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TOM WOLF

What the Governor-Elect's
Victory Means for Erie
and the Keystone State


EXILE ON STATE STREET

Waking Up Erie's Leadership
By Rick Filippi

Q & A with PAINS OF BEING
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From The Editors

Critical times lie ahead for the state of Pennsylvania and the city of Erie. On the cover, we're featuring the Keystone State's governor-elect Tom Wolf, because if we're left with any question after the 2014 midterm elections, it's: What does his election mean to Erie — and to the state?

The Corbett administration barely had a fighting chance of taking a second term — something every governor of Pa. had done before. His probability of winning seemed so slim that he resorted to ads featuring zombies and horror-film-inspired murderers. But what was more telling was the fact that major media outlets announced Wolf the winner at 8:01 — just sixty seconds after polls closed — with zero percent reporting.

But did we elect Wolf because we believe strongly in him, or had we just lost so much faith in Corbett? That's something time — the next four years to be exact — will tell.

In this issue, Contributing Editor Jim Wertz breaks down key issues Wolf ran on and talks to local political leaders to get a sense of what January 2015 will look like. If anything, we've seen two good omens thus far: Wolf announced he won't be collecting a salary, as a means of budget tightening a la Bloomberg, and Vice President of The Brookings Institution Bruce Katz said during the Jefferson Educational Society's Global Summit that "he's the kind of governor Pennsylvania needs" and went on to emphasize Wolf's strong background in manufacturing.

Also in this issue are several pieces that articulate the importance of community voice. First, we look at tree trimming — or in some cases,

Governor-elect Tom Wolf at a Get Out the Vote rally earlier this year

manicuring versus chopping. It's a simple question: Why do some neighborhoods see pin oaks treated like bonsai trees while others feature gapping Vs? It's a rather simple answer: Communities with strong, unified voices send loud and clear messages. In this case, that message is that the aesthetics of a community matter.

Dan Schank writes about the recent Destination Erie community meets held throughout the county. As the two-year, \$1.8 million plan nears its completion, the question of *What's next* is on everyone's mind. The outcomes of these meetings in this community-driven process will help to begin answering that. At very least, it's a reminder that we should all be paying close attention in the months to come, as they'll influence the decades to follow.

Rick Filippi turns his attention in this issue's *Exile on State Street* to local leadership in light of the midterm elections. He sounds the bell to wake Erie's leadership from what he calls a "comfortable slumber" and questions the age of "anti" ideas and "anti" anything and how that may impede progress.

If there's anything to take away from these pieces, it's that collaboration — whether it's a Democratic governor working with a Republican-controlled state congress, communities uniting, citizens working together, or leadership taking action rather than idly sitting by managing decline — will win the day, because if we don't work together, we'll be asking the same questions and addressing the same problems year after year.

Exile on State Street

Waking up Erie Leadership from Its Comfortable Slumber

By: Rick Filippi

Now that the dust has settled on the 2014 election, I'd like to offer some thoughts both on the national results and here locally. As everyone knows by now - except maybe those who don't vote, which is quite a large group - the Republicans completely routed the Democrats in every major election, with the notable exception of Tom Wolf's victory over Tom Corbett here in Pennsylvania.

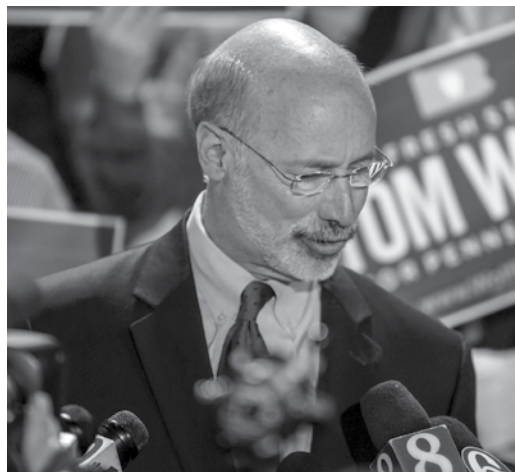
In my thirty years of political awareness, I must say that this past election was the most surreal that I have ever experienced. My politics are well-known, but I believe many would agree that the Republican national rout was largely the triumph of "no-ideas." Actually, it might be more appropriate to call it the election of the party of "anti-ideas."

The GOP offered nothing in the way of any forward-thinking, solution-oriented policies, only the tried and true platform that anything that is or was anti-Obama was to be voted for. Sadly, this was a vindication of the GOP's six-year effort to oppose, obstruct, and reject any meaningful proposals to deal with America's domestic and foreign policy issues.

On the other hand, the Democrats might as well have run in this election with a sock in their collective mouth. Rather than flout the progress made in the last six years and stand on their principles, most ran from those accomplishments, and instead offered... nothing. Few Democrats gave any compelling reason to vote for them or their party. Despite the evidently accepted gospel that the President has been a failure, his accomplishments are quite significant.

A short list. First, the President's economic policies helped pull us from the brink of the economic collapse now known as the "Great Recession." Second, the Affordable Care Act. This was a promise the President ran on, to address a significant social problem, i.e. the millions of Americans with no health insurance. Third, national reduction in unemployment rates to numbers we had not seen in years. Fourth, the withdrawal from the quagmire in Iraq created by the previous administration. Finally, as further vindication of the President's policies, the stock market continues to break records putting huge profits in the pockets of many of the richest people in America. Ironically, many of those people form the core of the anti-Obama front.

Tactically speaking, the most significant effect of the election is to ensure more gridlock in the next two years. The GOP will be able to block appointments to the Supreme Court and other federal offices. But can they really enact any meaningful legislation? They don't have the sixty votes in the Senate to move most legislation to a vote and



Tom Wolf (pictured) one of the few bright spots in an otherwise depressing election.

politics, it's not going to change soon.

Let me provide some examples just in case the point is not getting through. On the political front, as stated, Erie no longer has its own representative in Congress. We are now designated a "rural" area by the state. Few national political candidates visit Erie. For that matter, few statewide candidates make Erie a priority as witnessed in the recent gubernatorial campaign, particularly by the now governor-elect.

Economically, it's very similar. Our two major hospitals are now affiliates of Pittsburgh-based hospital networks. The largest bank and the largest real estate firm are also Pittsburgh based. We continually see a reduction in state and federal investment in the region. The list could go on.

Sure, some of these things are due to changing economics. But because of our population stagnation, we are approaching the loss of critical mass that enabled Erie to be its own economic and political unit. Now, we've become a vassal state of Pittsburgh, which is confirmed in our political emasculation.

So what should we learn from the local elections? That unless we address our internal problems with bold and, yes, radical ideas, we will continue to slide into political obscurity. Our leadership needs to wake up and take active roles in job creation (i.e. the Inland Port Project), land use planning (i.e. stop sprawl), tax equity (i.e. countywide revenue sharing), and education (i.e. the community college). These are just some of the things that have either failed or are not even being discussed.

This was a depressing election, particularly for Democrats like me. But it should also make others think as well. Has this great nation become spent of meaningful ideas? Are we just a bunch of "anti" anything? Does it matter to anyone here locally, that Erie seems to have lost much of its relevancy as a geopolitical unit?

Nationally, I hope we can come to grips and put the country's interests first, as opposed to individual interests and get some things done again. Locally, I would hope that this election and surely those to follow wake up Erie's leadership from its comfortable slumber to develop their own ideas to bring about change that leads to progress and growth.

I'll hold my breath because I have to. America and Erie are worth it.

Rick Filippi can be contacted at atty.filippi@gmail.com.

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Street Corner Soapbox

The Moral Bankruptcy of the GOP

By: Jay Stevens

The 2014 midterm elections were a dark week for the Republican party.

Waitaminute! Am I crazy? The GOP by all accounts *dominated* the 2014 election! They picked up 12 more House seats, won a Senate majority, picked up some gubernatorial seats, and upped their majorities in state legislatures across the country! How could you call that a “dark week”? Yes, I’m a progressive, a liberal, a lefty – whatever you want to call me (and some of you might prefer unprintable terms) – but I’m not crazy enough to call the 2014 elections a “dark week” for Republicans.

You see, I didn’t really pen that opening line. I stole it from a Republican strategist and columnist for the *Houston Chronicle*, Chris Ladd. That’s what he said, not me.

So, why would a Republican write something like that?

Three reasons.

For one, argues Ladd, the 2014 election saw Republicans deepen their support, not broaden it. They saw support increase from aging rural white voters, but made no inroads among Democratic constituencies, especially in the most heavily populated areas of the country – the Northeast, West Coast, and parts of the West. That’s Ladd’s “Blue Wall,” an area that contains so many Electoral College votes that it makes a Republican presidential victory in 2016 nearly impossible. Despite the GOP sweep this election, for example, no Republican candidate won a Senate seat behind Ladd’s Blue Wall.

Second, GOP success was in large part a result of low turnout. Ladd noted that the Republican victories rested on winning 52 percent of those that turned out in 2014. Given only about 35 percent of registered voters turned out, which translates to 17 percent of the registered electorate. Hardly a “mandate.”

Ladd also admits that turnout success was due to “vote suppression” – the crazy patchwork of new voter registration laws – but thinks that’ll bring advantage in only one or two low-turnout elections, but at the cost of losing any hope of winning minority voters “for the foreseeable future.”

But the kicker is what Republicans will do with their Congressional advantage between now and 2016. Expect more stupid. “This is an age for Republican solutions,” claims Ladd. “[But] what are we hearing from Republicans? Climate denial, theocracy, thinly veiled racism, paranoia, and Benghazi hearings.”

According to a July *New York Times* report, Congress has spent more than \$3 million on hearings around the attack on the Libyan embassy in an effort to tie it Obama administration incompetency. To date, there has been no evidence of intelligence failures,

delay, or political cover-up – at least according to a Nov. 21 House Intelligence Committee report, which came to the same result as five previous government reports.

You don’t have to look much further than Erie’s own House representative, Mike Kelly, for evidence of how the emerging GOP majority will play out.

After the Pennsylvania state assembly gerrymandered Kelly’s House seat into a safe Republican stronghold, Kelly rewarded the electorate by turning his House seat into a guest seat on *Fox News and Friends*. Railing against the Obama administration on Ebola, coal, the IRS, immigration, Obamacare, and the Keystone Pipeline on Fox News, Kelly in Congress has done...nothing. Assigned to draft legislation in 2013 that would trim \$380 million from the federal budget in loan guarantees to clean-energy compa-

Conservative politicians and the media that supports them are creating their own version of reality that’s politically motivated to consolidate their base and immunize themselves against rational counter-responses.

nies, Kelly never turned in his homework.

“Mike’s efforts shifted when he chose to focus more on holding the administration accountable with regards to [Operation] Fast and Furious,” explained Kelly spokesperson Tom Qualtere. “And then when the Benghazi tragedy occurred, that took the cake.”

Real issues need to be addressed – climate change, the Syrian civil war, increasing inequality of wealth, the deficit – but Benghazi!

It’s a pattern among Republican politicians and the media that supports them, this increasing disconnect from reality. Conservative politicians and the media that supports them are creating their own version of reality that’s politically motivated to consolidate their base and immunize themselves against rational counter-responses. That’s how they were able to drive the Benghazi scandal for a year and a half, how they create “controversy” out of thin air – Fast and Furious, IRS corruption, death panels, Obama-is-a-Kenyan. That’s how they keep issues of scientific certainty – climate change, evolution – “controversial.”

They’ve done this by painting the mainstream media as “liberal” – when it’s any-

thing but – and the scientific community as a secret society engaging in vast conspiracies. There’s no such thing as a nonpartisan authority over reality, posit conservatives. Everything is political, even facts.

Dave Roberts, a blogger for *Grist*, summed up the disturbing trend of conservative rhetoric in a series of 36 brilliant tweets.

“[The] right has systematically and progressively destroyed the very notion of a nonpartisan arbiter of information,” he wrote. “It’s like pointing to an apple and saying, ‘this is an orange.’ It takes practice to train your mind to be able to do it. [O]n the question of what the object is, there are only competing answers – no objective fact of the matter.”

Conservatives have taken out any sense of authority over facts. As such, “every dispute, even over matters of fact, becomes a contest of power – loudest, best funded, most persistent voices win.” Which is readily apparent, especially in the political battles over climate change. As the globe warms and we’re wracked by extreme weather events (like five feet of November snow in Buffalo), conservatives are still disputing of any of this is *actually happening*.

The “danger for the right,” tweeted Roberts, “is that once you lose your mooring to nonpartisan epistemological standards, you are at sea. You start thinking you really can ‘make your reality,’ forgetting there’s anything rigid in the world that can’t be wished away.”

That sense of fantasy will have two results. First, it will hinder us from coming to any political solution to any problem. Second, it will damage the Republican Party as its policies, rhetoric, and agenda drift from the problems people are actually encountering. And *that’s* why Chris Ladd thinks the 2014 midterm elections represents a “dark week” for the GOP.


“It is almost too late for Republicans to participate in shaping...our economic and political transformation,” writes Ladd. “The opportunities we inherited coming out of the Reagan Era are blinking out of existence...while we chase so-called ‘issues’ so stupid, so blindingly disconnected from our emerging needs that our grandchildren will look back on our performance in much the same way that we see the failures of the generation that fought desegregation.”

I am a liberal, a progressive, a goddamned Commie pinko, but I am not crazy. I know there are millions of bright, energetic minds in conservative ranks that want to provide real and conservative solutions to real problems. I believe the world needs them.

Jay Stevens can be contacted at Jay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Sneveys_Yaj.

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Schedule Highlights

My Life As A Turkey



**November 26 at 8pm
on WQLN-TV 54.1**

**PBS|ARTS
FALL FESTIVAL**

Kristin Chenoweth
COMING HOME



**November 28 at 9pm
on WQLN-TV 54.1**

**PBS|ARTS
FALL FESTIVAL**

A TRIBUTE TO
**BRUCE
SPRING
STEEN**



**December 5 at 8pm
on WQLN-TV 54.1**

The Way I See It

USPS and the Burden of the Postal Reform Accountability Act

By: Rebecca Styn

Two months ago, I penned a column on the imminent consolidations or closings of branches of the United States Postal Service. I cited facts and figures directly from the USPS website and included my own personal thoughts on the situation, but wasn't supportive of this shrinking, rather mentioning that given the looming timeline and deficit, "without a complete 180 of the operation, the facility will eventually close, and we are just prolonging the inevitable."

Readers offered quick rebuttals, which is great, because that is the intent of the column – to provoke discussions regularly. Most of the arguments against the piece cited the Postal Reform Accountability Act as the main source of post office's issue (which I did not mention previously, so I'll address it here). For what it's worth, though, I must note that with the exception of one gentleman, every single person shared their thoughts via email.

In 2006, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act required the USPS to make

a payment of more than \$5 billion annually from 2007 through 2016 to build up a retirement fund in order to pre-fund 50 years of estimated costs. According to the Government Accountability Office, this payment was intended to reduce possible liabilities on future taxpayers. Prior, the USPS employed a "pay as you go" approach to pensions, paying the pensions and health care benefits out of each year's profits.

As a result, the USPS is now the only enterprise in America that is required by law to pre-fund future retiree healthcare benefits – which in essence, is not a bad idea and something all government entities should have to do.

But that's the reason we're here.

The USPS was once the United States Post Office Department – a heavily government-subsidized agency. In 1970, in response to widespread postal worker strikes based on requests for additional pay, Congress compromised with the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, which replaced the United States Post Office Department with the United States Postal Service. This new organization was quasi independent and allowed to set its employees pay. Also as a result of the reorganization came the United States Postal Regulatory Commission (or PRC), an independent regulatory agency, which from 1970 through 2006 had oversight authority over the USPS. And in 2006, this Act came to be.

But due in part to the payment, shortly thereafter, USPS revenues started to decline – so much so that back in 2011, the looming default on payments called for drastic measures. Offices around the country shuttered their doors to avoid default on this \$5 billion annual obligation. In the round of cuts ending this year, Americans will see 229 processing plants close and 28,000 jobs lost. Locally, our East 38th Street branch is slated to close in April 2015, and if that happens, nearly 120 jobs in Erie could be lost or displaced.

This is truly only part of the problem. According to Quora.com, the Postal Service labor rules and lack of innovation have also prevented them from becoming competitive. For FedEx and UPS, labor is 50 percent of their expenses. For the USPS, it is 80 percent. The group is also not allowed to offer any new products or services in an effort to keep them competitive.

Conversely, while Congress does impose these costs and obligations, it also protects the Postal Service from all competition. According to the Government Accountability Office, the Postal Service has a legal monopoly over first-class and standard mail. It is mandated by Congress to provide each American with "universal service," which includes uniform prices, access to services, and six-day delivery nationwide, irrespective of where they live or the costs of serving them. To ensure this, Congress grants the

USPS a statutory monopoly on the delivery of first-class and standard mail and restricts mailbox access to mail delivered by the USPS, preventing other companies from delivering such services. The group also benefits from other privileges, by being exempt from vehicle licensing requirements, sales taxes, and local property taxes. They don't have to pay parking tickets and have eminent domain powers.

So, while Congress requires this mandate, it also provides USPS all the abovementioned privileges. The Act accelerated this process, and financially stressed the system, but like most other businesses (government, for profit, or non profit), the group is also at the mercy of its consumers.

We have had declining mail volume over the years due to the use of new technology that doesn't have the same strict laws. Additionally, bloated operating expenses, and constant congressional meddling have all added to USPS' current state of affairs. And companies like FedEx and UPS are also gaining ground, literally, by offering expansive ground service deliveries that the Postal Service can't, due to limited weight restrictions.

Ultimately, with or without the mandate, the USPS still needs an entire overhaul to stay afloat.

Love? Hate? Agree? Disagree? I want to hear from you. Email me at rStyn@ErieReader.com and follow me on Twitter @rStyn.

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News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

Weird Patriotism

November is tax-publicizing season in Finland, where, starkly unlike America, the government releases all individuals' tax records to help build public support for the country's vast welfare state. Thus, reported Foreign Policy magazine, Finnish society gets a "yearly dose of schadenfreude" ... "opening the door for a media frenzy of gossip, boasting and fingerpointing" about "fair share" and who's more worthy. A few, however, proudly pay high Finnish taxes as a "badge of patriotism," rejecting common tax shelters. "We've received a lot of help from society," said one home-grown (and wealthy) entrepreneur, "and now it is our turn to pay back." [Foreign Policy, 11-5-2014]

"Offended!"

Steve Soifer, CEO of an international support group for people with "shy bladders," excoriated DirecTV in November for its series of commercials featuring Rob Lowe, whose "awkward" character in one ad stands at a urinal and says, "Fact: I can't go with oth-

er people in the room." Soifer says the ad ridicules a serious problem — and compared it to "making fun" of a man missing an arm or leg. [Associated Press via New York Daily News, 11-4-2014]

The Power of One Sensitive Soul: (1) Lt. Col. Sherwood Baker was turned away from Adams High School in Rochester, Michigan, in September by a guard who said a school official sent word that Baker was not allowed in to discuss his daughter's class schedule until he changed to civilian clothes — because "a student" might be offended by his military uniform. (The Rochester school superintendent later apologized.) (2) The British Embassy in Washington, D.C., apologized twice in August, first a tongue-in-cheek "apology" for England's War of 1812 attack on the White House and then for making that "apology" in the first place — because of a backlash on Twitter from Americans complaining the jokey "apology" was "offensive." [Daily Mail (London), 9-11-2014] [Sky News (London), 8-25-2014]

Bright Ideas

David Van Vleet asked for certain supposedly public records in Tacoma, Washington, and was forced into federal court

when the city turned him down. Van Vleet wanted data from the city licenses of strip club employees (dancers' stage and real names, date of birth, etc.) so that he could pray for them individually, by name, to make his appeals more effective. (In October, Judge Ronald Leighton denied Van Vleet a temporary restraining order against the city.) [KING-TV (Seattle), 10-23-2014]

The Washington, D.C., restaurant Second State recently added an accessory to its bar menu — "hand-cut rock," i.e., "artisanal" ice, for \$1 extra (but free in premium drinks). The local supplier Favourite Ice assures that its frozen water contains no calcium to cloud it and, with a heavy-duty band-saw blade, "hand-cuts" 200-to-300-pound blocks into the cubes that ultimately wind up in the glass. A Favourite Ice founder said his frozen water resists drink-weakening longer than ordinary cubes do. [NPR, 10-21-2014]

Ewwwww — Gross!

Daniela Liverani, 24, of Edinburgh, Scotland, and British singer Katie Melua recently survived inadvertent, grotesque ordeals hosting, respectively, a three-inch leech and a spider. The leech had found its way

into Liverani's nose during an Asian backpacking trip and had poked part-way out several times (though Liverani had assumed it was a nosebleed clot and "sniffed (it) back up"). When she finally saw a doctor in October, she said, the leech played peek-a-boo for a half-hour until the doctor grabbed it with tweezers. Melua's tiny spider apparently lived in her ear for a week, creating a constant "rustling" noise until her doctor vacuumed it out. She guessed that it came in through old earbud headphones on an airline flight. (Her spokesperson said the singer had no hard feelings and had released the spider into her garden.) [Daily Record (London), 10-12-2014] [The Guardian (London), 11-2-2014]

Chutzpah!

The law finally caught up, partially, to squatter Darrell Beatty in September, as he was charged with grand larceny for forging a deed to a home owned by Jennifer Merin, 70, in Laurelton, New York. However, he bailed out of jail on Oct. 22 and immediately returned to the house. In fact, Beatty's two sons had remained "at home" even while Beatty was locked up. The home has been in Merin's family since 1930. "Mind-boggling," she said. [New York Daily News, 11-4-2014]

The Law Works in Strange Ways: (1) The Gothamist news site reported in October that bicyclist John Roemer, who was rear-ended by a driver in Brooklyn in May (and whose intensive-care bill was paid by the driver's insurance company), is now being sued by the driver in small claims court for \$2,000 damage to her car. (2) In November, a civil court in Lindau, Germany, ordered Rory Gray to pay Dr. Daniel Ubani for calling Ubani "an animal" (for having injected Gray's father with 10 times a drug's safe dose in 2008, which led to his death). The court found the epithet unwarranted and ordered Gray to help pay Ubani's legal expenses. [The Gothamist, 10-16-2014] [BBC News, 11-7-2014]

Well, Of Course!

The owner of the world's largest corn maze (63 acres), at Cool Patch Pumpkins in Dixon, California, told Sacramento's KOVR-TV in October that "several" times this season, visitors have called 911 to come get them out of the maze. Said owner Matt Cooley, "When it's dark, all you see is corn." (Also, two months earlier, an emergency crew in Braintree, England, was forced to use special equipment to find and rescue an elderly woman who had fallen while inside the 10-acre Blake House Craft Centre maze.) [KOVR-TV, 10-30-2014] [Essex Chronicle, 8-20-2014]

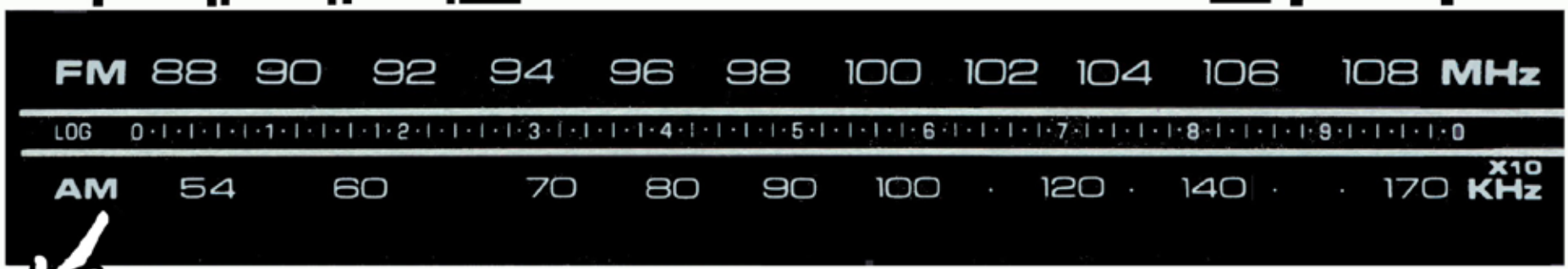
Just Toyin' Witcha — By: B. Toy

Your guide to American *Radio* stations

College Radio
Christian Radio
NPR

An odious morass of Top 40, Pop-Country, Adult-contemporary, Retro-80s and Classic Rock pre-programmed by marketing firms in New York City

Fly-by-night stations that last about two weeks



Jock-Talk, financial advice, Rush Limbaugh and his insipid progeny

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Considering the City

Made in Erie Marketplace

By: Civitas Members Lisa Austin and Laurel Swartz

Do you make a point of buying things that are made in Erie?

According to the *American Business Alliance*, buying locally “creates more local wealth and jobs.” Additionally, the *Forbes’ Retail* blog noted this November that 48 percent of purchases “at local independent businesses” are “re-circulated locally, compared to less than 14 percent of purchases at chain stores.”

This means that when you shop on Upper Peach, instead of investing directly in Erie’s economy, you are sending 86 percent of your purchasing power out of town. This “dollar-drain”, like the “brain-drain” of Erie’s ex-pats, negatively impacts our local economy. Luckily, there is a simple solution to reverse that trend: Start – or continue – buying locally-made products.

Come Black Friday, this will be easy thanks to the Made in Erie Marketplace, held from 5 to 8 p.m. Nov. 28 at the Masonic Temple Building, located at 32 W. Eighth St. in downtown Erie.

Last year on Black Friday, Civitas launched the Marketplace to encourage the establishment of a venue for locally produced food, functional objects, and culture in order to showcase the wealth of local talent and to better inject dollars into Erie’s economy.

Local crafter Stephanie Westley – who had only been a crafter for a year – attended the 2013 Marketplace, and before leaving, she volunteered to organize the 2014 Marketplace. After high school (General McLane), she earned her undergraduate degree in art history at Edinboro University. While completing her masters in art history in Arizona, Westley sold vintage items. When she returned to Erie, she began creating a line of clothing and accessories available at PACA’s bi-monthly Even Crafter fairs.

To make the Marketplace vendor-selection process more efficient, Westley initiated an online application. From the submissions, she selected a group of vendors selling everything from yoga DVDs to handmade soap. Examples of products can be found on the Facebook Made in Erie Mar-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Stephanie Westley (pictured) volunteered during last year’s Made in Erie Marketplace to organize this year’s event.

ketplace page at Facebook.com/MadeInErieMarketplace.

Some of the 2013 Marketplace vendors are returning including Jessica Stadmueller, Carol Posch Comstock, and Lena Logvina. New Marketplace vendors include: Ali Ford and her Table of Curiosities, Linda Flatley’s journals, Pink Cottage Soaps by Janice Fatica, award-winning stuffed animals by Sarah Brown, and sleek furniture by Brian Millspaw. Maddie Fry will offer fiber works from her Drop Spindle Studio and Angela McNair will share her “boutique finds.” Additional businesses new to the Marketplace include: A Little Brick House, Conneauttee Creamery, Dragonfly Lake Scents, Exercising Balance, Firekin Studio, Girl with Baggage, Jess and Joann Creations, Rags & Old Iron, and TARA Pottery.

The Erie Mobile Kitchen will return with pizza on International Bakery shells, savory Italian sausage from Bello’s Market served on fresh rolls from the West Lake Bakery, and the Kitchen’s popular vegetarian quesadilla. New food vendors include Beelzebub with their “outstanding salsa and pickles” and Showman Farms selling cheese and raw honey.

Westley is initiating a theater table to build attendance at local productions. Shoppers will meet Mark Tanenbaum from PACA and Jess Flock from Dramashop. Tickets to upcoming productions at these two venues will be on sale.

In support of another literary art – poetry and spoken word – Westley has invited the Erie County Poet Laureate Cee Williams of Poets’ Hall and Chuck Joy to sell chapbooks of their award-winning poetry.

Edinboro University will have a strong presence. Art students and alumni (Alexis Spina, Heather Nu-

ber, Moriah Schreffler, Brian Shuffstall, and others) will offer ceramics, fiber, metal, and wood products including earrings, crockery and cutting boards.

A client from the StARTup Incubator in Edinboro will represent the new Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, an affiliate of Edinboro University. Mary Moodey, founder of Mar-MooWorks will be selling children’s products along with Alexandra Carney-Knisely’s fiber work, Royce Hilderbrand’s ceramics.

A \$3 donation gains entry to the Marketplace, where the Nowhere Family Band will be performing their folksy, indie sound. Nowhere’s musicians include Optimistic Apocalypse and Andi Wondersound, who will play some of his handcrafted instruments.

The money earned by the individual vendors at the Marketplace is theirs to keep. All of the Marketplace entrance donations will be re-donated to winners of the 2015 Design Excellence Award at the annual Innovation Erie Design Competition held at the Erie Art Museum. The cost of publicity and the Masonic Temple venue are being covered by a generous sponsorship from the Edinboro University Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Westley hopes that Erie attracts and retains residents “not just because it is cheap to live here” but because creative-types “can make a living.” If you want to support living-wage jobs in Erie, buy some locally-made products. A good place to start is at the Made in Erie Marketplace.

Civitas members can be reached at their website www.civitaserie.com, via Facebook at CivitasErie, by emailing Lisa@civitaserie.com, or by scheduling a Friday morning meeting at the Civitas office in the Masonic Building, 32 W. Eighth St.

A Keen Perspective

An Edinboro Honors Student Marries Art and Math

By: Mary Birdsong

Today, people often think of art and math as having the same sort of relationship as oil and water. Not Megan Kuntz, an Edinboro University junior, double majoring in art education and painting and illustration. Earlier this month, she walked away with a national award in the Visual Art category at the National Collegiate Honors Conference in Denver for her project “Using Mathematical Perspective.”

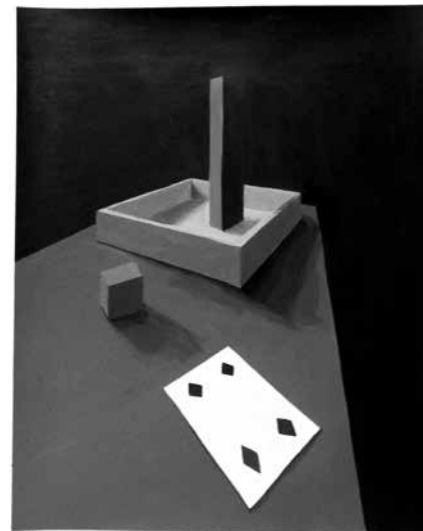
To complete this endeavor, she applied the method of one-point linear perspective to explore how a subject in a two-dimensional work of art changes based the viewing distance and angle. Kuntz started with a three-dimensional still life, took measurements, created scatter plots for two different viewing distances in Microsoft Excel, and then translated those two graphs into two-dimensional paintings designed to be viewed from different distances.

This undertaking came about after Kuntz read the book *Viewpoints: Mathematical Perspective and Fractal Geometry in Art*, which breaks down the method of linear perspective into mathematical and geometric terms and offers exercises for implementing it. Ever since, she wanted to apply it to her work.

She was advised in the project by her art professor, Terry McKelvey, and math professor, Dr. John Hoggard.

“Professor McKelvey helped me with understanding how size and the temperature of color affect our perception of distance and size. It helped me enhance the mathematical side,” Kuntz explains. “Dr. Hoggard helped me work through some of the more complex math and showed me how even small measurement errors can result in distortions.”

Kuntz says it was “really nice” to win the award, but her favorite part was doing the project and talking about it with the contest judges. “They were enthusiastic and really captivated in what I had done – it was great to share



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EUP Honors student Megan Kuntz won a national award in the Visual Art category at the National Collegiate Honors Conference in Denver.

my project with people who are interested in the same things I am,” adding with a laugh, “Not all of my friends appreciated me talking about my project.”

McKelvey, who has taught Kuntz in several of his classes, is a big fan.

“It does not surprise me one bit that she won this award. She is very motivated, absorbs concepts easily and produces quality work at the highest level,” he says. “I don’t think I have ever had a student as brilliant in so many capacities.”

Kuntz’s project has begat offspring, as well. The collaboration between McKelvey and Hoggard has led to the two departments working together to develop a specific math class for artists.

“We always say that disciplines are interrelated, but, in truth, we rarely work together,” says McKelvey. “Now we will, and we expect to have a class up and running in a couple of years.”

The award is a feather in Edinboro’s cap, says McKelvey. “We are very proud of Megan.”

Mary Birdsong can be contacted at mBirdson@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @Mary_Birdsong.

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Tom Wolf Ready to Take Over

What the governor-elect's victory means for Erie and the Keystone State

By: Jim Wertz

Tom Wolf was one of ten Democratic gubernatorial candidates elected in the Republican sweep of the 2014 mid-term election cycle.

Wolf's candidacy, juxtaposed against one of the most unpopular governorships in the country, led many pundits and prognosticators to give him the likely win. Then every major media outlet in the country confirmed the victory at 8:01 on election night. It was the first race called nationwide. With zero percent reporting.

And they were all right: Wolf defeated incumbent Gov. Tom Corbett 54.9 percent to 45.1, with nearly 350,000 more votes cast in favor of Wolf.

Corbett and Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell were the only Republican governors to lose this election cycle. Parnell was defeated by independent challenger Bill Walker.

The electoral mandate gives Governor-elect Wolf bargaining power heading into his first term in Harrisburg, and there's a good chance he's going to need it.

That's because the Republican led Pa. General Assembly picked up additional seats on Nov. 4, giving the party a 35-seat majority in the House of Representatives and a 10-seat advantage in the Senate.

Whether the political advantage will be polarizing or positive remains to be seen.

Remember that the Republican legislature under Corbett blocked privatization of state liquor stores, reminding Corbett that he had no free reign.

Wolf is likely to face a few legislative challenges just to remind him that the electoral mandate he received is no more potent than was Corbett's party affiliation.

Nevertheless, the tenor of legislative debate in Harrisburg is not likely to be as divisive as it's expected to be in Washington, D.C. But Gov.-elect Wolf laid out major legislative reforms during the campaign that are not likely to sit well with all members of the Assembly.

"Governor-elect Wolf doesn't have long political coat tails in this election," says Democratic party stalwart Bill Sesler. "He's got to decide how he's going to answer the question of balancing the budget for 2015-2016. That budget will need to be formulated and presented by March, at the latest, to the General Assembly, and they're facing a deficit that could easily be \$300 million."

Education funding in Pa. waned under the Corbett Administration and will be a major point of contention in upcoming budget talks. Amplified by the loss of federal stimulus dollars to public education, state contributions to public K-12 education dropped to historic lows and placed the Commonwealth 45th nationwide in public education



By 8:01 p.m. – just one minute after Pa.'s polls had closed – major media outlets had declared Tom Wolf triumphant over incumbent Tom Corbett.

take" says State Rep. Ryan Bizzarro (D-Erie) "The Democrats have to understand they're not going to get everything they want just because there's a Democratic governor and the Republicans surely understand that just because they have the numbers they're not going to get everything they want because there is a Democratic governor. There's got to be compromise."

Opponents of the extraction tax argue that such as tax would inhibit job growth associated with the oil and gas industry and therefore impact overall job growth in the state. Shale-related employ-

funding, according to factcheck.org, which analyzed education spending as Corbett and Wolf sparred on the campaign trail.

School districts most affected by reduced education spending were those in low-income communities with shrinking tax bases. Most school districts in Pa. made up the losses through tax increases on homeowners, who contributed the majority of revenue to the local districts, factcheck.org concluded.

In Erie, reduced state funding for public schools also meant the loss of reimbursement for \$8 million in charter school payments, which the Erie Public Schools are required by law to disburse. Those reimbursements went unfunded by the Corbett Administration.

"The restoration of reimbursement for charter schools is the top recommendation of the auditor general, Eugene DePasquale. We're hopeful that it gains some traction because it's part of the law, but it went unfunded," says Matthew Cummings, director of communications for Erie Public Schools.

"Instead of looking for things to cut, we'd be in the process of restoring programs based on that funding alone."

The \$8 million charter school reimbursement was nearly equal to federal stimulus funds received by the district in 2010 and 2011.

Stimulus money disappeared in 2012 and that loss was compounded by an increase in contributions to the state retirement fund, which was legislated in the General Assembly. Between 2009 and 2013, Erie Public Schools experienced a net loss of \$2,188,465 in state and federal funding, says Cummings.

Gov.-elect Wolf proposed a restoration of public education funding during the campaign, but that's dependent upon the passage of a 5 percent extraction tax on oil and gas industries operating in the Commonwealth. That wasn't a popular position with the outgoing Governor and it's unlikely to have much traction in the General Assembly.

"There's going to have to be a lot of give and

ment, however, currently accounts for only 0.40 percent of Pennsylvania employment, according to the Multi-State Shale Collaborative.

Compromise on this point may be the third rail of the next session in the General Assembly because it's also tied to economic development initiatives, which Gov.-elect Wolf made top priority during the campaign. Although Wolf said throughout the campaign that economic development should not be "about the next deal or reacting to the latest crisis," it's clear that the electorally conscious Republican-led legislature doesn't necessarily share his opinion.

Observers remain hopeful that Wolf's manufacturing background may well position him to lead Pa. into a sustainable economic recovery.

Bruce Katz, vice president of The Brookings Institution, told the crowd at the Jefferson Educational Society Global Summit VI in early November that Wolf's election was one of the bright spots of the 2014 midterm elections because of his business acumen.

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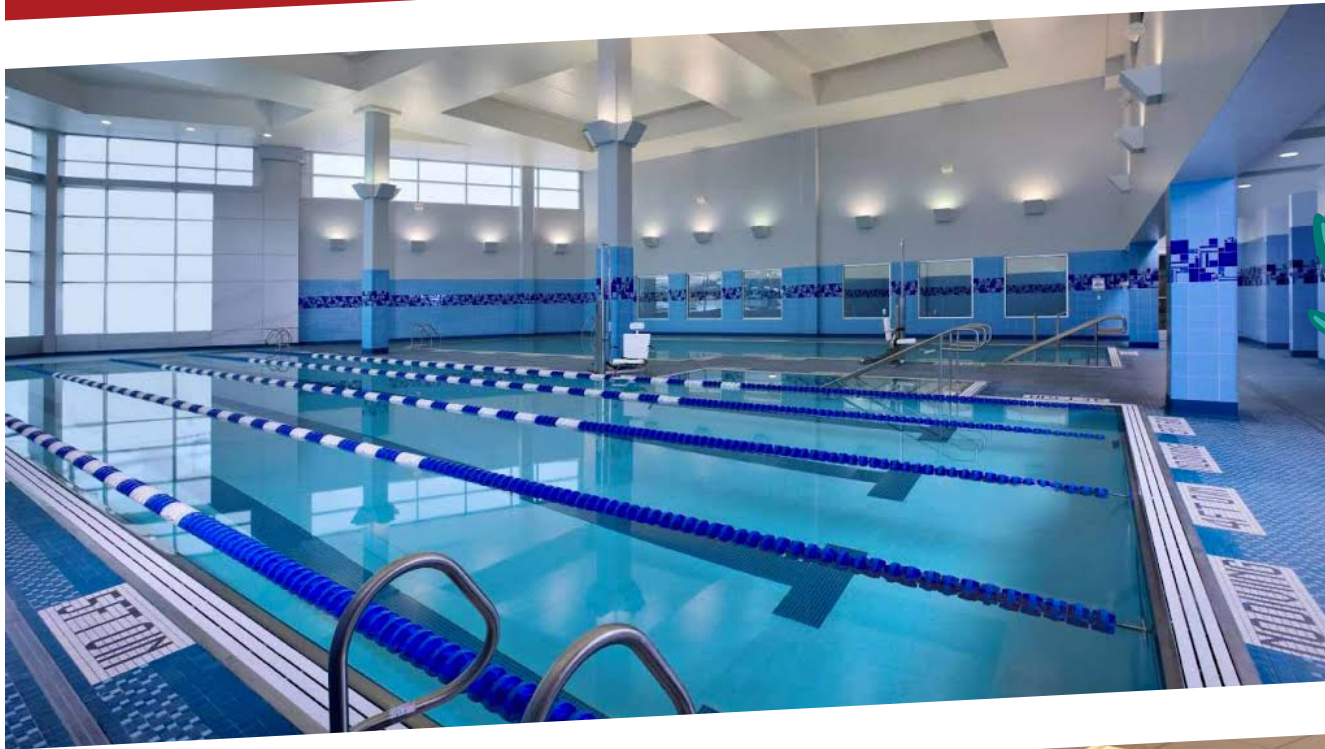
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PA NATIONAL GUARD

Tom Corbett made Pennsylvania history, becoming the first incumbent governor to lose his bid for a second-term.

He is “the kind of governor Pennsylvania needs,” said Katz, who’s also the founding director of The Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program.

Tom Wolf, a native of York, Pa., is a graduate of Dartmouth College, the London School of Economics, and he holds a Ph.D. in political science from MIT. As the sixth generation owner of his family business, he returned to the company and by all accounts saved the organization from financial ruin. Reporters and citizens across the Commonwealth laud Wolf’s everyman qualities – from his wholesale support of his wife and two daughters to a seemingly genuine interest in the lives of people with whom he interacts in business and on the campaign trail.

Wolf is the first entrepreneur to take the Governor’s office since Democrat Milton Shapp (1971-1979), who amassed a multi-million dollar fortune as a pioneer of the cable television industry.

Wolf, like Shapp, enters the governor’s office at a time of great political discord. And like Shapp, Wolf stands at the precipice of major reforms for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Courting new business will take overhauls of both tax and regulatory policy, both of which Wolf experienced first hand as the CEO of the Wolf Organization, Inc., America’s largest supplier of kitchen cabinets and specialty building products, which employs more than 250 people, according to its website.

Moreover, Wolf supports raising the minimum wage in Pa. to \$10.10 per hour over a two-year period and tying the minimum wage to the inflation index after that. It’s a major point of contention at the state level across the country, as different locales try to

reconcile high costs of living with a federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour.

As a punctuation to the wage debate, Wolf will follow an emergent trend among wealthy businessmen turned executive politicians. Like former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, Tom Wolf will also forgo his salary of \$187,256 by either donating it to charity or returning it to the state, according to a statement made to the Associated Press.

Regardless of the cards Wolf gets to play as the architect of Pennsylvania’s new deal, his tenure in office will likely be defined by his first two years in office.

If Republicans in Harrisburg follow the lead of their federal counterparts and stonewall the Wolf Administration as a prelude to 2016 and beyond, it’s going to be a long four years for the citizens of Pa. and its first-term governor.

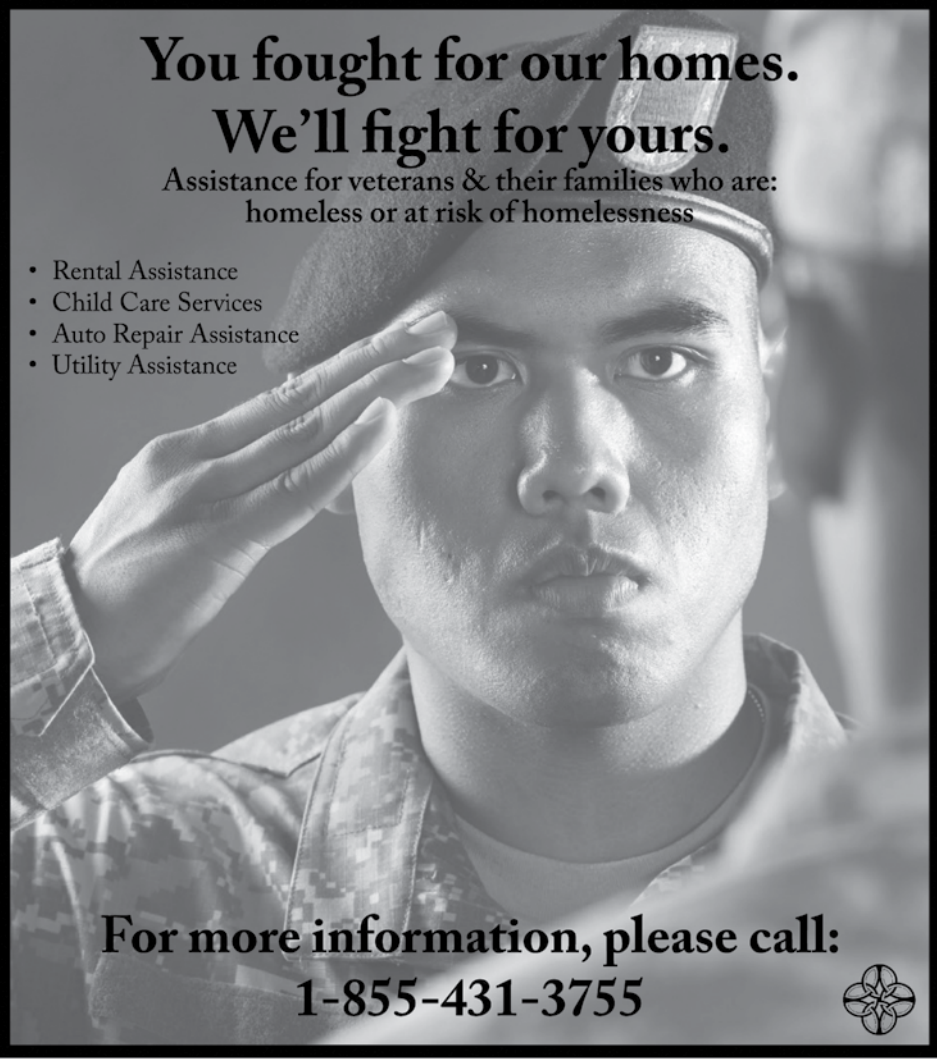
If, however, Wolf’s pro-business policies are insurance enough for Republican leadership in the General Assembly to allow Wolf and Democrats in the House and Senate to initiate the debate points that made Wolf popular in the primary and general elections, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will likely return to its otherwise standard practice of reelecting incumbent governors.

Jim Wertz can be contacted at jWertz@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Jim_Wertz.

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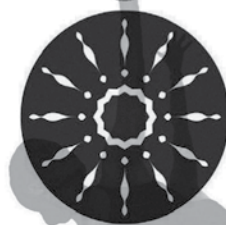
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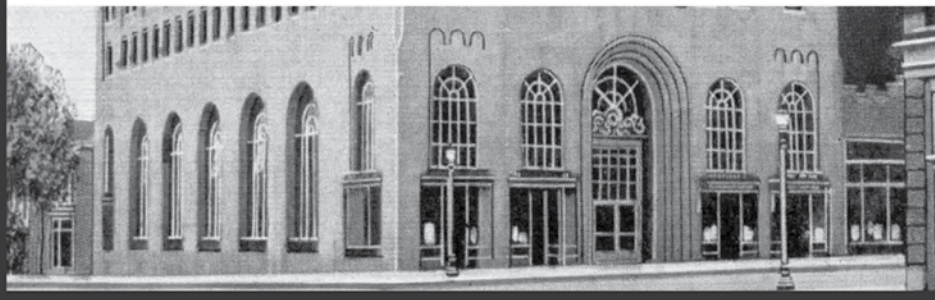


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CALENDAR

Erie Philharmonic's Come Home for the Holidays

The Erie Philharmonic's wildly popular "Come Home for the Holidays" pops concert on Saturday, Dec. 6 at 8 p.m. is sold out, but you still may be able to catch a little jingle at the 2 p.m. matinée. New this year, the kid-friendly, shorter concert has all the sugary delights that the Phil is offering in the evening, but packaged up just a little bit differently to keep the kiddos entertained. And someone very special might be making an appearance. You know, that guy dressed all in fur from his head to his foot.

Expect holiday tunes, from the traditional to the swinging, performed by the pops orchestra, the Erie Philharmonic Chorus and Young People's Chorus of Erie. An even sweeter treat is special guest, pops fiddler Jenny Oaks Baker who will be sitting in on a few pieces. Oaks, a first violinist in the National Symphony Orchestra for seven years, has a national reputation as a solo violinist, with her album *Wish Upon a Star: A Tribute to the Music of Walt Disney* earning a Grammy nomination in 2011 for Best Pop Instrumental Album. She will be joining the pops orchestra on classics like "We Wish you a Merry Christmas," "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," and the lesser-known "Ding Dong Merrily on High," among others, and, of course, the traditional carol sing-along that is the hallmark finale of the concert. Children's activities starting at 1 p.m. in the lobby, provided by the expERIENCE Children's Museum, makes the afternoon a slam-dunk for parents looking to occupy little one who may be getting a little antsy about a visit from the big guy. Or grown ups who still believe.

— Mary Birdsong
Warner Theatre 811 State St. // 455.1375 // EriePhil.org



WWW.ERIEPHIL.ORG

Travel through the one-way street forest, pass the twirly-swirly snowfalls, and walk into the Erie Playhouse for *Elf: The Musical*

It was 11 years ago when audiences first saw an unusually tall elf named Buddy travel through the seven levels of the candy cane forest, pass the sea of twirly-swirly gumdrops, and walk through the Lincoln Tunnel. Now the beloved Christmas story of *Elf: The Musical* will grace the Erie Playhouse stage for a month-long run this holiday season.

The magical mainstage musical follows Buddy, a human who was mistakenly taken to the North Pole as a baby, and his journey to find his dad in New York City, where the locals aren't quite as friendly as the sugar- and happiness-loving elves. Not one to be easily dismayed by relatives on the "naughty list" and department store Santas who smell of beef and cheese, Buddy persists on an adventure that will make for plenty of laughs and have you thinking of the true meaning of Christmas.

Led by a cast that includes Michael Hipwell as the lovable Buddy, *Elf: The Musical* grants you 16 chances to travel through the one-way street forest, pass the twirly-swirly snowfalls, and walk into the Erie Playhouse theater to embrace your inner elf. — Alex Bieler

7:30 p.m. Dec. 5, 6, 11-13, 17-20, and Jan. 2, and 2 p.m. Dec. 14, 21, 27, 28, and Jan. 3 and 4 // 13 W. 10th St. // erieplayhouse.org



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CALENDAR

Let Winter Drive You Mad at PACA with a Party

Winter weather can drive people a little crazy, especially when it arrives much earlier than expected. In fact, someone should tell Mother Nature that the first day of winter isn't officially until Dec. 21. But Erie's seasons don't really work that way, so we should learn to embrace the cold and find good reasons to congregate in warm indoor areas – like the Winter Madness Party at PACA.

"What's the Winter Madness Party" you ask? It's just a crazy-good lineup of local rock stars that will leave you feeling warm and fuzzy from 5 to 10 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7 at PACA. The event offers up a talented group of five bands, with Eric Brewer and Friends, Smackdab, Falling Hollywood, Daybreak Radio, and Pot-whole, all ready to have your ears ringing in the holidays. Adults can also treat their taste buds with Lavery Brewery's fine fare available with a donation and snacks provided by The Cookie Lady.

You can't stop winter, so you might as well embrace the crazy weather. The Winter Madness Party is an excellent excuse to brave the potential frost burn and head to PACA for a night keeping warm – and happy – with the music-loving community. – Alex Bieler

5 to 10 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7 // 1505 State St. // paca1505.com



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'Tis the Season with Babes in Toyland – a dance concert for the holiday season

The snow is already flying in Erie, Christmas carols are flooding the airwaves, and the most intrepid (or most foresighted) among us have already strung up holiday decorations and lights in store windows and on front porches.

The time is right, then, for a Christmas classic and sure sign of the season: *Babes in Toyland*.

Presented by the Mercyhurst Dancers and Liturgical Dance Ensemble next weekend, *'Tis the Season with Babes in Toyland* is an hour-long dance concert that features the ballet from which it takes its title, a heart-warming Christmas production that in turn has been an operetta, a musical, a ballet and movie – one which, in 1961, the *New York Times* said that with a finish "as colorful, busy and cheerful as a Grandma Moses winter scene, this 'Toyland' should be a Christmas joy to every moppet everywhere." Dated language from the *Grey Lady* maybe, but the subject is still charming as ever.

But this *Babes* is an original ballet, choreographed by Mercyhurst assistant professor of dance Melissa Bobick, who took elements from the operetta and score to create new work, completely different from the beloved movie. In Bobick's work, two little girls are allowed to open one present each on Christmas Eve, transporting them to the world of Toyland. Eventually, however, Bobick said, the girls realize that the toys, while delightful, are just toys.

"In the end, they decide that spending time with your family is what Christmas is all about," Bobick said.

The evenings at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center also include a spiritual work to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach titled "Passion Sculpture," and an original seasonal premiere called "Christmas Fun on Fa-La-La-Lane."

"It's a fun way to jump into the holidays," Bobick said. – Sara Toth

4:30 and 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5; 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6 // 501 E. 38th St. // 824.3000



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



FALL & WINTER HOURS

Mon- 10-5:30
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Thurs- 10-3
Fri- 10-5:30
Saturday 10-4
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Beginner Knitting Cowl Class—Saturday, Nov. 8, 15, and 22 | 10:30-12:00 \$35 plus materials

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Original Members of Shotgun Jubilee Reunite For One Night at the King's Rook

It's been nearly a year since Erie bid adieu to Shotgun Jubilee at their Farewell Show at the crooked i. The beloved State Street establishment may still be closed, but the bluegrass-loving jam band will be back in action – for at least one more night – when Shotgun Jubilee returns for a special reunion show Friday, Nov. 28 at the King's Rook Club.

“When [the band] got together for the farewell show, it was pretty final that we weren't going to do another show,” Shotgun Jubilee bassist Ryan Bartosek said. “Then we had so much fun working on it that almost immediately after it happened we talked about doing it again.”

What's more, the reunion show will feature all of Shotgun Jubilee's original members, assembling Ryan Bartosek, Tonya Camasi, Dominick DeCecco, Steve Powell, and Paul Schillinger back together once more. The Black Friday show will also feature an opening set by local artist Tyler Smilo, an extra bonus to a free show that will bring back some old chums to the same stage.

“It's definitely like a family reunion,” Bartosek said. “We're all like brothers and sisters and we're just having a good time with it.”

According to Bartosek, no plans are being made for another Shotgun Jubilee show soon, but the idea isn't out of the question. Either way, the Reunion Show is an opportunity to welcome back one of Erie's favorite jam bands in recent years for one more night.

– Alex Bieler
9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 28 // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/kingsrookclub



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gallery Night puts the ART in Party

What's your calendar look like on Friday, Dec. 5? How about meeting an artist or two and feasting your eyes on the best of local, regional, and national art?

Gallery Night – a staple of the Erie art scene for more than a decade – has all that, and offers a chance to do some gift shopping, too. Plus, if you visit at least five of the participating venues, you get a chance to win a gift certificate to any of the galleries.

A bounty of styles and materials should make finding something of pleasure easy, whether it's painting, sculpture, jewelry, or photography that trips your trigger.

Glass Growers has paintings by Joyce Perowicz and ceramic sculpture by Ron Mazanowski; the works of Frank Kelly, Jr. and Sebastian are at D'Hopkins Denniston; the venerable Kada Gallery is hosting Finger Lakes artist, GC Myers, and Allen Stoneware is presenting a student show.

California ceramic artist Greg Ledd Carlson has his ceramic porcelain shadow boxes and local painter Diane Wenzel Pierce has oils on display at Ralph Miller, and the newly designed Schuster Gallery at Gannon University is presenting the Photographic Arts Society of Northwestern PA.

Besides the usual refreshments and meet-and-greet opportunities that venues are providing, Urraro Gallery is offering live music by Matty B., along with the annual holiday show by the artists of the Northwest PA Artists' Association.

The granddaddy of the event is, of course, The Erie Art Museum, which is showcasing the design work of Erie native Wilbur Henry Adams and works by local artist Jamie Borowitz. It also promises a ClaySpace demonstration and sale and a “quirky winter-themed tour of the galleries” at 7:15 p.m.

Many of these venues offer additional artisan-crafted wares to please your eye and make local shopping easy and fun. – Mary Birdsong

7 to 10 p.m. // Free Admission // Various locations // More at erieartmuseum.org/events/gallerynight



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MUSIC

Matty B and the Dirty Pickles 10 Year Anniversary w/ Potwhole and Broke Boland, Plus After Party w/ The Remnants

Nov. 26 – 9 p.m.
 King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

East Ave.
 Nov. 26 – 9 p.m.
 The Brewerie, 123 W. 14th St. brewerie.com.

GNOSIS
 Nov. 26 – 9 p.m.
 The Metropolitan Dance Club, 144 W. 13th St. metroerie.com.

Jake & Rick
 Nov. 26 – 6 to 9 p.m.
 Sprague Farm & Brew Works, 22113 U.S. 6, Venango. sleepingchainsaw.com.

Ron Yarosz and the Vehicle
 Nov. 26 – 9 p.m.
 Scotty's Cigar and Martini Lounge, 301 German St. 459.3800.

Taylor Maid
 Nov. 26 – 7 p.m.
 Docksider Tavern, 1015 State St. 459.0099.

Wild Turkey Wednesday w/ Whiplash
 Nov. 26 – 9 p.m.
 Sherlock's, 508 State

St. 453.7760.
Thanksgiving Night with TJ the DJ
 Nov. 27 – 9 p.m.
 Sherlock's, 508 State St. 453.7760.

New Wave Nation
 Nov. 27 – 9 p.m.
 Sherlock's, 508 State St. 453.7760.

The Bleeder Project w/ Chris Taylor
 Nov. 28 – 8 p.m.
 The Beer Mug, 1108 Liberty St. 454.4753.

Jesse Weston
 Nov. 28 – 9 p.m.
 The Brewerie, 123 W. 14th St. brewerie.com.

JD Jazz and Blues
 Nov. 28 – 6 to 9 p.m.
 Anchor In, 3122 West Lake Road. 833.1212.

Junk Shop Failure w/ This American Song
 Nov. 28 – 9 p.m.
 Erie Ale House, 1033 State St. facebook.com/eriealehouse.

Man Up Day featuring The Highlife
 Nov. 28 – 6 to 9 p.m.
 Sprague Farm & Brew Works, 22113 U.S. 6, Venango. sleepingchainsaw.com.

Next of Kin
 Nov. 28 – 7 p.m.

McCoy's Barrelhouse and Grill, 1013 State St. mccoysbarrelhouse.com.

Nick I am a Don
 Nov. 28 – 9 p.m.
 The Metropolitan Dance Club, 144 W. 13th St. metroerie.com.

Ralph Chamberlain Jr.
 Nov. 28 – 9:30 p.m.
 Doc Holliday's, 7425 Schultz Road. docholidays.net

Rankin & Schell
 Nov. 28 – 6 to 9 p.m.
 The Ugly Tuna Tavern, 1010 Peninsula Drive. uglytunatavern.com.

Shotgun Jubilee Reunion Show w/ Tyler Smilo
 Nov. 28 – 9 p.m.
 King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Tennessee Backporch
 Nov. 28 – 9 p.m.
 Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Tricky Dick and The Cover Ups
 Nov. 28 – 9 p.m.

Oasis Pub, 3122 West Lake Road. oasispub.net.

Winter Warriors Tour featuring Battlecross, Wretched, War of Ages, Precinct Aflame and Saevitia
 Nov. 28 – 7 p.m.

A Visit From St. Bacchus

‘T’was the night before Thanksgiving and all through the town, every creature was stirring (their drinks) and looking to get down.

We all were discussing, our late evening plans, as many bars, clubs, and dance floors, would be filled with great bands.

Matty B's 10-year reunion was where we all finally were led, while visions of Dirty Pickles, danced in our heads.

We knew Potwhole and Broke Boland, were musical guests at the pub, as we drove up State Street, to the newly revived King's Rook Club.

After enjoying the show, we ran to our car, drove down Peach Street, and walked in the next bar.

As we took in the scene, something grand did appear, the release of NEIMAN's first solo album – it was finally here!

Amongst the talent on stage, were other great guests – Domy Doo, GNOSIS, and Byron Eanes – were some of the best.

We then learned Ron Yarosz was playing, but we didn't know where – and whether we were going to stay or leave and head there.

We knew in a moment that we must stay the course, so we put on our gear and took off with great force.

As we walked out the door, I heard Wertz yell in delight: “Now, Graham! now, Bieler! now, Welsh, now Speggen!

On, Triana! On, Birdsong! on, Toy and Stevens!

We are heading to Scotty's for scotch and cigars and we can hear Ron Yarosz at that great corner bar!”

When we arrived at the lounge, Yarosz spoke not a word; the bluesman took to the microphone and went straight to his work.

After the show, before we parted our ways, we went through the bill and determined our pays.

As we got in our car, and drove out of sight, we heard Ron Yarosz exclaim, “Happy Thanksgiving to all, and to all a good-night!” – Rebecca Styn, with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore

Matty B and the Dirty Pickles Ten Year Reunion Show // King's Rook Club 1921 Peach St. // 8 p.m.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

More than a Day in the Park: Dramashop presents Pulitzer- and Tony-winning Play

When they left their southside Chicago home at the end of *Raisin in the Sun*, what became of the Youngers?

The Youngers are on the periphery of *Clybourne Park*, never a direct part of its action, but in its way, the play explores the answer to that question, sweeping into its plot examinations of race, housing and discrimination. And now, Bruce Norris' Pulitzer- and Tony-winning play comes to Erie, in the way of a staged reading from Dramashop December 9 and 16.

Norris wrote *Clybourne* in response to Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin*, taking the audience across decades and across town into the lives of families living in the white neighborhood of Clybourne Park, where the Youngers presumably move to in the late 1950s. Flash forward 40 years, and the neighborhood is predominantly black, and a white couple looking to move into the area highlights issues of gentrification and race. The connections between the two plays, though each stand on their own, "raise the stakes" of the action in *Clybourne*, said director Jessica Annunziata.

It's a production Annunziata hopes will resonate with Erie audiences. "I hope people will see themselves in all of the characters," she said. "That can be challenging when we're looking at characters whose views we don't agree with, which may even be offensive to us, but it is necessary because it helps us to be critical of ourselves and our society. With this play in particular, I hope audiences and the cast will have considered and considerate conversations about race, gentrification, and how we all aspire to a better life."

To say "we don't like to talk about race in this country" is a cliché, Annunziata said, but it's true – "and that's exactly why we need to talk."

Ultimately, Annunziata said, she's looking forward to "having and hopefully inspiring fearless conversation about difficult things." – Sara Toth

8 p.m. // Renaissance Theatre 1001 State St. // Dramashop.org



Winter Warriors Tour Pays Tribute to Veterans

Veterans Day is over, but that isn't stopping the Winter Warriors tour from showing their appreciation for those who served.

Detroit's thrash/heavy metal group Battlecross is collaborating with the Veteran Ticket Foundation, an organization that provides free admission to concerts and other events to members of the military, on their headlining tour across the U.S. after doing major tours in South America and Europe.

"We are a band that stands for ideals such as loyalty, honor, sacrifice, and perseverance through our lyrics and how we conduct ourselves," says guitarist Hiran Deraniyagala. "[We] hope the tour will be a fitting tribute to every service member who attends. We look forward to raging with our fans who serve or have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and thank them again for their service."

Battlecross' latest album *War of Will* released on MetalBlade Records debuted at No. 134 on the Billboard Top 200 chart, and peaked at No. 3 on the iTunes Metal charts.

Supporting acts on the tour are Wretched from Charlotte, N.C., and Erie's own Christian metalcore band, War of Ages. War of Ages is one of Erie's most successful underground bands, and one of the only bands still active from what some would consider the glory days of Erie's underground music scene. Despite the members having relocated to other cities, WoA returns to their hometown on almost every tour, and have filmed music videos for their songs "All Consuming Fire" and "Chaos Theory" at Forward Hall and the old Basement Transmissions, respectively.

Opening the show are locals Saevitia and Precinct Aflame, both of which have presale tickets available for the event.

It's reassuring to see that in a business usually motivated by profit, one band is willing to sacrifice some of that to give back to those who have sacrificed much more, and hopefully it will encourage other bands to do the same. – Tommy Shannon

7 p.m., Nov. 28 // Basement Transmissions 145 W. 11TH ST. // Presale Tickets: \$12; day of show: \$15 // facebook.com/basementtransmissions



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. basementtransmissions.com.

Chrome Moses w/ Coronado and Bill Jasper
Nov. 29 – 9 p.m.
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Fred Ardillo w/ Frank Singer
Nov. 29 – 6 to 9 p.m.
Anchor In, 3122 West Lake Road. 833.1212.

French Kiss
Nov. 29 – 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. 453.7760.

Jake's Blues
Nov. 29 – 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Perdition, Gelatin Skeleton, Starve, and Resinaught
Nov. 29 – 8 p.m.
Bobby's Place, 1202 W. 18th St. 455.9840.

Small Town Revolution
Nov. 29 – 9:30 p.m.
Doc Holliday's, 7425 Schultz Road. dochollidays.net

Tiger Maple String Band

Nov. 29 – 6 to 9 p.m.
Sprague Farm & Brew Works, 22113 U.S. 6, Venango. sleepingchainsaw.com.

November Reign III Live Music Showcase
Nov. 30 – 5:30 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. pacal505.com.

2Blue
Dec. 4 – 6 to 9 p.m.
Victor's at the Bel-Aire Clarion, 2800 W. 8th St. belaireclarion.com.

Justin Moyar
Dec. 4 – 7 p.m.
The Villa, 236 S. Main St., Cambridge Springs. 398.4409

Basket Eddy, Tyler Smilo, and Dan Baney
Dec. 5 – 9 p.m.
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Frank Singer Duo w/ Tony Steffanelli
Dec. 5 – 6 to 9 p.m.
Anchor In, 3122 West Lake Road. 833.1212.

The Groove
Dec. 5 – 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Mid-Life Crisis
Dec. 5 – 7 p.m.
McCoy's Barrelhouse and Grill, 1013 State St. mccoysbarrelhouse.com.

Amy Shallenberger w/ Sean Seth
Dec. 6 – 6 to 9 p.m.
Anchor In, 3122 West Lake Road. 833.1212.

Come Home for the Holidays
Dec. 6 – 8 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. eriephil.org.

Gathering at Chaffee's Christmas Party featuring Spiritual Rez
Dec. 6 – 9 p.m.
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Mala Sangre, C-face, and Bitchwax
Dec. 6 – 10 p.m.
Bobby's Place, 1202 W. 18th St. 455.9840.

Winter Madness Party
Dec. 7 – 5 to 10 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. pacal505.com.

DANCE

'Tis the Season with Babes in Toyland

Dec 5, 6 – 4:30 & 7:30 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Saturday
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. 824.3000.

How The Grinch Stole Christmas
Dec 6, 7
Erie Dance Conservatory, 8335 Edinboro Road. 476.7123.

Lake Erie Ballet Open House
Dec 8 – All day
Lake Erie Ballet, 701 Holland St. 871.4356.

FOOD & DRINK

Black Friday Special
Nov 28 – all day
Courtyard Wineries, 10021 W. Main Road, North East. 725.0236.

Cooking with Garlic
Dec. 3 – 7 p.m.
Frankie and May Fresh Grocery, 1101 Peninsula Drive. frankieandmay.com.

Barjo Bons Club Ugly Sweater Party
Dec 4 – 5:30 p.m.
Beechwood Golf Club, 6401 Gorski Road, Fairview. 725.0236.

8th Annual Santa

Claus Pub Crawl
Dec. 5 – 6 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. 881.4223.

Erie Art Museum Gallery Night
Dec 5 – 7 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. 459.5477.

FILM

Great White Shark
Ongoing – Noon, 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. trecpi.org.

Mysteries of the Unseen World
Ongoing – 2, 5 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. trecpi.org.

Wonders of the Arctic
Ongoing – 11 a.m., 1, 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. trecpi.org.

Warren Miller's 'No Turning Back!'
Nov. 28, 29 – 7 p.m. & Nov. 30 – 1 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. trecpi.org.

Family Night at the Movies
Dec 4 – 5:30 p.m.
Corry Chamber of Commerce, 221 N. Center St. 665.9925.

Edinboro Film Series Presents 'Jurassic Park'
Dec 4 – 8:30 p.m.
Pogue Student Center, Edinboro University, 405 Scotland Road. 732.1048.

VISUAL ARTS

GC Myers Alchemy Exhibit
Ongoing – All day
Kada Gallery, 2632 W. Eighth St. 835.5232.

Liminal Spaces: Paintings by Kenneth Hall
Ongoing – All day
Bruce Gallery, Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St., Edinboro. 732.2513.

Rebecca Signoriello: Paintings of People
Ongoing – All day
Bruce Gallery, Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St., Edinboro. 732.2513.

Architecture of Erie: A Photographic Survey
Ongoing – All day
Cummings Art Gallery, Mercyhurst University, 501

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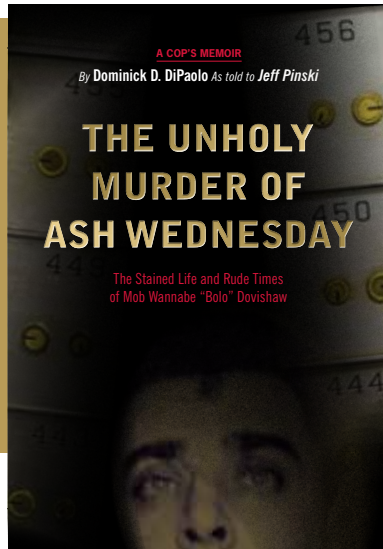
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CALENDAR

E. 38th St. 824.3000.

Combat Paper: Words Made Flesh
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Doane Hall of Art, Allegheny College, 520 N. Main St., Meadville 332.4365.

The Anytime Arcade - Joe Popp and Karen Dodson
Ongoing - All day

Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. Fifth St. 453.3758.

NPAA Schuster Gallery Exhibition
Ongoing - All day

Schuster Gallery, Gannon University, 700 Peach St. facebook.com/NPAAonline.

Erie Art Museum Focus: Fiber Exhibit
Ongoing - All day

Erie Art Museum, Bacon Gallery, 20 E. Fifth St. 459.5477.

Erie Art Museum Karen Erst Exhibit
Ongoing - All day

Erie Art Museum, Holstein Gallery, 20 E. Fifth St. 459.5477.

Erie Art Museum Wilbur Adams Exhibit
Ongoing - All day

Erie Art Museum, Main Gallery, 20 E. Fifth St. 459.5477.

Erie Art Museum Gallery Night
Dec 5 - 7 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. 459.5477.

THEATER

All An Act presents 'The Odd Couple'
Nov 29, 30 - 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m Sunday

All An Act Theatre, 652 W 17th St. 450.8553.

Laugh/Riot presents 'Alice in Wonderland'
Dec 4 through 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Edinboro University, 219 Meadville Road. laughrioterie.com.

The Tempest
Dec 4 through 6 - 8 p.m. & Dec 6 through 7 - 2 p.m.

Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E 38th St. 824.2000.

Striking I2
Dec. 4 through 6 - 8 p.m.

Schuster Theatre, 620 Sassafras St. 871.7494.

Erie Playhouse presents 'Elf'
Dec 5 through 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Erie Playhouse, 13 W 10th

St. erieplayhouse.org

Erie Broadway Series presents 'Sister Act'
Dec 8 - 8 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. 452.4857.

Dramashop presents Staged Reading Series 'Clybourne Park'
Dec 9 - 8 p.m.

Renaissance Centre, 2nd Floor, 1001 State St. info@dramashop.org

COMMUNITY

Friday Night Writes
Ongoing - 8:30 to 11 p.m.

Poet's Hall, 1136 E. Lake Road. 572.6077.

30th Annual Saint Vincent Festival of Trees
Nov. 26 through 30 - Noon

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier. ahn.org/FestivalOfTrees.

Erie Otters vs. Mississauga SteelHeads
Nov. 27 - 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. ottershockey.com.

Light Up Night
Nov. 28 - 6 p.m.

Gibson Park, Route 20, North East. nechamber.org.

MLK-ACE Turkey Day Challenge
Nov. 20, 30 - 8 a.m.

Erie City Schools. ebiddle@visiterie.com.

Christmas at the Station
Nov. 29, 30 & Dec. 6, 7 - Noon to 4 p.m.

Lake Shore Railway Museum, 31 Wall St., North East. lakeshorerailway.com.

Erie Otters vs. Belleville Bulls
Nov. 29 - 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena - 809 French St. ottershockey.com.

Community Singing Circle with Todd Crowley
Dec 2 - 7 p.m.

Corry Chamber of Commerce, 221 N. Center St. 665.9925. eriechildrensmuseum.org.

Holiday Open House & Book Signing with David Frew
Dec. 3 - 5 to 7:30 p.m.

Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E. Front St. flagshipniagara.org.

Erie Otters vs. Owen Sound Attack
Dec. 3 - 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809

French St. ottershockey.com.

A Very Merry Corry Christmas
Dec 5 - 5 p.m.

Corry Chamber of Commerce, 221 N. Center St. 665.9925.

Downtown D'Lights
Dec 5 - 5 p.m.

Perry Square Park. eriedowntown.com.

Tennessee Backporch Concert
Dec. 5 - 5 p.m.

Asbury United Methodist Church, 4703 W. Ridge Road. 456.8073.

Port Farms Country Christmas with Santa
Dec 5 through 7 - 6:30 p.m. Friday, 5 p.m. Saturday & Sunday

Port Farms, 2055 Stone Quarry Road, Waterford. portfarms.com

Erie Bayhawks vs. Sioux Falls Skyforce
Dec. 5 - 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. 790.5600.

TREC the Halls!
Dec. 6 - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. trecepi.org.

25th Annual Schoolhouse Craft Festival
Dec. 6 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

McDowell High School, 3320 Caughy Road. 835.5356.

Sugar Plum Weekend
Dec. 6 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Dec. 7 - Noon to 5 p.m.

Downtown North East. nechamber.org.

Safer Sex Games
Dec 6 - 2 p.m.

Penn State Behrend, Erie Hall, 4701 Behrend College Drive. 452.0224 x 310.

Erie Bayhawks vs. Grand Rapids Drive
Dec. 6 - 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. 790.5600.

Corry Ministerial Association Annual Christmas Music Festival
Dec 7 - 3 p.m.

First United Methodist Church, 650 Worth St., Corry. corryfirst.org

Winter Madness Party
Dec 7 - 5 p.m.

PACA 2nd Floor, 1505 State St. 434.0687.

Living With Disabilities
Dec 8 - 2 p.m.

Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St. 451.7081.



Mad Mex Opens Lucky No. 13 Franchise in Erie

Executive Chef Bill Fuller emphasizes fresh ingredients, craft beer, and distinct menu items with his Cal-Mex cuisine

By: The Reader Eater

If there's one thing *Reader Eater* editors can agree on, it's our love of Mexican cuisine. If there's something else, it's our appreciation of a solid vegetarian-friendly restaurant.

So when we noticed the slow Pittsburgh invasion of Erie by way of sandwiches with fries on them and burritos with names like "Angry Hippie," we knew we had to head up the Millcreek Mall to check out what was happening. That's how we came to get a taste of the fresh, funky style of the new Mad Mex.

Executive Chef Bill Fuller's brought his distinct Cal-Mex (yes, different than the Tex-Mex most Americans just call "Mexican"

food) brand of cuisine to Erie from its robust roots in Pittsburgh with branches and leaves stretching as far as Philly and Columbus, Ohio – and just because it's a restaurant located in a mall doesn't mean it's bland food-court food. In fact, it's far from it.

Take notable appetizer Pennsylvucky Fried Tofu. Funky in nature – after all, it's bite-size hunks of mashed soy beans tossed in soy sauce, peanuts, sesame seeds, and cilantro served with fresh bean sprouts – PFT jumps off of the menu, smacks you in the taste buds, and warns you that this is not something commonplace that you're bound to see many other places.

Then there's the Angry Hippie Burrito – a

gnarly good mash-up of thick cut, grilled Portobello and piquant spinach that ain't your grandmama's canned stuff and that'll remind you that leafy greens really can be fun, rounded out with pico de gallo, black beans, and melty Monterey Jack cheese. It's angry in all the right places and fun and friendly just like your favorite hippie friend who's always happy to see you.

Noticing a vegetarian-friendly theme, you say? There's that Cal in the mix, a West Coast approach to food that keeps it fresh and fun without weighing it down and sacrificing flavor.

Want to take it to the extreme? Many dishes come with the option to go full-frontal vegan by swapping things like the cheese for Diaya shreds satiate even the most health-conscious consumers out there.

But fear not, Carnivores – there's the other extreme, and eating meat doesn't have to come with a side of guilt.

If things like pork braised in beer, garlic,

and ancho chili all snug in a wheat tortilla with roasted green chilis are more your thing, look no further than the Carnitas Quesadilla – a meatlover's dream served up with a side of slaw, pico, and Jack cheese.

But that's just an iota of the menu. There's an entire array of enchiladas and tacos. And those aforementioned burrito and quesadilla – they both have a lot of friends taking up good real estate beside them on the menu.

The common thread? That Mex – big, bold flavors dished out on grande plates, all to be washed down by shots of tequila, pints of craft beer, or glasses of fresh margaritas – which tells you that this is a place to unwind, gather friends, laugh, sweat, and be merry, because life's too short to not be funky fresh in a Cal-Mex kinda way and enjoy the food that embodies that philosophy.

The Reader Eater can be reached at ReaderEater@ErieReader.com



Like many options on the menu, the "Angry Hippie Burrito" (top right) can be made vegan, showcasing the Pittsburgh based restaurant's health-conscious ethos.

PHOTOS BY: JIM WERTZ



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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.

Rick has made a career caring for the people, both in politics and in his legal practice. When you have an important legal problem, put Rick's experience to work for you.

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MUSIC REVIEWS

TV on the Radio

Seeds
Harvest

★★★★



When TV on the Radio singer Tunde Adebimpe sings "I should really give it up sometime" less than a minute into latest album *Seeds*, it almost sounds as if he recorded potential thoughts about the band's future. It wouldn't be too surprising for the alternative rock kings, as longtime bassist Gerard Smith lost his battle with lung cancer and the band split with label Interscope following the release of 2011's *Nine Types of Light*. But luckily for us – at least for the moment – TV on the Radio still chugs on for *Seeds*, an album full of some of the band's prettiest pieces yet. While it lacks the ambitious compositions that made past works like *Return to Cookie Mountain* and *Dear Science* essential listens, the latest album certainly doesn't skimp on quality, with the nervous-energy of "Happy Idiot" and the steady buzz of "Careful You" serving as highlights. TV on the Radio may sound more reserved these days, but we're lucky to still have them around. – Alex Bieler

Damien Rice

My Favourite Faded Fantasy
Warner Bros.

★★★★



After eight years of near silence, Irish singer-songwriter Damien Rice comes out with a soul-stirring bang on *My Favourite Faded Fantasy*. The delay between his second and third solo albums certainly didn't diminish Rice's ability to put his inner turmoil on display, as listeners get a taste with the haunting melodies and sweeping arrangements on the title track and album opener. Rice's soft vocals float above the gentle plucks of guitar and delicate piano before the highlight track shifts into a powerhouse track of passion, climaxing with Rice shouting "I've never loved" amid shrieking strings. Unfortunately, the rest of the album struggles to compete with its stellar introduction. "It Takes a Lot to Know a Man" and "The Greatest Bastard" are solid songs, but lose some luster trying to compete, although "Colour Me In" is a gentle delight. Overall, *My Favourite Faded Fantasy* is a welcomed, if unbalanced, return for the Irish balladeer. – Alex Bieler

The Twilight Sad

Nobody Wants to Be Here and Nobody Wants to Leave
Fat Cat

★★★★



If you're looking for an album full of heartwarming, happy tunes, then The Twilight Sad's *Nobody Wants to Be Here and Nobody Wants to Leave* won't be up your alley. The appropriately-named Scottish trio, however, has quite an aptitude for creating melancholy sonic tableaux, much like if the guys behind Interpol inherited the natural glumness of Glasgow's Frightened Rabbits. *Nobody Wants to Be Here* showcases The Twilight Sad's penchant for fuzzy synths and echoing guitars, making for a haunting 10 tracks. The album tends to hit a lull at times with the insistence on midtempo misery, but there are some tracks that add a bit of energy to the melancholy, such as singer James Graham's impassioned lines on "Drown So I Can Watch," or his wails of "I've been put to bed" on "Leave the House." Anguish usually isn't pleasant, but it makes for some solid inspiration on *Nobody Wants to Be Here*. – Alex Bieler

Joe Bonamassa

Different Shades Of Blue
J&R Adventures

★★★★★



This is straight-up rock-inflicted blues at it's finest. Clean, smokin' hot guitar licks packaged in tight, melodic grooves. Memorable, catchy tunes sung with soulful delivery. Intense, uplifting lyrics matching perfectly with toe-tapping rhythms. Joe Bonamassa's latest album should become a staple on every rock-formatted radio station in the nation. After being discovered at a young age by Eric Clapton, Bonamassa has gathered for himself a loyal following of millions of rabid blues-loving fans. His name is synonymous with the term "guitar god" and is mentioned freely in the same breath as his heroes, Clapton, Jimmy Page, Duane Allman and Stevie Ray Vaughan. The brass-heavy "Trouble Town" could be off a Little Feat record and he channels Robert Cray on "Never Give All Your Heart." His guitar work is killer as always on this record, but it is the diverse songwriting that sets this one apart. – Bryan Toy

Q&A with Pains of Being Pure At Heart's Kip Berman

Talking about the chance to tour with a band he's admired, the Denver Nuggets, and being a huge music fan after seven years in the business

By: Alex Bieler

Many people dream of being a successful musician, but Kip Berman is one of the few who went from adoring fan to an on-stage star. Berman began his journey to musical fame back in 2007 with the formation of his band The Pains of Being Pure at Heart. What started off as a group with a few song uploads on MySpace turned into a critically-acclaimed shoegazey pop band that released its third album *Days of Abandon* earlier in 2014, leading Berman and his fellow musicians to tour around the world, including a Sat. Nov. 15 show with veteran rockers The New Pornographers at the House of Blues in Cleveland. I chatted with Berman over the phone about the chance to tour with a band he's admired for years, the Denver Nuggets' Kenneth



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"I just feel incredibly lucky and fortunate that this has gotten to be my life. I feel that the most important thing is heart and songwriting, and if I do my best and work hard, we can make something special in this world."

Faried, and how he's still a huge music fan after seven years in the business.

Alex Bieler: You're touring with The New Pornographers. I remember reading that you were a big fan of Destroyer, so you must be pretty excited.

Kip Berman: Oh yeah. I'm a fan of The New Pornographers as well. I remember when *Mass Romantic* came out, I was living in this house in Portland [Ore.] with my cousin and the only record that all of the people in the house could agree on was *Mass Romantic*, so we listened to that a lot. They've gone on to make wonderful records as a group, and obviously the solo work of Neko Case, and A.C. Newman, and Dan Bejar, all of those people have made such incredible records, so it's an honor to get to tour with them and see how they go about their lives and music.

AB: In addition to being a musician, you seem to genuinely be a massive fan of music as well. What's it like being in the business as well as being a fanboy?

KB: It's true - although I wonder what bands are not fans of music. I don't understand how you can participate in something and not have a lifelong interest in it. It's such a weird concept to not have artists you admire and aspire to emulate, so I'm a

huge fan of music and I always feel like an outsider looking in. We'll be playing a large festival or something, and I'll feel like I've been accidentally been given this backstage pass to this show I would have wanted to go to anyway, and then I'm up there on the stage playing too. I don't know if I'll always have that outsider's perspective to music, but I think I might because I've never really thought of ourselves as a real band, but at the same time, we've been doing this for seven years. I just feel incredibly lucky and fortunate that this has gotten to be my life. I don't think there's any reason that we've had the success that we do except that so much of it is luck and working really hard.

AB: So the whole sense of wonder hasn't worn off just yet?

KB: Oh my god, not one bit! Just the fact that I get to say hi to Neko Case and Daniel Bejar for the next seven weeks, get to play festivals with Blink-182 in England, and get to travel to incredible places around the world, I never... I mean, I went on a fishing trip with my grandpa to Canada once when I was a kid, but [other than that] I had never really left the United States until Pains. It never wears off, nor should it. It must be such a sad thing to have all of these wonderful experiences and not be able to appreciate it.

AB: Pains of Being Pure at Heart's third al-

bum *Days of Abandon* came out earlier this year. How have the new songs been translating to the stage?

KB: It's been really exciting to play these songs live. Whatever sonic differences our albums have from one to the next, they disappear when we play them live. We probably play the first record and it sounds better than what it did on the recording, maybe the new record sounds more raw, but they all meld into a consistent sound live in a way that you may not think they would just listening to the records because they're each distinct in their own ways. I like that; I like the ability to have different identities to songs live than on the record. I don't think people really want to go see a band just push play on a CD player and replicate it 100 percent. There should be something different in the energy or the arrangement of live music than on the recording because it's a different experience.

AB: When you see fans at shows, are there any people that remind you of yourself before you started Pains?

KB: I have a hard time even thinking we have fans; I think of them as people like myself who like our music. I don't see a huge divide between who I am and the people that come to our show at all. I see people that love the kind of sounds we make and I see people that I'd hang out with in real life,

Pains of Being Pure At Heart are on tour with and opening for The New Pornographers, which included a stop in Cleveland.

like "Hey, you're cool, want to grab a drink after the show or get tacos?"

AB: I was going through the Pains Twitter account before this interview, and I saw that you gave Kenneth Faried of the Denver Nuggets a shout out. Are you a big NBA fan?

KB: Oh yeah, Kenneth Faried is awesome. We were playing in Denver. The U.S. International squad this year was a little bereft of the traditional stars that you would expect. LeBron [James] wasn't there, [Kevin] Durant, Kevin Love were out for legitimate reasons. The basketball season is probably too long, and with the exhaustion that these guys face, you can't expect them to show up for every national tournament. But I was really psyched that Kenneth Faried totally picked up the slack and that he was totally psyched to be there. You don't really think of him as a traditional Dream Team amazing player because he doesn't score a ton of points, but he has a really good attitude and energy and commitment. And I like that he has spoken out in favor of same-sex marriage, which is a difficult issue for professional athletes to take a public stance on. I think it was really courageous that he was willing to engage in an issue that might seem like a bad business decision if you are really mercenary about it, but he was speaking from the heart. So yeah, I love him as a player, and he seems like a really cool person.

AB: He's a fun player to watch, one of those so-called stat-sheet stuffers.

KB: That's the thing: Everyone in the NBA has incredible talent, but there are always those guys who aren't going to make flashy moves or put up a bunch of points, but they succeed through real passion, dedication, and hard work. Bringing it back to music, that's how I feel about myself. I'm not Jimi Hendrix and I can't sing like Adele; I have a lot of physical limitations. I'm not Prince, but I feel that the most important thing is heart and songwriting, and if I do my best and work hard, we can make something special in this world.

AB: The Pains of Being Pure at Heart have been together for seven years now. Do you have any idea what the band is going to look like in another seven years?

KB: Well, older, hopefully, unless something really bad happens to me before seven years from now.

Alex Bieler can be contacted at aBieler@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Catch20Q.

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COMMUNITY

Destination Erie

Key Recommendations Unveiled

By: Dan Schank

When it comes to envisioning the future of Erie, a diverse array of institutions, organizations, and individuals are already hard at work. Destination Erie is an attempt to bring them together.

According to Project Manager Anna Frantz, "the goal has always been to break down silos between organizations working on issues that affect us." The project's three phases of development are nearing completion, and last week they unveiled a list of recommendations at public meetings across the county. Destination Erie's "regional vision" offers an opportunity for local citizens, business owners, nonprofits, and government officials to work together for the shared benefit of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

The project began in 2012, with approximately \$1.8 million in federal funding from the department of Housing and Urban Development. Destination Erie is a large-scale planning initiative for the five-county region that surrounds Erie, with suggestions for sustainable development over the next twenty-five years. Those helming the plan started by establishing a baseline to assess the community's most crucial needs. Through a series of neighborhood workshops in the summer, local people were invited to help revise and improve the ideas.

The current draft recommendations offer suggestions about how to improve our local economy, make our neighborhoods safer, cultivate civic engagement, and protect our environment. Now that the recommendations are complete, they'll seek out local businesses, institutions, and citizens to help implement the ideas.

That may sound like a lot to accomplish. And Destination Erie is still working to address funding sources and key partners as they compose their final timeline, which will be unveiled in early 2015.

Still, Frantz is optimistic that several short-term priorities can be implemented soon. When I asked for a practical example, Frantz suggested we could build "more regional systems using technology to better track the issue of blight and coding enforcement." This approach could help us reduce or retrofit the abandoned homes in our region, maintain safety standards, and monitor landlord/tenant disputes more actively.

At the community meeting I attended on Nov. 20, tables were set up to highlight the recommendations. Informative handouts were made available, as were suggestion sheets to allow us to respond to the proposals. Community representatives were also on-hand to explain and discuss the eight areas of focus: Economic Growth and Development, Vibrant and Safe Communi-

ties, Education and Training, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Environment, Community Health, Regional Collaboration and Leadership, and Land Use, Infrastructure and Transportation Networks.

There are pragmatic ideas, like improving broadband Internet access, encouraging local food production, and updating Erie's plan for development on the waterfront. Some suggestions aim to attract visitors – such as the creation of a cultural tourism plan to highlight our region's industrial and maritime history. Other proposed projects are more ambitious, like the formation of a Tri-State Alliance to identify economic opportunities in our region and establish entrepreneurial projects that will support the local workforce.

What unifies these ideas is their interconnectivity. For example, consider the proposed Green Infrastructure Matching Grant Program. By encouraging eco-friendly construction projects, it could address our architectural and environmental needs simultaneously – and possibly create some well-needed jobs in the process. It would make things look better too – trees would be planted, facades would be updated, and stormwater runoff would be kept to a minimum.

At the meeting, Eve Holberg of the planning firm Peter J. Smith and Company claimed that about 18,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in our region over the past fifteen years. In short, that's a really depressing number. Accordingly, it's understandable that some of Destination Erie's recommendations have been met with skepticism in our community. As technology changes and jobs are outsourced, it's easy to become disillusioned with large-scale public planning projects and promises about prosperity.

Some of the Destination Erie events have been a bit quarrelsome. I attended one of their Neighborhood workshops last summer and, among the half-dozen folks at my table, there were lively debates about topics ranging from natural gas exploration to home-schooling. On some issues, we found common ground, and on some we didn't. But we were still able to hear each other. And when the time came to offer suggestions, I felt that Destination Erie heard us as well.

Last week, I saw those conversations reflected in the proposals themselves. They clearly weren't the products of political polling or stuffy bureaucracies – they seemed borne out of healthy debates within our community. Once Destination Erie establishes a foundation for community partnerships, the heavy lifting will be up to us. Implementing the ideas will undoubtedly involve dialogue, compromise, and collaboration. As we begin to put the proposals into practice, I hope we can maintain the spirit of democracy on display at these meetings, warts and all.

Dan Schank can be contacted at DSchank@ErieReader.com.

Penelec Tree Trimming Leaves Much to be Desired

Why some neighborhoods are manicured while others get chopped

By: Jim Wertz

This time of year, sometime amid the six minutes of beautiful Fall weather we experience before the snowmageddon, I usually take a moment to reflect on when the leaves remained on the trees and the yards were clear of autumn debris.

The leaves are camouflage, of sorts. They hide the creative arborism that tree services carry out on behalf of Penelec in an effort to protect the power lines that feed the city with electricity.

According to Penelec, trees across Pennsylvania are trimmed on a four-year cycle. The electric provider spent \$24 million in 2014 on, what it calls, "vegetation management."

As you drive through the city in late fall and winter, you'll see that many of its large trees, which hide power lines in the Spring and Summer, have actually taken on a "V" shape where the trees have been "end-cut" and center branches extracted, effectively making the tree grow around the power lines.

"Why are there holes cut out of the trees for the power lines?" asked one first time visitor to the city.

News reports each year focus on residential complaints about the methods used by service providers contracted by Penelec. Some city residents believe the end-cutting – also known as "topping" – kills the trees.

"It absolutely does," says City of Erie arborist Sarah Galloway. "It might take five years or it might take twenty five years, but the trees are harmed in the process. There's no way the tree can seal over that wound."

This process also creates a particular aesthetic in the city's downtown corridors.

None of the large trees grow upward because the end cutting has damaged the trees' central leaders, the bodies of the trees from which other branches grow up and out.

Once a tree has been cut, it will not return to its original form.

But preserving trees is not Penelec's primary concern, nor is the resulting aesthetic. For the electric company, it is about clearing power lines – four feet around the power lines – to prevent outages that result from falling dead branches and other debris which usually comes down during severe weather.

"Vegetation is inspected and trees are pruned in a manner that helps maintain the health of the tree, while also maintaining safe and reliable electric service for customers – Penelec's top priority," Penelec said in a statement released earlier this year.

Many people believe that this means most residents in the City of Erie have very little to say about the preservation of trees on their property. That's not the case.

Penelec does not care about the look of the trees from neighborhood to neighborhood.

But homeowners do care, and that's the primary difference in the outcome of utility mandated pruning throughout the city.

Residents who monitor the cutting by Penelec contractors and, in some cases, file grievances with the electric provider to save their trees and salvage the look of their neighborhood have better looking communities.

Penelec prefers to avoid the formal complaints because they are costly, in terms of both time and capital resources.

The Pennsylvania Utility Commission requires Penelec to investigate every complaint. One formal complaint on a single electrical circuit might lead Penelec to explain to a single homeowner why the trees must be cut. A neighborhood with three-hundred homes on a single circuit all



PHOTOS BY: JIM WERTZ

filing complaints about the tree cutting is more problematic, and more expensive to defend and possibly litigate.

In neighborhoods like Frontier and Glenwood Hills, outspoken residents have for decades demanded that the trees be preserved.

As a result, the same tree services that end-cut trees along city thoroughfares carefully prune giant pin oaks like bonsai trees, ensuring that Frontier and Glenwood Hills remain attractive to current residents and prospective homebuyers alike.

In some cases, homeowners choose to have

the trees groomed privately rather than allow the Penelec contractors to do the work for concern over the end result. But this process can also be time consuming and expensive. Therefore, it's an option that's out of reach for many city residents.

This is why the resulting aesthetic of end cutting city trees is problematic for the future of Erie.

Imagine if every neighborhood – from college and residential rentals downtown to Frontier and Glenwood on the periphery – had equal appeal at first glance. The types of communities that that cultivates and the

Penelec places priority on safety over aesthetics, which often results in "end-cutting." But neighbors who reach out to the electric company see better and more responsible vegetation management.

kind of residents that would attract could be the remedial spark necessary to revitalize a downtown struggling to find identity and community.

It's a philosophy that influenced the recent revitalization efforts along West 18th Street



PHOTOS BY: JIM WERTZ

Vocal communities expressing concern over the “end-cutting” of trees see an end to the Vs lopped into vegetation lining their streets.

in the Little Italy neighborhood.

“When you come in to a neighborhood, what you see becomes your perception of that area,” says Rose Graham, Executive Director of the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network (SSJNN), which has been spearheading the revitalization efforts as part of the Little Italy Revitalization Association and the Historic Little Italy Plan.

“When you see broken streets, or broken sidewalks, rundown buildings, boarded up industry, what do you think when you see that? You think, ‘I don’t want to live there.’

“We want [Little Italy] to be a place people want to live and want to come to. It is a neighborhood that still maintains that character of people who know each other,” Graham says.

The Historic Little Italy Plan includes a detailed streetscaping project that has been underway since 2012. This includes replacing, repairing, and widening sidewalks and curbs, installing more lighting throughout the neighborhood, designing bus shelters and parking lots, and planting trees throughout the neighborhood.

The trees planted thus far are low-growth trees that will not exceed twenty-five feet in height and therefore will not be subject to cyclical cutting that has altered the look of

other downtown neighborhoods.

“That’s a standard policy instituted throughout the city,” says Galloway.

New trees and public lighting aren’t the only infrastructure changes in Little Italy. Community gardens and mural projects are changing the look of the neighborhood and residents’ feelings toward their community.

“We really believe that in order to fix an area, you have to help the people in that neighborhood create community with their neighbors, but also to work on physical infrastructure. Changing a community has to come from the inside out. The community has to be involved in that change,” says Graham.

As the city moves forward under Destination Erie, or the next proposal, or the last proposal, there are important lessons to be learned from its most stable and successful communities as well as its most developing and emergent neighborhoods. If it abandons notions of looking good and feeling good under the guise of fiscal responsibility and project expediency, it will be left holding the decaying limbs of its central leaders.

Like so many things in life, the greatest wisdom on the subject might just have come to us as children from the great philosopher Theodor Seuss Geisel when he wrote, “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

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Geeked Out

First-person perspective changes everything

By: John Lindvay

Grand Theft Auto 5's new feature on the re-release already has people talking

As another holiday cycle approaches, 'tis the season of mega video game releases. And so far, 2014 has been rife with re-releases, with *Last of Us*, *Tomb Raider*, and *Halo*, all of it culminating in the unexpected re-release of *Grand Theft Auto 5* for PlayStation 4 and Xbox One. Rockstar Games, the studio behind the venerable series, packed in more than just a high-definition upgrade to convince gamers to pick up this game potentially for a second time.

GTA5 made waves last year for how immense the world within the game is and for offering a narrative with three playable protagonists. In its first iteration, players could swap between one of three caricatures: Trevor (a trailer-park-dwelling hy-

Rockstar excels at pulling from our collective pop-culture and mashing various elements together into a big ol' circus that is one part mindless fun and another part critique on modern life.

per-violent sociopath), Michael (ex-bank robber and Tony Soprano analogue), or Franklin (gangbanger looking to elevate himself above street game). All three are back in this upgrade.

What's notable is that game-in and game-out, Rockstar excels at pulling from our collective pop-culture and mashing various elements together into a big ol' circus that is one part mindless fun and another part critique on modern life.

Without question, *Grand Theft Auto* has become one of the tent poles in the gaming world, a series often looked upon as touchstone games for many. I remember the first *GTA*, which was a top-down pixelated mess and a limitless source of fun for my friends huddled around a computer. Since its jump to consoles with *GTA3*, it has become a smorgasbord of cultural influences and commentary sponging and excreting influences of TV, film, and music – all set on the backdrop of the criminal underworld of getaway drivers, bank robbers, and players.



In many ways, the latest *GTA* is the culmination of what has made video games so popular, and with the re-release on the latest and greatest hardware, Rockstar seems to want to go even further. Not only did they increase the visual fidelity, making use of the new hardware for even more delicious graphics, they added in a new perspective: For the first time you can play the game in first-person. Before, the game always took a third-person perspective with the camera, and the player, hovering a short distance behind the protagonists.

Surprisingly, moving the camera just a few feet changes *everything*.

GTA has never been shy to diving into adult themes of sex, prostitution, drug use, and violence, and in the first *GTA5*, Rockstar dove head first into a lengthy and graphic torture scene that has had many of us in the game world discussing it ever since. But having the camera in the third-person in some ways helped distance us as players from the actors we saw on screen as we would when we watch a scary movie and the antagonist is brutalizing our hero. However, if the viewpoint is from the killer, we get a bit more uncomfortable.

The same is true in *GTA5*. With the new first-person view, when picking up a prostitute in your car, you now have the chance to watch the scene unfold *completely*. In past

version, these moments were hidden inside the car and audio would be your only context to what was occurring. Now, players get the wonderfully uncomfortable dead-eye expression of a streetwalker asking what kind of 'service' they are looking for – all accompanied with animation of various sexual acts... woohoo advancement in video games – right?!

Okay, so I'm no prude, and to be honest, I don't think this is something that should be removed from the game based on the perspective shift, but more than anything, though, what this has called to our attention is the depressing, uncomfortable feeling we have – and *why*, based on the pop-culture laden game.

Ultimately, it shows what Rockstar thinks of us and what we like to see in our games. Between this, the strip clubs with topless women, the torture scene, and the rampant ultra-violence with little-to-no consequence, it all makes for yet another male power fantasy.

Rockstar is at its best when its taking our pop-culture and spitting it back at us, all the while making us (maybe) laugh at how absurd it all is. Moments like the above just remind me of my teenage years with my buddies' chuckling around the "hot-coffee" incident back during *GTA: San Andreas*, where a mini-game was left in that contained sexual themes which were then used as a bullwhip by Jack Thompson, who then went on to use it to demonize games.

Perhaps, like in the words of Roger Murtaugh, "I'm getting too old for this shit." Perhaps we all are.

But do enough people think that this matters? And, is this increase in graphic sex any more offensive than the graphic violence already found in games? This is the mirror that's now being held up to us and we need to decide what it is that we see.

One thing is for sure, though, with the holiday season looming: Please don't buy this game for your kids. It has an M for Mature rating for a reason.

John Lindvay can be contacted at jLindvay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @FightStrife.

Tech Bits

Google Experimenting With Removing Ads for a Fee

By: Conor Dougherty

An oft-heard saying in Silicon Valley is that "information wants to be free." Google is running a test to see if users feel the same way.

On Thursday, Google started experimenting with a new way to let users contribute to web sites in exchange for removing – or at least reducing – the number of ads. The service, called Contributor by Google, has users give between \$1 and \$3 a month to sites like *The Onion* and *Mashable*.

Once they pay, the ads that normally show will be replaced with a banner that says "Thank you for being a contributor." Think of it as an ad-blocker that doesn't stiff the publisher.

While people still expect most websites to be free, they seem to be increasingly comfortable with paying for online content.

The experiment is tiny, and follows other similar pay experiments like Google Consumer Surveys, a way for publishers to finance content through surveys instead of ads, or Fan Funding, a way for YouTube fans to pay their favorite video makers (this is often described as "a tip jar").

For Contributor, Google is only working with 10 sites, and it will take a small cut of the contributions. The sites may not be completely ad free: Google only has the power to remove ads it has served, so it should probably be described as a way to see "fewer ads" rather than no ads.

While people still expect most websites to be free, they seem to be increasingly comfortable with paying for online content. HBO recently said it would start a new streaming service aimed at so-called "cord cutters" who don't want to buy cable service. Coming from another direction is Vimeo, an online video service that has started charging for content and is investing in premium shows like "High Maintenance."

Will this condition people to pay for websites like *The Onion*? We shall see.

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ER Sports

Catching up with Erie-native and USA Today writer Jon Saraceno and breaking down the strange happenings of the Gannon-Mercyhurst Basketball Game

By: James R. LeCorchick

I'M AT THAT stage in my life when some things make you feel old, and some other things make you feel *real* old. I had one of those latter experiences recently, but it was a positive one so I guess I'm okay with it.

I ran into one of my all-time favorites at a Gannon basketball game and was a bit shocked when I thought how long it has been since I met nationally-known sports writer **Jon Saraceno**, the talented writer who made quite a name for himself nationally as a beat writer with *USA Today*.

Saraceno, who graduated from McDowell in 1975, was working for the *Erie Times-News* in the summer of 1978 when I first met him. I was writing sports at the local paper when I saw him working at a typewriter (you remember those?), and after someone told me who he was, I felt the need to go over, introduce myself, and tell him I thought he had a great gift after reading some of his stories.

He seemed sincerely appreciative, and we just seemed to get along after that day. He was a junior at Penn State, and as they say, "The rest is history."

The former Trojan, who was in town visiting his 93-year-old mother, seemed to always remember his hometown, and that is something I've never forgotten. It was always exciting to hear him being introduced an Erie-native when he would be on a major boxing broadcast or when he inserted the name of his hometown in one of his *USA Today* columns.

"I love Erie, and I always will," Saraceno told me. "This will always be my hometown."

The PSU-grad mentioned a long-proven adage about ending up with the national publication, as he pointed out, "I was in the right place at the right time."

And the right place, believe it or not, was Danville, Ill.

The personable Erie-native accepted a position with the Gannett Corporation, and

that evolved into a spot at *USA Today* in the Virginia-D.C area in 1984, following a stop in Florida and a few other moves. He started with the national paper as a general assignment reporter, which included auto racing and many other events.

He covered two-dozen Super Bowls in his 30 years on the staff there.

However, it was in the wild, whacky world of boxing he made his name and was also taking part in a labor of love. "I was always watching boxing with my dad when I was a youngster, and it was always something I enjoyed," he told the listening audience while a guest on my Sports Blitz Radio Show.

"Boxing is a great sport, and I loved covering it."

He has many (too many to get into here) great stories about what went on inside the ring, and outside it. He lists **Muhammad Ali** as one of his all-time favorite athletes he has mentioned over the years. He also enjoyed working with **Kareem Abdul Jabbar**, **Brett Favre**, and **Joe Namath**.

When queried as to some of the bigger jerks, he maintained his professionalism and pointed out some are just tougher interviews than others. He did add that interviewing **Ben Roethlisberger** was "like going to the dentist."

Saraceno said he worked with broadcaster George Michael and that Michael had one of the bigger egos he ran into. However, he was quick to point out, "He wasn't a bad guy; he just had a large ego - as many on air people do."

He also explained that the TV people are a different breed than the print media. Saraceno said that it was more likely you would end up going out for a beer with a big name writer rather than a broadcaster.

Saraceno, a true-blue (pun intended) Penn State loyalist, had all the respect in the world for **Joe Paterno**, but wished the Nitany Lions coach had given up the position a

few years earlier before the scandal hit.

I did have one last question for him, as I asked, "Are you in the Erie Sports Hall of Fame?" He answered, "I didn't know they had one."

On a personal note, I'm not a big fan of the media entering any Halls of Fame (they should have their own), but I believe it's time Saraceno be informed that Erie has one, and he's going to be inducted - soon.

As far as his association with *USA Today*, he took an early buyout a year ago. Now I

I ran into one of my all-time favorites at a Gannon basketball game and was a bit shocked when I thought how long it has been since I met nationally-known sports writer Jon Saraceno.

feel *really, really* old.

I CAN REMEMBER about 60 years of sports, so it goes without saying that I have seen many, many strange happenings in that time, but I must admit the recent Gannon-Mercyhurst men's basketball game caught my attention, the Golden Knights winning on an **Adam Blazek** three-pointer with five seconds remaining that gave his team a 46-44 victory.

While it was typical GU-MU intense, physical barnburner, thinking about it for a minute, several odd things began popping up.

For starters, the Lakers didn't score a point in the opening 10 minutes but trailed just 8-0 as the Golden Knights also weren't much offensively. And then to top it off, the Hurst actually held the lead at the intermission, up by an 18-14 count.

It appeared the home team was going to cruise to the win when they opened up a 41-25 lead with 10 minutes left in the contest, the Golden Knights' offense being totally shut down. At this point, I commented on the radio, "If Mercyhurst ends with 50 points, they win easily."

Now keep in mind they had 41 at this point and needed just nine tallies in the final 10 minutes to reach this mark. The truth is the Hurst needed just six points, as 47 would've given them the win.

But the GU defense kicked in and the MU offense went into shutdown, the visiting Golden Ones outscoring the Lakers 21-3 in the final 10 minutes, the winning basket coming with 5.1 seconds to play when All-American candidate Blazek buried a three-pointer.

The most fascinating aspect of this game comes when you do the math and take a look at two 20-minute phases, the first and final 10 minutes and the 20-minute span in between.

As you look at the figures, MU scored zero points in the first 10 minutes and three (being out scored 21-3) in the final 10. Meanwhile, in the 20-minute span in between, the Lakers scored 41 markers.

So, if you look at one 20-minute duration, the Hurst tallied three points in one half (which adds up to six points for the entire game), or you can look at the other 20 minutes and that computes to 82 tallies (41 per half).

As I said, no matter how many sporting events one goes to, strange things never quit happening.

For those who missed this encounter, another one is scheduled for the Hammermill Center in late January. Don't be surprised if some strange happening occur once again.

James R. LeCorchick can be contacted at JRLSportsReport@gmail.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @JRLSports.

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