds of voting, according to MLive.

After all those votes, the council remains divided 4-4, with no decision reached on either issue as of this writing on Jan. 1, 2025.

Following some of these votes, council members left the meeting, breaking the necessary quorum to continue the meeting. At other meetings, security threats caused some members to leave or stay away from city hall altogether, preventing any official business from taking place.

Atop all of the above, during another meeting, a fight broke out between members of the audience that required police intervention.

In a similar sign of division, nearly all of the sitting members of the council, as well as Flint Mayor Sheldon Neeley, have faced numerous recall attempts.

While perhaps we've become numbed as this disunity

and dysfunction became all too typical of Flint politics, this ongoing division has serious implications for the City of Flint and beyond.

Flint City Council deadlock

With the death of Third Ward Councilman Quincy Murphy, the council became an even-numbered body with votes regularly splitting 4-4. That split has seemingly prevented them from choosing a new president and vice president as required by the city charter, as well as prevented the council from appointing a replacement for Murphy.

In a nine-hour meeting on Nov. 11, the council voted 345 times and split 4-4 in an attempt to select the Council president, with four members supporting Seventh Ward Councilwoman Candice Mushatt and four supporting Ninth Ward Councilman Jonathan Jarrett. Murphy had been part of the group that supported Mushatt before his passing, and his absence seems to have led to the deadlock that continued over several meetings and several months. The Nov. 11 meeting ended only when the Mushatt supporters left and there was no quorum to continue.

That same gridlock was also reflected in the repeated 4-4 tie votes to appoint a replacement for Councilman Murphy. To add to that confusion, in Flint's Nov. 5 general election, Murphy's name was still on the ballot, as he had been facing a recall before his passing. State officials had ruled the recall election

(Continued on Page 7)

Cover: Snow falling in the woods. (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)



Photo of the Month: Winter's frost. (Photo by Edwin D. Custer)

Education Beat

Flint Schools: Academic improvement clouded by financial challenges

By Harold C. Ford

During his recent visit to Flint Community Schools (FCS), Michigan Superintendent of Instruction Michael Rice both lauded the district's recent academic achievements and tempered that praise with concerns around the district's budget.

"I want to commend the district for progress under the partnership agreement," Rice said during an appearance before the Flint Board of Education (FBOE) on Dec. 18, 2024.

Initially, FCS found itself in an expanded partnership with the Michigan Department of Education in July 2018 after being designated as "chronically failing." At that time, FCS was expected to increase student attendance to 90 percent, reduce out-of-school suspensions by 10 percent, and increase state exam performance by at least 10 percent. A newer iteration of that partnership began Apr. 17, 2023, which included the Genesee Intermediate

School District, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and Michigan State University.

During his December visit, Rice specifically noted "new literary resources, classroom libraries that reflect diverse authors and helped to increase student engagement in literacy instruction" and "small-group targeted literacy interventions" and use of multiple grants "to provide professional development for staff."

He cited these initiatives as "an essential step toward improving instruction and, by extension, student achievement" and said the district's "alignment of resources with evidenced-based strategies" demonstrated its commitment to continuous improvement.

"At the same time," the superintendent cautioned, "it is essential to address some of the district's larger structural challenges." He then

encouraged FCS leadership toward the goal of a "structurally balanced budget in which recurring revenue is equal to recurring expenditures."

"Substantial improvements"

For its own part, FCS had issued a public statement on Dec. 12, 2024 that provided some details about meeting 18-month benchmark goals in literacy and mathematics.

According to the statement posted to its website, FCS demonstrated "substantial improvements in M-STEP/PSAT literacy and math and NWEA scholar growth in reading and mathematics."

M-STEP is the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress that assesses student achievement in English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science in grades 3-11. The PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test), a creation of the

Education Beat ...

(Continued from Page 4)

College Board, is administered in grades 8-10 and measures proficiency in English language arts, math, science, and social studies.

NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) is a division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt that creates academic assessments for students in pre-K through grade 12.

Notably, however, no FCS test data for these assessments accompanied its Dec. 12 statement.

The statement further noted “systems improvement,” including classroom coaching, literacy support, and “data-driven decision-making” as well as upgrades at Potter Elementary and the district’s Brownell/Holmes campus.

“Structural deficit”

While recognizing FCS improvements in December, Rice also addressed the dire, long-term, and ongoing financial profile of the school district.

He noted a \$14 million annual recurring deficit – as reported by Chandra Cleaves, FCS finance director – “a fact,” he said, “that was obscured by the substantial Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funding” (better known as COVID-relief funding) that FCS received in the wake of the pandemic.

Rice reported that Cleaves told him, “continuing to spend in the same fashion would fully drain [the district’s] fund balance in two and a half years.”

The superintendent then concluded to the FBOE: “It’s critical that you reduce and ultimately eliminate the structural deficit so that you are able to fully serve Flint students.”

As he did on his last visit in November 2023, he emphasized that rightsizing the district’s building lineup, staff, and budget will allow FCS more time to focus on the needs of its

students.

Rightsizing and indebtedness

Rightsizing Flint’s public school system has been a recurring theme for decades as student counts plummeted, state aid shrank, and a bloated building lineup and staff size sapped the district’s diminishing financial resources.

While the call for FCS to right-size has echoed again and again from auditors, financial advisors, state officials, citizens, district employee groups and administrators, as well as FBOE members, a few examples include:

- November 2019: “Even with an austere budget augmented by massive cuts in spending, the FCS deficit would not be erased until the 2035-36 school year ...” – East Village Magazine (EVM) report
- November 2019: “We have too much infrastructure for the number of students we’re trying to educate.” – Derrick Lopez, then-FCS superintendent
- May 25, 2023: “You only need half of the existing buildings.” – Nicole Blocker, senior vice president of the district’s auditing firm at the time
- June 2023: “Once that [COVID-19] money dries up, if careful adjustments are not made, the district could be facing a financial cliff.” – Brian Jones, FCS interim chief financial officer
- June 2023: “We need to get rid of these dilapidated schools.” – A.C. Dumas, community activist
- June 2023: “You guys have done zero to address your operational deficit ...” – Bruce Jordan, teacher union official, during a FBOE meeting
- Jan. 26, 2024: “The situation in Flint Community Schools, with approximately \$56,093,404 in debt, with an operational deficit of \$14,420,492 ... is undoubtedly challenging.” – FCS press release
- Apr. 4, 2024: “Flint Communi-

ty Schools remains committed to making informed decisions regarding the right-sizing, closure, and repurposing of buildings...” – joint statement by United Teachers of Flint and FCS

The FCS financial profile rocketed into red numbers with a \$20 million loan taken out by the district in 2014. That same year, then-auditing firm Plante Moran informed FCS leadership that it was encumbered by debt totaling \$22 million.

The district’s massive debt has plagued the administrations of at least seven FCS superintendents: Linda Thompson (2008-12); Lawrence Watkins (2013-15); Bilal Tawaab (2015-18); Gregory Weatherspoon (2018); Derrick Lopez (2018-20); Anita Steward (2020-21); and Kevelin Jones (2021-present).

The debt has been exacerbated by declining student enrollment and loss of concomitant state aid. FCS enrollment peaked at 47,867 students in 1968. Rice told the FBOE that FCS enrollment currently stands at 2,732 students.

A building lineup that was once 54 structures has very recently been whittled to ten. Over 41 years, FCS leadership closed 45 buildings from 1976 to 2017, an average of more than one building each year. For the next seven years, during a period of precipitous loss of students, no FCS buildings were completely shut down until this school year when Pierce Elementary was shuttered. Neithercut, Eisenhower, and ALA (Accelerated Learning Academy) buildings are to follow in the next two school years.

“It’s critical that you reduce and ultimately eliminate the structural deficit so that you are able to fully serve Flint students,” Rice reminded the FBOE in December.

“Decades in the making”

Following Rice’s comments, FBOE members were provided a

Education Beat ...

(Continued from Page 5)

chance to respond. Laura MacIntyre, the board's assistant secretary/treasurer, was first up.

"I'm hopeful we can continue the partnership," she said. "We're in a structural deficit ... decades in the making ... that has been designed to weaken public education and to take away autonomy from particularly vulnerable districts like Flint."

She further asked that those in partnership with FCS "help us rectify those decades of structural deficiency instead of making us responsible."

"Flint was the exception"

Notably, Flint was passed over by the State of Michigan last school year as lawmakers approved \$114 million from the state School Aid Fund to pay off the legacy debts of several current and former school systems that faced financial distress including Pontiac, Benton Harbor,

Muskegon Heights, Ypsilanti, Willow Run, and Inkster.

Rice acknowledged this in his response to MacIntyre.

"State policy has undermined public-school districts across the state," Rice agreed, "particularly urban public-school districts, without

(And that each student takes with her/him nearly \$10 thousand in state aid to the school s/he attends, including public charters.)

"These PSAs are predominantly ... in urban areas [like Flint] ... largely unfettered, largely able to grow without challenge," Rice said.

"It is awkward to be sitting in a chair having to deal with past bad decisions."

a doubt."

Rice also noted that charter schools – also called public school academies (PSAs) – comprise 14 of the 35 school districts that currently operate in Genesee County.

A 2024 study by EVM found that, if combined, the recent enrollment numbers of charter schools in Genesee County – 6,442 students – would make charters the second largest school population in the county.

"It does not serve us well."

Finally, Rice addressed Flint's exclusion from the list of schools that received debt relief from the state in December 2023.

"It is awkward to be sitting in a chair having to deal with past bad decisions," he said. "I tried to get debt relief for seven school districts in the state and we were successful with getting debt relief for six of them. Flint was the exception." ●



Flint Community Schools Administration Building on the corner of Crapo and Kearsley.

(Photo by Harold C. Ford)

Commentary ...

(Continued from Page 3)

null and void prior to election day, but the ballots had already been printed and a number of people cast votes anyway.

The public reaction

Council's repeated deadlock has meant that much of the usual business of the body remains on the back burner to the frustration of citizen groups.

In a December letter to the Council, Flint Neighborhoods United (FNU), a coalition of neighborhood groups, wrote:

It has been deeply distressing to see the most basic of city business left on the table due to disagreements not on the policy of these resolutions, but due to other governance issues. It is clear that our council is currently divided into 2 groups of four members each, with deep disagreements and concerns about trust that are not likely to abate any time soon ... As a coalition of community organizations, we are asking that in tonight's meetings and those going forward, that issues around the election of a Council President and 3rd Ward appointment be considered in meetings, but after resolutions, ordinances, and city board appointment items in any council agenda.

What got done and what didn't

FNU's letter did seem to have some impact, and while the Council remained deadlocked over the appointment of its president and filling Murphy's seat, it did take action on some items last month. It approved funds for new equipment for the fire department, additional funds for police vehicles

and water line replacement, as well as completed a land sale needed for ongoing development at the former Buick City property.

Yet many issues remain unresolved.

The city has been unable to complete a number of important grants and contracts, which include a \$472,000 grant dealing with Michigan State Housing Development Neighborhoods and a contract for a pipeline under the Flint River.

As its deadlock continues the council has been sued by the city's Ethics and Accountability Board, which asked the court to require the council fill Murphy's seat. In response, Judge Elizabeth Kelly ordered court-supervised mediation in an attempt to break the deadlock, and retiring Judge Celeste Bell was appointed to mediate. That process starts this month.

In a further attempt to resolve the impasse, Mayor Neeley's office moved to have an "ambassador" appointed to respond to the concerns of the citizens of the Third Ward while Murphy's seat remains empty.

Governmental dysfunction beyond Flint City Council

Unfortunately while the focus has been on the deadlock within Flint City Council, it's hardly unique. In our age of divisive politics and partisanship, many other governing bodies are facing similar conflicts.

In Genesee County, both the Flint Community School Board and the Mott Community College Board of Trustees have been facing deep divisions and conflicts as they try to make policy for their respective organizations.

On the state level, Democrats have had control of the governor's office, the State House and the State Senate for the first time

(Continued on Page 11)



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If interested, please contact Ed Custer at edcvster@gmail.com or mail to East Village Magazine, 720 E. Second St. Flint, MI 48503

THIS MONTH IN THE VILLAGE

Below is a selection of events available to our readers, beginning after our January publication date. To submit events for our February issue, email information about your event to eastvillagemagazineflint@gmail.com by January 29.

An Epitome of Times and Fashions: Clothing and Society in Hawthorne's America

Tuesday, Jan. 14 | 6 p.m.

This lecture, led by the Dean of the College of Sciences and Liberal Arts at Kettering University, Dr. Babak Elahi, examines Nathaniel Hawthorne's depictions of dress and connects them to visual representations of clothing in paintings, a gravestone, and early advertisements for ready-to-wear clothing in "department stores" – an innovation in American consumer society of the 1840s.

Flint Institute of Arts

1120 E. Kearsley St, Flint

Flint Under the Stars: The Outfit and LEROY

Wednesday, Jan. 15 | 7 p.m.

Dance your winter blues away with two area bands. The Outfit is a string band from Southeast Michigan featuring fiddle, upright bass, acoustic guitar, banjo, mandolin, and three lead singer songwriters. LEROY is an improvisational rock band based out of Flint known for blending genres and getting audiences dancing. Tickets are "donate what you wish" with all proceeds benefiting KidsTix, a program that expands access to the arts by providing admission to live performances for children and their families.

FIM Capitol Theatre

140 E 2nd St, Flint

Rough Draft Café Community Writing Center

Wednesday, Jan. 15 | 7 p.m.

UM-Flint's Community Writing Center, the Rough Draft Café, provides writing support services to community members. Whether you need writing tools and strategies to tune-up your resume or a sounding board for your next writing project, RDC staff happily work with you on your academic, creative, and professional writing on a first-come, first-served basis.

Gloria Coles Flint Public Library

1026 E. Kearsley St, Flint

Open Mic Night

Friday, Jan. 17 | 6 - 8 p.m.

This month is musicians-only on Cafe Rhema's new bar-side stage. Event is free with food or beverage purchase. Musicians can expect a 20 minute slot and should arrive by 5:30 p.m. Sign up at <https://shorturl.at/kTKZC>.

Café Rhema

1026 E. Kearsley St, Flint

Celebration of MLK Day

Saturday, Jan. 18 | 12 - 2 p.m.

Join your neighbors for this annual community event filled with music, encouragement, and inspiration where speakers and guests will emphasize the vital connection between caring for ourselves and our community. This year's theme is "Mission Possible." All are welcome!

Gloria Coles Flint Public Library

1026 E. Kearsley St, Flint

Selma

Saturday, Jan. 18 | 2 p.m.

The New McCree Theatre will be showing Selma, a historical drama depicting a march for suffrage led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama that ultimately culminated in President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The New McCree Theatre

4601 Clio Rd, Flint

Grown Up Book Fair

Saturday, Jan. 18 | 6 - 8 p.m.

Featuring new and used books from local book sellers R & B Used Books and other amazing vendors. Make your own bookmarks, buy a new book to start, or bring an old book to finish! Cash Bar with food, drinks and snacks available for purchase at the Coffee Beanery Café. Plus, the entire museum will be open to explore after hours. Tickets \$5 per person.

Sloan Museum of Discovery

1221 E. Kearsley St, Flint

Meet the League

Thursday, Jan. 30 | 5 - 7 p.m.

This event is an opportunity for new and old members of the Junior League of Flint, an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, to mingle with prospective members looking to learn what it means to be a member.

Queens' Provisions

421 Garland St, Flint

Writer in Residence Book Release

Saturday, Feb. 1 | 2 - 4 p.m.

Hear from Buckham Fine Art Project's fourth Writer in Residence, Jenifer Fernandes Veloso, at the release event for "Observations, Volume 4" which features a collection of compositions created for BFAP's Writer in Residence from October 2023 to September 2024.

Buckham Gallery

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Flint Repertory Theatre



A Driving Beat

By Jordan Ramirez Puckett

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Flint City Bucks add three University of Wisconsin standouts to 2025 roster

By Kate Stockrahm



The 2019 Flint City Bucks team celebrates their national title win.

(Photo courtesy Flint City Bucks)

The Flint City Bucks have signed three University of Wisconsin players for the upcoming USL League Two (USL2) season, pending league and federation approval.

If all is okayed, Ellis Jones, Thomas Raimbault, and Matthew Zachemski will join the Bucks after helping the University of Wisconsin Badgers to a 7-5-3 record, just one goal shy of Big Ten Tournament qualification.

According to a Bucks press release just before the new year, Ellis Jones is sophomore defender who started 13 matches this past fall, scoring once. He is a native of Wednesbury, England and has already appeared in USL2, most recently with the Western Conference champions FC Tucson last summer.

Thomas Raimbault is a junior forward and native of Wellington, New Zealand. He recently finished his second season at Wisconsin where he has six goals and four assists in 28 games. Before transferring to the Badgers, Raimbault made 15 appearances as a freshman at the University of California Los Angeles, including in two NCAA Tournament matches during the Bruins' Round of 16 run.

Before college, Raimbault played club soccer with Vancouver Whitecaps FC, amassing 36 goals for the club's U-17, U-19 and U-23 youth sides. He is also on the New Zealand national team radar, having attended camps at both the U-17 and U-20 levels.

Matthew Zachemski is a freshman midfielder that tallied three goals and three assists while starting 14 matches. He was named to the Big Ten All-Freshman team after this past fall season.

An attacking midfielder, the Itasca, Illinois native was also named by TopDrawerSoccer.com to its nationwide freshman second team, and previously played for Sockers FC in Chicago.

The Bucks have qualified for league playoffs 26 times in 28 chances — claiming four national titles (most recently in 2019), 11 conference championships (most recently in 2023), and 16 division crowns (most recently in 2024). The news of the incoming Badger trio arrives on the heels of learning two beloved Bucks players were selected by Major League Soccer (MLS) teams in the 2025 MLS SuperDraft at the end of December 2024.

Michael Adedokun, a senior from Ohio State University, was picked 13th overall by CF Montréal and Barzee Blama, a sophomore at Mercer University was taken 77th overall by Charlotte FC.

With Adedokun's and Blama's achievements, the Bucks have now sent 107 alumni to MLS since the draft began in 1999, remaining the world's only club to see a player join the league in all 25 years of the SuperDraft era. ●

Parks & Rec in Flint and Beyond: Kearsley Park

By Christina Collie

This article is the second in a series East Village Magazine is producing about parks and recreational areas to explore in Flint and surrounding areas within 20 miles.

*Kearsley Park
1830 Kearsley Park Blvd.
Flint, MI 48504
Hours: Dawn - Dusk*

With snow beginning to fall, my editor asked if I could write about a park with a sledding option this month. I've had others mention to me that they remember sledding at Kearsley Park as a kid, so I thought this would be a good time to write about this gem. (Oh, and the sledding hill is immediately off the parking lot, so you can't miss it!).

For some reason, I remembered Kearsley Park as having a dirt path, but the path is actually paved. However, it runs parallel to Gilkey Creek, making the area around the path prone to flooding in some plac-

es, so be sure to go after a dry spell.

There is a parking lot right off of Kearsley Park Boulevard with steps that take you down to the main path, but you can also reach the park via foot or bicycle by an entrance off of Robert T. Longway Boulevard. The latter entrance is clearly marked with a large park sign across the street from the entrance to Mott's Applewood Estate.

Aside from the park's paved path, there is also a historic pavilion next to the parking lot, officially called the "Genevieve Donnelly Pavilion." The pavilion was built in 1920 and was originally used as a changing area for a public swimming pool that was located where there's now a nice playground with wood-chips as the base under the equipment.

According to reporting in "Flint Our Community Our Voice," the pool was removed in the 1980s due to budget and safety concerns. But, the pavilion remains and is available to rent for events by con-

tacting the Flint Parks & Rec office at (810) 766-7426 extension 2715.

As for the park's larger history, Keep Genesee Beautiful notes that Kearsley Park was formed in 1917 when 60-acres of land was donated to the city. At that time, it was the largest parcel of land owned by the City of Flint.

Kearsley Park has a second playground aside from the one near the pavilion. It is quite a ways down the main path. To get to this second playground, make a right onto the path after crossing the small bridge that is visible from the parking lot and walk about a quarter mile to reach the playground, which also includes a couple of picnic tables.

I love this park for short explorations with my dog because of its many small bridges. However, there is sometimes broken glass in the parking lot and on the paths around the pavilion, so it's a good idea to keep an eye out if you are there with a dog.

Happy exploring! ●



A view of Genevieve Donnelly Pavillion in Flint's Kearsley Park. (Photo by Christina Collie)

Commentary ...

(Continued from Page 7)

in 40 years. However, during the recent lame duck session, Democrats achieved less than expected because of divisions in their party and Republicans refusing to attend sessions. Those divisions may grow worse when Republicans have the majority in the State House in 2025.

Then there is the U.S. Congress. While Republicans will have a majority in both the House and Senate, it will be a very narrow majority of just a handful of seats. If the recent vote on the House speaker is any indication, there are already signs of division within the Republican Party as Donald Trump begins his second term.

The dangers of governmental dysfunction

While it's easy to shake our heads and say "that's just the Flint City Council," governmental dysfunction and deadlock present more worrisome implications.

We expect the government to deliver some services, whether

those be national defense, well-paved roads, or garbage pickup, and when they can't do that we begin to distrust the whole system.

Nationally, that distrust has been growing for many decades. According to the Pew Research Center, in the mid-1960s, 77 percent of the public said they trusted

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the government to "do the right thing most of the time." Today that number has shrunk to just over 20 percent. When that distrust grows, democracy itself is at risk, and it becomes more tempting to support an authoritarian leader who says "give me all the power and I will fix everything."


As I discussed last month, there are many possible reasons for the rise of Donald Trump, but distrust in government is definitely one of them.

For better or worse, Flint may be a harbinger of many things beyond our borders: In a time when leaders have made it a habit to break with tradition and challenge norms, we had a Don (Williamson) before the nation had a Donald Trump. We had a water crisis before a number of other communities found they also had lead in their water.

While Flint has served as a prelude to a number of things beyond its borders, that also means it's possible for Flint to serve as an example of how we might end those divisions. One hopeful sign is the action the Council took on Jan. 8 to schedule a primary election on May 6 and a general election on Aug. 5 for the Third Ward seat.

One can only hope that 2025 will bring an end to Flint City Council's deadlock and that other governments will follow Flint's lead and find a way to make democracy work. ●

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Village Life

New year, new resolutions

By Kate Stockrahm

I've always had mixed feelings about new year's resolutions.

On the one hand, I feel foolish pretending the change of a calendar date will motivate me to do all the things I should (but don't) do anyway, like drink more water or eat less red meat.

But on the other hand, what's so awful about setting goals?

A quick Google search of "new year's resolutions" brings up many of the things we promise ourselves we'll start doing every January: "save more money," "eat healthier," and "spend more time with family," all fall into the top results.

These are worthwhile pursuits of course, and I don't fault anyone working toward them this year. In fact, I sincerely hope that they succeed.

But when my family and friends asked me about my 2025 resolutions (as required during every lull in conversation over a holiday buffet table), I had nothing for them this time.

"I don't really have any," I'd say, grabbing a handful of potato chips and a third Christmas tree-shaped sugar cookie.

This would prompt a good-natured, "Oh, really? Not a resolution person, huh?"

Is that so bad? I'd think, now inexplicably going for a fourth cookie even though I'd stopped being hungry two hours before.

Instead of sharing my thoughts, however, I found myself trying to be a good sport and offering up something like: "Oh. Well I don't want to call it a resolution, but I'm going to try to keep a pescatarian diet next year."

Will I though? Meh, maybe. I do love sushi.

When examining my reluctance to set any resolutions post-holiday parties, I realized that what I don't like about making them is the fact I've rarely kept them in the past.

And worse still: I know that's my own fault.

Though each year goes up in number, the hours in their days stay the same. I know I can't exercise more if I don't also do less of something else – and figuring out what I want to do less of each December doesn't bring me any joy. And shouldn't joy be part of our new year's aspirations?

family functions this month), I've decided that I'm going to set joyous, reasonable ones for 2025.

Here's my working list:

- Eat a full ball of burrata all to myself
- Compliment a stranger on their outfit
- Give up on a book I don't like rather than finishing it because I feel like I have to (and the characters will somehow know if I don't)
- Wear more patterns
- Go on a walk with no destination in mind
- Learn the name of each dog I meet
- Visit a museum I've never been to before
- Fail at any one of the above and be fine with it

While none of these resolutions may wind up in the top 10 of a Google search anytime soon, they all feel achievable in the time I already have – not time I feel obligated to make – in 2025.

And maybe that will be the trick to actually keeping them this time through.

All this to say: here's to a new year full of burrata, conversations with strangers, good books, and learning new things. I wish you and yours a happy,

healthy, and joyous 2025, no matter your resolutions (or lack thereof)! ●



So, rather than spurn creating resolutions altogether (or continue to make them up at work events and