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Indigenous Perspectives on National Parks and Public Lands

Photo by Aimee Bingham

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Wednesday Nov. 19th 2025, the Chelsea District Library hosted a discussion and learning opportunity for Library patrons. Dr. Kyle Whyte, Dr. Whyte is a George Willis Pack Professor in the School for Environment and Sustainability and University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor at The University of Michigan. He is founding Faculty Director of the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment, Principal Investigator of the new Environmental Justice + Humanities Hub, co-Principal Investigator of the Global Center for Climate Change and Transboundary Waters, Faculty Associate of Native American Studies, Principal Investigator of the Secretariat for the Pathways Alliance for Change and Transformation, STRIDE Committee member, affiliate Professor of Philosophy, and Senior Fellow in the Michigan

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BALLET CHELSEA'S MAGICAL NUTCRACKER PERFORMANCE

Photos courtesy Michael Bessom Photography

Let the holiday season begin. Step into the Land of Sweets with Ballet Chelsea's 28th Annual Nutcracker - the perfect festive outing for families and friends. Ballet Chelsea is collaborating once again with the Jackson Symphony Orchestra at the Potter Center, December 12–14. Make the day extra sweet with the

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A Brief Stop: Chelsea Senior Center Helping Seniors Live with Confidence

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For many older adults, a trip to the store is not as simple as it once was. Limited mobility, caregiving demands, fixed incomes, or unreliable transportation can turn even the

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Step Back in Time at Chelsea's Historic Homes Tour

The Chelsea Area Historical Society (CAHS) invites you to celebrate the season with its beloved

Semi-Annual Historic Homes Tour, taking place Saturday, December 6, from 1–4 p.m. as part of Chelsea's Hometown Holiday festivities.

Wander through six beautifully preserved historic homes, each lovingly decorated for the holidays and brimming with stories from Chelsea's past. Knowledgeable guides will be on hand to share the charming tales and rich histories that make each home a treasured part of our community.

Bundle up, bring a friend, and enjoy an afternoon filled with the warmth of history, holiday cheer, and hometown spirit.

Tickets

Find all the details and purchase tickets online at www.ChelseaHistory.org, or stop by one of these friendly local spots:

- Chelsea Hometown Pharmacy
- The Garden Mill
- CAHS Museum (open Saturdays, noon–3 p.m.)

Every ticket purchased helps support the ongoing efforts of the Chelsea Area Historical Society, keeping our shared history alive for generations to come.

Chelsea Painters Hold Pop Up Art Fair

Art Sale: Chelsea Painters is in their 50th year of art fair in Chelsea. In December many members will share their art with a "Pop Up" Art Fair. Sunday December 7 12-4 at the Chelsea Community Fairgrounds service building.

Indigenous Perspectives on National Parks and Public Lands

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Society of Fellows. His list of accolades, previous work and research are too long to list. But, he is an impressive scholar, educator, and environmental activist. The McKune room was packed.

When Dr. Whyte began speaking, I felt myself get uncomfortable. I'm going to be as honest as possible and face judgment with the hope that if you feel the same way, you will learn, as I did during his discussion. He explained that when the US initiated the effort to preserve National Parks, people were removed from their land. I didn't know that. Naïve, yes, and blissfully unaware. I know historically the US has removed people from their land. I know this act was violent and tragic for the people removed. I was uncomfortable because I feared he was going to tell the audience that the ethically right thing to do is to give back the land. I am admittedly selfish and don't want to lose our national park access. Initially, I was uncomfortable with the discussion. I know, I know, how incredibly selfish to want to keep something that is stolen from the rightful owners.

Dr. Whyte defined the term Indigenous. Native Americans are indigenous, but there are indigenous people all over the world. Indigenous people had their own form of government but a new regime stepped in and removed their right to govern themselves. Often, these people were not represented in the new government. Often they were exposed to horrific human rights violations. Aborigines in Australia, for example, could not vote and were forced into unpaid labor. Dr. Whyte asserted that indigenous people are historically more successful at meeting the goals of the National Parks with fewer resources. He used the Menominee tribe in Wisconsin. It owns and manages the Menominee Forest. It is a 230,000-acre forest and has been managed by the tribe for 160 years. It is a well-known example of sustainable forestry world-wide. He then brought up the Sault St, Marie Tribe in Michigan. 20% are subsistence farmers but the tribe has the smallest land base. They make no decisions on habitats and the habitats are declining. He suggested the Hiawatha National Forest should be a part of their land base and the tribe should have a voice in how it's managed.

What I learned from Dr. Whyte, through example after example, was that allowing Indigenous people a say in how lands dedicated to conservation is managed produces a better outcome at a lower cost. He also alleviated my fears that I would not be able to enjoy the National Parks if its management was not handled as it is today. Conservation, to indigenous people, does not mean removing people from the land. He detailed a legal fight between loggers and the First Nations of Vancouver Island. The First Nations won the legal battle. Vancouver Island is still a tourist destination and offers a rich educational experience to visitors. Visitors are only asked to be respectful of the culture and heritage of the area. Peru's Potato Park is one such area and Peru is the only nation in the world hitting what the Worldwatch Institute calls "the sustainability sweet spot," balancing both high levels of human development with environmentally sustainable levels of resource consumption. Unlike my initial fear, allowing Indigenous cultures to manage conservation areas does not mean losing the ability to visit. It means reducing costs associated with conservation and increasing protections for the areas.

A Brief Stop: Chelsea Senior Center Helping Seniors Live with Confidence

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most essential errands into real hurdles. Beginning December 2, the Chelsea Senior Center is stepping up to quietly and respectfully help with the kind of neighborly care that has long defined the organization.

The Chelsea Senior Center's newest initiative, A Brief Stop, is a discreet personal needs closet offering adult briefs, pads, and related care products to area seniors. The goal is simple, explains Jennifer Smith, CSC Executive Director: "We want to meet needs with dignity and ensure that seniors can go about their daily lives with confidence, comfort, and one less worry."

Located inside the Chelsea Senior Center at 512 Washington Street, A Brief Stop is designed to supplement regular needs and be a discreet, easily accessible, frequently available space.

Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., A Brief Stop welcomes all area seniors. Membership at the Senior Center is not required. Visitors provide basic information, and while supplies are free of charge, reasonable limits are in place to ensure that as many seniors as possible can benefit each week. Donations of products and financial support will help keep the shelves stocked, and volunteers play a central role in creating a warm, welcoming, respectful environment.

Staff and volunteers emphasize privacy, kindness, and the belief that no one should have to choose between personal comfort and daily connection with family, friends, and community.

Chelsea Senior Center is already looking beyond its doors, planning outreach to homebound seniors starting with their current Meals on Wheels recipients and caregivers who regularly visit the building.

A Brief Stop is the latest expansion of Chelsea Community Senior Services (C2S2), launched by Chelsea Senior Center in 2013 as a grassroots partnership focused on helping older adults age safely and independently in their own homes. "All that we offer through the Chelsea Senior Center seeks to support our community members as they age," says Executive Director Jennifer Smith, "allowing seniors to live safely, independently, in a familiar environment regardless of age, income, or ability, and to live each day as they choose." Today, C2S2 continues to be at the core of Chelsea Senior Center's mission.

That mission now includes a robust array of services: the Senior Nutrition Program which includes home-delivered meals as well as onsite senior café meals, blood pressure checks, a notary public, paper shredding services, Secretary of State Mobile Office appointments, technology support, mending services, caregiver respite, transportation to and from doctor's appointments, and tax preparation assistance in addition to Chelsea Senior Center's regular offerings such as support groups, fitness and movement classes, enrichment programs, and countless opportunities to socialize and stay engaged.

The launch of A Brief Stop is made possible thanks to recent funding from the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, allocated to the Chelsea Senior Center and 10 other senior centers. Collected through the county's Older Persons Millage, these funds empower each center to meet the unique needs of its community and to continue being the "trusted boots on the ground" serving local seniors.

With careful planning and a strong track record of financial stewardship, the Chelsea Senior Center is able to put these funds to work immediately in ways that make an immediate, meaningful difference. A Brief Stop is the first of many new initiatives to come.

Keeping A Brief Stop running smoothly depends on the community. Volunteer hours are flexible and meaningful. For more information about services, volunteering, or donations, contact the Chelsea Senior Center at 734-475-9242.

A Brief Stop is more than a closet of products, it's a continuation of Chelsea Senior Center's commitment to helping all of us can age with dignity, connection, and confidence.

SCIO TOWNSHIP COMPLETES LAND PRESERVATION PROJECT

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The Scio Township Land Preservation Program recently closed on a conservation easement purchase from Carol Fletcher. The property is nearly 16 acres in size with frontage on the east side of Zeeb Rd. north of Scio Church Rd. Most of the property is agricultural and it includes an historic house and barn. The conservation easement ensures that the land will never be developed but it remains in private ownership and is not open to the public.

Carol and Robert Fletcher (aka "Fletch") purchased their farm in 1978. Their primary motivation was that their children had been taking riding lessons and wanted a place to have their own horses. Carol and Fletch had spent time on farms as children and had good memories of those times.

The Fletchers are only the second owners of the farm. It had been started by the Aprill family in the 1800s, so was a centennial farm when the Fletchers purchased it. Unfortunately it had once been much larger, but the last April to own it had gradually sold off pieces of land so this was what remained. Fortunately it contained the house plus all of the barns and outbuildings, so it still functions well as a farm.

It greatly troubled both of them to see so much farmland disappearing. In addition their children all have an enduring fondness and closeness to the farm. Therefore, Carol views the conservation easement as the best way to maintain the "jewel" with which they were blessed.

Conservation easements are permanent deed restrictions on the use of a property. Purchasing easements costs less than buying the property and keeps the property on the tax rolls and contributing to the local economy. Scio Township's dedicated land preservation millage provided the entire purchase price for this conservation easement purchase.

Scio Township's land preservation program is funded by a dedicated millage which voters passed initially in 2004 and renewed twice, all by large margins. The Township has attracted over $12 million of matching funds from other sources, a rate of over $1.5 to $1 of its own. With this project the Township program has been involved in protecting 1,735 acres, with more projects set to close in the coming months.

VISIONARY VIOLINIST DIXON'S VIOLIN PLAYS CHELSEA DEPOT, CHELSEA, DEC 12

You've never heard violin like this! The world's premier visionary violinist, Dixon's life mission is to inspire people - and he has done so across North America, including giving four TED talks/performances, over ten years at Burning Man, plus radio, TV, and film appearances. Dixon's Violin continues his HUMANKINDness tour on Friday, December 12th at Chelsea Depot in Chelsea. 7 PM performance. 6:30 PM doors. www.DixonsViolin.com

A former technology leader and symphony violinist, Dixon walked away from a distinguished career to follow his dream full-time, and invented a whole new music genre. Dixon now improvises on a 5-string electric violin with a looping system he developed to create an all-live one-man symphony, guided by his remarkable personal story of life transformation. The visionary violinist grew up in Davison, graduated from the University of Michigan-Flint, where he was the assistant concertmaster of the University of Michigan-Flint Symphony. Dixon is also the former assistant concertmaster of the Flint Youth Symphony, which is one of only two youth orchestras in the U.S. invited to perform in Munich, Germany.

Advance tickets $29 on sale at www.dixonsviolin.com

Dixon had been playing classical music all his life, but in 2005 everything changed. A trip to the Burning Man festival challenged him to improvise and gave a perfect opportunity to create his own music for the first time.

"When I saw the look in people's eyes, that I could move them with my own music, it changed my life," he said. "I made up my mind then and there to rearrange my life priorities. I had been playing for 25 years, but for the first time I truly fell in love with music."

Dixon is the only one in the world doing what he does. Few violinists are both classically trained and able to improvise. To also have a command of such a wide range of pedal effects is nearly unheard of. But what sets Dixon apart is his empathy and presence. He is always conscious of the energy in the room, baring his soul through his instrument, guiding and inspiring the listeners through his words and bittersweet, beautiful sounds.

"Humankindness is the blending of humankind and kindness," Dixon said. "I believe we are all connected and we can honor each other with compassion and care."

"After living my life only using my head, when I realized the power of sharing from the heart, and the soul-moving, even spiritual experiences you can share through music, I knew I had to do this full time," Dixon said.

"Dixon improvises multiple rhythmic and melodic violin repetitions with the loops — adding percussive noises, power chords, speed runs and more on top of the recordings. Dixon might pluck, strike, or bow his metallic violin — or attack the fret board like a rock guitar god." - David Winkelstern, Lansing City Pulse

For additional information, high-res images, attending the show, interviews or live in-studio performance, please contact Kevin Alan Lamb, This is a Good Sound.

BALLET CHELSEA'S MAGICAL NUTCRACKER PERFORMANCE

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Sugar Plum Tea on December 14. Limited seats, reserve your tickets today!

Make it a holiday tradition—get your tickets now! For more information, visit www.balletchelsea.org/tickets/. **December 12 at 7 pm, December 13 at 12 pm and 5 pm, and December 14 at 2 pm, Sugar Plum Tea at 12 pm on December 14.** Don't miss out on this festive experience! www.balletchelsea.org/tickets/.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Ballet Chelsea's mission transcends the stage, aiming to shape resilient individuals through impeccable training and performance artistry while giving back to the community through the transformative power of arts education and outreach.

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JD's Stage Bistro Spring 2026 on Main Street, Chelsea!


Rendering of the Newsroom Event space
Courtesy JD's Stage Bistro

JD's Stage Bistro is under construction at 117-1/2 South Main Street, a long-awaited project for the Tannin Property Group, which had been envisioned for 20 years.

Tannin Property Group, a small business that has been part of the Chelsea community since 2005, is proud to announce its latest investment in downtown. For over two decades, the ownership team of Sandra & Aaron Vermeulen, Nathaniel Stanton, and Roy Farmer has helped preserve and enhance the heart of Main Street, beginning with the renovation of 115 South Main Street, formerly the Hallmark Store, which they transformed into mixed-use commercial and residential spaces. More recently, they restored the historic Flintoft law offices, now home to Serendipity Bookstore, while maintaining the Kempf Bank and Farmers and Merchants Bank gas lights, as well as the teller cage that Peter Flintoft had restored for his law office. Today, their tenants also include Chelsea Bakery and the former Ale House, which is being used as the construction office and will be remodeled and available soon. The redevelopment also included the renovation of three residential downtown apartments.

The idea for JD's Stage Bistro began when Tannin Property Group partnered with Jeff Daniels to envision a world-class music venue with exceptional food and a welcoming space for gatherings with family and friends. Daniels, along with his son, Ben, and wife, Amanda, joined the project to help create a world-class music venue that would attract local, regional, and nationally recognized singer-songwriters, while setting a new standard for sound quality.

On the culinary side, Chef Nate Wegryn, formerly of Echelon Kitchen and The Dixboro Project, will feature an inspired contemporary menu, working with many local farmers and suppliers. The 100-seat restaurant will feature a wood-fired pizza oven, cocktail bar, patio seating, and multiple private event spaces. The event spaces will cater to small to mid-sized community gatherings and private celebrations.

Building on a history of restoration and stewardship, the team is creating a new downtown destination in JD's Stage Bistro: a music venue, bistro, and event space designed to reflect Chelsea's culture and love of the arts. A strong complement to the Purple Rose Theatre, providing a nighttime economy to enrich and complement Chelsea's standing as a destination for arts and cultural entertainment.

The venue has been designed by Aaron Vermeulen, Principal of O-X Studio, Inc., and Nat Stanton, Principal of Craft Structural Engineering, Inc. Mechanical and Electrical engineering was provided by Kelly Sugg of Greenpath Design and Lynn Surdock at WPF Engineering. Acoustics is at the forefront, by Gavin Haverstick, lead Acoustical consultant at Haverstick Designs, not only to ensure an outstanding listening experience but also to manage the sound within the building. Acoustic treatments, structural reinforcements, and sound-absorbing materials are being incorporated to ensure performances enhance downtown without disrupting nearby residents and businesses.

JD's Stage Bistro is a commitment to Chelsea's future. The venue will create new job opportunities for restaurant and event staff, provide opportunities for local and regional musicians, and serve as an intergenerational gathering place that will enhance Main Street activity and support neighboring businesses. By sourcing ingredients from Michigan producers and welcoming local artists into the space, the project is designed to feel like it belongs to Chelsea—because it does.

The owners anticipate an opening of JD's Bistro in spring 2026. They look forward to welcoming the community into a space built with care, creativity, and a deep respect for Chelsea's past and future. For more information, please visit their website at www.jdsstagebistro.com.

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Jeff Daniels in the Newsroom
Courtesy JD's Stage Bistro

Chelsea Police Department Weekly Summary

Incident #: 25-4496

Date: November 24, 2025

Location: 100 block of S. Main Street

Time: 11:06 am

INFORMATION: While on routine patrol an officer was dispatched to the lobby of the Chelsea Police Department to meet with a complainant related to an assault that had reportedly occurred in the 100 block of S. Main Street. The complainant stated that he had been approached by the male suspect and initially the suspect grabbed his shoulder, a short time later, as the complainant was leaving the establishment; the suspect came from behind him and grabbed his arm in a "escorting manner" and told the complainant that he "had something for him" and attempted to guide the complainant outside. The complainant stated that he did not recognize the suspect and resisted the suspect's attempts. The suspect reportedly refused to identify himself and left the area. The case remains open pending further investigation and attempts to identify and speak with the suspect.

Incident #: 25-4509

Date: November 25, 2025

Location: 14000 block of E. Old US 12

Time: 8:52 am

INFORMATION: While on routine patrol officers responded to the 14000 block of E. Old US 12 for the report of a tree on fire, threatening a structure. Upon arrival officers located the fire and observed a male subject standing near the base of the tree that was burning. Officers called for the subject to come towards the officers for safety reasons and the subject refused. Officers approached the subject and escorted him a safe distance away from the fire. Officers questioned the subject about what had taken place and how the tree had caught fire. The suspect was identified as a 37-year-old Novi man and admitted to setting the tree on fire in a premeditative act. Officers placed the suspect under arrest and transported the subject for a medical evaluation and then transported the suspect to the Chelsea Police Department for processing. Once the suspect was processed for the arrest, he was transported to the Washtenaw County Jail where he would be held pending warrant review and authorization by the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office. The suspect was subsequently arraigned on one count of Arson in the fourth degree and two counts of Resisting/Obstructing/Assaulting a Police Officer.

Incident #: 25-4601

Date: December 1, 2025

Location: 100 block of W. Middle Street

Time: 10:53 am

INFORMATION: While on routine patrol an officer was dispatched to the 100 block of W. Middle Street for the report of a retail fraud that was believed to have occurred sometime between Monday, November 24th and Wednesday, November 26th. The complainant stated that recently it had been discovered that two Santa figurines, both approximately 30" tall had been taken. The complainant stated that there were no signs of forced entry into the building and there was no record of the items being purchased by a patron of the business. At the time of the report there was no further information available on the identity of the suspect(s).