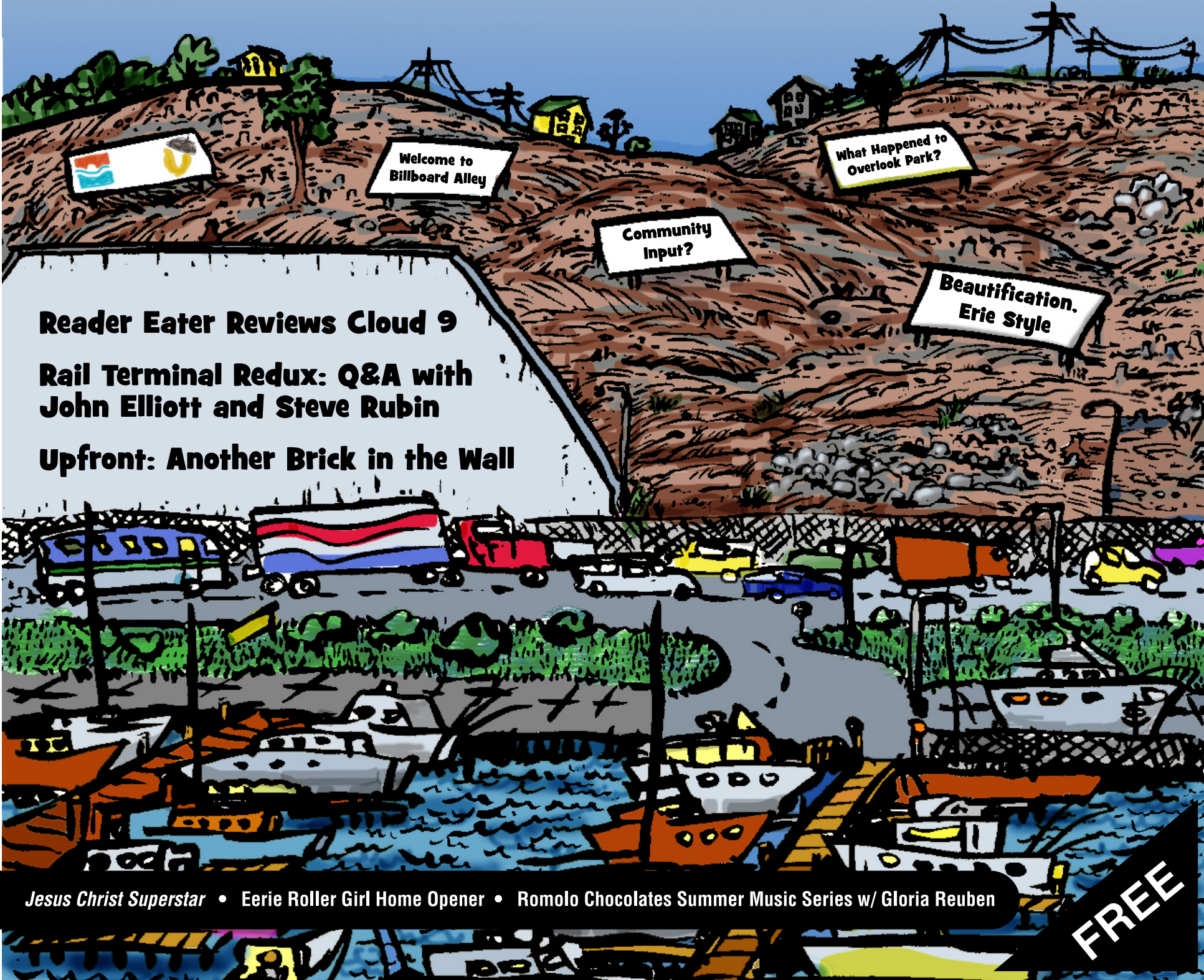


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# ERIE READER

## Erie Bluffs: A Tradition of Trouble



**Reader Eater Reviews Cloud 9**

**Rail Terminal Redux: Q&A with  
John Elliott and Steve Rubin**

**Upfront: Another Brick in the Wall**

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## From the Editors

For anyone in the world of media, there still remains a great rush of excitement and swell of pride that comes with truly breaking a story. And perhaps this excitement and pride is amplified in today's arena, as newspapers, TV, and radio compete against the likes of blogs, podcasts, and social media platforms.

But there is also a great responsibility of cultivating a story once it has blossomed and taken root in a community.

For us, an example of that responsibility began March 5 when CIVITAS members Lisa Austin, Michael Beightol, and Stephen Sonnenberg wrote in their "Considering the City" column that "Erie's Bayfront Bluff Park has Potential." It continued April 30 in B. Toy's comic strip, "Just Toyin' Witcha" when he presented a single panel featuring the words "Beautification — Erie style" hovering above an all-too-realistic rendering of the Bluffs depicting tree stumps, bulldozers, and corporate logos with signs sprouting up in place of pedestrian walkways and gardens.

But the story actually began long before that, dating back to the City of Erie's incorporation in 1805. That narrow, 23-acre strip of land sprawling out from Cascade Street to Wallace Street remained under the ownership of the Keystone State — that is, until the Erie-Western PA Port Authority obtained it in 2002.

From there, the story of that strip of once-forgotten, once-unused, once-overgrown land becomes a complicated one. Which is why you'll find the history and status of what's quickly becoming known as "Billboard Alley" on our cover — complete with new art from B. Toy.

When we first covered the topic back in early March and then again in April, we quickly learned from the conversation these initial pieces generated that the people of Erie had questions — *why is anyone who*

## Culture

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The next level of next-gen games is finally here

passes through the Bayfront Connector gateway to The Gem City greeted with advertisements? They also had concerns — *Who actually owns this land, and who is overseeing its development?* And the comments — they were plentiful. Which is why we decided to feature a fleshed-out, in-depth look at the Bluffs in this issue.

Chiefly, people lamented about a perceived lack of community input throughout the process. As Mary Birdsong notes in her feature, community input was solicited — but that was back when the process of plotting the future of that land had just begun. What is clear to us, now, is that the community remains interested and still cares about a lot of land, and these community members demand transparency and desire a seat at the decision-making table.

Also in this issue, Cory Vaillancourt's "Upfront" returns with "Another Brick From the Wall: Education. Dark Sarcasm." In it, Cory tells a tale of seven Savannah women who, house by house, plot by plot, began preserving historical landmarks throughout the city in the '50s, simply by banding together and securing the money to purchase these places themselves.

Engaged, active citizens with questions, comments, and concerns — and more importantly, the fortitude and will to not only become part of a conversation, but to change that conversation entirely.

Erie is good at losing itself in nostalgia, daydreaming for the days of yesteryear when things seemed better. But daydreaming doesn't stop the demolition and the conversion of historic relics into parking lots. And it certainly doesn't cultivate the future of strips of land brimming with great potential. Now is the time for concerned citizens to get their heads out of the clouds and onto the streets, where conversations can be made theirs, if their voices are loud enough to be heard.

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# Street Corner Soap Box

## World Cup Soccer Has Arrived! Again.

By: Jay Stevens

The last men's soccer World Cup was greeted with conservative hyperbole. "I hate it so much, probably because the rest of the world likes it so much," said Glenn Beck. "Soccer is a socialist sport," wrote columnist Marc Thiessen, and saw similarities in it to Obamacare. "To conservatives, the troubling aspects of the game aren't confined to the pros," wrote another, Matthew Philbin. "Soccer requires comparatively little from children but the ability to run after the ball – the risk of failure for anyone except maybe the goal keeper is zero. Even the strong chance that any given game will end in a tie makes it attractive for parents reluctant to impart life's difficult lessons to young kids."

But as the nations don cleats to face off in this year's tournament in Brazil, it may be time to face this fact: soccer has at last arrived in the U.S. .

Oh sure, we've heard that before. "Soccer has been America's sport of the future since 1972," quip Men in Blazer podcasters Michael Davies and Roger Bennett. Soccer "arrived" in the U.S. when 77,000 fans packed Giants Stadium to watch Pele's New York Cosmos in a 1977 NASL playoff match. Soccer "arrived" when the World Cup landed in the United States in 1994 – 69,000 fans on average attended each match, still a FIFA Cup record, and by a large margin. (The next closest was during the 2006 tournament in Germany, when 52,000 fans on average attended each match.)

Nonetheless, soccer lags behind most oth-

er professional sports in the country.

The sport has always been an oddball game to American fans, a curiosity, something to experience close up every so often to see what all the global fuss is about, but then to eschew, as they settle in to watch baseball, football, basketball, or hockey. Or car racing. Tennis. Boxing. UFC.

Things are different now. Really.

The 2010 World Cup in South Africa, for example, drew impressive U.S. viewership. The elimination match between the U.S. and Ghana, for example, was watched by 19.4 million Americans – more than the 19.2 million that tuned in for last year's deciding Game 6 of the World Series between the Boston Red Sox and the St. Louis Cardinals. The tournament's final – which saw Spain defeat the Netherlands, 1-0 – was watched by even more Americans, 24.3 million. Women's soccer is popular, too. The gold-medal match between the U.S. and Japan in the 2012 London Games drew 4.35 million viewers – more than typically watch games of the Stanley Cup finals.

U.S. viewership of European soccer is also up, drastically. NBCUniversal's February 2014 ratings of its English Premier League games set a monthly record for soccer broadcast, as did its recent 10-game simultaneous broadcast of the final Premier League matches. And several of this year's UEFA Champions League games drew more than a million American fans to their television sets.

That's a far cry from the Super Bowl, of course, whose recent lopsided Denver Broncos – Seattle Seahawks matchup drew more than 111 million viewers. But the demographics of soccer viewers points to a steep increase in the sport's popularity: the two biggest segments of soccer viewers, according to Nielsen ratings, are the young (viewers under 34) and Hispanics. The former is, of course, the future, and the latter the fastest-growing demographic in the U.S. And those viewers tend to be more socially connected, too, much more likely to own a smartphone and to stream video on it, and more likely to spread the news through social networks.

"Millennials are the biggest driver of the sport right now," said Gilt Edge Soccer Marketing's John Guppy in a recent Bloomberg report. "They are looking for their own identification. Soccer fits that bill."

That might also explain why the MLS survives. In some cities, it even thrives. The Seattle Sounders, for example, draw an average of 44,000 fans to each game – that's a higher per-game average than all but the Los Angeles Dodgers in the MLB, and nearly triple the average that attend each Cleveland Indians' home game. Seattle also has a high population of millennials.

And more Americans are playing soccer

than football: according to the 2010 Census, 13 million Americans play soccer, behind only basketball for participation in a team sport. That includes over 8 million kids ages 7 to 17, more than the number that play baseball and football. Those numbers have likely only increased since the knowledge of the dangers of concussions in football have grown.

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**The demographics of soccer viewers points to a steep increase in the sport's popularity: the two biggest segments of soccer viewers, according to Nielsen ratings, are the young (viewers under 34) and Hispanics. The former is, of course, the future, and the latter the fastest-growing demographic in the U.S.**

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So what's in store this World Cup? For starters, it's in Brazil – itself a draw for Americans, not just because of the pageantry and excitement that'll accompany soccer's biggest tourney in soccer's liveliest country, but because it's only an hour or two ahead of most time zones in the U.S. . And while the U.S. squad's odds of advancing are slim – it's in this year's "group of death," with favorites Germany and Portugal, and a quality Ghana team – and without its most famous player, Landon Donovan, who was cut from the team at the last minute, rising interest in America for soccer likely means more soccer viewing records will fall.

But most importantly, soccer is a great game. It's a game full of chaos and creativity and played by the world's best athletes. The tension and suspense of a close soccer game is like nothing else in sports. If for no other reason, love for soccer here has grown out of a basic love for the beautiful the game.

And for all those reasons, it's appropriate that soccer is growing in popularity here. It is in many ways the face of 21st-century America with its young, multicultural fan-base and a beautiful artistry at its heart. No wonder Glenn Beck hates it.

Jay Stevens can be contacted at Jay@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/gpt83>



## News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

### What's in a Name

Vanellope, Rydder, Jceion and Burklee head the latest annual list of the most common baby names on the Social Security Administration register of first-time-appearing names. There were 63 Vanellopes (girls), but only 10 each for Rydder and Jceion, the most popular debut names for boys. Other notables were Hatch (eight times) and Psalms (seven). (In other "name" news, among the finalists in April's "Name of the Year" contest sponsored by Deadspin.com were the actual monikers Curvaceous Bass, (Dr.) Eve Gruntfest, Chillie Poon and the winner – Shamus Beaglehole. [Nameberry via MSN.com, 5-15-2014] [NameoftheYear.com])

### Editorial Privilege

To celebrate today's 25th anniversary of the weekly distribution of News of the Weird by Universal Uclick, Chuck Shepherd recalls a few of his favorite stories (among the more than 25,000 covered).

**(1989)** In the mid-1980s, convicted South Carolina murderer Michael Godwin won his appeal to avoid the electric chair and serve only life imprisonment. In March, while sitting naked on a metal prison toilet, attempting to fix a TV set, the 28-year-old Godwin bit into a wire and was electrocuted. [Orlando Sentinel, 3-8-89]

**(1991)** Dee Dee Jonrowe, leading the Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon in January in northern Minnesota, took a wrong turn and went 300 yards before recognizing her error. The mistake cost her team only a few minutes, but stopping to calculate her location allowed the dogs an unsupervised rest, and by the time she was ready to go, two of her dogs had begun to copulate. She was forced to wait on them for 25 minutes and lost the lead. [Duluth News Tribune, 1-17-91]

**(1994)** In Toronto in March, Sajid Rhatti, 23, and his 20-year-old wife brawled over whether Katey Sagal, who plays Peg Bundy on "Married With Children," is prettier than Christina Applegate, who plays her daughter. First, the wife slashed Rhatti in the groin with a wine bottle as they scuffled, but she dressed his wounds and the couple sat down again to watch another episode of the show. Moments later, the brawl erupted again, and Rhatti, who suffered a broken arm and shoulder, stabbed his wife in the chest, back and legs before they begged neighbors to call an ambulance. [Canadian Press via Edmonton Journal, 3-18-94]

**(1995)** From the Riley County police blotter in the Kansas State University newspaper, Sept. 2: 1:33 p.m., disturbance involving Marcus Miles; 2:14 p.m. (different address), "unwanted subject" (police jargon for acquaintance who wouldn't leave) in the home, Marcus Miles told to leave; 4:08 p.m. (different address), Marcus Miles accused of harassment; 6:10 p.m., "unwanted subject" call against Marcus Miles. Nov. 14: 6:47 p.m., "unwanted subject" in the home, Marcus Miles told to

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# The Way I See It

## The Trouble with Raising the Minimum Wage

By: Rebecca Styn

Recently, Seattle passed the highest minimum wage ever seen: \$15 an hour. Assuming a 40-hour work-week, this hike equates to \$31,200 gross annual income. For us Pennsylvania folk, that's over twice our current wage of \$7.25, which has been in place since 2009. Also interesting to note is aside from Seattle, twenty other states have a higher minimum wage than Pennsylvania.

Since November 2013, President Barack Obama has been trying to increase the minimum wage on a federal level – to \$10.10 an hour. But it's received much criticism – and Congress has not decided to move forward with the legislation. Case in point, in Pennsylvania, a proposed change in the minimum wage currently sits in the House of Representatives.

On the positive side, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a leap to \$10.10 would be enough to get a large number of the working poor out of poverty. It would bolster the earnings of about 16.5 million workers, providing \$5 billion a year more for families living in poverty and \$12 billion a year more for families earning from one to three times the poverty threshold. Closer to home, statewide, the move would help more than 1 million workers.

And the truth is, nobody that works full-time deserves to be living in poverty.

However, just because something seems like a good idea, doesn't always mean it is. The Congressional budget office estimated that lifting the minimum wage would also reduce total employment by about 0.3 percent, eliminating 500,000 jobs. So, we'd be raising some families out of poverty while displacing others.

Economists maintain that a raise will spur economic growth by distributing more money to lower-wage earners, thus helping low- and middle-class families climb the economic ladder. And conservatives believe that raising the minimum wage would cause businesses to hire fewer workers, which would in turn hurt the very employees the raise is looking to assist.

In Erie, much of our local economy relies on small businesses. We are just now, as a country, coming out of one of the most devastating economic recessions we've ever experienced. Just last week it was announced that the total number of employed in the United States is finally back to pre-recession levels, yet unemployment numbers still remain high. An increase in minimum wages here could hurt many of our local small business employers.

Another factor to consider is that the wages you get paid are not the only things that make up the amount that your employer is paying out for your work. On a larger scale, there is health insurance and 401k plans. On a smaller front, there are employee meal



Erin Hoekstra

**Seattle's minimum wage increased to \$15 per hour -- more than twice what Erie residents make at \$7.25.**

plans and other small perks. If businesses suffer, those added employee benefits could be in jeopardy.

The irony to all of this, however, is even with an increase, according to the Center for Economic Policy and Research, if the minimum wage would have kept up with increases in worker productivity (a measure of the amount of goods and services that can be produced within a specific time-frame) over the years, the actual federal minimum wage would be about \$21.72 an hour today.

The truth is, situations like these shouldn't be decided on the federal level. While I do believe anyone working a full-time job shouldn't be living in poverty, the increase on a federal level could actually hurt the local economy (one that is already stagnant). Then, the increase could end up driving more individuals into poverty than those being lifted out.

A letter from 33 Pennsylvania chambers of commerce sent to the General Assembly this past week says the last time Pennsylvania increased the minimum wage, many small businesses were forced to reduce hours, halt hiring, and cut jobs, and a boost to \$10.10 an hour could result in the loss of 28,000 to 119,000 jobs in Pennsylvania.

The benefits simply do not outweigh the costs. It has been six years since the Great Recession started and the economy is still

only sluggishly limping along. The Affordable Care Act and a host of other regulatory changes from the current administration have created great uncertainty for small business owners throughout the country. This uncertainty has frightened business owners who are waiting to see how these regulations affect their bottom line. This change would only increase the unknown.

While recognizing our minimum wage is low, this may not be the time to raise it. There will be a time, but with the state of our current fragile economy, decisions like these should be left in the hands of the local and state legislatures. While there is a good argument that decisions made at the federal level make the system more consistent, some things should be left to local and state government, where the voices of individual residents not only carry more weight, but at times, better insight.

*Love? Hate? Agree? Disagree? I want to hear from you. Email me at [rStyn@ErieReader.com](mailto:rStyn@ErieReader.com), and follow me on Twitter @rStyn. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/egt80>*



# Guest Opinion

## Fracking and Destination Erie

By: Tom Fuhrman

Having served as the Chair of the Environment Committee for the Destination Erie project for the past two and a half years, I've experienced some ups and downs as we have struggled to envision Erie thirty to forty years down the road. Our committee has worked hard to identify needs and policy to protect our natural resources that will make Erie County a cleaner, greener, and healthier community.

At times, it's been frustrating to work with consultants and others who want to sugar-coat things like sprawl by calling it something else - even though land use has been a major problem over the past fifty years, with us developing over half of the land we had with no population growth.

But we have identified policy and action ideas that could protect and even enhance our quality of life, which could attract new business and people to the area as well as slow what we call the "brain drain." Some of these ideas were brought up early in the process and others have been discussed more recently - things such as completing and complying with a Climate Action Plan and getting an Open Space Referendum on the County ballot for voters to decide if we should have a dedicated funding source for protecting more open space.

We've also found consensus on encouraging and promoting renewable energy, which would contribute to a greener economy, a need to focus on RE-development rather than development (as in using more open space), preserving agricultural land, making walkable neighborhoods, and improving public transportation. It should be obvious to most that environmental issues are threaded through most of the other focus areas of Destination Erie, such as Economy and Workforce, Housing and Neighborhoods, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Community Facilities.

But some issues have just recently been acknowledged, such as a ban on fracking in at least the Lake Erie watershed portion of Erie County. At a recent Consortium Leadership meeting, which included committee chairs and the leadership team, I brought up this idea and it was a pleasant surprise that our new County Executive, Kathy Dahlkemper, immediately embraced the idea and had the courage and vision to say so publicly. She needs to be commended for taking a stand on a controversial issue and we can only hope

It should be obvious to most that environmental issues are threaded through most of the other focus areas of Destination Erie.

that her leadership will carry over to other elected officials. I have been outspoken all along that any ideas, actions, or policies coming from Destination Erie will need political will to get accomplished.

So your last chance as a community is this week to let your voices be heard on the issues mentioned here or on any of the other issues or actions recommended by the other committees. Meetings are being held throughout the County and a schedule can be found on the County's website.

This is your plan. Most of us Baby Boomers who are working on this project will be gone by the time many of the action items that come from this plan will be implemented or results accomplished. But this is the future, this is your future.

If you would like to contact me, send me an email at [lercerie@gmail.com](mailto:lercerie@gmail.com) and your phone number. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/drcs3>



# Why Preserving Erie's History Matters

Archaeological Reviewer Kira Heinrich to Speak at Mission Main Street Workshop

By: Jessica Courter

When our dear friend Opportunity comes knocking, we need to welcome him with open arms. Thankfully, he makes appearances rather often in Erie.

Now Opportunity is knocking once again in the form of an Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority Mission Main Street workshop on June 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m at the Jefferson Educational Society. The workshop is a collaborative effort of Preservation Erie and the Erie County Historical Society to provide Erie-area residents with a chance to learn the hows and whys of preserving Erie's history in order to better our future.

"Knowing where you came from forms where you're going," says Archaeological Reviewer Kira Heinrich of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and one of the key speakers at the workshop. "If you don't understand how you got to where you are as a civilization then you're bound to make the same mistakes that people in the past have made."

As we walk down the streets of Erie, we don't always realize we are walking through history. Everyday we pass buildings that have been preserved or restored, like the Boston Store on State Street that was completed in 1931, or the Dickson Tavern on French Street that was built in 1815, making it Erie's oldest building.

We don't always pay attention to the significance of buildings like these but rather we tend to take them for granted without recognizing that they actually make our city and that without them Erie wouldn't really feel



Mission Main Street workshops will be held at the Jefferson Educational Society Friday, June 20.

like home.

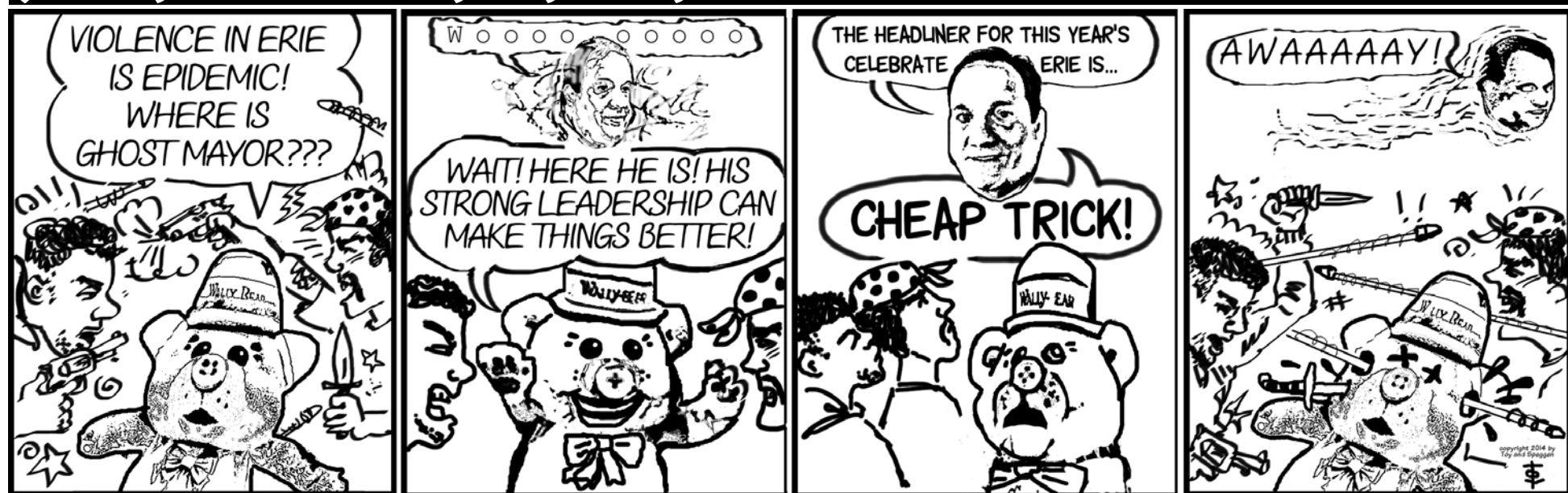
"Having these things in your community gives you an identity and gives you a sense of place," says the Mercyhurst University alum. "Not having that connection to the past really changes how a place feels and how it functions and how people feel in the place."

We are always looking towards the future as we focus on what is down the road, oftentimes without glancing behind us. This workshop serves as a reminder to us all that sometimes we need to take not only a glance but a good, long look at our past and make the effort to preserve where our city has been.

Jessica Courter can be contacted at [jCourter@ErieReader.com](mailto:jCourter@ErieReader.com), and you can follow her on Twitter @ [JessCourter](https://twitter.com/JessCourter). To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/nkv2t>



## Just Toyin' Witcha – By: Bryan Toy







Photos by Brad Triana

# Cloud 9 Wine Bar

By: The Reader Eater

Until recently, the restaurant scene in Erie has certainly been robust enough to leave diners on cloud 3 or cloud 4; of course, we've got Alto Cucina, Bertrand's Bistro, Colao's, Peppino's, and 1201 Kitchen, so maybe it's more like cloud 5 or 6.

But now, Bertrand Artigues – owner of the aforementioned Perry Square favorite Bertrand's – has let his French roots vine their way down to 10th and French streets with a truly hyperbolic effort sure to leave local gourmands on cloud 9 – the Cloud 9 Wine Bar.

First, let's talk about that space – that rounded, glassy corner of the parking garage across from Jerry Uht Park. Somehow, Bertrand's crew made the arcing, rambling room even more open by closing off parts of it and coloring it in Mediterranean hues of maroon and tan, accented by dark woods and a stainless steel bar. Among the finer details of this beautiful environment lies a secret – when you grab a seat at the bar, reach your hands underneath and feel what's there.

No, most of us wouldn't go to Cloud 9 just to recharge our phones, but the electrical outlets nestled just above your lap are a handy feature symbolic of the attention to detail that went in to this place – a place that has been synonymous with failure over the past few years. In fact, about the only thing that didn't fail in that space in the last decade or so was the local Obama for President campaign headquarters.

However, if this respected restaurateur fails in this effort, this Reader eater is willing to pull a Werner Herzog and eat his shoe.

Seriously. It's that good. The restaurant, not the shoe.

As the name suggests, Cloud 9 Wine Bar has wine. Lots of it. And in what is believed

to be a first for our area, they even have a cruvinet – a custom-built, climate-controlled tap system holding 16 different bottles of wine that fills the bottles with inert Nitrogen to keep them fresh indefinitely.

Bertrand's always been known for his wine savvy, and in another brilliant innovation – at least locally – all wines are available by the bottle, by the glass, and by the "taste." A "taste" is a 2-ounce pour just perfect for pairing with the plethora of small plates served.

And those plates – dear Lord, those plates – they are astounding. Brilliantly conceived, expertly prepared, and beautifully presented, everything on the menu is ridiculously delicious (ridiculous?), unpretentiously priced, and created with a mindfulness of

the world from which it comes.

"Bertrand himself having grown up in the French countryside – it was a way of life for him. There was no 'organic' or 'biodynamic' or 'sustainability,'" said B.J. Shields, General manager of Cloud 9. "His mom would send him to get produce, and it was produce from the farmer down the road. That's how he grew up, and moving to the States with all of our processed stuff was kind of a shock to him, so he tries, even with his bistro, to do everything local and sustainable. Those are things that the chef holds dear to his heart, and I do as well."

You can see this ethos in action for yourself in some of their appetizers – especially the charcuterie and cheese plates – mostly sourced from Showman Farms in Edinboro.

Chef de Cuisine Kyle Fioretti – an Erie native and Mercyhurst University alum, who comes to Cloud 9 from 1201 Kitchen and is just 27 years old – deserves much of the credit. "What we're trying to do is source as much as possible from not only local but also sustainable and wholesome farmers, foragers, and producers," he said. "We spend a lot of time finding these people, finding these ingredients, and then we take all that and make things from scratch."

Almost as if on cue, the duck egg man showed up at that moment with a fresh dozen. He handed them over the bar to Chef Kyle, who returned moments later with a decadently rich crispy poached duck egg perched precariously atop pancetta risotto and swimming in aromatic bouillon.

If that sounds good to you, run don't walk. In line with the sustainability-oriented mindset of Cloud 9, only 24 of these dishes will be available each week, because some of those duck eggs need to grow up to become ducks for Cloud 9's fried duck

wings – available in ghost honey hot, Cassis blackberry Jalapeno, and maple mustard stout varieties.

Cloud 9's other equally-delicious offerings include several types of poutine (a common Canadian dish consisting of French fries and gravy topped with more Showman Farms cheese), gourmet thin-crust pizzas, salads, topless tartines, and burgers, all exhibiting high-quality ingredients and thoughtful flavor pairings. Main courses (no, Cloud 9 is not just a tapas joint like some had speculated) include everything you'd expect from a place like this – gnocchi, Mahi, scallops, free-range chicken, duck confit, pork loin, and strip steak.

To wash it all down, Bar Manager Ryan Bondi sums up how his little fiefdom complements Artigues', Shields', and Fioretti's. "We want to fall in line with the vision – sticking with sustainability and local spirits and local wines," including Lavery Brewing Company's beers and Mazza Vineyards' whiskey. "We will not be using any pre-made things here," he said. "We utilize fresh fruit, fresh-squeezed juices, and down the road, we'll be getting into a classic cocktail revival – bringing back original recipes from the 1920s."

Overall, Cloud 9 Wine bar is a welcome addition to the local scene and will certainly be appreciated by eaters, drinkers, and anyone who enjoys great food and great service in a great setting. Perhaps the only problem with the whole concept is the name; to hell with "Cloud 9" – this place should be called Cloud 19.

The Reader Eater can be contacted at [ReaderEater@ErieReader.com](mailto:ReaderEater@ErieReader.com). To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/1rys3>





# Erie's Bayfront Bluffs

## A Tradition of Trouble

By: Mary Birdsong

The Erie Bluffs, a slender ribbon of undeveloped land between the Bayfront Parkway and the rest of the city, has been a problem since 1795 when our region became a part of Pennsylvania. This land's small footprint belies its large presence as a barrier between the city and the water's edge that keeps citizens from easily accessing the sparkling waters of Presque Isle Bay.

And now, since 2011, with the Erie Community Foundation's licensing agreement with the Port Authority and the current Bayfront Beautification Project, this 23-acre no-man's land continues to see its share of trouble.

With the overgrown and invasive vegetation removal nearly complete, and sponsor logos and small gardens installed, critics call it an eyesore or worse, and champions call it a work in progress.

One thing both detractors and proponents agree on, though: Something had to be done with the prominent overgrown bluffs that are the city's "front door."

To understand how the bluffs (and the community) got to where they are today, we need a quick history lesson.

When the borough of Erie was established in 1805, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania retained title to this property, which stretches from Cascade Street on the west and Wallace Street on the east. No one knows why.

The land was untouchable by the city, development-wise. Citizens, working alone or in small, independent groups created ad-hoc paths and put in a few benches, but mostly no one cared for the parcel because no one local owned it.

The state forgot about it, only paying attention when granting easements to the railroad or a company wishing to do business at the waterfront, and it allowed the Erie Extension Canal to link up to the West Basin. The two-mile stretch quickly became an industrial corridor where trains and trucks went about their business and people dumped their unwanted trash.

By the year 2000, it was a bank overgrown with invasive plants and laden with junk that looked shabby next to the new Bayfront Parkway that was being built in the 1990s, and the and developments north of it.

The Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority finally acquired the land in 2002 as part of a site master plan — created with community input — for the development of "Overlook Park." This comprehensive forty-page plan outlines the challenges and lays out a plan for open spaces, habitat reclamation or improvement, pedestrian walkways, security, and more. Its estimated price tag in 2002 was \$12,122,600. As far as can be told, only a handful of people remember that this plan was created and it is not available online for public viewing. It is, however, still the plan that the Port Authority is using to



Various corporate logos advertising both for-profit and nonprofit organizations dot the Bayfront Bluffs.

move forward with any development on the property.

What does this have to do with the clearing of trees and the sprouting of corporate logos?

The Overlook Park plan never found funding. Nine years later, in 2011, the Erie Community Foundation (ECF), with a generous \$75,000 gift, kick-started the effort to move the land from unkempt bank to public park. The Foundation came to a five-year licensing agreement with the Port Authority to oversee the "Bayfront Beautification Project," giving it the right to make decisions about the property. The ECF then turned to the business and nonprofit community for additional funding, and started soliciting sponsorships from local businesses and civic organizations.

For-profit organizations were asked by the ECF for \$50,000 sponsorships and nonprofits, \$25,000. In return, these businesses and

institutions receive recognition through their logo signs and a surrounding garden, with maintenance, for a five-year period. Afterwards, the sponsors can choose to re-up for a pro-rated share of the overall maintenance costs, which Mike Batchelor, executive director of the Erie Community Foundation, says would be approximately \$6,000 per year. The ECF plans to complete its project at the end of the five-year agreement, which Batchelor says will be in one or two years, and any future development will be back in the hands of the Port Authority.

According to the Erie Community Foundation's website, its part in the larger plan is a multi-year process in three phases, with the bulk of the initial cash going towards clearing the sites between Cascade Street to Myrtle Street (with the exception of some privately-held properties), and Holland Street to Parade Street. The third phase is listed as "creating bayfront access down the hillside

directly across from Liberty Park including a safe walkway across the Parkway into Liberty Park."

Both phase one and two, the clearing of the west and east side, was completed in 2013. There is no timeframe indicated for the third phase, but currently a path from Cascade and around the corner towards Liberty is being cleared with Port Authority funds along with some matching monies from the ECF. Raymond Schreckengost, executive director of the Port Authority, says that the crosswalk to Liberty Park will be completed this summer.

The clearing of the bluffs was instrumental to getting the project off the ground and is the first step in the Overlook Park master plan, since so many invasive plants, such as ailanthus (tree of heaven), phragmite (common reed), and Polygonum (Japanese knotweed) had populated the site.

Removing the debris and invasive plants was expensive work. The Overlook Park plan calls for the sparing of areas that contain native species and maintaining areas for wildlife, but doing so was cost-prohibitive says Dan Dahlkemper, landscape architect and consultant to the ECF on the Bayfront Project.

"I would love to see native plantings or wildflowers, but they are difficult to control," says Dahlkemper, "We started with so many invasives; until we can get those under control, I am looking to use native trees and grasses in the design that are easier to maintain and still create a park-like setting."

This is where the voice of the opposition gets a little louder.

Susan A. Smith, a member of the Presque Isle Advisory Board, and on the boards of the Lake Erie Region Conservancy (LERC) and Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation Center as well as a life-long nature and wildlife advocate, disagrees. "The worst part is the way the bluff was savaged to look like it had been bombed and that nothing has been done to restore the natural habitats," she says. Chris Magoc, Chair of the History Department and Director of the Public History program at Mercyhurst University, agrees. "I was not directly involved in this project, so perhaps I am wrong, but from the outside, it seems to me that far more trees and vegetation were stripped away than necessary, doing damage to prime habitat for birdlife and other animals that inhabit the water's edge."

Tom Fuhrman of LERC echoes their concern. "I wish all the logos were created like Sunburst Electronics' was — out of living shrubbery, in a green manner. They don't seem to have any consideration for wildlife in their plans. When it was first cut in 2011, LERC received lots of calls from citizens reporting animals moving up into the neighborhoods on the lower west side."

Despite their criticisms, Smith, Magoc, and Fuhrman are supportive of the project and want to contribute to it.

Another point of contention is the installation of the logos on the bluffs. In their "Considering the City" editorial in the *Erie Reader* March 5, Civitas points out that, according to zoning laws, advertising on the Bayfront is prohibited and people see the signs as just that — advertising.

Photo by Brian Graham





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In addition to having a well-rounded legal education, Rick Filippi has secured access to serve before the U.S. Court of Appeals (3rd District) and the United States Supreme Court. He also has experience in local politics, having served on Erie's city council from 1998 to 2001. Additionally, he was elected Erie mayor from 2001 to 2005.

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Reservations are \$25 per Asbury Woods member, \$35 per non-member. Individuals must be 21 or older to attend the event. Pre-registration is required.

**Asbury Woods Nature Center - 4105 Asbury Road - Erie, PA 16506  
 (814) 835-5356 - www.asburywoods.org**

John Vanco, executive director of the Erie Art Museum, is disappointed in the results and sees the signs as mere marketing. "The logos show no understanding of good design and seem to me to be erected far too early in the project. Shouldn't the work be done before the sponsors get recognition?" he asks. Magoc says the signs "cheapen what is a public space."

Batchelor supports the signage, saying that it is not about marketing but showcasing the region's assets. "We can show anyone who comes here that we have thriving businesses and four educational institutions that make this a better community." He also added that as part of the agreement with the Port Authority, who retained ownership of the property under the licensing agreement, the ECF has permission to use the space in this way.

Dave Brennan, a member of Erie City Council, thinks that there should be more landscaping and the signage could be smaller, but overall, he supports the project. He expressed some concern, however, for how the project is moving forward. "I'm relatively new on Council, so I am still catching up on the details, but I think we need more public input - see the complete vision the organizers have in mind. We really haven't seen that."

And there's the "trouble" in a nutshell. Many members of the community feel that they have not had a chance to contribute, despite the fact that five public meetings were held for the Port Authority's Overlook Park plan in 2001 and two before the ECF's Bayfront Beautification Project moved forward in 2011. Schreckengost feels that if people wanted input, they should have been a part of the process when the public meetings were held.

Many who are now voicing their concerns, however, were part of the Overlook Park planning process. Vanco, who was a member of the planning committee for the Overlook park plan, says at the time it "did not include the mounting of large corporate logos on the bluffs. Yes, public-private partnership is needed, but this isn't the way to go about that."

One can surmise that nine years of inactivity since the creation of the Overlook Park Plan is serving to confuse and surprise people; after all, public memories can be short lived. But the ECF is taking some heat from critics for their handling of the more recent project.

Vanco also attended one of the two public meetings that the ECF held in 2011, where he asked to see concrete plans and a budget. "I found out later that people were unhappy that I was asking those questions," he says, adding, "nothing changed as a result of my input."

Magoc feels "this project has thus far proceeded without the sort of genuine engagement with important constituencies of this community who might well have been able to collaborate in helping to produce a more thoughtful design of greater sensitivity to a range of issues."

Batchelor maintains that their planning "was not hatched in secret. We held public meetings for input. This will take years to develop; people need to be patient."

Schreckengost adds, "for those one or two people who don't like what's being done, there are 100 who do. We aren't going to please everyone."

But many are still unsettled and feeling disenfranchised and several questions linger. Should the Erie Community Foundation have held more meetings or collaborated more broadly? Should the ECF or the Port Authority have conducted more outreach on the need for removal of invasive species to prevent negative public perception? Will all we end up with is a long bank of grass, some trees, and more metal logos sprouting up?

And the biggest question of all may be: When the ECF steps away in one or two years, then what? The answer to that question, as far as funding is concerned, may be making its way through the Pennsylvania Senate.

Senate Bill 968, sponsored by Sen. Randy Vulakovich (R-40) and co-sponsored by Sen. Sean Wiley (D-49), promotes a Water-

**"The logos show no understanding of good design and seem to me to be erected far too early in the project. Shouldn't the work be done before the sponsors get recognition?"**

front Development Tax Credit program that would allow private enterprise to receive a tax credit for any donation made to an eligible organization that is developing a waterfront property for public use. This would be similar in structure to the current Educational Improvement Tax Credit program.

The bill was referred to the Appropriations Committee in January. If passed into law, a more regular funding stream may be possible.

But is the Overlook Park envisioned in 2001 still viable? Hasn't the Bayfront and the community changed since then? Certainly our perception of it has.

Is it time to revisit, and, perhaps, freshen the Overlook Park plan?

Now that the work has begun and the community is engaged, we stand at a threshold of opportunity. Could this be the moment we do it right and do it well?

Let's try, shall we?

Mary Birdsong can be contacted at [mBirdsong@ErieReader.com](mailto:mBirdsong@ErieReader.com), and you can follow her on Twitter @Mary\_Birdsong. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erindr.com/qyxf9>





# Rail Terminal Redux

Q&A with John Elliott and Steve Rubin of DevelopErie

By: Rebecca Styn

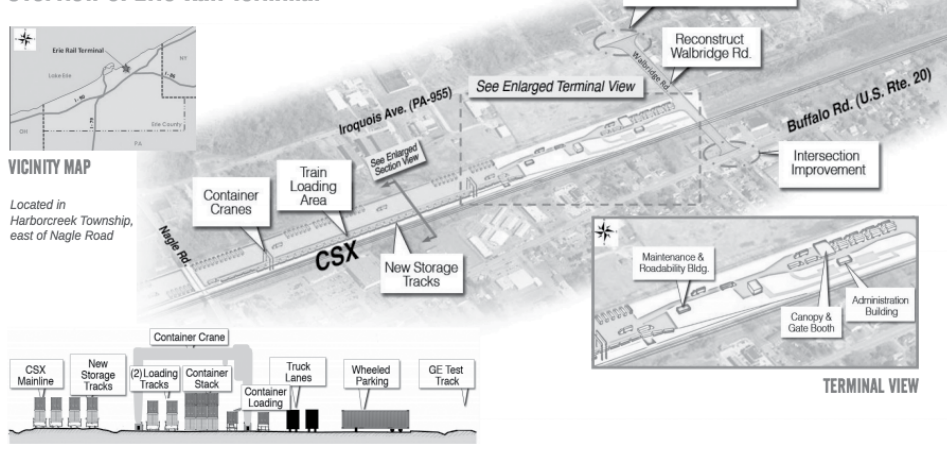
In its original capacity, the plan for the Erie Rail Terminal project called for a 30-acre facility to be built near Walbridge Road and Route 20 in Harborcreek. The specifics were very detailed: The project had to be right next to a CSX mainline; the site itself had to be long and flat with three- to four-thousand feet of frontage along the railroad so that you had the ability to park a ten-thousand-foot train without blocking any roads. The location must have easy eastbound and westbound access; be close to state and interstate highways; and be zoned for industrial use.

The project was estimated to have created 500-plus construction jobs, several full-time rail terminal jobs, and then thirteen-hundred full-time jobs for every one-million square-feet that was developed around the terminal – alongside \$3 million in new payroll. It would have generated real estate and payroll taxes. It would have created a supply chain for existing businesses and attracted new business to the area.

The site itself was a perfect match for freight patterns. Just not for its neighbors.

There are several key players involved in this project. Some, like John Elliott, President and CEO of DevelopErie, are already recognizable to anyone who has been fol-

## Overview of Erie Rail Terminal



lowing this developing saga. Others, like Steve L. Rubin, Erie Rail Terminal President, are not as widely known in the community. Although not a household name, his experience speaks volumes. In addition to his current role, he serves on the Board of Directors of Horizon Lines, the largest U.S. domestic ocean container line, he was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Intermodal Association of North America, the premier trade association of the intermodal freight industry, and prior to that, he spent 17 years at Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Inc. (K Line), Ja-

pan's third-largest shipping company, in a number of senior leadership roles for North American operations.

But even with all of this collective experience and expertise and planning, on May 15, 2014, the project derailed.

In an effort to shed some light on the subject, I sat down with Mr. Elliot and Mr. Rubin to discuss the past, present, and still hopeful future of the rail terminal project.

**Rebecca Styn:** As you're both aware, there was much talk about lack of community outreach on this project. The public per-

ception was that your group didn't focus on the public relations aspect of introducing the project. Perhaps you could address the community outreach that your group did conduct, and if you think the citizens were given the appropriate information from the beginning.

**John Elliott:** I do think we could have done a better job introducing the project. While our conversations with township officials and PennDOT began several months before the project was introduced, alongside that, much of that time was spent doing traffic and environmental studies – so that we could begin answering the questions we knew the community was going to ask and had already started asking. We've learned a lot from a false start in Harborcreek. Projects of this scale need better communication, and unfortunately, it really wasn't enough to identify opportunities and start bringing in customers and partners. It became apparent quickly, that besides our early efforts, we were missing our local community.

**Steve Rubin:** It really was a transitional phase which John and his team were leading – until I was appointed president and started working with him in developing the go-forward strategy. Starting in late winter, we had formally partnered with PennDOT to develop a full public engagement process. In early April, Bill Petit [PennDOT's District Executive] alongside myself and Katrina Smith [DevelopErie Senior Vice President] started discussing the project – but we had just started scratching the surface. We had a public official briefing in mid

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Cont. on 21



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## wed 6.11

### Jesus Christ Superstar

Edinboro // 434.3307

#### FILM at the Erie Art Museum & Kickoff Party

It's a perfect kickoff for their Summer 2014 Program; *A Story of Children and Film* is a poetic portrait of the adventures of childhood – as seen through 53 great films from 25 countries and includes classic movies like *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* and *The Red Balloon*, also dozens of masterpieces that are almost unknown. It combines the child's eye view of Mark Cousins' acclaimed film *The First Movie*, with the revelations and bold movie history of his 15 hour documentary *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*. It was also an official Selection in the Cannes Film Festival, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival

6 p.m. // 20 E. Fifth St. // [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com)

## thurs 6.12

#### Downtown Block Party at Sullivan's Pub

It's something we all wait for every year — that sure sign that summer is officially underway. It's Erie's Downtown Block Party and we're glad to see it. Swing by Sullivan's Pub on this (hopefully) lovely Thursday to listen to some classic tunes from the '80s and '90s from local bands Money Shot and The 190s, rain or shine. Remember to arrive early if you want to procure a street table. Proceeds benefit The A.N.N.A. Shelter.

6 p.m. // 301 French St. // [eriedowntown.com](http://eriedowntown.com)

## fri 6.13

#### Scarlet Ledbetter

Keith Wilson, Tanner Edwards, and Dom-

Four decades after the show debuted on Broadway, beloved rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* is still going strong, a mainstay for stages of all sizes across the country. However, sometimes even a modern favorite like the musical documenting the final days of Jesus Christ can use an update to keep things fresh. The Erie Playhouse will be giving *Jesus Christ Superstar* a more contemporary touch this June when the show continues its run which started June 5.

"A lot of people have the misconception that it's tied to that '70s era and that it's 'flower child-like,' but the instrumentation and characterization of our production is very modern," says Jess Flock, who plays Mary Magdalene in the show Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice created in the early '70s. "It's got a very modern rock feel to it, much more than what a lot of people think it's capable of having."

In addition to Flock, *Jesus Christ Superstar* boasts a talented cast that includes Andrew Dolan as Jesus, Adam Fladd as Judas Iscariot, and plenty of other notable local thespians looking to add plenty of rock to a story with plenty of soul that should appeal to people who are active in the religious community as well as those who are not.

"This show is really cool because it focuses on the humanity of Christ as opposed to the divinity," Flock says. "If you're coming to the audience with a very faith-heavy background, you'll absolutely respond to the treatment of Christ, but even if you're coming from a secular approach, his human story is so interesting."

*Jesus Christ Superstar* has been entertaining people for the past 43 years, but now it's time for an update of the rock opera hit where Erieites can meet the new show, which still has the heart and soul of the old one. — Alex Bieler

7:30 p.m. June 11-14, 19-21, 26-28 and 2 p.m. June 15, 22 // 13 W. 10 St. // [erieplayhouse.org](http://erieplayhouse.org)

inick DeCecco have all made some great music in separate bands, so it makes sense that when they team up for *Scarlet Ledbetter*, the results are pretty great. The string band trio will team up again at the Sunset Grill at the Edinboro Lake Resort to show off their own twist on Americana. If you can't catch *Scarlet Ledbetter* lakeside then you can catch them at the King's Rook Club on Saturday.

7 p.m. // 12690 Edinboro Road,



Contributed Photo

of these reasons, the Three Mile Isle is your cup of tea. Ranging three miles through Presque Isle with obstacles, the registration fee is \$75 with perks, like a complimentary beer provided by Miller Lite.

10 a.m. // Presque Isle // [discoverpi.com/events](http://discoverpi.com/events)

#### Cruise Town Erie Car Show on State Street

For those of you out there that harbor an extreme passion for automobiles—or even only a passing fascination—there is nowhere else you ought to be than along State Street for the Cruise Town Erie Car Show. Here you will find an array of vehicles from antiques and classics to muscle and sports cars belonging to collectors in Erie and beyond. The show spans from 4th to 12th streets as well as Perry Square and is a free event.

2 to 10 p.m. // State St. // 868.8622

#### 3rd Annual Jog 'n Hog

It's a test of physical strength ... of mental endurance ... of gastronomical fortitude. It's cross-running-meets-binge-eating: The Stanganelli's Pepperoni Ball Jog 'n Hog. And, now in its third year, it's becoming one of Erie's most fun — and freakiest — traditions. So, if you think you can handle a four-mile, meat-and-dough-filled jog along Presque Isle this weekend, get yourself signed up ahead of time. Or, just head out to see the all-American spectacle that is Jog 'n Hog ... just one of the things that keep summertime in Erie weird, and wonderful.

8:30 a.m. // Presque Isle Beach I // [jognhog.com](http://jognhog.com)

## sat 6.14

#### Three Mile Isle

Running is as much a part of being human as eating and breathing. The only difference is — as Brian Graham points out in his "Runner's Paradise" article last issue — running is no longer a condition of survival. Now people run for pleasure, competition, and exercise. For those of you who run for any

## sun 6.15

#### HOTBOX Open Mic Night

Hey, you. Yeah, you — with the musical talent. Sherlock's is hosting HOTBOX, a night where aspiring musicians of all kinds can take their guitars, their rhymes, and their flash drives

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**Erie Roller Girls Home Opener vs. Royal City Roller Girls**

**Y**ou don't always have to deal with bad drivers out on the road to experience hell on wheels. In fact, there's a much more enjoyable way to experience heavy traffic when the Erie Roller Girls host their Home Opener June 14.

Erie's premier roller derby squad comes back home for their third season with a match against the Royal City Roller Girls of Guelph, Ontario at the Presque Isle Skating and Event Center, featuring two teams full of tough women ready to put on a show. Roller derbies pit five roller-skating players from each team out on a flat-track rink at a time, a race of speed and physical will featuring badass ladies with names like Hemorrhoidal Rage and Master Grief.

For once, heavy traffic and tough hits make for some entertaining road rage, and the Erie Roller Girls are ready to return to Erie for a hellishly good time on wheels. — Alex Bieler

**7:30 p.m. Saturday, June 14 // 3162 West Lake Road // eierollergirls.com**

to put on a show. Special guests are always a possibility, so join some local greats and enter your name in the conversation.

**8 p.m. // 508 State St. // 453.7760**

**WWE Live**

A long-and-hard-fighting battle between two trios of strongmen — the dark-and-mysterious Shield and the backwoods-creepy Wyatt Family — has been raging on in the world of WWE Wrestling. That's the kind of war pro-wrestling fans can really sink their claws into, and tonight, the Gem City is its chosen battlefield, as WWE Live comes to Erie Insurance Arena.

**5 p.m. // 809 French St. // Tickets/info: wwe.com**

**mon 6.16**

**Great American Book Sale**

Who doesn't love finding a good book to get lost in while lounging in a hammock, swinging in the summer breeze, or while soaking up rays at the beach? And if you can find a good book at a good price, even better. At the Great American Book Sale you can find gently used, donated books along with VHS tapes and CDs. Funds raised support the Erie County Library. The sale takes place at Villa Maria Center Gym.

**10 a.m. to 8 p.m. // 2551 W. Eighth St. // erielibrary.org**

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June 26-28

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It's Gilbert's first time here at Jr's! He is a true legend and we are thrilled to have him! At the young age of 15, Gilbert Gottfried began doing stand-up at open mike nights in New York City and after a few short years, became known around town as "The Comedian's Comedian." Aside from his glowing reputation in comedy clubs, Gottfried began to gain a reputation as the king of quirky roles in both movies and television. He appeared in such movies as "Problem Child," "Problem Child II," "Look Who's Talking II" and "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane." He was also the host of the very popular late night movie series "USA Up All Night." After his stellar performance as the wise cracking parrot, IAGO, in the Disney classic "Aladdin," Gottfried became one of the most recognizable voiceover talents, lending his voice to several commercials, cartoons and movies, including the frustrated duck in the AFLAC Insurance commercials. As a famed comics comic, Gottfried puts aside political correctness for his live performance and fires an onslaught of jokes that know no boundaries. Come see what he has in store.

### THURSDAY:

\$15 per ticket

6:30 pm

### FRIDAY & SATURDAY:

\$20 per ticket

6:30 & 9:30

For reservations: 1402 State St.  
Erie, PA  
814-461-0911 or  
jrslastlaugh.com

## tues 6.17

### Pride Night at Erie Seawolves

NWPA Pride is having a Pride Night at the Erie SeaWolves in Jerry Uht Park. Stop out for a family and friends night at the ballpark! A portion of the ticket costs will go directly to NWPA Pride and help the group with future events. Tickets will be \$8 and you must get a voucher from NWPA Pride prior to purchasing your ticket.

7 p.m. // 110 E. 10th St. //  
president@nwpapride.org

## wed 6.18

### Sirsy

While some bands have enough members to roster a beer-league softball team, Sirsy is an example in musical efficiency. The two-person alt-rock act turns up the volume for their smartly-written songs, which will pair quite well with the beautiful setting at Presque Isle's Beach One when Sirsy plays as part of the UPMC Sunset Music Series.

7:15 p.m. // Beach One at Presque  
Isle // [discoverpi.com/events/  
upmc-sunset-music-series/](http://discoverpi.com/events/upmc-sunset-music-series/)

## thurs 6.19

### Downtown Block Party at U Pick Tap House

Craft beer, live music, and downtown Erie, Pa. — all of this makes for a Thursday evening you should spend outdoors and on the streets of The Gem City. The M-80s are headlining and this evening benefits the American Red Cross, so join the rest of Erie and don't miss out of the party-of-the-week.

6 to 10:30 p.m. // 333 State St. // 455.3743

## fri 6.20

### Ron Yarosz and the Vehicle

Oasis is set to turn into a blues-rock ballroom when Ron Yarosz and the Vehicle comes to the West Lake Road establishment. Yarosz brings his Hammond B3 organ and trusty harmonica to the stage for a rocking night as the rest of the Vehicle drives the jam along. All you need need to do is come along for the ride.

6 p.m. // 3122 West Lake Road // 833.1212

### The Vigil, Basket Eddy, and Justin Moyar

As you are ready to get away from the hectic work week, a trio of bands are gearing up to unplug and entertain this Friday night at the Erie Ale House. Local acts The Vigil, Basket Eddy, and Justin Moyar are all set to play for Erie Ale House Acoustics, providing plenty of top tunes as you settle in for the night.

8 p.m. // 1033 State St. // 454.4500

### "What's Her Name?"

Ukraine-native and Erie-resident Artist Lena Logvina will debut new works at Ur-

## Romolo Chocolates Summer Music Series w/ Gloria Reuben

Locals can enjoy the sweet eats provided by Romolo Chocolates all year round, but it has been a long wait for the musical treat that is the Summer Music Series hosted by the confectionary. Thankfully, the 2014 season kicks off this month with a performance from Gloria Reuben and her band.

The R&B singer will play at Romolo Chocolates' outdoor piazza Saturday, June 21, the first of seven special Saturdays that mark the 2014 Summer Music Series. Reuben, an actress who is known from her performance on the medical drama \*ER, will be performing songs from her 10-year singing career along with her five-man band, making soothing sounds in a relaxing setting.

It's been nearly a year since the last Romolo Chocolates Summer Music Series, so treat yourself when Gloria Reuben kicks off another great year of music down on the piazza.

6 p.m. Saturday, June 21 // 1525 W. Eighth St. // [romolochocolates.com](http://romolochocolates.com)



Contributed Photo

raro Gallery, ranging from metal sculptures eight-feet tall to dazzling, handcrafted jewelry. What's more, there'll be Russian classical guitar from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and the Frank Singer Duo from 7:30 to 9:30. Wine from Penn Shore winery will be available for purchase and the hors d'oeuvres will be complimentary and plentiful, so don't miss this meeting of artist, music, food, and wine on a Friday night.

5:30 p.m. // 135 W. 14th St. // 455.6240

## sat 6.21

### Zack Orr

Zack Orr is a talented guy. So talented, that it'd be a shame if he were limited to just one set. Luckily, he'll be performing solo electric and DJ sets at the King's Rook Club this Saturday, a great opportunity for you to get even more Orr.

9 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub)

### Romolo Chocolates Summer Music Series

Gather in the piazza of this confectionary delight to experience this delectable kickoff of the summer. The first showcase will feature actress and R&B singer Gloria Reuben alongside her five piece band including Jay & Marty Ashby, Tom Wendt, Tony DePaolis and Shay Pierre. The event is free and open to the public.

6 p.m. // 1525 W. Eighth St. // 452.1933

### Bay Swim VII at Presque Isle

Up to 300 swimmers are expected to make a splash at Presque Isle Bay today, when they jump in for Bay Swim VII, a one-mile swim from Presque Isle State Park's Beach 1 to the Erie Yacht Club, in which they'll be vying for bragging rights and benefiting local nonprofits in one stroke. Pre-registration is required for those who want to jump in, and spectators are welcome.

9 a.m. // Presque Isle State Park,  
Beach 1 // [discoverpi.com](http://discoverpi.com)

## sun 6.22

### Erie Cemetery Tours

Find out everything you've ever wanted to know about the lives (and afterlives) of some former, and now-long-deceased, residents of Erie's famous West 6th Street neighborhood during today's Erie Cemetery Tours. Today's two tours are part of a series being presented by local genealogist Caroline Reichel, who's rich in knowledge about Erie County's colorful history. It costs \$10 for adults, and \$8 for kids 12 and under.

11 a.m.; 2 p.m. // 2116 Chestnut St. // 864.4423

### Biggest Loser Run/Walk Half Marathon/5k

Returning to Erie once again due to the success of last year's inaugural race! So successful in fact, that the race sold out and due to the overwhelming response, the event is being moved to the campus of Penn State





**Iggy's Last Show w/ AWAR, Dos Noun, and Mic Excel**

Jason Imig has been a big member of the Erie hip-hop scene, booking plenty of prime talent for this city. Sadly, the man many know as "Iggy" will be leaving the Flagship City for the West Coast - but not without a proper good-bye celebration first.

PACA will host Iggy's last show, featuring New York's AWAR and Pittsburgh's Dos Noun, along with several other out-of-state and local MCs ready to honor Iggy and entertain the crowd. As for the musical talent, Iggy is a big fan of the lineup assembled for the Saturday night shindig.

"AWAR is definitely heavily East Coast-influenced hip-hop, a lot of the more classic sound," Iggy says over

AWAR - Contributed Photo

the phone. "As for Dos Noun, I cannot put into words enough what an awesome freestyle MC he is. When he performed with his buddy BZE as Timecapsoul, they freestyled at least half of their set and you would not have known it."

The show will cap off a day that includes a graffiti jam at the Raven building on Peach Street, an event that Iggy describes as a "mini Bencher's Union," referencing the all-day artist extravaganza he's helped run in past years.

Iggy has been a big contributor to the art and music scene in this city. Now we can offer a fond farewell to a good man and celebrate the hip-hop movement he supported at the same time.

**9:30 p.m. Saturday, June 14 // 1505 State St. // pacal505.com**

Behrend so that more runners and walkers may participate. Both a 5k and half marathon will be offered in a non-intimidating environment, with longer course time limits to allow runners and walkers to complete the race at their own pace.

**7 a.m. // 4701 College Drive // ChristinaM@biggestloserrunwalk.com**

**The Fantastic Foray of the Frolf Frolic at Frontier**

It's simple: Take the game of golf and add a Frisbee, and there you have it — Frolf. This round of Frolf benefits the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier, so it's \$20 per person or \$45 for a tree-o (eh-oh!), which includes beer and wings afterwards. So yeah, just so we're clear here, that's: Frisbee, golf, beer, wings, and a good cause — doesn't get much better than that.

**1 p.m. // Eighth Street and Seminole Drive // http://www.leaferie.org/events/**

**mon 6.23**

**War of Ages at Basement Transmissions**

Basement Transmissions is on the rise, their popularity growing so much it warrant-

ed a change of venue. And onward go the shows, as BT welcomes War of Ages to the stage. The local band was a favorite back in the days of Forward Hall on Peach Street and the Hangout in Edinboro, so don't miss what's sure to be a kick-ass show on their home turf before they embark on an international tour. As always, shows are open to all ages.

**7 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St. // basementtransmissions.com**


**tues 6.24**

**Between the States: Photographs of the Civil War at Mercyhurst**

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the Cummings Art Gallery at Mercyhurst presents photographs of the War Between the States, from historical war sites to the haunting events that resulted by photographers such as George Barnard, Matthew Brady and Alexander Gardner. Come take a walk through history of the war that "divided a country and created a nation."

**11 a.m. to 4 p.m. // 501 E. 38th St. // miac.mercyhurst.edu**

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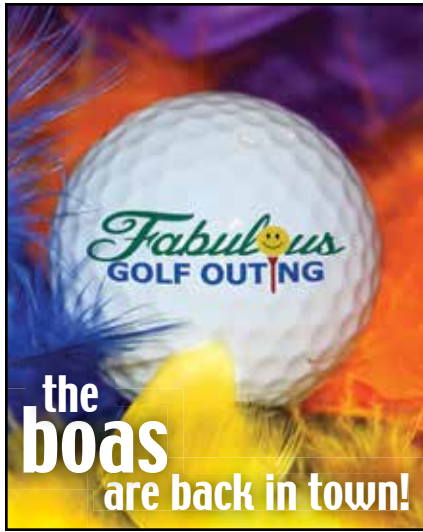
**June 18 & 25, 3-6 pm – Farmers Market**, free admission.

**June 22 – Pollinator Day:** 11 am - 5 pm Hand Feed Butterflies for \$3  
3 pm - Tea Time Talk with Connie Schmotzer, \$7 (\$3 with membership).

**June 27, 7-9 pm – Live Music by Earth Angel**, *old-time country and gospel*  
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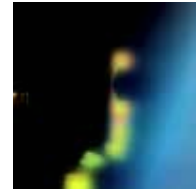
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# Music Reviews

## onewayness + dRachEmUsiK

*immeasurable*  
 self-released



When you spin a 46-minute, four-song album with tracks named "Loving Kindness," "Compassion," "Joy," and "Equanimity," you're bound to make certain assumptions as to the substance and style of the thing; when that album has been summoned into existence from the milky ether by local electro-ambient artist onewayness (Adam Holquist) and his frequent collaborator dRachEmUsiK (Indianapolis-based Charles Shriner), your assumptions will be both rewarded and rejected. Dreamy but not dreary, sparse but not slight, and intense but not overwhelming, *immeasurable* is a deeply textured sonic landscape that – much like the aforementioned concepts of peace and positivity – reveals deeper layers each time you revisit the wispy, watery reverberations contained therein. Think Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma* without the LSD-induced mania, or The Orb without the driving house music beats. One of the best local albums released so far this year, *immeasurable* measures up, measure for measure. – Cory Vaillancourt

## Jack White

*Lazaretto*  
 Third Man Records/Columbia



If 2012's *Blunderbuss* offered us insight to the post-divorce, tormented, jaded lover, *Lazaretto* seems – lyrically – chiefly concerned with isolation, identity, and vision. "I fantasize about the hospital – the army, the asylum, confinement, in prison," raps Jack White on "That Black Bat Licorice," "Any place where there's a time to clear my vision." From phoenix references in title track "Lazaretto" – a funky blues-rocks meets Rages Against The Machine infectious gutpunch of sound – to the split-engineering on "We Are Going to Friends"-esque "Want and Able," separating piano and baritone vocals to be piped in through the left channel and the guitar and tenor vocals on the right – White is his most adventurous yet. From folk-noir "I Think I Found the Culprit" to barrel-piano-tinged "Alone In My Home," to the twang-soaked "Entitlement," White leaves few territories unexplored, creating a sonic tidalwave, that upon first listen, engulfs listeners but leaves them refreshed by the seventh. – Ben Spегgen

## Owen Pallett

*In Conflict*  
 Domino



Owen Pallett's last album may have been released back in 2010, but the Canadian musician certainly hasn't been resting on his laurels. In the years since his concept album about a self-aware character in a made-up 14th century country, Pallett has kept busy arranging strings for Arcade Fire, contributing to the likes of The National and Taylor Swift, and earning an Oscar nomination for the soundtrack of *Her*. Fortunately, his return to his solo career results in the excellent *In Conflict*. The album may abandon many of the fantastical elements of past albums, eschewing sci-fi and adventurous themes for personal first-person takes, but the results are surely fantastic, from the pained cry of "I'll never have any children" on opener "I Am Not Afraid" to the final string plucks of "--> (2)". It doesn't take long to get sucked in by the swells of strings and pulsing tones of *In Conflict*, and it continues to reward upon repeated listens. – Alex Bieler

## Parquet Courts

*Sunbathing Animal*  
 What's Your Rupture?



Just a year ago, Andrew Savage and his Parquet Courts cohorts found their way to the top of the slack-rock world with the fast-paced *Light Up Gold*, 15 songs that lasted a punchy, and extremely enjoyable, 33 minutes. Appropriately, the band didn't wait very long to start working on their follow up effort, resulting in *Sunbathing Animal*, an album that finds the Brooklyn band more focused than before, but without sacrificing the ramshackle feel that drew in listeners from before. "Bodies Made Of" and "Black and White" start the album off with a bang, each song containing enough ferocity to keep the songs from unraveling, a musical roller coaster ride where you don't quite know where *Sunbathing Animal* will turn next. Sometimes those swerves end up in some less pleasant sonic territory, like the last half of "She's Rolling," but the adventure is a fun enough ride to make up for the bumps in the road. – Alex Bieler



Thu. Jun. 11

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Fri. Jun. 13

**Jessie & The Greyhounds**

Sat. Jun. 14

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# Lavender Country Reissue

## An Interview with Patrick Haggerty

By: Dan Schank

Lavender Country's self-titled album from 1973 is believed to be the first country record to openly explore themes of homosexuality. And frontman Patrick Haggerty wasn't delicate about the subject, either. The record's blunt, R-rated lyrics confront homophobia directly, responding with exasperation, humor, and melancholy to an intolerant era. When I asked about the origins of the album, Haggerty's response was surprising.

"The early part of the Lesbian and Gay movement was all about public education," according to the singer, who lives in western Washington state with his husband of 28 years. "I know that sounds boring, but it really was! It was very exciting and a fundamental, necessary step - you had to tell people who you were and what you were about. And nobody had any information. We didn't have any information... We were making our own valid information."

Recently, the North Carolina-based indie label Paradise of Bachelors reissued the record, and it's finding a much broader audience than the one that greeted it in the early seventies, but the idea for the album began with "Back in the Closet Again," the band's subversive update on the Gene Autry cowboy classic. It's a strangely multifaceted song. When Haggerty exclaims, "Whoopee ti yi yea/It's sure a bummer being Gay," one might be tempted to dismiss it as an ironic novelty. But the song's celebratory piano and fiddle arrangements transform it into something more substantial and emotional. Haggerty wrote it in response to the intolerance he encountered as an activist: "[It] was about the struggle to be admitted into the anti-war movement - the left, progressive, socialist movement. Because at the time, they had to re-organize their thinking too. We had to fight our way into the anti-war movement and the various movements that were happening at the time. And we weren't necessarily accepted into any of them, though the women's movement was, of course, always a friend."



Patrick Haggerty, the frontman for Lavender Country, running for Washington State Senate with Nation of Islam runningmates 1988.

Though Lavender Country's music was often confrontational, the appeal of the record isn't limited to political agitation. With its laid-back style and careful piano arrangements, it shares many similarities with other "outlaw country" favorites of the seventies, such as Townes Van Zandt or The Flatlanders. Speaking of the latter, Haggerty's voice calls to mind a gentler, more eccentric Jimmie Dale Gilmore, adding sweetness and vulnerability to his punchy tales of sexual alienation. There's plenty of dark humor throughout the album, but there's also sadness, warmth, a touch of psychedelia, and a remarkable sense of urgency.

Haggerty is particularly proud of the communal aspects of the record's production: "The joy that you find in the Lavender Country music was the joy that we were having in the Lesbian and Gay Liberation movement. We were having fun... It's a true community piece, produced by the community... sold by the community to the community, raised from the community, very much so. I could never have made Lavender Country on my own. And that's a really cool aspect to the vintage of the album now." In this spirit, the reissue includes a long, fascinating oral his-

tory by Haggerty, which carefully details the album's eccentric history.

As you might imagine, the audience for a gay country record was pretty limited in the wake of Richard Nixon's landslide re-election. Haggerty laughs as he recalls the dismissive responses: "You're either gay or country; you can't be gay country. Even though a ton of sissies came from Nebraska and Idaho and all over the place. Of course there's gay country. Duh... We came from everywhere!" Fortunately attitudes are beginning to change, and the songwriter is impressed with the diverse, enthusiastic response to the reissue: "There's been a paradigm shift in who's interested in Lavender Country. They don't care that it's country. They think that's interesting, kinky and kinky... The line has moved. Any half-baked ignoramus who aspires to not be a bigot would like Lavender Country. That's what happened."

Dan Schank can be contacted at DSchank@ErieReader.com. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/hr2xq>



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# Geeked Out

The next level of next-gen games is finally here.

By: John Lindvay

It's time to talk videogames – next generation videogames, that is.

How many of you hopped on the 'next gen' console wagon like me? We all can agree that grabbing a new gaming console at launch is always a risky proposition. Sure, the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One have a suite of features that we all can drool about, but what about the actual games?

Recently, a nice set of new game releases has helped usher in this next generation of gaming we've all been promised. Games like *Infamous: Second Son* and *Titanfall* have shown us the next step of next gen. Unfortunately, the latest "next gen release," *WATCH DOGS*, seems like a step back. Heck, even Nintendo, who seemed down and out of this next gen race, is back in fighting action with its latest stellar release of *Mario Kart 8*.

But I want to talk about an awesome game that few of you may know about that was also recently released on PS4 and PC: Supergiant Game's *Transistor*. I'm a sucker for indie games, and *Transistor* is one of the reasons I purchased my PS4, not *WATCH DOGS*.

*Transistor* is a game about a woman named Red. As the curtains draw, we see Red mourning over her deceased lover as the Transistor, a giant translucent blade shaped like a circuit board, juts out of his abdomen. The Transistor communicates to the player, "Hey Red, we're not going to get away with this are we..." It then orders you to retrieve the sword and you and it/he are on your way.

But what is the Transistor? This question is never truly answered. It's obvious that it's a weapon of immense power. It is also sentient. It seems to have captured the soul of your deceased lover and now he uses it as a conduit to Red, a.k.a. you the player.

A signature of Supergiant's body of work is the steady stream of narration that occurs. The Transistor is not only the key source of conflict in the game, it is also the device used to expose the story to the player. It is all delivered as if a close friend was trapped inside and is now guiding us through the hazards the game is present-

ing. It helps us as players understand the world at large in a seamless and engaging way.

The first discovery we find is that Red has lost her voice and a mysterious Illuminati-esque group called the Camerata has taken it. We also learn that they were the cause of the Transistor killing our unnamed lover. The Transistor urges us to flee, but Red has one thing on her mind – and that is vengeance, which is when and where the game really becomes exciting.

Narratively, the game is superb. Bits of information and facts of the world trickle in as we piece together where we are, who we are, and why all this is happening. It is not like the average game where cut scenes dominate and we are beaten over the head with whatever nonsense military jingoistic teenager plot the writers dreamed up in fervor. Instead, voiceover contextual narration occurs to help fill in some of the gaps.

But like all good fiction, we the viewer are expected to invest and help flesh it all out. Things are left purposefully ambiguous, which allows us to interpret what we experience.

But narrative isn't enough for a great game, is it? *Transistor* in action is just as smart. What starts off to be a seemingly simple run around and mash your attack on enemies as they crop up ultimately turns into something much more thoughtful. Players can institute what the game calls a Turn(). During this action, time dilates and the player can queue up a series of actions. We are now tasked to think tactically and all of our actions now carry more weight, because after the command is issued, we are left vulnerable as we eagerly await the Transistor to recharge allow-

**Supergiant's Transistor is the game you've been waiting for.**

ing us to take a Turn() again. It's a smart hybrid of traditional button mashing and thoughtful tactical planning.

As the game progresses and the story unfolds, we unlock new skills to play with. Further along in the game, we get the ability to augment moves with other moves. As an example, we get an attack that shoots out a piercing projectile that will go through walls and multiple enemies. We then can combine that to another skill that normally shoots out a cluster of explosives; the result is a piercing projectile that splits in three directions. The reason this is worth mentioning is that it allows for players to find their own style of play.

In other words: Do you like to charm enemies and sneak around looking for backstabs? Yep, there's a skillset for that.

It is difficult to talk about *Transistor* without talking about Supergiant's first game *Bastion*. *Bastion* also had the similar trappings of an omnipresent narrator akin to the Transistor and it also had a striking visual style. *Bastion* was a successful debut game for a small, indie studio because it felt fresh while building off of what was already familiar. That's what I would say is the Supergiant signature, there is always this feeling of familiarity. Both *Bastion* and *Transistor* feel like a well-worn pair of shoes in which you just feel like you know what to do before you are prompted to do so – even if you're taking steps in directions you thought you'd never go.

So I strongly recommend you check out *Transistor*, which is currently available on PlayStation 4 and PC. The soundtrack also KILLS and I haven't been able to stop listening to it.

John Lindvay can be contacted at [jLindvay@ErieReader.com](mailto:jLindvay@ErieReader.com), and you can follow him on Twitter @ [FightStrife](https://twitter.com/FightStrife). To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/cqyzr>



Contributed Photo

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- David's commander
  - Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (abbr.)
  - Vein (pref.)
  - Irish poet
  - Gamble
  - Church vessel
  - Peruvian relic
  - Counter
  - Rim
  - Laughter sound
  - Of flightless birds
  - Towhead
  - Sup
  - Air-to-air missile (abbr.)
  - Tilting; naut.
  - Cyclades island
  - Hebrew (abbr.)
  - Gr. wine container
  - Distribute
  - General
- DOWN**
- Eight (Ger.)
  - Wry face
  - Wings
  - Whatever
- equivalency diploma (abbr.)**
- Mulberry of India
  - Expedition
  - Secrets
  - Rifle
  - Amer.
  - Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
  - Self
  - Forbidden
  - Energy unit
  - Freedom, briefly
  - Happen
  - Dutch commune
  - Donkey (Fr.)
  - Intervening, in law

### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

- One-celled organism
- Warp yarn
- Discover
- Street (Ital.)
- Son of Odin
- Vent
- Back of the neck
- King of Israel
- Distant (pref.)
- Last
- Electrocardiogram (abbr.)
- Eastern church chalice veil
- And
- Bantu language
- Spring
- Aviv
- Elam's capital
- Ice mass
- Low-grade brown sugar
- One-celled alga
- Dickens character
- Berne's river
- S Afr. Boer assembly
- Herring barrel
- Sprint
- First principles
- Subject in grammar
- Gilt
- Laconian clan group

## Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

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

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DIFFICULTY: ★☆☆☆☆

## Answer to Sudoku

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

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			33		34		35		36		
37			38		39		40		41		
			42		43						
44	45	46				47		48	49	50	51
52				53		54		55			
56				57		58					
59				60		61					

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A61



## Another Brick from the Wall

By: Cory Vaillancourt

A few weeks ago, using my Spanish skills and my dollar bills, I was able to walk away with an armload of bricks from the Janes Mansion, which is now consigned but to memory and dusty dog-eared photographs.

Each of those bricks has at least one side slathered in that ghastly blue – ghastly, but iconic nonetheless. Long story short, I've only got one left, but those bricks are all that really remain of the place, as far as I know.

One thing I do know is that I'm no more an architect or lawyer than I am urban planner or economist. I'm not qualified to speak much about the building's significant style, or the legality of the quickie demolition, or the zoning restrictions, or the financial impact of the undignified parking lots that will soon take the place she held for a hundred-something years.

I'm not qualified to speak on those things, but I am a human being who is alive in the built environment, and I can't stand by and watch Erie continue to commit aesthetic suicide any more.

For far too long, we've relied on the intelligence and foresight of legislators and the goodwill and charity of capitalists to preserve the historic legacy of Erie; and now we have parking lots. Lots and lots of lots. We might as well start a nonprofit called "PaveErie" and just get it over with already, because no one can take my brick back and rebuild.

Taman Shud. It is done.

We – me and people like me, who aren't necessarily preservationists but are human beings alive in the built environment – need to do something to stop this from happening again. Because doing nothing hasn't worked so far.

And since legislating away the private property rights of landowners is as ludicrous as asking them to conform to our aesthetic – out of their own pockets, mind you – the only option left is to get some skin in the game.

The Historic Savannah Foundation was founded in Savannah, Ga. by seven little ol' southern belles in 1955 after a string of historically and architecturally significant buildings suddenly became parking lots.

Sound familiar?

Spurred into action by the impending demolition of the Isaiah Davenport House (built around 1820) these pioneering women did the only thing they *could* do – they bought the place.

Since that time, what came to be known as the Historic Savannah Foundation has gone from putting out fires to preventing them altogether. They've grown into a robust, award-winning, nationally-known local preservation nonprofit organization that has raised millions upon millions of dollars and saved more than 350 irreplaceable



Contributed Photo

structures over the past 59 years.

Obviously, most of that was done before things like Facebook and Kickstarter.

The effect these seven women had on Savannah has been noticeable in more ways than one; what started as a desire simply to preserve the history and beauty of the built environment inadvertently led to it becoming a routine winner of "America's Most Beautiful City" polls and a major tourist destination.

Destinations = dollars, people. Lots and lots of lots do not.

Granted, these seven women were women of means, and splitting a \$150,000 building

**For far too long, we've relied on the intelligence and foresight of legislators and the goodwill and charity of capitalists to preserve the historic legacy of Erie; and now we have parking lots.**

between six other people is out of reach for most of us. But not all of us.

As I alluded to before, there's this thing called the Internet, and crowdfunding is but one avenue available today that was not in 1955. And while I couldn't possibly think of donating \$21,248.57 (one-seventh the cost of that metaphorical \$150,000 building) to a nonprofit, I could donate \$214.28 (one seven-hundredth the cost of that building) to save something as historic and important as the Erie Estate Buyers building on Parade Street. And if just 699 people felt likewise, well, then we'd have something, wouldn't we?

**Leaving just a memory, this brick is a snapshot in Erie's album of history.**

Yes. We'd have an absolute treasure with three levels of wood flooring and plastered corners and our own gas well in a neighborhood that needs all the help it can get. And we'd clean it up and rent it out as office space, or performance space, or whatever space, and we'd fix it up and once it took root, we'd sell it to someone who'd continue to devote the loving care to it that we had, and then we'd use the money to do the same thing. Again, and again, and onward ad infinitum.

Sorry, that was my John Steinbeck "Tell me about the rabbits, George" moment. I don't know if that particular building has a date for the demolition ball, but as you can see, I'm excited about the creation of an HSF-style revolving fund in Erie, because that building just might have to go to that dance alone. And if it doesn't, another historic building surely will.

We live in a city that has one of the most vibrant nonprofit communities in the entire Commonwealth; Erie is one of the most charitable and giving communities I have ever been a part of, which is what allows those nonprofits to exist. With Erie's nonprofit know-how and the generosity of people whose causes range from kitty-cats to cancer cures, is there *anyone* in this community willing to step up and make this happen. If so, let me know. I'll give them my brick so they can start building.

Cory Vaillancourt is a brilliant writer/complete hack and can be complimented/heckled at [cVaillancourt@ErieReader.com](mailto:cVaillancourt@ErieReader.com). To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/hce6d>



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Cont. from 11 to late March – and invited the neighboring townships, county executive and others – and then had a public forum in early April to appeal to nearly 500 citizens. We really considered ourselves at the beginning stages of the public engagement process. But it was early on that the process got really heated – before our studies were concluded, we didn’t anticipate such a reaction. We really didn’t have the opportunity to have a full discussion of what the real impacts were and the extent of the studies and how their issues could be mitigated. We learned a lesson – going forward we’ll go about it in a

**“It’s a high hurdle that needs to be cleared in order to build and operate a sound financial and operational business – and to justify the investments. Intermodal, as an industry, is not well understood. That site was a perfect fit.”**

very different matter and engage them earlier in the design.

**RS:** As time went on, what were the major concerns of the citizens and how were they addressed?

**JE:** What we heard repeatedly were the number of additional trucks along Buffalo Road and the impact of the retail businesses of that stretch. We heard from township supervisors that the additional traffic may hinder the growth of the retail sector. Residents were concerned with Depot Road and the schools located along it. From the beginning, PennDOT took responsibility to fix the width and grade of the road – regardless of the Rail Terminal development. They were going to address the Depot Road issues that the public identified. They also believed that

there was plenty of existing capacity to handle the volume. We were looking into ways to deal with the different traffic patterns and trying to cover them all. There were solutions to these concerns.

**RS:** As I understand, the criteria for this project location were specific. Were there any other location options, and why did you ultimately choose that site?

**JE:** DevelopErie had started looking at sites years ago. There were five sites we conducted analysis on – and ultimately two sites we did preliminary designs for – the International Paper site in the city and Harborcreek. As we were working with the railroad and operating partners, we identified really unique attributes that a good site required. We didn’t want a residential district – we didn’t want to require relocation of farms, homes, and businesses and didn’t want to have to use eminent domain – so we ultimately needed to be able to purchase any land that would be used.

One of the unique attributes of the Harborcreek site was that it had existing rail siding that would save several millions in construction costs. This was a very difficult puzzle to put together with all of these site characteristics and the site had to fit the local zoning and land use plan. Naturally, we wanted to be close to the businesses that would use the terminal. The further away we are, the less attractive it was going to be to those businesses as an economic opportunity. It was our goal to avoid unnecessary expenses, as it was a private investment driven project.

**RS:** It’s a high hurdle that needs to be cleared in order to build and operate a sound financial and operational business – and to justify the investments. Intermodal, as an industry, is not well understood. That site was a perfect fit.

**RS:** Has this decision had an affect on the Inland Port Initiative overall?

**JE:** The Inland Port Initiative is still going forward. The Initiative includes multiple projects at multiple sites. The Rail Terminal was a large and very important part of the project – and the Initiative is now smaller without it. However, we have always been intentional about keeping these projects moving independently and that any one of

**The proposed Rail Terminal Project came to a screeching halt May 15.**

them can proceed without the others. There are still opportunities here and we will pursue them.

**SR:** There really is a lot of support for a rail facility in Erie County. We’re continuing our efforts to pursue it. The rail terminal is just the start for economic benefits for the greater Erie economy as a whole. Our private investors still want to see the project go forward. There’s a broad consensus from both the public and private side that the terminal would provide Erie with substantial benefits – but it also has to meet the physical, operational, and financial requirements to successfully operate a private terminal that will provide sufficient returns to investors. We are currently working on a whole new approach that will be presented to DevelopErie board and public partners over the next several weeks.

**JE:** We’re an investor in the project and it has always been our intent to transition to a minority role. We’ll continue to support the rail terminal plans to move forward. We have several other projects going on as well that continue to move forward.

**RS:** Keeping with this line of thinking, if this project does move forward in another capacity, what do you see as the short- and long-term benefits to the region?

**JE:** The most obvious is the cost savings to current businesses – shipping products in and out of Erie. Between Erie and L.A., businesses can save \$200 to \$2,000 per shipment by changing modes of transportation from truck service to rail service. Overall, the project improves their national and global competitiveness. Intermodal provides new opportunities for those shipping in bulk – it will allow for the possibility of taking some of that bulk product and moving it by rail, overall providing even more cost savings to



tap into new markets they haven’t thought of before. In addition, the federal government has implemented tougher regulations on the trucking industry. Freight costs will increase making Erie businesses less competitive – as truck pricing is actually growing faster than inflation this year. Which also explains why the intermodal industry has grown faster than inflation in the last ten years. The railroads are having a great year. When companies are looking for locations to grow, they’re looking at factors like energy costs and labor costs and so many are looking at logistics. This would make us a more attractive place to grow business. We need our community as a partner. It’s going to require a lot of effort, and the public all working together, if this is going to succeed. I think it does have a chance at new life here and it’s a project worth doing. We have a natural harbor which grew around our railroads - it’s part of our history and potentially a great part of our future.

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# ER Sports

## The Shaming of Erie School District

By: James R. LeCorchick



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I'm not sure why, but I really do care – a lot.

Other than kindergarten, I never attended a public school, but I have always rooted for their teams – of course the exception being when they played my alma mater. I have no apologies for that, as I know I have been more than fair to the teams and athletes over the years.

This is why I have no qualms about writing this article; being a fan is as good as being an alumnus, and I am no Johnny-come-lately when it comes to rooting for the Erie public school teams. This was almost a rant, but I actually waited a couple days to calm down before putting this on paper – or in the computer.

I have been covering Erie sports for nearly 40 years, and I have been extremely consistent in my opinion of the support – or lack of support – by the Erie School District (Erie School Board) for its teams, coaches, and athletes. As a matter of fact, at times it has almost been unethical as well as extremely frustrating.

First, each school not having its own Hall of Fame is beyond obscene; addressing this should've been done years ago – many, many years ago. As in at least 50 years ago.

And if the schools didn't have enough gumption to do it themselves, then Erie School District should have a Hall of Fame for all the schools, but this would've taken some work. Heaven forbid!

The worst part of all of this is that it's way, way too late to honor our past greats, as that horse has left the barn. Keeping in mind, though, that this is something that should've been done a long time ago, it's impossible to blame the past few school boards and the past few administrations. However, something should be done currently to remind our young people about

### FORMER ACADEMY star Art baker rushes for yardage against Texas in the 1960 Cotton Bowl, the ex-Lion helping Syracuse University to the National Championship.

the legends of yesteryear as we look to inspire them and show them what's possible today.

I keep hearing about lack of funds every year and how we need more money for the "kids." Well, I have a bulletin: It doesn't take much to remind the students of today about history. Where would you go in the Erie School District to find about our great athletes and teams from the past?

It is a disgrace to go past our high schools and not see signage reminding everyone of individual state champions and that team that "won it all." I'm sure with all the talented young people we have in the District, this would be easy to get done and cost very little money.

I am going to give some samples of some of those greats from the past, and I wonder if any of the students today have any idea about them. But it's not their fault.

What's more, I wonder how many School Board members can tell me who these people are?

It seems to be a lot easier to whine about lack of money instead of doing something inexpensive to inspire our youngsters. It's a lot easier waiting for a handout than it is to do some research.

Also, I could write for days about the lack of facilities for the Erie kids. How about this one tidbit to showcase that setting?

When **Jon Cacchione** coached baseball at Strong Vincent for three very successful years, his practice fields were the softball field at Grover Cleveland and the football field at SV.

Geez, I wonder why he ended up the head football coach at McDowell.

### A LITTLE INFO FOR THE ERIE SCHOOL DISTRICT:

1. **ART BAKER** (Academy) – If he had accomplished this in Canton or Massillon, these towns would have a statue of him somewhere and a school named after him. Last time Art was in Erie, he was an assistant football coach at Cathedral Prep.

Should the current students know these facts?

Baker was the second African-American to win a PA state title in wrestling and the second to do it in the NCAA while at Syracuse, as a matter of fact winning two state crowns at 165 (1956) and 185 (1957). He also started for the Orange national championship football squad in 1959, playing next to Heisman Trophy winner Ernie Davis, the first African-American winner of that prestigious award.

Baker played two years with the Buffalo Bills in the AFL, four in the CFL, and was also the number-one choice of the Philadelphia Eagles in the 1960 NFL draft.

2. **CRAIG and R.J. Costello** (Tech) – Dynamic brother combination for the Centaurs, starring in football as well as capturing state wrestling titles.

3. **BILLY and BOBBY BRABENDER** (Strong Vincent) – The first brothers to win state championships in wrestling, the fiery twins were also great coaches in the Erie School District, Bobby at SV and Billy at East.

4. **WOODY THOMPSON** (East) – A football, wrestling, and track star for the Warriors, the powerful Thompson starred in college at the University of Miami (FL) and played in the NFL with the Atlanta Falcons and Cleveland Browns.

5. **TOM LAWLESS** (Strong Vincent) – Lawless was a baseball and wrestling star for the Colonels and an outstanding baseball player at Penn State Behrend. He was best remembered for hitting a game-winning home run in the 1987 World Series for the St. Louis Cardinals.

6. **ESSIE HOLLIS** (Strong Vincent) – One of the most popular athletes in Erie history, "Easy Essie" was a high school All-American basketball player at SV, led St. Bonaventure to an NIT title, and played in the NBA with the Detroit Pistons.

He also played in Spain where he achieved Michael Jordan-type status with the fans.

7. **1985 STRONG VINCENT** basketball team – The Colonels lost one game that season and romped to a PIAA state title. SV

coach Pete Flinn ended up as an ultra-successful cage boss at McDowell.

8. **1991 STRONG VINCENT** football team – The SV gridders lost one game and captured a state championship.

These are just a small taste of the great performers and teams. Where would you go to find the rest of them?

It would be nice to drive by our City schools and see some kind of recognition of their great athletes and teams outside the school. I wonder if there is even anything inside remembering each school's finest.

Again, the blame can't go to the current Erie School Board or the current administration, but they haven't helped either.

As former Superintendent Jim Barker used to say when I called him, "That's a great idea." Little did I know, he must've been laughing himself sick after the phone call ended.

I have three words for past and current School Board members and past and current administrations – (1) SHAME (2) ON (3) YOU!

### FAN MAIL!

Two weeks ago I was coaching at the PIAA State Championships for Track/Field in Shippensburg, Pa. As my female athlete approached the starting line, I could not help thinking: "How many of these athletes made it to this level by training on a 6 inch wide dirt track?"

My guess was ZERO.

During practice, my track team looks more like a rugby team, covered head to toe in



Contributed Photo

### Where's the Track? -- This is the track (that 6-inch piece of dirt) that the Strong Vincent team practices on.

mud.

I think it is very sad that a school district our size does not have a track at all. Northeast, Fairview, Harbor Creek, and Fort LeBoeuf all have beautiful tracks. – Geoff Filutze

[Editor's note: Geoff Filutze is the highly-respected track and field coach at Strong Vincent.]

James R. LeCorchick can be contacted at [JRLSportsReport@gmail.com](mailto:JRLSportsReport@gmail.com), and you can follow him on Twitter @JRLSports. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/as2s5>





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