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Experimental pianist mixes tight jazz with open-space jams and melt-your-face rock

From the Editors

It'd be easy to start drawing battle lines, it'd be easy to start picking sides, and it'd be easy to paint this story as "The Battle for Erie's Bayfront."

But what if it isn't a fight? What if this doesn't have to be a this *or* that moment? And what if this *could* really be Erie's renaissance moment when we see the landscape of Erie take shape for decades to come?

By now, you've heard the developing story: The Erie County Convention Center Authority wants to secure a bond from the county to erect a publically-funded hotel adjacent to the Bayfront Convention Center. And by now, you've seen Scott Enterprises' plan for a development east of State Street known as Harbor Place.

What this has quickly become is a private versus public-funding debate. But it's more complicated than that, an evolving issue with many moving parts.

For one, there's the grant Erie's secured from the state — a whopping \$25 million over five years that would go to the development of the ECCCA's hotel, which in turn would propel forward the development of the former GAF site. Can those funds be re-appropriated for another use? That remains unclear.

And how many hotels are too many? The Scotts are arguing that a publically-funded hotel would threaten the likelihood of the success of their development — which includes a hotel, and which is still slated to move forward despite Erie missing out on CRIZ funds. But as Jay Stevens wrote in our last issue, Erie's may be getting a second

chance at those funds soon.

And those funds help *everyone* — not just some — as the land designated stretches roughly from Sunburst Electronics to the pumping station, which includes not only the Scott project but the former GAF site.

Rebecca Styn explores this story more fully in "The Tale of Two Hotels," which you'll find in this issue. It is a complicated story, and Rebecca does a commendable job distilling the story to date.

Why does she tell it? Because decisions will be made soon that will affect Erie for generations to come. And perhaps this doesn't have to be a this *or* that tale of two hotels. Perhaps it can be a story of two different visions for Erie being seen to fruition at the same time through cooperation and collaboration. Because if ever Erie deserved more than a puncher's chance at putting the "gem" clearly and boldly in "Gem City," it's now, the very moment that change and growth seem to be more than whispers in the air — they seem palpable.

The energy for change, for growth, for development is abuzz in Erie. Take John C. Lyons as an example. Lyons, a local filmmaker who we featured last year in our 40 *Under 40* issue, is the visionary behind the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania, where he currently serves as Executive Director.

Not only is Lyons curating various film series, he's bringing filmmakers to Erie. And not only is he bringing filmmakers to Erie, he's starting initiatives like The Greater Erie Film Office to

help bring the filmmaking *industry* to Erie. Need a location that features all four seasons? We have that. Need a massive body of water? We have that, too. Need the backdrop of industrial boom *and* bust? Yep, we've got that, too.

In just three short years, the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania has transformed from a stale nonprofit sitting on a shelf collecting dust to an organization that's fostered both film appreciation and film development in our region. Ben Spегgen sat down with John C. Lyons to discuss this and what it means for Erie.

Undeniably, things are happening here. People are working to make Erie a film capital of Pennsylvania, and people are working to develop the last bits of land dotting our Bayfront. What's needed now more than ever is the energy of the entire community to ensure that the foundation that's being laid now leads to a structurally strong and stable city for decades to come.

That's why we're asking you to remember two dates: Tuesday, Feb. 11 and Wednesday, Feb. 12.

The first is the second reading of the ECCCA's ordinance proposal to County Council; that meeting is free and open to the public. The second is the kickoff for the next season of the Film Society's series FILM at the Erie Art Museum. It costs only \$5 and proceeds go to ensure that Erie continues to get cooler each time an independent film is screened in our city.

As proponents of both sound discussion that leads to smart development and the cultivation of the arts scene in The Gem City, we'll see you there.

Street Corner Soapbox

Why Corbett Could Still Win

By: Jay Stevens

The results of the Jan. 30 Franklin & Marshall College poll are out, and Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett's favorability ratings are so low, so down-in-the-toilet bad, it's a lock that the State House will be in Democratic hands after the next election.

Right?

Hardly.

The numbers *are* bad, though. In that Franklin & Marshall poll, 23 percent of Pennsylvanians think Gov. Corbett is doing a "good" or "excellent" job. Apparently that same 23 percent believe Corbett deserves re-election. The rest of us – parents with school-age children, the LGBT community, women, small business owners, men...okay, in short, everybody not sucking up royalties off of fracking wellpads – the rest of us, well, we're not that crazy about Gov. Tom Corbett.

Those numbers put in context also make a November Democratic win seem inevitable. Compared to the last two Pennsylvania governors who faced re-election – Tom Ridge in 1998 and Ed Rendell in 2006 – Corbett's numbers are significantly worse at the same stage of the process. A few months before their re-election bids, Rendell's favorability ratings were in the forties and Ridge's were at or above 50 percent. Corbett's got a long way to climb before he even gets to those governors' low approval ratings.

And the last time I wrote about Corbett's numbers – wa-a-a-ay back in March – his favorability rating in Public Policy Polling (PPP) and Quinnipiac polls were in the thirties. Sure, they're all different polls with different methodologies, but the Franklin & Marshall poll numbers show no major rebound for Corbett. He had ten months to pull those numbers up – and he's been touting his proposed increases in education spending to anyone who'll listen in an effort to do so – but nada, zero, zilch. People still view him as an unlovable Grinch Governor.

So I must be mad to question a no-doubt, slam-dunk Democratic victory in November, right?

For starters, can you name me the Democratic frontrunner?

What's that? You can't even name *any* of the Democrats? (Okay, the political junkies out there can – you know who you are.) The problem here is that there are too many candidates. Right now, eight candidates have declared their candidacy for the job – and the filing date isn't until March.

The list includes two former heads of the State Department of Environmental Protection (John Hanger and Katie McGinty), the state treasurer (Rob McCord), and a former head of the state department of revenue (Tom Wolf). Allyson Schwartz is a Philadelphia-area U.S. House Rep.

The rest of us – parents with school-age children, the LGBT community, women, small business owners, men...okay, in short, everybody not sucking up royalties off of fracking wellpads – the rest of us, well, we're not that crazy about Gov. Tom Corbett.

Ed Pawlowski is mayor of Allentown. Max Myers is a businessman and pastor. Jo Ellen Litz is a county commissioner.

Most Pennsylvanians have no idea who these people are. The latest polling information I could find on the candidates is from a November PPP poll. Those polled then were unsure if they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the Democratic candidates in the survey. "Not Sure" was the runaway winner, reaching a high of 72 percent for Ed Pawlowski, to a "low" of 56 percent for Allyson Schwartz. So, between now and November, one of those candidates has to become a household name for Pennsylvania voters. Those "Not Sure" numbers are bigger than Corbett's unfavorable ratings. That's a big hill to climb.

And that's assuming, of course, something strange doesn't happen in the primary, and somebody out of nowhere wins the Democratic nomination. It can happen in primary elections with loads of unknown candidates. A Green Party and Socialist candidate won Montana's Republican nomination for U.S. Senate in 2008. It could happen here.

And then there's the ugly fact that over 40

percent of Pennsylvania Republicans still view Governor Corbett favorably in that Franklin & Marshall poll. It's a reminder that, in this heated partisan political environment, it doesn't matter *who* runs, as long as they have the proper letter behind their name on the ballot. Corbett's got that "R," and Pennsylvania Republicans will dutifully line up to pull the lever next to his name on Election Day in November, no matter what his favorability ratings are.

The Corbett camp's biggest worry is that the governor's relative unpopularity even among Republicans will cause his voters to stay home,

out of indifference. If they work on their ground game – the door knocking, the get-out-the-vote push on Election Day – and rile up the base over the summer (about abortion? taxes? Obamacare?), the voters should turn out. And money certainly shouldn't be a problem for Corbett, who has the oil and gas industry in his corner.

And then, *anything* could happen between now and November. On Sept. 10, 2001, George W. Bush was a do-nothing president who spent most of his time clearing brush in Texas. Chris Christie was a relatively unknown East Coast governor in the hours before Hurricane Sandy swept northward in the Atlantic Ocean. Barack Obama was an obscure junior state senator before he stepped up to the podium to speak at the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

This election is not a slam-dunk for Democrats, no matter what the polls say.

Jay Stevens can be contacted at jav@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Snevets_Yaj. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/9lpzz>



News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

Going Postal

America's returning warriors continue to experience inexplicable difficulty after putting their lives at risk for their country. It took 13 years for Army Sgt. Maj. Richard Erickson to get his job back from his civilian employer after he took leave in 2000 to serve in the National Guard special forces. The employer soon fired him for taking "excessive military leave." The employer? The U.S. Postal Service, for which Erickson worked as a window clerk (and which was forced to reinstate him after a January 2014 ruling awarding him \$2 million in back pay). Erickson had won several interim victories, but USPS fought each one, extending the case, and said in January that it might even appeal the latest ruling. [Los Angeles Times, 1-8-2014]

Recurring Themes

Happy New Year: (1) Once again, celebrants in France marked Jan. 1 by setting fire to 1,067 cars nationwide (down from 1,193 the previous Jan. 1). (2) In the Hillbrow neighborhood of Johannesburg, South Africa, celebrants apparently decided to abandon a 20-year-old tradition and not hurl furniture from high-rise apartments. (The Hillbrow custom was highlighted on one social-networking website, along with the New Year's graveyard gathering of relatives in Chile and Ireland's banging bread on walls to dispel evil spirits.) [Daily Telegraph (London), 1-1-2014] [Wall Street Journal, 1-2-2014]

Holy Mutations: Deformed animals born in developing countries often attract streams of pilgrims, seeking to touch a creature considered divinely blessed. In December, a five-legged cow in Raipur, India, had supposedly "caused" the last 30 women who touched it to give birth to boys. And a day after that report came one from Phuket, Thailand, in which a newborn gecko with six legs and two heads has become a magnet for visitors seeking clues to

It's back!

ERIE'S
40 under 40

Do you know someone under 40 who's shaping the future of Erie? Nominate them by sending an email to contact@ErieReader.com. Please include a brief description and contact information. All nominations must be received by February 28.

winning lottery numbers. [Daily Mail (London), 12-25-2013] [Phuket News, 12-26-2013]

In November the Journal-News of Hamilton, Ohio, examining various police union contracts in the state, learned that in several jurisdictions, officers are allowed to work their shifts even when less sober than some drivers whom they ticket for DUI. In Lebanon, Ohio, for instance, cops can work with a .04 blood-alcohol reading. In Butler County, a .04 reading triggers legal protections for officers that are unavailable to ordinary drivers. (However, in Lebanon, an officer's right to suck on a breath mint before taking the test was recently removed from the contract.) [Journal-News, 11-17-2013]

Judges as Romantics: (1) In December, Italy's top appeals court awarded a new trial to a man, 60, who had been convicted of having sex with an 11-year-old girl. Evidence had been excluded that the pair were having an "amorous relationship" with "feelings of love." (2) Alabama Judge James Woodroof of Limestone County, given two separate chances in December to sentence Austin Clem, 25, to jail time for raping a girl beginning when she was 13, both times opted for probation. (The no-jail sentences perhaps reflected that Clem's family and hers continued to socialize after the rapes.) [Agence France-Presse via Business Insider, 12-31-2013] [Associated Press via New York Times, 12-24-2013]

The Continuing British Campaign to Abolish Risks: (1) Britain's Royal Mail announced in December that it would stop delivery to Jeff and Sheila White's cottage in Carnforth because the carrier was frightened of cows. (Mrs. White said he was just lazy, in that when the cows were present, the carrier had to open and close a gate to get to their cottage.) (2) A 65-year-old school crossing guard resigned in October from a job he said he liked because officials at Manadon Vale Primary School had ordered him to stop playfully "high-fiving" students. Guards, the school said, need both arms free to hold signs and make proper signals. [Daily Mail, 12-5-2013] [Plymouth Herald, 10-14-2013]

News of the Weird has reported the emerging mainstream treatment (for various bowel disorders) of fecal transplants, in which a healthier relative "donates" via enema supposedly healthier microbes to a sickly patient to normalize intestinal activity. The process, still strange to many patients despite its apparent success, has become so popular that in October Canadian officials felt the need to warn patients not to perform amateur transplants. Said one mother, after successfully having her 10-year-old daughter treated, "I think one day ... we will have fecal-matter banks like (blood banks and sperm banks)." [CTV, 10-4-2013]

Unclear on the Concept: In December, after Carmen Reategui, 34, was arrested for DUI in Readington Township, N.J., and was too impaired to drive home, she called Nina Petracca, 23, who arrived at the police station impaired herself (and was arrested for DUI), and both women called Ryan Hogan, 33, to take them home, but he also arrived impaired and was arrested. [Hunterdon County Democrat, 12-20-2013]

A Tale of Two Hotels

Bayfront Development Plans Take Shape

By: Rebecca Styn

It was the best of times. On Sept. 5, 2013, during the launch of the Tall Ships Festival Erie, when we weren't experiencing a polar vortex and at worst 65 degree temps and a light breeze, the Erie County Convention Center Authority announced that Erie would be getting \$25 million in state funds to develop a new hotel just west of the Bayfront Convention Center. At the time, this announcement received mixed reviews, as Erie had been down this road before. And while it's been successful, it's not without the potential cost to the taxpayers.

Since that significant day, the Authority has continued to make progress towards breaking ground. However, in the meantime, a similar announcement was made to the Erie community. Yet, this time, a private enterprise is involved.

Both projects have potential to move Erie forward, both in small and great ways. But there are risks involved

That private enterprise is Scott Enterprises, Inc., and their project is now known as "Harbor Place," a mixed-use plan that also includes a hotel, which would be situated on the northeast corner of State Street and the Bayfront Parkway.

Both projects have potential to move Erie forward, both in small and great ways. Each project has been down similar roads before – one in actuality, one in theory. But there are risks involved. As it stands, the decision to move forward with the public hotel rests in the hands of the Erie County Council. And ultimately, that decision will have consequences.

What do these projects have to do with each other? More than you'd think.

To start, the two representing groups have a complicated history together. In 2001, Scott Enterprises had an agreement to build a hotel next to the convention center (before the BCC was built) on Scott Enterprises property. But there was a dispute about the size of the hotel, and the Convention Center Authority voted to drop Scott as the developer. Allegations arose from both sides, Scott filed a lawsuit, the authority countersued, and a long legal fight followed.

According to Chris Scott, vice president of Scott Enterprises, "This went on for nearly a decade. Our land was tied up in the lawsuit so we settled. We ultimately decided it wasn't worth it, and we wanted it free and clear so that we would not be encumbered to move forward."

Ultimately, Scott's Bayfront Development agreed to pay the Convention Center Authority \$1.3 million to settle the case.

Story over. More like *chapter* closed.

Now both groups are back in the spotlight for proposed plans that are causing a heated dispute that may ultimately end in the Scotts pulling out of their project. The reasoning the Scotts are giving? They have gone on record stating that they believe both hotels would have difficulty existing in the current market.

While from quick glimpses and flashes of news, some might be quick to paint this as a good guys versus the bad guys-type of story, a this or that, a one or the other. But can both plans exist? And more importantly, can both entities put aside their differences and work together? The following will hopefully help answer those very questions that will shape the landscape of Erie for decades to come.

Erie County Convention Center Authority

The Authority is proposing to build a limited service 200-room hotel and parking garage adjacent to the Bayfront Convention Center (BCC). This hotel (recommended

to be affiliated with the Courtyard by Marriott brand) is intended to complement the Sheraton Bayfront Hotel – all the while enhancing the viability of the BCC. The argument for the hotel is that it would help attract larger conventions to Erie – something the Authority argues is not currently feasible with just the Sheraton in proximity of the BCC. And the new hotel would also offer a lower price point to conventioners and visitors than the Sheraton.

In order for this hotel to materialize, in addition to the \$25 million grant that was received, the group needs to secure a bond from the County to make this happen. Thereby, the group recently approached County Council asking for a \$60 million debt guarantee. The total cost of the project will not exceed this amount, and the guarantee would likely only apply to about \$35 million, as \$25 million of it will be financed through the state grant. Also, by obtaining this guarantee, the overall costs will be reduced and incur a net savings over the life of the bond issue of \$19 million. That additional \$19 million will go to the GAF site, which could ultimately enhance the possibility of growth on what would be a taxable property.

The Authority also has a proven history of suc-

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cess when it comes to bonds, as the Sheraton Hotel has a similar history (created with the help of public dollars) and is operating successfully.

In 2005, County Council agreed to guarantee a \$48 million bond issue on behalf of the Authority for the Sheraton. And according to data provided at Jan. 23's County Council finance meeting by Kirby Pain, a principal with HVS Consulting and Valuations Services – a firm hired by the Authority to conduct a marketing study on the proposed hotel – the Sheraton has been successful.

“As of today, the Sheraton hotel has met all its debt service covenants, and it is the largest remitter of hotel sales tax in the community, because it is the largest revenue generator,” Pain said. “The operating results of the last three years have exceeded the initial forecast that was done when the project was initially conceived.”

Reports show that in 2013, the profit of the hotel exceeded the original forecasts by 11 percent, in 2012 by 8 percent, and nominally exceeded the projected forecast in 2011 as we were coming out of a recession.

“The RevPAR [revenue per available room, a measurement used in the hotel industry] for the Sheraton is \$94.64,” he continued.

On average, a competitive hotel, according to Smith Travel Research [a firm that gathers data in the hotel industry], runs a RevPAR of \$65.95.

“The hotel has also maintained a reserve of 4 percent of revenue monthly, which is held in trust and is then in turn used for capital improvements,” he added.

Casey Wells, executive director of the Authority, in agreement with Pain's remarks, added, “One of the market penetrations that we are getting pushback from are the meeting planners, as the hotel sprawl is posing a real challenge.”

As such, the planners want convention rooms connected to the Convention Center so elements outside aren't something they have to deal with.

“We have associations that are saying they are not coming to Erie because of the lack of a number of continuous hotel rooms attached to the BCC.”

Pain also pointed out, “There are a number of hotels that the study had anticipated being developed and therefore are addressed.”

However, that study didn't include anything beyond qualitative data on the chance that another Bayfront hotel would be built. “There is something called an ‘extraordinary circumstance’ where you ask the consultant to make certain assumptions they don't necessarily think will come to fruition. So, we then asked that an additional study be done assuming that a second hotel would be

built on the waterfront.”

The results of that additional analysis showed that both hotels are market feasible, that the projections are better than was anticipated in March 2013 though the projections are not quite as high in occupancy rates as would be anticipated without building a second hotel.

Attorney and Convention Center Authority Board Member Roger Richards added in closing, “There is something we should remember. We received \$25 million allocated to Erie County. There wasn't another place in the state that got another \$25 million grant except for the city of Philadelphia. If this money has to go back, other communities are going to gobble it up, and it's going to be difficult to get future grant money in Erie if we can't take advantage of this opportunity.”

Scott Enterprises

On Nov. 27, 2013, officials from Scott Enterprises announced plans for a \$150 million private waterfront development, known as “Harbor Place.” It would be located about a half-mile east of the Convention Center on 12 acres of prime real estate that was purchased in 1999.

According to Nick Scott, Sr., “Simply put, this is a game-changer for our community.”

And that it would be. The group announced that Harbor Place – borrowing a name from a project that sparked the renovation of Baltimore's inner harbor in the late 1970s – would be built in phases and would include corporate offices, hotels, retail shops, a restaurant, parking garages, an outdoor ice-skating rink, condominiums, and apartments. The group has also made steps towards moving forward with the plan. Over the past year, they have been working with Weber Murphy Fox Architects on renderings and plans, and they've already purchased a liquor license from the now-defunct Under the Clock Restaurant for a new restaurant to be developed within the plan.

The hotel will also be put on the tax roles. Upon completion of their Harbor Place project the development would pay around \$4.8 million annually in taxes.

And Erie knows the successful history of Scott Enterprises. All one needs to do is be anywhere on upper Peach Street or skiing in Western New York to see their successful developmental footprint in the region.

However, should the public hotel come to fruition, Harbor Place may be in jeopardy. Scott Enterprises is arguing that a publicly-backed hotel is unnecessary when a privately-funded- [Cont. on 21]

Both groups are back in the spotlight for proposed plans that are causing a heated dispute that may ultimately end in the Scott's pulling out of their project.

Local Artist, National Recognition Scalise throws another award on the pile

By: Cory Vaillancourt

When I interviewed Todd Scalise almost a year ago for a feature story on the artist and his works, one of his quotes really stuck with me:

“Andy Warhol said ‘Business is art.’ That's a really important comment about American art. The business of it becomes an art form – the synchronicities of lining up people, meeting people, running into opportunity – that also fascinates me, and I learned all those characteristics from making art. In the business world, I can say, ‘This person has a need. How can I fulfill it?’ That's a creative act.”

Turns out, Scalise's creative acts of business have earned him yet more recognition. Late last year, he earned the prestigious Bruce Morton Wright Artist of the Year Award from ArtsErie, but late last month, it was announced that he'd won the first ever Arts Entrepreneurship Award from Fractured Atlas.

“Fractured Atlas empowers artists to succeed as entrepreneurs by supporting the business side of their practice,” said Adam Huttler, founder and executive director of the New York City-based organization. “We help them raise funds, insure their work, sell tickets, engage audiences, find space, and more. We are delighted to honor Todd Scalise with a 2014 Arts Entrepreneurship Award. Todd is as creative about his business as he is about his art. By approaching every project as a business venture and an investment opportunity in community creative capital, he inspires our field to reconsider how public art can stimulate economic development.”

Speaking of the award, Scalise said, “It is a great honor to receive this award while creating community art in my hometown. Community art stimulates more than just the soul – it also stimulates economic development. This award is evidence that Erie can also have creative capital comparable to Austin, New York, and Chicago.”

Learn more about Scalise at ToddScalise.com. Find Fractured Atlas at FracturedAtlas.org.

Cory Vaillancourt can be contacted at cVaillancourt@ErieReader.com. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/tuzgo>



Scalise



JUST TOYIN' WITCHA By: B. Toy





Abigail Adams Greenway and Masood Omari give a private performance on a cold January Erie night.

myself pausing, unable to write, locked into the moment.

It is *mesmerizing*. And *hypnotic*. And it was the communication of two people speaking a language through the art of tabla – and we were all present to that great conversation.

Most often used in Hindustani classical music, the tabla isn't all that different to its Afro-Cuban and Latin-American cousin, the bongos. In fact, the word "tabla" comes from the Arabic "tabl," simply meaning "drum." These drums are said to have their origin in Sufi poetry in

the 13th century, which explains why the vast array of sounds they can produce are said to reflect bol – or mnemonic syllables created by the tapping of fingers and pressing of the heel of the hand to bend and sustain pitches.

Then, at its most basic, *Tabla for Two* is a conversation between Masood Omari and Abigail Adams Greenway. But at its most complex, the music created between the musicians reflects a meeting of East and West through a beautiful language for which words aren't necessary.

"We don't know of many other Western women playing the tabla," says Erie native Greenway between songs. "This is an art form I've dedicated my life to now. I practice this art eight hours a day."

Greenway first met Omari, a native of Ghazny, Afghanistan, a few years back by chance in an Afghan shop in Georgetown where he was teaching tabla, an instrument he's been studying for twenty-two years. Having toiled in the renowned Punjab

lineage, Omari received his gurmani – or mastership – in 2002, and is now sharing that conversation and history with Greenway.

An appreciator and maker of art her entire life, Greenway says after the performance that she feels like she's "channeling the music, the beat, language" and that passion for the instrument has led her to accomplish in just a few short years what she felt could take decades.

"This," she says, turning her shoulder and craning her neck to look at the instruments that lay behind her, "is beautiful. And I want to share that with everyone I can."

Fortunately for those not in attendance that cold January night – and, well, for all of us, too, should we crave a second helping of the mystical conversations of *Tabla for Two* – we can hear them play Omari's original compositions at 8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10 at Mercyhurst University, as the two are the third event of the 25th anniversary season of the Visiting Artists Series.

"They're speaking the language of music," says Albert Glinsky, professor of music at Mercyhurst, who was in the attendance for that intimate performance. "That language is universal – something we can all appreciate and understand. We're excited to share that at Mercyhurst with Erie."

Tabla for Two will perform at the Walker Recital Hall. The show is free and open to the public. A separate master class for Mercyhurst music students will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11 in the Walker Hall. The public is welcome to attend and observe. For more information, to watch videos, and to see *Tabla Art Greenway* is creating, visit TablaForTwo.com. To find out more about the concert and master class, call 824.2394.

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bspeggen@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @ER-BenSpeggen. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/appaz>



Tabla for Two

Percussion Duo to Perform at Mercyhurst University

By: Ben Speggen

We kill the engine, grab our gear, brace ourselves for what awaits, and throw open the doors to the car. The biting winter wind nips at us until it sinks its teeth deep enough to make us quicken our pace from where I parked my car fifty or so yards away at the end of the driveway to the house that neither of us have been in before but are about to enter.

It's a bitter, black January Thursday night in Erie and photographer Brad Triana and I hustle, joining a group huddled together, shuffling toward the house on South Shore Drive that is our collective destination. The beats of the group's shuffling feet crackle against the raspy huff and puffs pluming out from scarf-covered mouths. A marching chorus of percussion, we make our way to the door, tap off the blanket of snow from our coats and boots and settle in for an evening of *tabla* – something I just heard about a

few days back.

The house is warm and gorgeous, open and inviting – filled with art, people, and wine. It's a who's who of art and culture, from artists to musicians to collectors to appreciators – all laughing, talking, preparing for the concert that's about to take place.

Have you seen them before? one man says to another in between sips of wine. They're *mesmerizing*.

Absolutely *hypnotic*, a woman punctuates her description of *Tabla for Two* before peeking into the room where

they musicians have set up. *If you're not witnessing them, you're missing out.*

With our glasses of wine refilled, we make our way into the intimate concert space, and settle in, right in front, sitting on the floor with our legs crossed and ears open, because unlike others here, we haven't seem them before and we don't want to miss out.

To describe what happened next as a concert falls short of what truly happened. And to attempt to capture such an experience in words isn't easy. As I scribble away in my steno pad, I find

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Brad Triana

John C. Lyons

The Future of Film in Erie

By: Ben Speggen

At first glimpse, John C. Lyons is an unassuming guy. He's quiet, with a slender frame and narrow shoulders – someone you've stood behind unknowingly in line waiting for a latte. But get close enough, and you start to notice the distinct features. His hipster crop of hair, buzzed tight on the sides with a gelled mane combed back on the top, and the trademark vintage thick-framed black Ray Bans of someone you've stood behind in line waiting to snag a Magic Hat No. 9 and see an up-and-coming indie act in a dive bar.

We're sitting close enough at Lavery Brewing Company on a cold Wednesday evening that behind those glasses I can see his steel-blue eyes light up when he talks about something that matters to him because it matters to his city and it matters enough that he's laboring for free out of love to see it lived out.

"Film matters – period," he says, leaning in closer as if telling me a secret he's surprised is a secret. "It's truly an amazing art form, and we have a great opportunity for it here in Erie."

Maybe that's why he's leaning in, treating the topic like it's taboo or a secret that only still a few have figured out. It's no mystery that even just five years ago, independent films were hard to find in Erie. And it's no mystery that the times, they are a-

changin', as when once there were three, then two, Erie now has just one lonely Cineplex perched on Upper Peach Street.

Fast-forward to that cold Wednesday night and why I'm meeting filmmaker John C. Lyons. Unfamiliar

with his work? Type his name in the popular film website IMDb. You'll see credits for director for 2013's *There Are No Goodbyes*, 2006's *Schism*, and 2005's short films *BOGO* and *Hunting Camp*.

You'll also see that he is a small-ish guy, standing at 5'10". More impor-

From filmmaker to curator to industry visionary, John C. Lyons is putting Erie on the film map.

tantly, though, you see he's from Erie, and you'll see that he's putting Erie on the film map.

But more than just creating art – producing scripts, assembling casts, directing actors, editing reel after reel, and then slinging promotion – John is directing Erie's film future through his endeavors with the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

"John has been so passionate about making Erie be a place that loves film and supports filmmakers," says Erika Dauber Berlin, president of the Film Society. "He has a long history in the community of working with people for film – he resurrected a nonprofit to be an active force in the community."

Rewind to three years ago. The Film Society existed, but it got shelved and consequently languished and began collecting dust.

"Somebody's got to pay attention to the details," Erika says over the phone. "John's extremely detailed-oriented and motivated. He's on-task. He's a filmmaker and [serving as the Film Society's executive director] is a volunteer role for him. But he's proven himself to be capable of both with just

as much energy and passion for each."

John paid attention to details, took the Film Society off the shelf, signed on as its executive director, blew the dust off of the nonprofit, and got the reels cranking again. With Erika's help as president, along with help from additional board members like Jim Wertz, the Society is already exceeding its three-year goals.

"We wanted to form a board and develop a vision," Erika explains. "And here we are already – a developed, capable board, a film series, major fundraising events, and new projects on the horizon."

With a strong board, John could easily do his directing thing to make a masterpiece of Erie film culture: Assemble the crew, give directions, frame the vision, and execute in hopes of making Erie an exciting place for film.

The Film Society is currently working with various regional film organizations – Bad-Ass Film Festival, Edinboro Film Series, Eerie Horror Film Festival, Langer Film Series, Lyons Den Productions, MoreFrames Animation, and Spirit Quest Film Festival – as well as forming a relationship with Tinseltown through the promotion of its CineArts series and continuing to develop the FILM at the

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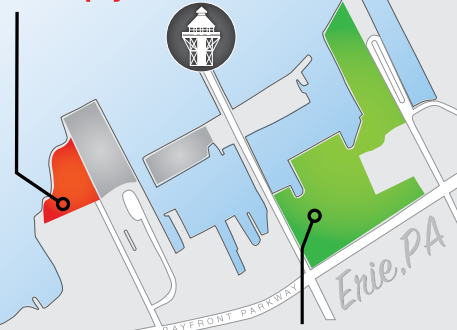
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Erie Art Museum film series.

It's that kind of synergy that leads to John saying things like *Amy Seimetz* without much context in between sips of beer.

"Getting her in Erie... that was a big deal for me."

Featured in the FILM at the Erie Art Museum's "Women in Film" season, *Sun Don't Shine* caught critics attention early and fast, and it notched a "best director" award in Seimetz's belt at the SXSW Film Festival.

So showing her 2012 breakout movie at the weekly film series held each Wednesday during a given season at the Erie Art Museum was a big deal for John as the curator. But an even *bigger* deal? John lined up the indie-movie darling for a Q&A after the screening via Skype and welcomed the audience to remain afterwards to ask her questions about her film and her work.

"I love that people stick around after the screenings," John says. "It shows that people in Erie really *do* care about film and the art of film."

But Seimetz isn't the only filmmaker to either appear in-person or via the Internet in Erie. Lyons has brought the likes of *Triple Divide* filmmakers Joshua B. Pribanic and Melissa A. Troutman, *Middle of Nowhere's* star Emayatzy Corinealdi, director of *The Mayor* Jared Scheib, director of *Chasing Ice* Jeff Orlowski, and lead special-effects developer for *Beasts of the Southern Wild* Matt Thompson – all while continually curating seasons' worth of films for the series.

And just because a renowned or emerging filmmaker can't fly in or Skype in, that doesn't mean the conversation at FILM isn't happening.

"Having a discussion post-film is critical," John explains. "It goes beyond sitting in a chair and passively

watching; it allows the viewer to ruminate, digest, get a real taste for what they just experienced."

And that discussion stems from engaging selections – something John takes very seriously.

"I'm constantly screening films," he says. "At least one a day if not more to find out what I want to bring to Erie."

Amongst his heavier hitters, he's brought *Blue is the Warmest Color*, *Upstream Color*, and *Sound City*. And with the upcoming kickoff of FILM's new season, he's tightlipped about the full lineup (something that he'll reveal opening night Feb. 12), but he's excited for *The Broken Circle Breakdown*, which plays that night.

"This film came completely out of left field for me. I was blown away by its heartbreaking love story and how closely the plot's DNA intertwines with the music," John explains. "And man, that beautiful Bluegrass music plus powerful lead performances – where the actors sing their own tunes – the drama, romance. A film of reason versus religion. Of life, parental love, death, America, and the music unites these two very different people. Whether or not it wins the Oscar, it's a must see."

The excitement he has for the kickoff is palpable, something you can hear in his voice and see in his eyes – the relentless energy of someone constantly driven to create.

"He seems to have tireless energy for this endeavor," says Jim Wertz, the director of the Greater Erie Film Office, over the phone. "It's good – it keeps us focused and motivated."

Jim is spearheading one of John's new initiatives that falls under the



Erika Dauber Berlin

umbrella of the Film Society: The Greater Erie Film Office.

"Pittsburgh's a great city to film in," John says. "But so is Erie. We have four seasons, the lake, woods, an urban center with industrial boom and bust – so many things that can be of great use to filmmakers."

The Greater Erie Film Office is the conduit drawing filmmakers to the Erie region, as the office can help facilitate everything from providing general knowledge of the landscape and terrain to production assistance to helping filmmakers know where to eat and sleep while in the area.

While it'll be unlikely to see a *Dark Knight Rises* land in Erie, something like a *Perks of Being a Wallflower* isn't that big of a stretch.

"The 'million-dollar' movies could really do well here," he says. "The *Little Miss Sunshines* of the industry could

easily be very *Erie* when it comes to backgrounds.

"And so few filmmakers actually know about the tax credit," John continues, again leaning in, as if divulging a secret.

But it's open knowledge: Pennsylvania offers a 25 percent tax credit to films that spend at least 60 percent of their total budget within the state. And while so far, John says he seems to be one of the few in the region taking advantage of that, he's not looking to keep that to himself; rather, he's looking to help share the wealth to grow the film industry in Erie.

And, every time he talks to an Amy Seimetz or a Jeff Orlowski or another acclaimed filmmaker, he's pitching them Erie, serving as its ambassador of film and encouraging them to consider filming their next project in The Gem City, helping them to see that

A full house is gathered at the Erie Art Museum eagerly awaiting the feature presentation.

the city that served as the backdrop of his films could easily serve as the backdrop of theirs, and really, that independent film in Erie shouldn't be a kept a secret.

For more information regarding the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania, as well as the kick-off event for FILM at the Erie Art Museum, visit: FilmSocietyN-WPA.org.

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bspeggen@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @ER-BenSpeggen.

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LSD = PED?

Sundance-screened 'Dockumentary' with local connections explores another side of drugs in baseball

By: Cory Vaillancourt

Hey man, you ever hear about that one guy? You know, that one guy in baseball who like *totally* pitched a no-hitter on acid?

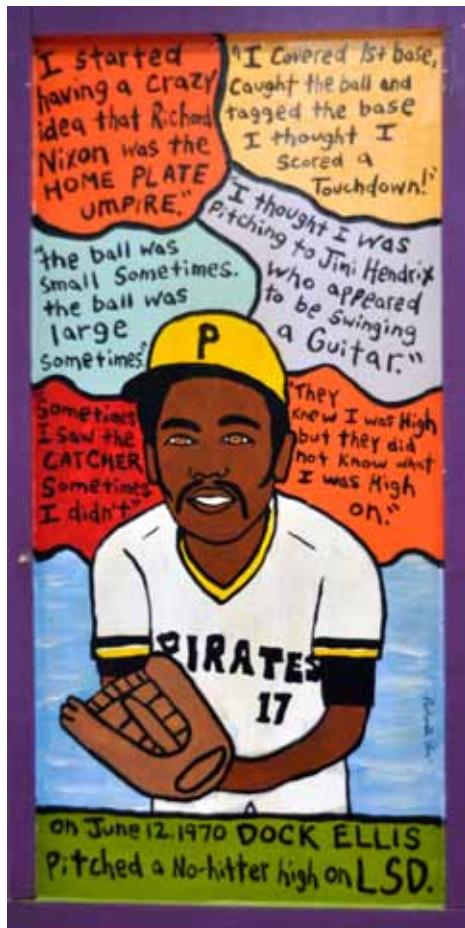
What – you think that the first time drugs made their way into baseball was when Sammy Sosa and Barry Bonds went from stringy, thin, scarecrow-men to freakishly horse-thighed brutes with craniums twice the necessary size?

Hell no. Drugs and baseball go way back, like Tinker and Evers and Chance. Those civil war soldiers who played the earliest versions of the game were probably all whacked out on laudanum or whatever, and Babe Ruth was rumored to sneak out of the ballpark for beers *between* innings. Postwar, amphetamines ran rampant 'round the basepaths, and probably every single one of your childhood heroes took them. By the handful. Turns out, your heroes weren't so much out-playing their opponents as they were out-dosing them.

Think even of tobacco, a stimulant. The average Joe's mental image of any generic baseball player centers on a chipmunkishly overstuffed cheek full of long-leaf chewin' tobaccky that would make even David Seville blush, and spit-sodden dugout floors fragrant with the spicy-sweet aroma of the nicotine-laden saliva of a dozen-odd men. Even up until recently, some players and managers have been known to smoke in the dugouts. You can't even smoke in bars anymore!

Anyway, Dock Ellis – Dock Phillip Ellis, Jr., yeah, that's his name – he, like, *totally* pitched a no-hitter for the Pittsburgh Pirates June 12, 1970. On acid.

So, the story goes that the flamboyant and outspoken young Ellis was in San Diego with his team on a Thursday, asked for permission to fly home to Los Angeles because he didn't have to pitch until Saturday, and dropped a few hits of LSD while waiting for his flight, obviously hoping to liven up a boring Thursday. And then on Friday at a friend's girlfriend's apartment, he



Fanhandle Slim

took some more.

Except, it wasn't Friday; he had partied himself on through Friday into Saturday without even knowing it! Because, well, acid.

So about 2 p.m. on Saturday, Ellis' friend's girlfriend was getting her news from the newspaper – as people used to do in those days – and she saw that the guy currently hallucinating in her Los Angeles apartment was supposed to climb a tiny dirt hill 120 miles away in front of thousands of people and very precisely throw a fist-sized leather sphere past nine San Diego

Padres in, oh, just about 4 hours or so.

Remarkably, the acid-addled Ellis rejected the thesis that this was some sort of newspaper from the future, and accepted his unpleasant and inconvenient temporary reality.

Ellis made the 120 miles back to San Diego, arriving around 4:30 p.m., whereupon he commenced to climbing that tiny dirt hill. Which is when the weird appeared.

Almost as if on cue, a misty fog arose, painting the entire stadium in a spacey surrealistic slurry of silver. Ellis was erratic yet brilliant on the mound, serving up 8 walks and 6 strikeouts, but allowing no hits. Willie Stargell went yard twice for the Buckos, who eked out a win despite Roberto Clemente, Matty Alou, Bob Robertson, and Bill Mazerowski all drawing the collar that day.

In a 2008 NPR interview, Ellis – always known as a giver of good quote, dropped these dandies about the whole experience:

"The opposing team and my teammates, they knew I was high, but they didn't know what I was high on. They had no idea what LSD was other than what they see on TV with the hippies."

"I didn't see the hitters. All I could tell was if they were on the right side or the left side. the catcher put tape on his fingers so I could see the signals."

"There were times when the ball was hit back at me, I jumped because I thought it was coming fast, but the ball was coming slow."

"I never caught a ball from the catcher with two hands, because I thought that was a big ol' ball! And then sometimes it looks small."

"One time, I covered first base, and I caught the ball and I tagged the base, all in one motion, and I said, 'Oh, I just made a touchdown.'"

Sure, Ellis' story is amusing and fascinating and demented and righteous all at the same time, which is why a group of Austin, Tex.-based filmmakers decided to give this legendary trip its well-deserved and long-overdue documen... err, "Dockumentary" treatment. *No No: A Dockumentary* was directed and produced by Jeffrey Radice along with producers Mike Blizzard and Chris Cortez and co-producer Jeffrey Brown. It's Radice's directorial debut, and the film screened at the Sundance Film Festival late this January.

But Radice's film is not all Lucy in the sky with diamonds. Ellis flatly stated in that same NPR interview that, "It was easier to pitch with the LSD because I was so used to medicating myself. That's the way I was dealing with the fear of failure, the fear of losing, the fear of winning.

Over 90 percent of the Major League was using Dexamyl [a stimulant] when I was playing. It was part of the game, you know."

It was, and it or something like it probably still is, but *No No* attempts to document not only the hilarity of a grown man performing to a penultimate level in a highly competitive sport while on a psychotropic hallucinogen, but also his harrowing battle with addiction and his post-baseball redemption as an addiction counselor.

Helping to paint that picture is Erie native Kevin-John Jobczynski, who is certainly no stranger to the pages of the Erie Reader. Jobczynski is a Disney Master Artist who provides original art for the Disney art galleries in each park – high-end stuff depicting the attractions, characters, and sights throughout Disney's resorts and parks. His first major piece – of the notorious hatbox Ghost from Disneyland's Haunted Mansion – debuted in December.

And although he's reached a very lofty perch in a very competitive profession, he's still probably best-known for producing high-quality images of well-known athletes, making him a natural choice to work on *No No*.

"I met the producers and directors when I was creating art for the Roberto Clemente family at the Clemente Museum in Pittsburgh," he told me from home in Florida. "They were gathering interviews, and we met. They liked my style, and asked me to be a part of the film."

Jobczynski's contribution to the film is as vivid and vibrant one would expect in a movie that features LSD usage as one of the major storylines.

"They have 'gaps' in the film – its a documentary – where they have no film or photos for the stories being told, so they had me create art to fill in those gaps, to give visuals to the viewers. In some cases, they put my realistic art to animation. It is so sick!" he said.

Sounds trippy. And thanks to the combined efforts of those who worked on this film, the next time someone asks you about that one guy in baseball who, like, *totally* pitched a no-hitter on acid, you can tell them that yes, you've heard the tale of Dock Ellis – the only known professional athlete (so far) to use LSD as a PED.

For more information on *No No: A Dockumentary*, visit www.nonoadockumentary.com. Contact Cory Vaillancourt at cVaillancourt@ErieReader.com. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/j4lb6>



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If We Were You...

WEDNESDAY 2.05

Digital Salon Night at the Erie Art Museum

It's impossible not to notice the millions upon millions of videos literally all over the Web. Some videos are used to tell a story while others are purely for entertainment, but there is usually a method behind the madness. Join Mike Esser of Red Hat, Inc. at the Erie Art Museum to discuss video marketing strategy and learn how to make your videos matter. Sign up is just \$20, including refreshments, hor d'oeuvres and a presentation.

When: 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Where: 20 E. Fifth St.

Contact: emarketinglearningcenter.org

THURSDAY 2.06

Copenhagen

After solving numerous equations and scientific puzzles, scientists Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, and Bohr's wife Margarethe have one question left to answer: Why did Heisenberg visit Bohr in Copenhagen back in 1941? The issue lies at the center of Michael Frayn's riveting Tony Award-winning play *Copenhagen*, which returns to the Dramashop stage in the Renaissance Center Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

When: 8 p.m.

Where: 1001 State St.

Contact: dramashop.org

Rince Na Tiarna's Pub Night

Rince Na Tiarna (Gaelic for *Lord of the Dance*) achievements and influence have echoed far beyond the boundaries of the local Irish community. Stop down and support these talented dancers by partaking in an Irish cocktail or two at Molly Brannigan's and tipping generously to your favorite bartender. Celebrity bartenders for the evening include County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, Father Michael DeMartinis, WQLN's Tom New, Mike Batchelor from the Erie Community Foundation, and many others. The event is free and open to the public. Proceeds benefit Rince Na Tiarna.

When: 5 to 8 p.m.

Where: 506 State Street

Contact: 716.675.8785

JES presents Protecting Watersheds and Restoring Foodsheds: One Blade of Grass at a Time

It used to be that mankind grew food for survival with nothing but a mixture of soil, sunshine, and rain. But times became less simple, and as the population grew, mechanical inventions, petroleum-based fertilizers, and artificial sunshine were introduced into agricultural production. Will this system be enough for the world's still-growing population? Find out at the Jefferson Educational Society's NWPAGE/Clean Air Council Lecture, free of cost.

When: 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Where: 3207 State St.

Contact: 459.8000



Spelitz - Contributed Photo

The Blue Pike Music Awards - Sunday, Feb. 9

If you were on Twitter the night of Sunday, Jan. 26, you were likely aware that the Grammy Awards were on TV. The event was a massive affair full of moments for snarky viewers to comment on (myself included), as jokes about the show's sheer length, the constant quick cuts to Yoko Ono and Steven Tyler in the audience, and host LL Cool J in general dominated the Twittersphere.

The countless online quips and Kendrick Lamar and Imagine Dragon's scintillating performance aside, the Grammys were largely a boring affair, a night dedicated to highlighting plenty of big stars that are fawned over by their fans (Hey, guys; did you know the Beatles were great? Don't worry, because the Grammys will constantly remind you of that!).

Instead, it's about time we stopped showering praise on these performers with huge followings and started showing some love to those that don't get quite as much attention. Enter The Blue Pike Music Awards, an event dedicated to honoring Erie's local acts that don't get as much recognition as they should. So leave the glitz and the glam to the Grammys, because Blue Pike is for the grinders, the up-and-comers, and the people in this area that play not for fame or fortune, but because they want to create something wonderful, and it's time we start recognizing these local giants one nominee at a time.

"We really do have giants among us in this community, and I don't want them being overlooked," Basement Transmissions' Bob Jensen said in Matthew Flowers' recent feature in the Erie Reader about the event. "We don't want [music] to go extinct in this town."

And that's exactly why Blue Pike is being held for the second straight year, this time at the Masonic Temple from 5 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 9, where nominees selected by online voters will have a chance to make off with awards for the best bands in their genre, with ultimate winners selected by the academy, a specially chosen group of local experts. In addition to the awards themselves, Blue Pike will feature original music by experimental quartet Spelitz, garage rockers Teatime for Three, and the acoustic stylings of Optimistic Apocalypse, as well as house band Steve Trohoske & the Submariners featuring Tony Grey.

Tickets for Blue Pike can be purchased for \$12 at bluepikeawards.com or for \$15 at the door. It may not be the suit-and-tie event that dominated Twitter, but your support means a lot to the dozens of people that play not only for our entertainment, but also because they have something to say. - Alex Bieler

"What is Gravity" Open House Night in Astronomy at Penn State Behrend

With 2013's sci-fi thriller *Gravity* grossing over \$260 million domestically in the box office, it's clear the movie was an instant success and proved to intrigue the general populace, but how accurate is the science behind the film? Penn State Behrend's professor of physics and astronomy will examine both this and the common untruths relating to gravity at the Jack Burke Research and Economic Development Center, free of cost.

When: 7 p.m.

Where: 5101 Jordan Road

Contact: 898.6008

FRIDAY 2.07

Barlow/onewayness 7" Split Record Release Show

One's a little more electro, and the other's a little more rock 'n' roll, but that doesn't mean that onewayness and Barlow can't work together for a new 7" split. Even better, the experimental electronic wizardry of onewayness and Barlow's shoegaze goodness are teaming up for a release show at Basement Transmissions, celebrating their collaboration with an exciting night of live music.

When: 5:30 to 11:30 p.m.

Where: 1501 State St.

Contact: basementtrans@gmail.com

Big Eyed Phish

It's a bit too cold for Dave Matthews to be travelling around to big, outdoor venues, but that doesn't mean that you can't experience the sweet sounds of Dave Matthews Band in a live setting. Big Eyed Phish will bring the songs of DMB to life at Sherlock's, so you don't have to wait for better weather for the ants to start marching.

When: 10 p.m.

Where: 508 State St.

Contact: 453.7760

SATURDAY 2.08

Annual Valentine's Event: Thai Yoga Massage, Wine, Chocolates, & More at Plasha Yoga

This class is designed to deepen each couples experience and appreciation of being together and maintaining that connection at home with these practices. This is a relaxing massage with passive, assisted stretching. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. No yoga or massage experience necessary. Afterwards, enjoy gourmet food samples from Village West's Lavender Rabbit and a wine tasting with 6 Mile Cellars paired with Romolo chocolates. \$30 per couple.

When: 4 to 6 p.m.

Where: 3330 W. 26th St.

Contact: 814.864.1114

Joshua Breakstone Trio

While some people tell stories through words, Joshua Breakstone tells them with notes. The



Contributed Photo

Louie Anderson - Feb. 13 to 15

After winning two Emmy awards, having three books published, and hosting a program that TV Guide ranked as the third-greatest game show of all time, Louie Anderson has enjoyed quite a nice career. Still, the longtime comedian isn't stopping anytime soon, performing regularly at the Plaza Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas and working on material for a new hour-long special. Anderson has fans to please and places to see, which is why he'll be coming to JR's Last Laugh for five shows from Thursday, Feb. 13 to Saturday, Feb. 15

"I go out in spurts just to get out of here because you can get a little Vegas-ized, kind of like *Fear and Loathing [in Las Vegas]*. So I go out every few months for a couple of gigs and come back and say, 'oh, that was cold, that was way too cold,' which is what I'll be doing [in Erie]," Anderson says over the phone, back in the warmth of Las Vegas after a visit to his home state of Minnesota.

Despite the frigid temperatures, Anderson says that he's excited to come and entertain the people of Erie, reaching out to new fans, as well as the people that have been watching him since the days of salad washing in *Coming to America* and the animated family stories on the Fox hit *Life with Louie*.

"I'm just a ham sandwich away from my TV personality," Anderson jokes. "I think what you see is what you get, and that appeals to a lot of my fans. People feel like they know me, they feel like I live in the same neighborhood as them in a sense. I don't want to sound maudlin, but I'm very grateful for the great career I've had as a stand-up."

Anderson will be showing his gratitude off the stage as well as on it, as he stressed that he'll be hanging around after his sets at JR's to chat with the crowd. It's been a long career for Louie, but when your fans feel like family, it's more of a reunion than a gig, and you can become a part of the Anderson clan. - Alex Bieler

veteran jazz guitarist will tell his musical tales at PACA, joining up with local jazz greats Frank Singer and Joe Dorris for a night presented by JazzErie, so get ready to sit back, relax, and enjoy a performance by a great storyteller.

When: 8 p.m.
Where: 1505 State St.
Contact: pacai505.com

Laugh/Riot presents *No Exit* at Edinboro University

No Exit is a 1944 existentialist French play by 20th century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and the source of Sartre's famed quote "L'enfer, c'est les autres" meaning "Hell is other people," which proves to be quite apt when three damned souls are punished in death by being locked together in a single room in Hell for eternity.

When: 7:30 to 10 p.m.
Where: 217 Meadville St., Edinboro
Contact: 323.1147

SUNDAY 2.09

SafeNet's Chili and Chocolate Celebration

Hey, you! Do you like chili? Chocolate? Ben Speggen MCing things? Then you'll love this event at the Erie Maennerchor Club! Check out seven unique chili dishes from your favorite local restaurants — including Franco's, Jekyll & Hyde, LaBella, the Maennerchor, Summerhouse, Victors, and the Whole Foods Co-op — and vote for your favorite. Tickets \$15 or 2/\$25, and all proceeds benefit SafeNet.

When: Noon to 4 p.m.
Where: 1607 State St.
Contact: 455.1774

On Screen/In Person Film Series presents *The Exquisite Corpse Project*

In this film-cum-documentary, five comedy



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writers are presented with the challenge of composing 15 pages of a movie in one week, having only read the preceding five pages of the script. The condition? Director Ben Popik must make the movie they have written. Prior to the film, Popik will lead the viewers at Taylor Little Theatre in their own unique Exquisite Corpse Project. Tickets are just \$6.

When: 2 p.m.
Where: 501 E. 38th St.
Contact: miac.mercyhurst.edu

MONDAY 2.10

The JES Takes a Look at Visual Literacy

We all love art, and Erie is a very artistic city. But how do we actually *see* the art and create meaning from it? Especially when the imagery is disturbing? Let Michael DeSanctis, Ph.D, professor of Fine Arts and Director of the Honors Program at Gannon University, shed some light on the subject. He'll help us gain a better understanding of how the visual arts, particularly imagery that is shocking, confrontational or outwardly displeasing, enriches our humanity and requires reflection and often times explanation. This richly-illustrated session is designed for those willing to grow beyond their traditional notions of what constitutes meaningful art.

When: 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Where: Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State
Contact: JESerie.org

TUESDAY 2.11

Lena Logvina's Valentine's Jewelry Party

Okay, you know it: Valentine's Day is right around the corner and your special someone needs a special something from you. Let's make this simple: Lena's jewelry is beautiful, and your special someone will feel extra special receiving some very special one-of-a-kind, handcrafted art. Don't have a special someone? Well, you could always just buy something special for your special self. Or, you could still come down and enjoy some live music courtesy of Stephen Trohoske, Tony Grey, and Stix Thompson free of charge — which is enough to make anyone feel pretty damn special on a Tuesday night in Erie.

When: 5 to 9 p.m.
Where: 123 W. 14th St.
Contact: 454.2200

WEDNESDAY 2.12

JES presents Remarkable American Women: Mary Todd Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was brilliant and instrumental in the progression of our country as we see it today, but what about his wife? In honor of Lincoln's birthday, the Jefferson Educational Society will celebrate and discover Mary Todd Lincoln, whose life consisted of tragedies and public ridicule as she served not only as the wife of President Lincoln, but also his political partner. Admission is free and open to the public.

When: 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Where: 3207 State St.
Contact: 459.8000



Ryan Smith

The Erie Philharmonic Presents: Broadway Romance - Saturday, Feb. 15

Chocolates and flowers are nice, but memories can last forever. The Erie Philharmonic will perform Broadway Romance at 8 p.m. at the Warner Theatre Saturday, Feb. 15, helping you sweep that special someone off their feet with a little bit of night music.

Instead of delivering material goods to prove your young affections, treat your loved one to the sweet swells of strings that accompanied Elphaba and Fiyero's romance in *Wicked*, or reaffirm your decades of devotion, just like Tevye and Golde in *Fiddler on the Roof*, to a Valentine's gift (one day late, which means you have twice as much time to celebrate this loving holiday) of Philharmonic goodness, ultimately making you the hero in your own personal love story.

To prove your love through music, go to eriephil.org and order your tickets to his or her heart, instead of some gift that would go to someone's hips, or eventually their trash can. Even better, get your loved one all three, and you'll be on your way to a night you'll always remember. - Alex Bieler

THURSDAY 2.13

Weapon of Choice

Knowledge is power. And if this city ever needed power to overcome violence, it's now. Thanks to the never-ending grinding of The Box, you can join the fight against local violence by supporting local artists, musicians, and poets. Remember, Erie: It's one Erie, one love, and it's knowledge over violence — so spread the word and make knowledge your weapon of choice.

When: 7 p.m.
Where: PACA 1505 State St.
Contact: paca1505.com

The Populist Influence in Erie Politics: Then and Now - Part II (FREE LECTURE)

This two-part series focuses early in the 20th century as waves of new immigrants deeply changed the nature of politics in the city of Erie. An on-going struggle for control between the "newcomers" and the "natives" ensued for most of the century with the ramifications still apparent in modern Erie politics although somewhat different in nature. The lectures will focus on the main political characters engaged in this struggle including Mayors Mike Liebel, Miles Kitts, Charles Barber, Tom Flatley,

Art Gardner, Charles Williamson, Lou Tullio, Joyce Savocchio, and Rick Filippi as well as key council players including Harkins, Cannavino, Bagnoni, Brabender, and Cappabianca. Instructor: William Garvey, Ph.D.

When: 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Where: 3207 State St.
Contact: 459.8000 or online at www.JesErie.org.

Edinboro Film Series presents Like Crazy

This week's film is directed by Drake Doremus and stars Felicity Jones, Anton Yelchin, and Jennifer Lawrence. When American student Jacob and a British exchange student Anna fall in love, they struggle repeatedly to make their relationship work when Anna's visa expires and she is refused re-entry in the U.S. Featuring completely improvised dialogue, *Like Crazy* won the 2011 Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize. Tickets are just \$5.

When: 8:30 p.m.
Where: 219 Meadville St., Edinboro
Contact: events.edinboro.edu

FRIDAY 2.14

The LEC w/ Falling Hollywood and Black & Broke

The Lower Eastside Connection doesn't have a

specific date for Valentine's Day; no, the band has several of them, treating everyone at the crooked i with a brand new video release, as well as a stacked night of performances. Local rockers Falling Hollywood and Cleveland hipster-hop group Black & Broke will join in on the Valentine's party, making this show one sweet treat.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Where: 1013 State St.
Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

SATURDAY 2.15

The Box Presents: B-Boys, Blackbooks, and Emcees

People can tell you what hip-hop really is, but sometimes it's best to just show you. That's why The Box will present B-Boys, Blackbooks, and Emcees, a night of hip-hop performances at PACA to help you get inspired by performances from Caprice Hollis, K Sanz, Elias, Random Union, Heresy, and King David, as well as music by Doc Proto.

When: 5 p.m.
Where: 1505 State St.
Contact: paca1505.com

This American Song Record Release Party w/ The Mighty Sea and Strangers & Liars

Local alternative Americana band This American Song may have to change their name to These American Songs after the upcoming record release party at the crooked i. The quintet will celebrate a new batch of songs with acoustic duo The Mighty Sea and rockers Stranger & Liars, all for your entertainment.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Where: 1013 State St.
Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

MONDAY 2.17

Spend Presidents Day at The Big Green Screen

The Big Green Screen at TREC is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays through the end of March, but not today! To help you celebrate our nation's highest elected office, they're opening their doors and offering ticket specials and group rates. Between *Titans of the Ice Age*, *Flying Monsters*, and *Tornado Alley* you're sure to be entertained. You'll probably even have your mind blown a little bit. Hell, make a day of it and see all three! Check their site for show times and info.

When: all day
Where: Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.
Contact: trecpi.org

TUESDAY 2.18

The MOMologues

Being a mother is no joke... but there is a comedy written about it. A play about the adventures of motherhood — the things mothers know but don't always talk about — *The MOMologues* is a staged reading that'll have the whole family laughing.

When: 7:30 p.m.
Where: The Erie Playhouse 13 W. 10th St.
Contact: EriePlayhouse.org



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MUSIC REVIEWS

Damien Jurado

Brothers and Sisters of the Eternal Sun

Secretly Canadian

★★★★



Two years after the release of *Maraqopa*, Damien Jurado returns with a sequel to the 2012 concept album. The Seattle singer/songwriter revisits the mysterious world of Maraqopa on *Brothers and Sisters of the Eternal Sun*, with 10 different stories to tell about a man who gets lost during the search to find himself, all rife with references to religion and outer space. The themes aren't the only similarity on *Brothers and Sisters*, as The Shins' Richard Swift returns as producer, helping to create the lush sonic world around Jurado's heavily reverberating warble of a voice. The results are fascinating, especially on the psychedelic second track "Silver Timothy," as Jurado expands from the simple folk tunes that marked his earlier work. Still, there are remnants of his finger-picking past on a gorgeous two-song stretch of "Silver Katherine" and "Silver Joy" near the end of the album, a lovely closing tale during a welcome return to Maraqopa. - Alex Bieler

Against Me!

Transgender Dysphoria Blues

Total Treble

★★★★



Against Me! lead singer Laura Jane Grace shocked quite a few people when she came out as transgender in 2012, an announcement that left the future of the Florida punk-rock band in doubt, as two members from the Tom Gabel era left the band. Grace powered through the transition with longtime guitarist James Bowman, resulting in the band's searing new album *Transgender Dysphoria Blues*, a personal concept piece about a transgender prostitute. Grace isn't too interested in subtleties on the album, yelling "you want them to see you like they see any other girl, they just see a faggot" on the fiery title track. Appropriately, Grace is the star of the show, able to pull off lines like "There's a brave new world that's raging inside of me" with sincerity. *Transgender Dysphoria Blues* hits hard, a 29-minute blast of passion that, while not entirely consistent, still ends up rocking. - Alex Bieler

Hospitality

Trouble

Merge

★★★★



After dealing out heavy doses of pleasant indie-pop on their self-titled debut album, Brooklyn trio Hospitality got a little rougher around the edges for *Trouble*. The new album finds front woman Amber Papini and her bandmates trading in the cute twee and simple acoustic guitar strummings that marked their first album for a slightly tougher sound and some darker lyrics. Opening track "Nightingale" introduces an unexpected slow burn of a song that leads into more cymbal crashes and synths than one would expect from Hospitality. "I Miss Your Bones" proves to be a catchy four minutes of wiry guitars, letting Papini play the part of a cool, collected rocker. Eventually the album starts to return to more familiar Hospitality territory, like on the gentle, swaying "It's Not Serious." It's not an unwelcome return to their original sound, but it splits *Trouble* awkwardly. Still, both halves have their moments, although it's not as much of a cohesive experience. - Alex Bieler

Broken Bells

After the Disco

Columbia

★★★★



It's an East meets West, Day juxtaposed against Night-kind-of-combo that's so different that it was distinct, fresh, and unencumbered by its opposed polar forces pushing in at the creative center. On one side, there's Danger Mouse, the mega-producer hip-hop artist; on the other, there's James Mercer, the posterboy for angsty bearded hipster singer-songwriters. And together, they teamed up to release their debut, self-titled album in 2010. Four years later, the duo is back at it – and even better at it. *After the Disco*, as its name suggests, features a bit more of a disco-esque mood than *Broken Bells*, but the consistency from song to song is clearer here as Danger Mouse's bleeps and bleeps bounce better with Mercer's how-do-I-deal-with-the-world-around-me meandering lyrics. Lead single and album-standout "Holding On For Life" is straight-up Bee Gees meets Hall & Oates meets Steely Dan – and it's a beautiful get-together. - Ben Spегgen

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Ryan Smith

The Happy Debauchery of Marco Benevento

Experimental pianist mixes tight jazz with open-space jams and melt-your-face rock

By Ryan Smith

One of the last times I saw Marco Benevento – I don't quite recall if it was the time before last, or the time before that – he was pounding his play-worn piano for a blissed-out, happy-footed festival crowd: Great-big, loony tunes – a real good time all around.

It's a sorta fuzzy recollection, but I remember it was a Saturday, and early afternoon-time, I think, and good and bright and sunny there in those mountains down south. There was a huge, stuffed tiger's head fixed to his piano's frame, I remember, and a big sack he was giddily tossing goodies (T-shirts, I think) into the crowd from, and eye-smiles all around, and whisky by his stool. A big ol', round-handled jug of whisky.

When I heard Benevento was coming to the crooked i a couple of weeks back, I smiled. And I wondered if there would be more of that same kind of happy debauchery, a collective symptom brought on by the stellar piano man's and his stellar cohorts' sound: A jubilant, free-range experiment that loops up and mashes together tight jazz and open-space jam and melt-your-face rock and, well, anything – everything – they like.

I'm happy to say there was. And plenty of it. And for me, it was just about the best Benevento party yet.

These days, Benevento swims the sonic waters with former Ween bassist Dave Dreiwitz and drummer Andy Borger, who also works with Tom Waits and Norah Jones. Every member of the trio has a big sound, a whole lot to contribute to their musical conversations, and Benevento gleefully gets the good-time shindig started, and keeps it going, with a big smile on his face, an ear down to the keys, and a leading wing always just a bit ahead of the flock.

"He's walkin' *all over* that thing!," yelled one guy getting down in that Friday-night i crowd, hands to his head and feet shimmying, all immersed in everything Benevento was putting down.

Yep, I thought, that about says it right there.

And, like it always is with most worth-hearing, true music, what's going on there isn't easy to box up into words. Benevento and his buddies –

Dreiwitz, Borger, and the colorful collection of other musicians he's taken to the stage with – are, to these ears, always among the best sorts to listen close to. They've trained long and listened close themselves, you can tell, learning all the rules and measurements of their instruments, and well, before they start bending all those rules, and good.

I mean, so good.

In all of Benevento's wide-smiled,

jesterly, expertly-crafted sonic concoctions, there's a slew of elements at work and play: You hear something of the funk of Stevie Wonder, the flamboyant showmanship of Elton John, the playful irreverence of Harry Nilsson.

But what Benevento's got – the amalgam of all that masterful influence and more, coupled with his singular inspiration, his muse – is something all his own, to be sure.

At the recent i show, that probably hit me hardest and best when Benevento tore into his medley melding Pink Floyd's "Fearless" with John's "Benny & the Jets." When I heard the first looped refrain of "Fearless" – a bent, building chant of cheers – I immediately felt those involuntarily, all-over chills (for some reason, my most physical manifestation of musical appreciation) that I always get when it's good, really good.

Marco Benevento rocked the crooked i Jan. 24.

And looking around, from the guys on stage to the way-caught-in-the-moment crowd, I could sure tell everyone else was feeling it too.

Sure enough, and right on cue, I heard someone happily shout: "I'm FEELIN' it!!!"

My brother and his wife – long two of my best show-going buddies – were close by me right then, and they were feelin' it too; both with those satisfied smiles they get when they're totally immersed in the sound. Another buddy did it up his way, all rubbery goofy-footed in his big mud boots, while his lady danced all loosy-goosy by his side.

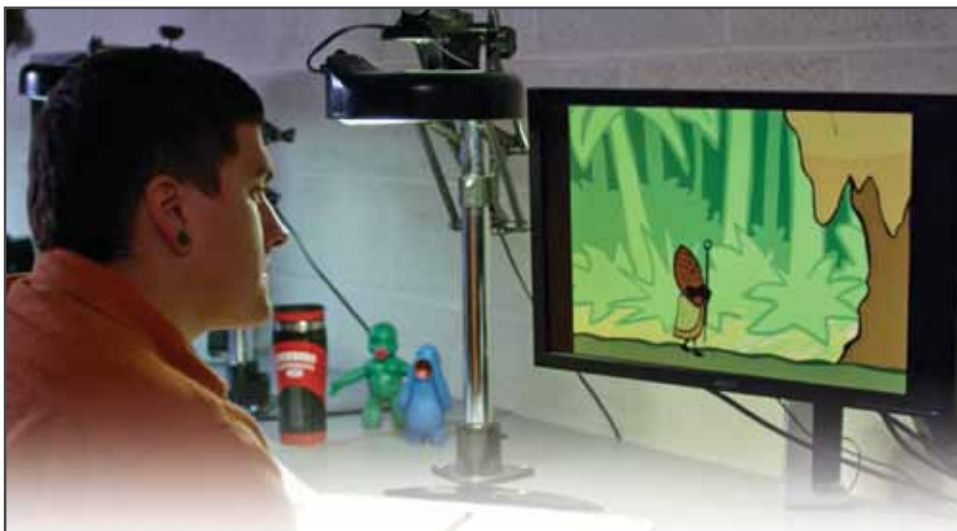
It looked that way all over the place that night. Benevento always wants everyone to get down – I mean, really get down – and he sees to it that everyone, himself included, always does.

Man, that's good, I thought at that moment, and just that simply.

So good.

Ryan Smith can be contacted at rSmith@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Ryan-SmithPlens. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/978ts>





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Outside Voices

By: Jessica Courter

How often do you watch live music in Erie, and where is your favorite place to see it?

Megan Lawrence

"If I do see music, it's usually at Mercyhurst because I'm a student and I live on campus. I see some of the student work, and when the Institute for Arts and Culture bring in acts like the Yamato drummers, I get to see those."



Dillon Shidemantle

"[I watch live music] as much as possible. I'm actually in a jazz combo, and we play around Erie. We try to not only play as much as we can, but to also support and see as much as we can. We go to the Erie Ale House, the Oasis, the Brewerrie, Mercyhurst...I'm down for anything – jazz, blues, rock, rap – anything goes."



Bobby Lucas

"I'll go out to the Anchor In on Fridays and Saturdays for jazz and blues. They'll bring in bigger-name people to play down there who also play at the Ale House and the Brewerrie. I just love watching live music."



Christine Olivier

"I watch live music in Erie a lot. I make a career out of it because I work [at Mercyhurst]. I go to the crooked i a lot and to the Art Museum when they're doing live performances, for sure. I also catch a lot of live shows at Mercyhurst."



Jessica Courter can be contacted at jCourter@ErieReader.com. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/8nm4k>



Tech Watch

Mobile keyless hotel check-ins are the new trend



By: Abby Witham, Epic WebStudios

It doesn't seem long ago that hotels began offering free Wi-Fi in your room. Some hotels are still catching on to this trend, but other larger hotel chains are already working towards being even more tech friendly. The hotel chain Aloft, one of Starwood Hotels and Resorts brands, is taking the lead when it comes to truly mobile keyless check-ins. This modern hotel chain is mostly in bigger cities, so it is no surprise that they will be the first ones attempting the change.

Smartphones have become more of a necessity than a luxury, and Starwood is taking advantage of that notion by trying the new technology out at its Harlem, N.Y. and Cupertino, Calif. Aloft locations.

Starwood's CEO Frits van Paasschen told USA Today, "In a world where digital tech is only getting smaller and cheaper, more ubiquitous, we need to see how technology is changing what our guests want – and keep pace." If everything goes as planned for the hotel chain, they will have this new system throughout three Starwood brands – Aloft, W hotels, and Element – by 2015.

The keyless system works through an app that runs through Bluetooth technology only compatible on the newer versions of the iPhone and Android phones. It allows users to check in to the hotel and unlock their hotel room door – not with a key or swipe card, but with the push of a button on their smartphones.

For most, this all may put security concerns into question. With so much personal information stored on our smartphone, it may raise a red flag for travelers, but Thorsten Kirschke, president of Carlson Hotels, Americas, told USA Today, "We would not expose our customers if there's a slight concern for their security." Carlson Hotels is not currently experimenting

with keyless keys, but they are trying mobile check-ins.

The initial step towards keyless keys may be taking off in a larger city at first, but Bel-Aire Clarion's Kerry Schwab, vice president of Schwab Hospitality Corporation, made a point that, "It's not so much anymore [Erie] necessarily of catching up to bigger trends in larger cities, when it comes to applications that we're speaking of now. We are in a franchise with Choice Hotels, and it's more or less once the parent companies – whether it's Choice, Marriott, Starwood, or Hilton – make the decision to adopt a standard, they will do their own data test market and make their appropriate decision and give guidelines for appropriate implementation."

Marriott, a hotel chain that has brands located in Erie, recently introduced a mobile check-in service, but hotel-goers still have to use the front desk to pick up their key. Unfortunately, when I looked into it, not one Marriott in Erie offers this service yet.

Bel-Aire Clarion hasn't reached the point of mobile check-in either. But when asked, Kerry said, "Is it something that we would entertain? Absolutely. It is probably the way that the hotel industry is headed."

Technology has reformed the hospitably industry – no questions asked. "The second you put your head down on the pillow or you take the afternoon off to play nine holes, you're behind," Kerry says. "It's exciting; it really is. The Internet has changed our industry maybe more than most. Maybe not, but it certainly has put the consumer in the driver's seat."

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[Cont. from 6] ed one is already shovel ready
 Chris Scott, vice president of Scott Enterprises, addressed County Council last week citing all of the potential concerns of a publicly funded hotel – such as the potential burden to the taxpayers and the feasibility of success for additional hotels along the Bayfront.”

He closed by adding, “If the \$25 million needs to be used to create jobs, the Convention Center Authority should use the funds to build something that will attract people to Erie, such as a science center, an IMAX Theater, or an aquarium,” he said. “These types of facilities are not built by private industry. They are built with public money, like the Erie Insurance arena and the Warner Theatre. These facilities generate tourism. We can build the hotel at our own risk, pay taxes, and get the extra rooms the convention center wants. We need to work together.”

It’s important to note however, that the funds may only be able to be used towards the hotel designation – and not re-directed. This is a question that hasn’t been answered yet.

The Scott’s concerns are legitimate – and worth noting. In addition, there has been little communication between the two groups, which also makes a partnership difficult.

On one hand, the Convention Center Authority is looking to create a project that would not only potentially increase conventions brought to Erie, but would also create the infrastructure necessary to attract private developers to the former GAF site, ultimately beautifying a substantial portion of our Bayfront region. On the other hand, we have this magnanimous multi-use development project

proposed by the Scotts that would not only help boost tourism, but would also be a destination in and of itself for both the citizens of Erie and visitors to our community.

As it currently stands, these two entities have yet to work together on Bayfront development, each of these two arms of development stretching to reach forward, moving independently of the other, while both remaining connected to a core that is Erie’s Bayfront. And both have stated publicly they would work together, albeit under different conditions.

Conditions aside, both are bold visions that come at a pivotal time for Erie. Yet the feasibility of these plans comes with risks, both private and public. But with calculated risk can come great rewards, rewards that can drive our economy forward – which isn’t a bad bet since as both en-

tities have successful résumés when it comes to development, despite their differences.

So what Erie needs most – aside from bold vision for development of the jewel in our crown that sits along the water’s edge – is collaboration and transparency and an informed community. The second reading of this ordinance proposal will come up during County Council’s next meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 11. Whether or not a vote will be cast has yet to be determined; however, time is definitely of the essence.

Rebecca Styn can be contacted at rStyn@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @rStyn. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/j63so>



Answer to Sudoku

7	8	5	6	3	1	4	2	9
6	9	3	7	4	2	5	8	1
1	2	4	5	9	8	3	6	7
4	7	1	2	8	5	6	9	3
9	3	8	4	7	6	2	1	5
2	5	6	9	1	3	8	7	4
8	1	2	3	5	9	7	4	6
5	4	9	8	6	7	1	3	2
3	6	7	1	2	4	9	5	8

Answer to Sudoku

7	8	5	6	3	1	4	2	9
6	9	3	7	4	2	5	8	1
1	2	4	5	9	8	3	6	7
4	7	1	2	8	5	6	9	3
9	3	8	4	7	6	2	1	5
2	5	6	9	1	3	8	7	4
8	1	2	3	5	9	7	4	6
5	4	9	8	6	7	1	3	2
3	6	7	1	2	4	9	5	8

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1 Sinbad's bird
- 4 Niger-Congo language
- 8 Stripe
- 12 Abridged (abbr.)
- 13 Fat (pref.)
- 14 Economy (abbr.)
- 15 Stinging insect
- 16 Douse (2 words)
- 18 Unclean in Jewish law
- 20 Russ. inland sea
- 21 Ring-shaped game piece
- 23 Cover meat with bacon
- 25 Fraction of a rupee
- 26 Fillet
- 27 Compass direction
- 30 Press for payment

DOWN

- 31 Goodbye (Sp.)
- 32 Europe (abbr.)
- 33 Honshu bay
- 34 Haw. goose
- 35 City in Bihar India
- 36 Irish nobleman
- 37 Leg of mutton or lamb
- 38 First principles
- 40 Wine (pref.)
- 41 Sinuous
- 44 Clod
- 47 Garden tool
- 48 Galatea's beloved
- 49 Monkey
- 50 Molding
- 51 Legislature
- 52 Belonging to (suf.)

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

W	H	O	A	H	A	B	A	J	A	R
R	A	M	N	A	P	A	D	U	D	E
A	B	E	J	E	E	R	O	R	A	L
P	U	N	T	O	B	A	B	Y		
			B	U	R	P	W	E	L	S
D	O	N	A	E	R	G	O	I	A	O
E	L	A	A	B	I	E	L	S	M	U
A	P	R	E	A	S	T	S	T	A	R
N	E	G	R	O	M	A	K	E		
		H	O	N	E	A	W	A	S	H
N	U	I	T	E	B	U	R	C	P	A
E	L	L	A	O	I	L	Y	R	A	D
T	A	E	L	C	O	M	O	O	D	E

- 3 Cotton fabric
- 4 Item of property
- 5 Hashish
- 6 Presidential nickname
- 7 One who is (suf.)
- 8 Whiskers
- 9 Recorded
- 10 Carol
- 11 Department of Natural Resources (abbr.)
- 17 Line
- 19 Estuary
- 21 Arabian judge
- 22 Alone (Lat.)
- 23 Salt solution
- 24 Tonic herb
- 26 Polish border river
- 27 Solan (2 words)
- 28 Betel leaf concoction
- 29 Quod _____ demonstrandum
- 31 Umbel family herb
- 35 Liquor
- 36 Afr. fruit
- 37 Alluvial deposit
- 38 Anagram (abbr.)
- 39 Roast
- 40 Migratory worker
- 41 Theater sign
- 42 Male person
- 43 Here (Fr.)
- 45 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
- 46 Vertical airfoil

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
		18	19					20				
21	22					23	24					
25						26				27	28	29
30						31				32		
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	38	39						40				
41						42	43			44	45	46
47						48				49		
50						51				52		

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A52



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ER Sports

By: James R. LeCorchick

Cradle of Coaches



Joe Lombardi

Mercyhurst University is going to be called the "Cradle of Coaches" if things continue in the direction they're going – with one of those directions leading to the NFL, while another coach with an MU connection was named as a head college coach.

Joe Lombardi, who was just named the Offensive Coordinator for the Detroit Lions, and is the grandson of the legendary Vince Lombardi, coached the Hurst under head coach Marty Schaeztle for four seasons. The head coach of the Lakers told the Erie Reader, "I always thought he would end up in professional football.

"He was incredibly smart – football-wise and intellectually – and was one of the brightest coaches I've ever been around. He has always had everything needed to be a great coach."



Marty Schaeztle

Schaeztle is extremely proud of Lombardi, who the Laker boss brought to Erie after coaching with him at Bucknell University. They stay in touch, and Schaeztle added, "I couldn't be more pleased as this couldn't have happened to a better person, on or off the field."

Meanwhile, former Mercyhurst University football standout Scott Benzel, a 1997 Hurst grad who started for two seasons with the Lakers as a free safety, was named the new head coach at Westminster College in New Wilmington.

This wasn't surprising news to MU



Scott Benzel

Athletic Director Joe Kimball who was Benzel's coach at the Erie School. "He was a natural leader who led by example," Kimball explained. "It was like having another coach on the field."

Kimball went on to praise the Plum High School graduate by adding, "He will be a head coach because he gets it. He knows the most important piece of the coaching puzzle is having a great relationship with his players, and he will be a master at this.

"I am thrilled for him as he is an outstanding young man who deserves everything he gets."

Benzel was the Associate Head Coach and Co-offensive Coordinator at Division I St. Francis University before landing the head position with the Titans.

Replacing Mark Soboleski

There has been plenty of discussion regarding what direction the Millcreek School District should take with the hiring of a new football coach following the resignation of Mark Soboleski. So, as long as no one asked for my opinion, what better time to chime in than right now.

Despite the fact I am armed with zero inside information, this is what I think the powers-to-be in the Millcreek District should do. Or at least attempt to do.

If Millcreek Township School District superintendent Bill Hall came to

me and informed me that it was my job to hire a new gridiron boss for the Trojans, I would go out and find the person I deem as the correct choice. I would not wait to see who applies and then start the selection process.

Personally, I think this is totally lazy and incredibly stupid. As many cool people are prone to say nowadays, "I would be proactive and not reactive."

The McDowell search committee won't have to go far if it is going to do things correctly and expediently, and that means take a close look at a couple of coaches on the staff of its rival Cathedral Prep.

Keep in mind, I have no inside information as to which coaches may apply or have applied, but as I said earlier, I would seek candidates rather than wait to see who shows interest. The McDowell position should be one of the tops in the state, but we all know about the recent track record of the people in charge out there.

I would approach Prep Offensive Coordinator Brad Orlando, and if he's interested, I make him my No. 1 candidate. He has shown that he can run a prolific offense, as the Ramblers have been one of the highest scoring teams on the east coast with his wide-open offense. He is also a former McD gridder and would be a perfect fit.

He is a no-nonsense coach who has earned his stripes, and he deserves to run his own program. I am sure Prep boss Mike Mischler would hate to lose him, but Mischler is a fair man who would not stand in Orlando's way.

If McDowell couldn't reach an agreement with Orlando, I would then pursue Prep Defensive Coordinator Matt Melle whose defense has been flying under the radar because of the record-breaking offense. However, the former head coach at Cleveland Angela-St. Joseph is a tremendous defensive coach and would be a perfect for the Trojans.

Also, Melle needs a full-time teaching position and McDowell will have some openings for him.

However, if this does happen, don't look for Prep to suffer too much, as Mischler is a great coach who has things rolling for the Orange-and-Black.

Look for McDowell to make a decision within the next three weeks, and don't be surprised if the administration heeds my suggestions.

To Cleveland, from Buffalo with

Love

Since I am a Cleveland Browns fan, I tried to get some background information on their new coach, Mike Pettine. While I couldn't come up with very much, I will share what I was able to uncover.

A friend of mine, Dennis DiPaolo owns Ilio DiPaolo's Restaurant if Buffalo, and he's has a great relationship with many of the Bills' coaches and

Bills' players. When I got in touch with Dennis, he said Pettine has a great reputation with both the players and the coaches as a good person and a very competent coach and that they were hoping he wouldn't get the Cleveland job and end up staying with the Bills.

"We deliver a lot to Bills' headquarters," DiPaolo pointed out, "and Coach Pettine was there morning, noon, and night. He was always gracious and appeared to be very humble.

"I know I will be rooting for him."

Carlton Bragg, a 6-9 junior hoopster from Cleveland's Villa Angela-St. Joseph, who wowed the Erie fans with two great performances in the Burger King Classic, will be out the next 4-6 weeks as the Vikings star broke a toe in practice.

He lived up to his billing as one of the top juniors in the country.

ER Salutes Top Team

It was a first – sort of – for McDowell wrestling coach Tom Lenox, who is in his first season as the coach of the Trojan grapplers, the Blue-and-White capturing their fourth-straight District 10 Class AAA team title. However, it wasn't a completely new experience as the former Gannon wrestler was an assistant for Shane McChesney when McDowell won the previous three crowns.

The Trojans earned the right to go to Hershey for their fourth consecutive year by outperforming Cathedral Prep and General McLane in the recent D-10 Team Tournament held at Al Calabrese Gymnasium at Central Tech High School. The charges of Coach Tom Lenox stopped Meadville 42-24 to reach the finals and then stopped GM in the finals by a 30-21 count.

The win avenged an earlier 30-28 setback to the Lancers in the regular season, the victory giving the Trojans a 10-1 mark with the only blemish being that regular season setback against GM.

This was the third consecutive time McDowell topped McLane for the District 10 crown.

The Trojans easily stopped Meadville to gain a spot in the finals, the Lancers avenging a regular season loss to Prep with a hard-fought 40-27 win in the semis.

Heavyweight Scott Augustine, a 182-pounder, will be representing the Trojans at the Giant Center in Hershey for the fourth time. Quite an accomplishment.

SUPER 7s

GIRLS

1. HICKORY – The Hornets have a

long way to go to make believers out of some District 10 fans, but they are showing a lot of sting so far.

2. VILLA MARIA – Coach Doug Chuzie has his Victors playing good defense, and "D" wins games.

3. MERCYHURST PREP – You can't have a top three without perennial power MP.

4. CONNEAUT – Don't underestimate this team as this could be the ultimate surprise five in D-10.

5. KENNEDY CATHOLIC – Another team that will be a force in the playoffs.

6. SENECA – Bobcats showing a lot of bite with some good wins on their slate.

7. GENERAL McLANE – Lancers in a down cycle, but should be tough come playoff time.

BOYS

1. McDOWELL – I am sticking with Trojans despite a close loss to rival Cathedral Prep. Trojans can put a lot of points on the board.

2. CATHEDRAL PREP – Ramblers had a great win over McDowell but need to find some more offense to make a strong showing in post-season.

3. FAIRVIEW – Coach Keith Nies, who recently picked up his 200th career win, has the Tigers on a roll – and with a lot of young players.

4. FARRELL – The Steelers can run and gun, and gun and run. They are a force.

5. EAST – Coach Matt Jones has the Warriors playing great basketball, and definitely one of the surprise teams.

6. STRONG VINCENT – The Colonels are young, starting two ninth-graders. And one of them, David Morris, son of former Gannon University hoopster David "Motown" Morris is one of the best freshmen to ever play in this area.

7. MERCYHURST PREP – The Lakers are another team that can be counted on to make a strong showing in the playoffs. They will be a tough out for all opponents.

You can email James LeCorchick at @JRLSportsReport@gmail.com, and you can follow him on Twitter

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12 NEWS



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