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From The Editors

Erie Summers: Their quality likely the most non-controversial topic facing our region. If any controversy does exist, it's probably that the season is too short or too jampacked with events.

Although summer doesn't officially start until June 21, we'd like to think it begins now, as the summer music festivals and series have been, are being, or are about to be announced.

In this issue, you'll find a roundup of fifteen local and regional festivals and series that should be — if they aren't already — on your radar. Contributors Alex Bieler, Bob Protzman, Dan Schank, and Ryan Smith give you plenty of reasons why you need to carve out some of your summer time to attend these events, because in short, from rock 'n' roll, to blues, to jazz, to country, to metal, there's something for everyone — and on virtually every night of the week.

So let us say that the kickoff to summer happens now.

Music, though, isn't the sole thing we're celebrating, because we happen to find ourselves smack dab in the middle of the first-ever Erie Craft Beer Week. Since 2006, brewers and beer-enthusiasts around the country have been celebrating the art of all things hops, malt, barley, and deliciousness with the American Craft Beer Week, and it's refreshing to see Erie's vibrant craft beer industry partaking (May 11 to 17), with various events at various establishments (for more details, check out Bryan Toy's write-up in our calendar section).

If there's a beacon of not just budding but flourishing industry in Erie, it's craft beer. Jim Wertz examines the renaissance of an American industry in Erie to chart how our region went from just a few eager and ambitious home brewers to a market that's manufacturing and exporting award-winning products outside of the region. And what's perhaps most remarkable is the cluster culture of craft beer — the fraternal atmosphere of valuing collaboration over competition.

But in truth, perhaps summer in Erie isn't without some controversy. Last year, the community-service initiative funded by the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, Erie County Council, and The Erie Community Foundation, Erie Summer JAM (Summer Jobs And More), debuted to mixed criticism. Some championed the effort, happy to see something, any-

thing being done to address crime and poverty amongst Erie County youth. Others thought the money being allocated and spent to create a system to provide access to jobs, job training, and additional opportunities could be better spent elsewhere. Some championed the City administration for not getting involved, citing it wasn't part of its core competencies; others were critical of what could be perceived as government apathy to preventative measures against crime and poverty, two factors that affect public safety and well-being.

It should come as no surprise, however, that summer jobs programs in general (ones that engage the youth with meaningful jobs and help foster skills necessary to enter the workforce full-time upon reaching adulthood) do more than just put children to work. And the total effects of summer jobs programs aren't something that can merely be measured for just one season.

According to a study conducted by Sara Heller of the University of Pennsylvania, summer jobs programs are proven to reduce violent crime — murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault — amongst teenagers — by 43 percent — for as much as a year after participants stopped working and returned to school. Although the reasons why such programs have such an impact remains unclear, Steven Raphael, a professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley, praised the findings, calling it "a great study [that] shows that a short, concentrated positive experience can have a long-lasting effecting on this population."

So while some might be quick to scrutinize Erie's summer jobs program, demanding clear, calculated results that prove immediate return on investment, lest they champion the funding be used elsewhere, we encourage Erie at large to continue to see the value of investing in our youth. We have the chance here to be proactive in addressing the plagues of crime and poverty, instead of being reactive, standing around wondering why another person was shot and another bank was robbed. Rather than pressing the reset button and looking to start anew in our now-now-now society that values quick results over quality results, let's give Erie summer jobs programs time to make a difference.

Street Corner Soapbox

The distracting joke of Jade Helm 15 doesn't have us laughing as the Patriot Act's renewal seems inevitable.

By: Jay Stevens

Have you heard the joke of the month? Get this – a bunch of nuts in Texas think the U.S. military is planning on taking over their state, imposing martial law, and silencing those pesky, freedom-loving, patriotic whack-job conspiracy theorists once and for all.

Really.

Apparently the Navy is doing some maneuvers and training in the area in July – known as Operation Jade Helm 15. And a PowerPoint presentation from the maneuver landed in somebody's inbox – and in it, Texas was labeled as “hostile.” Paranoid radio talk-show host Alex Jones took one look at this and declared that the U.S. was going to invade Texas. Dissidents would be arrested and held in Walmart supercenters that are ostensibly closing for plumbing repairs.

No, *really*. People believe this!

Now, if it ended there with the nuttiness confined to the usual back-alley Internet sites, the ones with black backgrounds and flashing neon letters, the furor over Jade Helm 15 would be amusing. Quaint. Silly. Only it didn't. It got weird.

First Texas House Representative Louie Gohmert took the conspiracy seriously. “This military practice has some concerns that the U.S. Army is preparing for modern-day martial law,” said Gohmert after his office had been bombarded with calls about Jade Helm 15. “Certainly, I can understand these concerns.” Why? Because the Obama administration considers Constitution-loving, gun-toting, patriotic Americans a “major threat.”

And then Texas Gov. Greg Abbot ordered the state militia to monitor the exercises. Why? To ensure that Texans' “constitutional rights, property rights, and civil liberties will not be infringed.”

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz agreed that Texans had reason to be concerned. “When you see a federal government that is attacking our free speech rights, or religious liberty rights, or Second Amendment rights,” said Cruz, “that produces distrust.” The would-be presidential candidate also sent inquiries to the Pentagon, asking the heads of the armed forces if they were planning on taking over Texas.

“We are not taking over anything,” said



Pentagon spokesperson Colonel Steve Warren.

First, let's get this out of the way: if you can get a House Representative, governor, and U.S. Senator and presidential candidate to take you seriously and turn your *completely imaginary* issue into a national news story, you are not in any danger of oppression.

Second, the U.S. government is actually involved in illegal activity that impinges on the civil rights of Americans. That is, there are *actual, real* issues to rally around.

Take the NSA's program to collect metadata on Americans. Revealed by former contractor and whistleblower Edward Snowden, the NSA's activities include recording all of the cell phone calls made by U.S. citizens, as well as all of our Internet activity. The NSA's collection of phone calls, anyway, was recently ruled illegal by a federal appeals court.

According to the court, the Patriot Act – under which the program was justified by the spy agency – “cannot bear the weight the government asks us to assign it, and that it does not authorize the telephone metadata program.” Additionally, the court noted that “such expansive development of government repositories of formerly private records would be an unprecedented contraction of the privacy expectations of all Americans,” and that we should “expect such a momentous decision to be preceded by

NSA Headquarters at Fort Meade, Maryland.

substantial debate, and expressed in unmistakable language.”

But such is the Patriot Act, that bill full of extraordinary and unprecedented police powers passed weeks after 9/11, when the country was still reeling from its recent terrorist attack. It grants the government almost unchecked search, surveillance, and property seizure powers over anyone considered a “terrorist” – a term so broadly defined by the act, that it could include domestic participants of civil disobedience against U.S. government policy. And the government's execution of the Patriot Act and the limitations on its powers rely on secret interpretation of the bill.

That's right. The government gave itself sweeping police powers, and the extent of those powers are secret.

And, yet another irony, and one that should make Ted Cruz and Louie Gohmert blush, is that our Congress has duly stepped up and approved not only the Patriot Act itself, but retroactively approved of the government's worst abuses under that bill. Warrantless wiretapping? *Check!* Indefinite detention of terror suspects? *Check!* Secret collection of Americans' phone and Internet data? *Check!*

And as I write these words, Congress is mulling over renewal of the Patriot Act.

While many Congressional representatives – yes, Louie Gohmert and Ted Cruz among them – support reforming the Patriot Act, it's not likely we'll see any meaningful change in the bill.

One reform is the USA Freedom Act, which is expected to pass the House. That bill limits – but doesn't end – the NSA metadata collection program, and as such is still relatively weak. An early provision of the bill, for example, requiring the government to have a warrant before collecting an American's phone and Internet records was cut in committee. But even that weak reform bill is likely to be further watered down or to fail outright, thanks to the Senate Majority Leader – Republican Mitch McConnell – insisting on simply renewing the

Our Congress has duly stepped up and approved not only the Patriot Act itself, but retroactively approved of the government's worst abuses under that bill.

Patriot Act without any change.

Which brings me to the final irony in all of this. The Texas nutjobs and the politicians that fret over Jade Helm 15 are all conservatives and Republicans – and self-identified conservative voters overwhelmingly support the Patriot Act. They also support warrantless wiretapping. Stop-and-frisk search policies. Drone strikes. Extraordinary rendition and our government's assassination program. Indefinite detention. Torture.

The only threat to civil liberties that the right end of the political spectrum cares about are completely imaginary. That... *insanity*...has permeated throughout the Republican party, the political party now shepherding reform of the Patriot Act through Congress.

The joke, it turns out, is on us.

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



DOWIGHT BURDETTE

Erie At Large

Municipal elections matter; a look at the Erie County Court of Common Pleas, City Council, and Millcreek Supervisors races.

By: Jim Wertz

An election is supposed to be about challenge. It should challenge incumbents to defend their work; it should challenge candidates to defend their positions; and it should challenge voters to hold their elected officials accountable for the state of the community.

But that's not politics in Erie. Here major challenges typically result only when multiple candidates vie for an open seat, be it on school board, city council, or the fifth floor of City Hall. It's the culture of machine politics that pervades the city and surrounding municipalities.

This municipal election cycle, there are some exciting microcosmic events happening in school board fights that pit aged anti-tax technophobes against concerned parents. On the other end of the spectrum, there are mayors' contests and council races with not a single candidate. It would take more space than we have here to evaluate what's happened across our region and around the nation that brought us to this place of contempt and apathy, but that is for another time and, perhaps, a different venue.

Before you pick up the next issue of the *Erie Reader*, the May 19 primary will be behind us and three elections that have the potential to shape the future of our region will have set the stage for November's general election or will have already been decided. Each one of these races is populated by candidates hoping to fill a

vacancy rather than challenge an incumbent.

In the race for the Erie County Court of Common Pleas, eight candidates are contending for two vacancies created by the retirements of Judges Shad Connelly and Ernest DiSantis. Seven of the eight candidates have cross filed, which means that any candidate who wins on both the Republican and Democratic ticket has already locked up a seat on the bench. The interesting part about this race is that it's unlikely that any candidate will win both tickets. There are too many well-known and well-respected litigators on the ballot and, despite the cross-filing, they represent a solid mix of registered Republicans and Democrats.

On the Republican side of the primary, you can expect former president of the Erie County Bar Assn. Ed Smith and former federal prosecutor Jamie Mead to fare quite well. Whether or not they are able to do as well on the Democratic side remains to be seen. That's because registered Democrat Joe Walsh, who made a run in 2013 for the seat left vacant by the retirement of Judge Michael Dunlavy but lost the Democratic primary by 86 votes to Bill Kelly, Jr., has strong support from the community as well as the endorsement of District Attorney Jack Daneri. Kelly, by the way, lost to Bob Sambrook in the 2013 general election.

The short money on the second Democratic bid is with Chad Vilushis, an

attorney in the Travis Law Firm who's received the endorsement of the PSEA, among others, and has significant political capital. The long-shot for the fourth slot has to be Elvage Murphy, an attorney in private practice and a professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science at Edinboro University. Murphy lacks the name recognition of his fellow candidates, but his dedication to and involvement in the community and the fact that he would be the first African American to sit on the Erie County Court of Common Pleas brings a unique dimension to his candidacy.

The Millcreek Township Supervisors race includes three Republicans and two Democrats hoping to earn a spot on the November ballot to replace Rick Figaski, who is not seeking reelection. Former supervisors Joe Kujawa, a Republican, and Jess Jiuliantie III, a Democrat have the experience in this race. But keep in mind that these are both *former* supervisors.

The remaining three candidates, Republicans George Hazuda and Mike Kobylka, and Democrat John Morgan, should have a solid election night, although my opinion is that Morgan will likely face Kujawa in the Fall. This race is important in the context of the ongoing conversation about regionalization. Many of Millcreek's citizens are firmly against the idea of regional government and shared services, but one change in "leadership" on the three-person board could bridge the philosophical fissure between Millcreek Township, Erie County government, and the City of Erie.

The last major election is, of course, the race for Erie City Council where seven Democrats are competing for three seats, two held by incumbents Mel Witherspoon and Bob Merski, Jr., and one seat left open by Jessica Horan-Kunco, who has reached her consecutive term limit. Witherspoon and Merski are expected to retain their seats, essentially making this election a five-candidate race for one council seat.

Like the Millcreek Supervisors election, this too could have profound implications for the city depending on the strength and personality of the winning candidate and the fact that the Mayor's seat will go up for bid in 2017. Just about everyone who has ever seen the Mayor thinks he or she could be the next one. That's not true, and we wouldn't want most of them, but if the next two years are a time to introduce ideas about the future of Erie and demonstrate some capacity for leadership, this election is important.

The striking thing about the candidate pool in this race is that only Mel Witherspoon and Sonya Arrington reside on the East side of the city. Arrington is a strong community voice and an exceptional advocate for nonviolence, but her single-issue campaign, lack of experience, and finite political capital places her on the margins of this campaign with fellow Democrats Gary Grack and Richard Wagner.

The real battle for the vacant seat is between Bayfront Sheraton sales manager, Rebecca Styn, and former mayoral assistant in the Sinnott Administration, Jon Whaley. Styn and Whaley are perhaps the most qualified to sit on City Council, although their approach to leadership and governance varies greatly.

Both candidates have committed their campaigns to discussing the fiscal health of the city and both have used social media and campaign events to push their

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agenda. Although Whaley served in the Sinnott Administration, Styn could be viewed as the more politically connected candidate in this race, which may give her the upper-hand. However, if the electorate shows up seeking a change agent, Whaley will prevail. He's loud and boisterous and makes sure that everyone knows where he stands, for better or worse. And while Styn has been quiet with regard to her political future, Whaley is quite open about the fact that he intends to run for mayor in 2017 with a spot on the ballot, unlike his write-in challenge to Joe Sinnott in 2013.

The bottom line is that there are choices to be made. Some reflect the status-quo and others reinforce the stasis and frustration this city and this region have experienced for more than a decade. Not much has changed in that time, so maybe it's time for challenge.

Jim Wertz can be reached at jWertz@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter [@jim_wertz](https://twitter.com/jim_wertz).

News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

Marital Enhancement

Saudi Arabia's very first sex accessory shop (in the holy city of Mecca) should be opening soon, according to news reports—operated by a Moroccan Muslim, backed by the German adult mega-retailer Beate Uhse, and supposedly fully compliant with Islamic law. Owner Abdelaziz Aouragh told Agence France-Presse he would stock 18 different Islam-appropriate toys for married couples, along with oils and fragrances that he said would enhance the marital experience. (He did not actually describe the toys, but ruled out U.S. mainstays such as inflatable dolls and vibrators.) One such “halal” sex shop opened in Turkey in 2013, and Aouragh's financial partner runs a similar enterprise online. [International Business Times (New York), 4-20-2015]

The Continuing Crisis

The February gun-and-baby-carrying workshop in Johnston, Iowa, was so successful that instructor Melody Lauer and CrossRoads Shooting Sports owner Tom Hudson plan more. Lauer insisted that she does not necessarily encourage a baby-holding mother to arm herself, but if she chooses to, safety would of course require that she be familiar with the tricky procedure of drawing, aiming and firing even though she might be “wearing” a baby in a sling in front of her body. Hudson, noting the fast-growing market of gun sales to women, said scheduling the workshop “was a no-brainer.” [Yahoo News, 3-4-2015]

What is believed to be America's only hard-nosed “gang” composed only of gay and transgendered African-Americans hopes to have its story told soon by filmmakers—who emphasize the group's transition from fighters to entrepreneurs working to establish their own clothing line, according to a March report on advocate.com. The gang, originally organized for protection (“We gonna get our respect one way or another,” said one), hails from the violent Washington, D.C., Trinidad neighborhood, yet some of the 200 members (in their teens or early 20s) insist on stilettos, lipstick and mascara (while carrying knives, brass knuckles and mace). [Advocate.com, 3-9-2015]

Questionable Judgments

Pioneering British facial surgeon Ninian Peckitt, 63, facing a Medical Practitioners Tribunal in Manchester in April, was accused by a witness of “repeatedly” having punched one patient in the face during a procedure in order to straighten a fracture. Dr. Peckitt acknowledged having used his hands to “manipulate” bones in the patient's face, calling it a routine surgery-avoiding procedure sometimes required for extensive injuries. [Daily Mail (London), 4-8-2015]

Suspicious Confirmed: Two airport screeners at Denver International collaborated in an ongoing ploy in which one, a male, signaled to a female colleague that he had spotted an attractive male passenger in line that he might like to grope. The female would

then suddenly notice an “anomaly” in the screening and ask that passenger to stand aside so the male agent could “inspect” him further—by genital and posterior fondling (over his clothing). The two agents were fired in February after a Transportation Security Administration investigator, having been alerted to the scheme, observed it in action. [KCNC-TV (Denver), 4-13-2015]

Inexplicable

From Recent Florida Crime Reports: (1) Mohammed Almarri, 21, was arrested on multiple charges in Tampa on April 12 after illegally entering a neighbor's apartment in a high-rise and forcing the owner onto the balcony. For reasons undisclosed in the police report, Almarri then allegedly microwaved the man's wallet in his oven. (2) Joseph Williams, 35 (and with several pending warrants), was arrested on April 5 in Fort Pierce, Florida, after entering the emergency room at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center and Heart Institute, demanding an enema and refusing to leave until he got one. [Bay News 9 (St. Petersburg, 4-12-2015) [TCPalm.com (Stuart, Fla.), 4-14-2015]

Leading Economic Indicators

In the face of jokes about proliferating airline charges, the British economy line easyJet added another fee recently. If easyJet, on its own, cancels a flight, it charges a fee of 10 British pounds (about \$15) to notify third parties. The airline said that even though

its own decision created the issue, it must nonetheless cover its costs to provide cancellation notices to passengers who miss connections or who need to provide verification to collect on private travel-interruption insurance. [Daily Mail (London), 4-21-2015]

Is This a Great Country or What? Counting only the pool of bonus money (not regular salaries), employees of New York securities industries in 2014 earned roughly twice as much as the total income paid to all employees in the United States who worked full time at the federal minimum wage (\$7.25 an hour). (The statistic, from a report by the Institute for Policy Studies and reinforced by a University of Michigan professor using figures from the New York State Comptroller and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was featured in a March New York Times analysis.) [New York Times, 3-13-2015]

Wait, What?

In April, a court in Munich, Germany, ordered a dentist (identified only as “K”) to pay the equivalent of about \$21,000 to patient “Alex S” for pulling all of his teeth (19) over four weeks of treatments—as the remedy for his schizophrenia and erectile dysfunction. The dentist had testified that Alex had too much bone inflammation for ordinary fillings. K made his own claim for the equivalent of about \$54,000 for the damage to his professional reputation that the trial had caused, but the court rejected it. [The Local (Berlin) via Daily Mail (London), 4-17-2015]

Just Toyin' Witcha

By: B. Toy

INTRODUCING ERIE'S
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We invite senior adults throughout our community to join us for a healthy day of fun and fitness. We will offer several events designed to encourage and educate seniors on the many health benefits of living an active lifestyle. Pre-registration is required to participate. You can register by calling 814-868-7800.

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DENIS TANGNEY

Considering the City

Seven candidates for City Council are “interviewed” by famed city planner John Nolen.

By Civitas Members Lisa Austin and Stephen Sonnenberg

A century ago, planner John Nolen claimed that a single agency with “collective power” should work “in the name of the community” to coordinate planning. In 2015, The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), is “the leading organization promoting walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development, sustainable communities, and healthier living conditions.”

Erie didn’t follow Nolen’s advice. Few leaders in Erie are aware of CNU’s guidelines. Instead, departments and Authorities make plans without considering the whole city. When voters are unhappy about the plans, they turn to City Council for help.

This year, seven people are running for three City Council seats in the May 19 Primary: Sonya Arrington, Gary Grack, Bob Merski, Rebecca Styn, Richard Wagner, Jon Whaley, and Mel Witherspoon. Here

are some of their ideas about addressing Erie’s streets, transportation, waterfront, buildings, open spaces, safety and economy through the lens of John Nolen. To wit, Grack didn’t comment on Erie’s buildings, and Whaley confined his remarks to public safety, economic development, and streets because he views them as “the most important” of the seven topics.

STREETS

The New Urbanists work to slow urban traffic (to protect pedestrians and support businesses) with two-way streets and on-street parking. To promote circulation, they avoid dead-ends and maintain underpasses, bridges and viaducts.

Jon Whaley says the “streets of Erie are a mess” and wants to revise the management. Mel Witherspoon said that the streets should “be repaired as soon as the weather allows.” Richard Wagner views Erie’s current practice of issuing bonds to

cover street repairs as “financial suicide” and proposes a \$3 million “dedicated budget line.”

Rebecca Styn hopes to “research alternatives” to find “viable alternatives to repairing our streets.” Sonya Arrington proposes using “stronger materials,” purchasing an asphalt re-cycling machine, and seeking “state and federal disaster funding” after “severe winter damage.” Gary Grack encouraged the use of “state and federal funds” to pay for infrastructure.

Like Wagner and Styn, Bob Merski suggested seeking “long-term sustainable financing for our streets.” Merski proposed complete streets funding” to encourage “multiple modes of transportation.” Whaley, Merski and Wagner each proposed cost-savings via LED street lights.

TRANSPORTATION

CNU notes that thriving communities have good public transit.

Styn noted that improved public transportation “would help to preserve our community, enhance mobility, and attract growth.” Wagner, citing Erie’s proximity to Buffalo, Cleveland, and Pitts-

burgh, believes that both the EMTA and “high-speed rail” are vital parts of a long-term plan.

Merski proposes “new meters that take electronic payments” and hopes to explore “late night bussing.” Arrington says that “affordable public transit is critical” because of “our high poverty rate.” The Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA) closed Division Street and moved bus lines off of State Street. During his service on EMTA’s board, Grack “learned how our citizens ... rely on public transportation.” Witherspoon commented, “The city has supported ... EMTA as they [complete] their new building and redirect the bus line.”

WATERFRONT

Former Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist, who led CNU for a decade, said Erie’s waterfront has the best natural formation on the Great Lakes; he advised extending the city’s grid to the waterfront.

Grack says, “The waterfront is one of our greatest resources.” Witherspoon wants this asset to be “developed in a manner that it is friendly to its citizens.” Arrington proposes that an aquarium be

constructed and believes that “parking lots” are “taking up ... valuable space,” suggesting instead that Erie needs “green-space, public access, and mixed-use” development utilizing “community benefits” and “labor diversity” agreements.

Merski says that the “waterfront has to have a balance: public and private, higher-end restaurants/bars, and affordable places” and that “CRIZ [City Revitalization and Improvement Zone] designation is critical” for development. Wagner believes that rather than a “convention center, parking ramps, and a Sheraton hotel” that other types of privately-funded development should have occurred. Styn proposes “more collaborative efforts between public and private entities” to “bridge the divide between developable space and profitable development” and suggests finding ways to increase pedestrian access to the waterfront from the downtown.

BUILDINGS

CNU promotes adaptive reuse instead of demolition as a green and local-jobs-producing strategy.

Styn encourages, “when possible”, the preservation of “old buildings that are a part of our history and character.” Wagner believes that we “owe it to future generations to maintain some of the history. Merski supports preservation because of the “economic benefits” and proposes consideration of a new zoning code to prevent “suburban type structures and garage doors on fronts of buildings downtown.”

Witherspoon “would like to see the buildings on State Street between 10th and 11th get a facelift through federal grants.” Arrington, also concerned about property maintenance, proposes an “improvement fund” to benefit owner-occupied homes that need to be brought “up to code” and suggested a “re-purposing task force” to match “vacant usable properties with people and businesses.”

OPEN SPACES

CNU notes that investment in open spaces spurs private development.

Witherspoon encourages places for “small games for kids and passive games for senior citizens.” Grack believes Erie has “great examples of open spaces” that already “enhance our sense of community, and Styn applauds Erie’s existing “50-plus parks” and notes that “open spaces are a vital element in city sustainability.”

Wagner explained that our “parks and boulevards” provide a wonderful “sense of freedom and openness” necessary in urban settings. Merski notes that there are many “underutilized city parks on the Eastside lakefront.” To maintain this wealth of open space, Arrington proposes to seek “more productive relationships with state and federal agencies and officials – to secure more funding.”

SAFETY

CNU notes that walkable, mixed-use communities encourage pedestrians and increase urban safety.

Whaley reports that Erie spends more than \$2 million a year in public safety overtime costs and says that additional police can be hired and placed on the streets via changes in “scheduling, re-assignments” and technology. Whaley proposes the use of surveillance drones for both crime and fire-fighting efforts, and believes that “in-vehicle computer terminals plus GPS can be used to report crime and monitor employee activity, thus freeing up time for more policing.”

Wagner says that to address safety over the long term, “we really have to look at lack of jobs, blight and ... poverty.” Styn takes a similar view noting that “Safer neighborhoods” will result from “an ample supply of quality, family sustaining jobs.”

Arrington will seek “funding for prevention programs” along with “youth employment opportunities;” she is advocating “foot/bike patrols” to reduce crime. Grack says “public safety is of utmost importance.” Merski says we must get gun violence under control while stating that, “Erie is safer than most metropolitan areas,” noting that offenders “are given plea deals” and in a few months are “back on the street often repeating the same offenses.” Witherspoon says he is “aware of issues going on” and supports law enforcement.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CNU notes that vital, well-designed cities attract economic development. Norquist, during his recent visit to Erie as the keynote speaker at Preservation Erie’s Greater Erie Awards, discouraged using tax-abatement incentives to lure developers, favoring instead an approach that emphasized the innate “wealth of the city.”

Wagner believes that a “logistics hub” is important to the city’s revitalization. Wagner notes that the city’s and county’s 23 economic development organizations cause confusion because entrepreneurs

and business owners seeking to move into Erie “have to spend an enormous amount of time trying to find which group” can be of assistance.

Whaley proposes a “Buy Erie, Grow Erie” campaign, and believes it is important to combine regional economic development organizations including the “Chamber, Ben Franklin, DevelopErie.” Wagner and Whaley believe that this “dysfunctional” situation with overlapping groups should be replaced with a single organization.

Whaley also believes the City should be meeting with “every single company” and business owner to find out what kind of assistance they need. Witherspoon says, “economic development is major because it creates jobs.” Arrington, Merski, Styn, Whaley, and Wagner all believe that a stronger economy will reduce crime here. To that end, Arrington encourages welcoming refugees, establishing a municipal fiber Internet, and funding summer jobs for youth.

Erie’s waterfront has the best natural formation on the Great Lakes.

Grack says he will “maximize funding opportunities” to “support business development and entrepreneurial activity.” Styn proposes “re-instating a 100 percent LERTA [Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance]” to “incentivize business development” as well as restructuring “the tax system to encourage businesses to relocate in the city” and to foster “technology-focused, small business incubators and accelerators.”

Merski notes that Erie won’t “grow from the outside in, but from the inside out” and, because “entrepreneurs are going to drive growth” we must “utilize our resources” to support them by creating regional workspace like the Tech Shop in Pittsburgh.

Civitas encourages you to take more time to research the men and women running more fully and to vote on Tuesday, May 19. Learn more about the candidates at their websites and Facebook pages. 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.

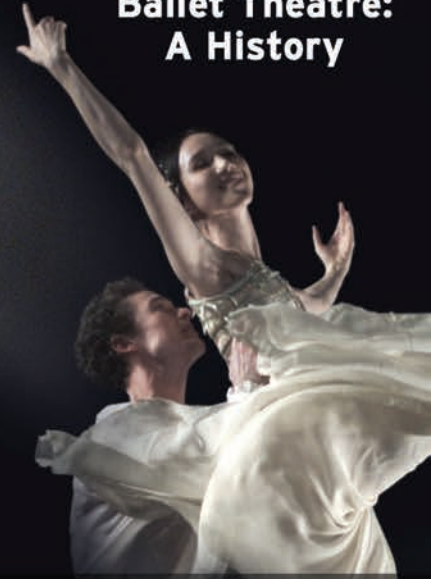


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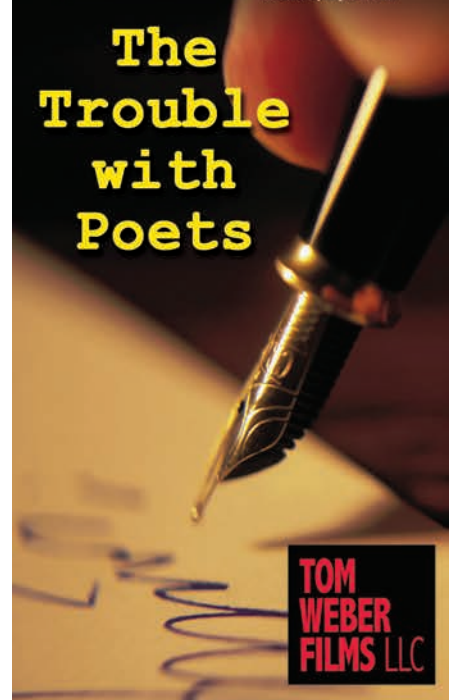


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The Renaissance of an American Industry

The cluster culture of craft beer spurs creativity, development, and opportunity.



By: Jim Wertz

Before World War II, American industries operated in centralized patterns. Topography, transportation routes – primarily water and railroad – and access to raw materials determined where and to what scale industries built and expanded production facilities. It's the reason that the American auto-making industry rose from the banks of the Detroit River and it's the reason that Silicon Valley is in the suburbs of Palo Alto and not Escondido.

To fully understand the concept you don't need to look any further than the affordable single-family housing in Lawrence Park with foot bridges that lead to the front gates of GE Transportation, which had access to main rail lines, the Port of Erie, and once utilized regional manufacturers to procure specialty resources. It was the epitome of topographic industrial centralization.

But after the Great Depression, the federal government initiated policies that forever changed the literal and metaphorical landscape of American industry. It

Lavery Brewpub (top) and Brewerie (right) are at the epicenter of Erie's brewing renaissance.

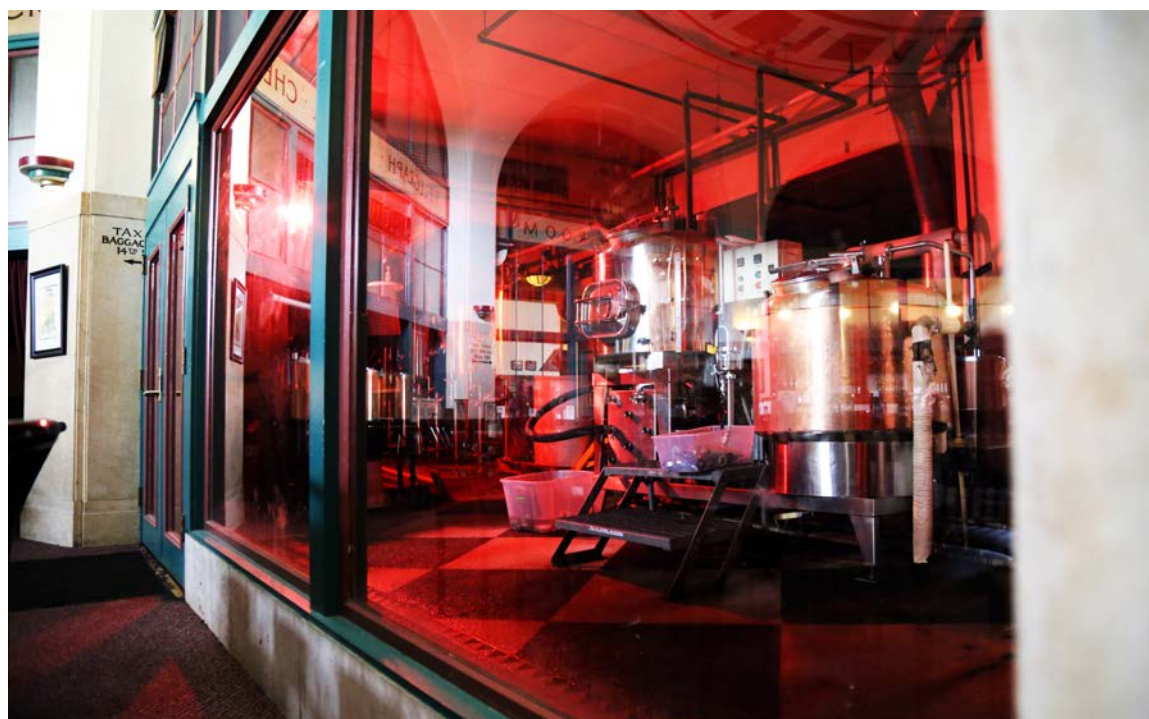
funneled money into the southern U.S. economy, which still reeled in many ways from the effects of the Civil War and the loss of slavery as an economic model; it encouraged regional development of expressways that became the backbone of the federal interstate system in the 1950s; and it sponsored technological innovation that allowed the U.S. to cultivate the era of *Pax Americana*, providing the nation an unbridled advantage in the Cold War during the second half of the 20th Century.

The precipitous change that followed these federal policies, while good for some, led to the decentralization of American industry and posed a challenge to the American labor force. In Erie, this meant that large corporations like GE didn't need to utilize local support systems to acquire raw and specialized materials, and homespun businesses like Kohler Brewery were challenged by national competitors, many of which built loyal followings by supplying troops during the war. National

brands maintained and expanded their customer bases by utilizing production automation and distribution networks that were inconceivable before the war. For those that succeeded, it was the apex of American exceptionalism. For those that failed, it was an unintended consequence of the new American century.

That new American century of geopolitical commerce and dispersed national markets initiated an era of rust and decay that only began to recede in the past two decades. Here in Erie the industrial renaissance is taking a variety of forms. That's one reason why it's difficult for people to understand what progress should or will look like in the 21st Century. Unlike Pittsburgh or Cleveland – much larger Rust Belt sister cities – Erie's industrial portfolio is wildly stratified. Some parts of the industrial sector appear to have strong roots and work from established brands. Others have adopted something more akin to 19th-century industrial ideals of apprenticeship, soft competition, and strong regional collaboration.

In this way, Erie's brewing culture has experienced a boom over the past decade. When Erie Brewing Company popped up as part of



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BUSINESS

Hopper's Brewpub at Union Station in 1993, it was a novelty, not an industry. It remained that way for more than a decade. But that inauspicious start laid the foundation for the regional craft brew movement that now seems poised to help redefine local manufacturing, not only in terms of its products, but also in the way that it operates and manifests growth within the Erie economy.

"When we opened in 2006, the only brewer in the region was Erie Brewing and they were a production facility," says The Brewerrie at Union Station owner Chris Sirianni. "There was no brewpub, no restaurant. They produced beer, and they distributed it."

Sirianni interned with Erie Brewing to gain an understanding of the marketing and sales side of running a brewery. As an enthusiastic home brewer, Sirianni had a plan to create a craft beer-based business, but there was no model, no handbook, for creating a sustainable and scalable brewery, restaurant, and distribution enterprise.

"Erie Brewing was a good big brother to kind of foster some ideas even though we were working on completely different scales," Sirianni says.

In 2006, after five years of research and business planning, Sirianni opened The Brewerrie at Union Station. The bones of Hoppers Brewpub and Erie Brewing still remained and Sirianni was a champion for its resurrection under his brand and his vision for that space. The following year, The Brewerrie hosted its first Brewers' Cup. That inaugural event brought together just a few home brewers who began a conversation about their trade and their vision and the potential for future collaborations.

"It's a unique set of science and art that only some people are drawn to," says Jason Lavery, president and owner of Lavery Brewing Company, "so it forms this fraternal bond with these guys who want to do the same thing as you. And it's alcohol, so that helps too."

Lavery attended that first Brewers' Cup as a home brewer and watched the event grow substantially over the past eight years. The feedback that he received from other home brewers and the general public led him to approach Sirianni about an apprenticeship at The Brewerrie to learn about large-batch brewing and pick up tips on building a pub and a brand.

"The Brewers' Cup has become the community's farm system for craft beer," says Sirianni, "because there's minimal crossover from homebrewing

to running a brewery. The ingredients are the same, but that's where it ends."

The collaboration of established and emergent brewers was a byproduct of the Brewers' Cup that yielded some of the region's most notable breweries, including Lavery Brewing Company and Erie Ale Works in Erie, Timber Creek Brewery in Meadville, Millcreek Brewing in West Erie, and even it highlighted Tate Warren, the head brewer at The Brewerrie at Union Station, who took four of six awards at the Brewer's Cup the year before stepping into the brewer's boots for Sirianni.

That "farm system" model helped build industries in America from steel and coal to microchips and semiconductors. As the industries scale, competition becomes fiercer. But Lavery believes that type of competition is most problematic for national brands.

"When you think about the history of American brewing, the big three – Budweiser, Miller, and Coors – have always fought each other because they're basically making the same style of beer," Lavery says. "Now you have 3,000 small brewers making 18,000 different styles of beer and doing whatever we can to promote each other's quirkiness and working together whenever we can to better our industry. We're still the small guy. Craft beer has 7 percent of the market share, so 93 out of every 100 beers is still Bud, Miller, or Coors. The Brewer's Association's official goal is to have 20 percent of the market by 2020. The only way you get to that goal is by working together."

That collaborative spirit led to the inaugural Erie Craft Beer Week, which begins May 13 with the launch of a collectively brewed Pear India Pale Ale. It's the love child of Erie Brewing Company, The Brewerrie at Union Station, Lavery Brewing Company, Erie Ale Works, Voodoo Brewing Company, Timber Creek Tap & Table, Sprague Farm & Brew Works, and Blue Canoe Brewing, and it's intended to raise awareness of the industry as well as the brands behind it.

While Erie may never see plumes from old smokestacks in its industrial future, the craft brewers' movement reminds us that authentic regional collaboration will trump artificial competition as a seed for innovation and growth in the rising tide of the 21st Century.

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



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RYAN SMITH

2015 Summer Music Festival Preview

Your guide to 15 upcoming events and series in the Erie region

Summer Programming at the Chautauqua Institution

The Skinny: For decades, our region's bookworms, news junkies, thinkers, and innovators have flocked to the Chautauqua Institution in Western New York for intellectual stimulation. This summer's programming continues that proud tradition.

Take Friday, July 31 for example.

Within a single day, The Rev. Dr. Dwight D. Andrews will explore the relationship between jazz and spirituality, two high-profile political strategists (Fred Davis and Mark Putnam) will offer insights about presidential campaigns, the life of an African American seamstress in 1905 will unravel in Lynn Nottage's play *Intimate Apparel*, the Chautauqua Opera will perform Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin, and Garrison Keillor will close things out with his whimsical storytelling.

If that's not enough, the Institution also features two art galleries, a sculpture garden, several dining establishments,

and plenty of places to admire Chautauqua Lake as you debate the day's merits. Better still, it's only a forty-minute drive from Erie.

On Radars Because: The range and diversity of high-quality programming is really phenomenal, and unusual – there aren't many places in the world where Charlie Rose, the Beach Boys, former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, and the top five contestants from season 14 of *American Idol* can all appear within a month.

You Should Attend Because: A comprehensive list of the worthwhile events would go on for pages. Like fiction? Drop by on Thursday, July 30 to hear Emily St. John Mandel read from her apocalyptic, fragmented character study *Station Eleven*. Maybe dancing is more your thing? On Tuesday, July 21 the Golden Dragon Acrobats will take to the stage, drawing inspiration from twenty-five centuries of Chinese gymnastics. For history buffs, Pulitzer-Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson will explain the African American migration from the south to the north during the

Jim Crow era (and beyond) on Thursday, August 6.

And there's plenty more – for a full listing of the summer's events, check out Chautauqua's website at ciweb.org.
– Dan Schank

8 Great Tuesdays

The Skinny: 8 Great Tuesdays makes for eight great parties on Tuesdays, unsurprisingly. Port Erie hosts this free concert series every year, drawing in thousands of people to the Burger King Amphitheater at Liberty Park for its great live music and fun atmosphere, with artists like country music artist Chris Higbee and Americana roots rockers Donna the Buffalo in store for the 2015 lineup. Even more, Higbee will lead the bike parade from Harley Davidson of Erie Bikefest up to Liberty Park before his July 14 concert.

On Radars Because: It's about the biggest party that you'll find on a Tuesday, making the typically tame weekday feel like a Saturday jam. Past performers have blown the roof off of the amphitheater (figuratively, of course, as literally

blowing off the roof would be quite terrifying and costly). Erieites have grown accustomed to seeing great summer shows like Rusted Root, Walter Trout, and Here Come the Mummies with local favorites Falling Hollywood all for free.

You Should Attend Because: It's like a massive party in a club – but it's outdoors, on the bay, next to the beautiful lake, and it's free. In fact, it's like eight of those. While the full 8 Great Tuesdays schedule was not available before the *Reader* went to print, it's a pretty safe bet that Erieites won't be disappointed, especially since Higbee, Donna the Buffalo, and a strong possibility of The Clarks will make up three-eighths of the lineup. What's more is that 8 Great Tuesdays is about more than just the music, as simply experiencing the event makes for a good time. The view alone of a packed concert along the Bayfront is worth a trip or eight to Liberty Park, plus there is always all of the festival food to enjoy.

– Alex Bieler

Top left: The Chautauqua Institution's summer program runs June 27 through Aug. 30. **Right:** The 11-year-old jamboree that is Edinboro Art and Music Festival kicks off the third weekend of May.

Edinboro Art and Music Festival

The Skinny: It's coming up on the third weekend of May in northwestern Pennsylvania – blooming, balmy (maybe), and beautiful.

And, in nearby, sunny (maybe) Edinboro – just like it has for the past decade or so – that means music, lotsa music, that's all good, and all free, and plentiful enough to fill up a few almost-summer days and nights.

Starting the night of Thursday, May 14 and continuing through Sunday, May 17, the Downtown Edinboro Art and Music Festival – deep-steeped and well-simmered in the fine, long-storied lines of Appalachian music and folk traditions – is always a sweet, sweet way to usher in the Erie region's music festival season.



On Radars Because: I've said this before: One of the coolest things I've found about this one (and I've been to every one) is that it's a pretty good-and-sizable gathering, one that may attract some thousands over that three-day stretch. But, no matter where you go, it feels small, and intimate, and unhurried.

And good damn fun for the whole family, at that.

You Should Attend Because: This year's fest kicks off with its traditional opening jam by organizers/hosts/pickers Fred Parker and Friends, followed up by longtime East Coast jam masters/mainstays Donna the Buffalo Thursday night at Culbertson Hills near downtown Edinboro.

From there, for a good few days, it just sorta doesn't stop, featuring headlining sets by regional favorites like Big Leg Emma, Jim Avett, and Driftwood, along with well-known local acts like Eric Brewer & Friends, Potwhole, Claire Stuczynski, and Tiger Maple String Band. There's lots of other worthwhile music there, too, along with all manner of cool arts and crafts, cool artists and crafters, and cool workshops on things related to art-ting and craft-ing (that's the 'Art' part of the festival).

The now-11-year-old jamboree "kinda has its own little personality," said Parker, the Edinboro gallery owner who leads Tiger Maple String Band and is one of the annual event's chief volunteer organizers.

Chances are, if you've been there before, you'll know what he means – and, probably, be planning on coming back.

Putting it into a this-is-like-that context, "I think of us as the little sister festival to the Great Blue Heron Music Festival," Parker said, talking about one of the region's premiere summer live-music events, featuring many of the same performers (plus more) on Fourth of July Weekend in nearby Sherman, N.Y.

That makes sense: Both may be a little way from home for most, but, for almost everybody, being there feels a lot like being with family.

For more details, head on over to EdinboroArtAndMusic.com to start making those mid-May plans.

– Ryan Smith

Great Blue Heron Music Festival

The Skinny: At the Great Blue Heron Music Festival, it's seemed to me, you're apt to run into a lot of friendly folks, in cozy situations, enjoying good

live music, and good-life times.

"I've been right here for the last 20 years," a wide-smiled guy said to me one of those times, showing off his wife, his daughter, and his grandchild while they all relaxed and jammed out together in the same spot he's always (really, always – for the last 20 years) set up around at the Great Blue Heron.

"Just look out there," he said. "It's beautiful."

Dude was talking about the Heron's rolling, lush-wooded grounds in nearby Sherman, N.Y. (where the festival, now in its 24th year, will be happening again on Fourth of July weekend). He was talking about the music (at that moment, a crazy-awesome, blow-out Sunday-closer set by area jam powerhouse Big Leg Emma – and pretty much everything that came before it). And he was talking about the people, and the place in general: It seemed to him (and it seems to me, and alotta other folks, too) that there may be, indeed, some kinda good magic in them there hills.

On Radars Because: Putting that good magic to good music – and plenty of it – this year's Heron lineup, soaring from July 3 through 5, includes performances by Donna the

Buffalo, The Town Pants, Los Straightjackets, Driftwood, Smackdab, Jimkata, Big Mean Sound Machine, Big Leg Emma, Sean Patrick McGraw, and a couple dozen more jam/roots/rock heavy-hitters from around the region.

You Should Attend Because: Getting down at the Heron, well, it's an experience to have, and have well.

"This isn't a crowd – it's a community," Erie resident Renee Semrau, who's been a part of the Heron family most years in the last decade or so (as a vendor, volunteer, or regular ticket-holder) said to me when I ran into her there a couple of years back. "Sometimes I think, 'We've hit every realm of this place possible' – until we come next year, and it's a totally different experience."

And "each of those experiences changes you," she said. "That's why people keep coming back to this... (and) everyone just gets closer. Here," – and she meant right there, right then – "people are beautiful. There's just that essence in this land."

Lots of other people, from festival-goers to performing artists to grandparents to event organizers to volunteer garbage collectors, have said much the same thing when

Just slightly more than 30 miles northwest of Erie, Sherman, N.Y. celebrates the Great Blue Heron Music Festival Fourth of July weekend.

I've asked them to talk about the Heron.

And, in my experience, their heads and hearts are right in the right place.

For a full lineup and other details, tickets, directions and everything else you wanna know about the Heron – past and near-future – visit greatblueheron.com.

– Ryan Smith

Romolo Chocolates Summer Music Series

The Skinny: Moving deftly from chocolatier to impresario, Romolo Chocolates owner Tony Stefanelli is entering his sixth year of presenting arguably the highest quality music series in the Erie region.

There's only one way to put Stefanelli's free summer music series: It's his gift to music lovers, like himself, the overall community and of course, his customers

For this year, all artist contracts had not been signed by the *Erie Reader's* deadline, so Stefanelli was unable to provide the schedule or lineup.

Judging from the past, however, the concerts will be held



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FEATURE

June through August (unless Stefanelli is extra generous this year and adds a September date).

On Radars Because: Looking at past lineups, we can almost be certain of the high quality of musicianship among Stefanelli's choices. Most will be nationally/internationally-known and critically-acclaimed, one or more will be a poll winner (Downbeat, JazzTimes, Jazz Journalists Association), or possibly even a Grammy recipient.

Stefanelli got started by sticking a toe in the music promoter/presenter waters in 2010, hiring individual musicians from New York and elsewhere to be featured with local rhythm sections, usually JD Jazz (Joe Dorris, drums; Frank Singer, guitar, and on at least one occasion, the highly regarded bassist Tony Grey).

One of the noteworthy things about Stefanelli's bookings is his choice of less common instruments in jazz, such as harmonica (Hendrik Meurkens) and violin (Christian Howes). You might also place vibraphone or vibes (Meurkens) and multi-percussion (the all-female group Cocomama)

in the "uncommon" category.

Perhaps Stefanelli explained this penchant in a past interview. "I don't like doing typical things," he said. "If I build a candy store, it's not a typical candy shop. Even when I played music, I tried to step out of the norm and see what happened."

A bassist for many years, Stefanelli studied for two summers in New York with the great Dave Holland under a grant he received.

You Should Attend Because: Some of the most exciting moments in the summer series result from Stefanelli's curiosity and adventurousness.

Howes, who opened the 2013 season, was little known, even among the most knowledgeable jazz fans. They sure know him now. He was stunning and had folks abuzz with his incredible technique and high-voltage style. Wow, people were saying afterward.

On harmonica, Meurkens recalled – although didn't quite match – Jean "Toots" Thielmans, the now elderly master of the instrument.

Stefanelli has his faves who he'll hire almost every year. He calls it his "greatest hits" ap-



MICHELLE CHYLINSKI

proach – bringing back people who received enthusiastic receptions the first time around.

At the head of the list is live-wire, dramatic organist Tony Monaco. Don't be surprised if he shows up again this season. Tenor saxophonist and superior composer Pete Mills, Monaco's Columbus, Ohio pal (Howes also hails from Columbus) and colleague, may come along for the ride – and to play.

June will be here before we know it, so see you then on comfortably warm evenings (Stefanelli's had amazing luck with the weather) on the Romolo Chocolates piazza and the sprawling lawn between Romolos and the Bayfront Highway.

Get there early; music begins at 6 p.m.

– Bob Protzman

The Gathering at Chaffee's

The Skinny: I've said it before: This is one two-day fest that tons of folks from around

Top: Free and open to the public, the UPMC Sunset Music Series makes Wednesdays come alive on Presque Isle's Beach 1. **Left:** Violinist Christian Howes opened the Romolo Chocolate Music Series in 2013.

ANDREA CANTOR



here wait, with happy anticipation (and with good reason), all year long for – the good-and-intimate, and even more good-and-groovy, Gathering at Chaffee's.

On Radars Because: Keeping it small-ish, but continuing to spread out a little to keep including more and bigger regional and national acts, the 2015 Gathering lineup (like last year's) is a veritable who's-who of both well-established favorites and up-and-coming jam and rock masters, including The Heavy Pets, Consider the Source, Spiritual Rez, Big Something, Conehead Buddha, and the Hornitz, just to name just a few.

You Should Attend Because: Chaffee's is one where you can get good and comfortable right off the bat, and, after that, get set for plenty of awesome tunes and positive vibes. July 24-25 // 8296 Mill St., Girard // thegatheringatchaffees.com.

– Ryan Smith

Roar On The Shore

The Skinny: Whether you absolutely loved it, or totally hated it, hair-and-chainsaw-rock monsters Jackyl's appearance at the 2013 Roar on the Shore was, well, memorable.

And, this year, with frontman Jesse James Dupree serving as the massive motorcycle rally's grand marshal, no less, they're back again, along with hair-metal mavens L.A. Guns, April Wine and Dokken, making for what's sure to be another Roar to remember.

On Radar Because: As part of his duties (the ones that don't involve chainsaw solos, anyway), Dupree's set to lead an anticipated 5,000-plus bikers to the Hub at Perry Square before taking the stage with Jackyl around 9 p.m. Thursday, July 16.

The other headliners will fill the four-day event with a lot more high-hair, high-octane tunes: L.A. Guns at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 15; April Wine on Friday, July 17; and Dokken on Saturday, July 18.

You Should Attend Because: Organizers have said for the Roar-loving crowd, this year's lineup may just be the best one yet. July 15 to July 18 // DowntownErie.com // RoarOnTheShore.com

– Ryan Smith

Erie Downtown Block Party series

The Skinny: It's a set of summer music happenings (and

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The Erie Art Museum's two-day Blues and Jazz Festival at Frontier Park is Aug. 1 to 2.



WQLN Sounds Around Town

The Skinny: WQLN's already-very-cool Sounds Around Town events (all of which get recorded for airing both on Erie's public radio and TV stations) return this summer even more very-cool: There's an expanded schedule, a refurbished open-air performance space, and an all-new lineup of some of the region's finest live music-makers.

On Radars Because: The shows – free and open to all – start at 7 p.m. each Friday from July 10 through Aug. 7, pond-side at the pavilion on WQLN's campus. If it rains, no worries – they take it indoors, where showgoers can also take an opportunity to check out the inner workings of public media in Erie.

You Should Attend Because: This year's performers are The Groove (July 10); Tennessee Backporch (July 17); M4 (July 24); Tyler Smilo (July 31); and Daybreak Radio (Aug. 7).

Fridays, July 10 through Aug. 7 // WQLN Campus, 8425 Peach St. // wqln.org.
– Ryan Smith

Blues and Jazz Fest

The Skinny: The Erie Art Museum has put on this free two-day fest for over two decades, dedicating a day each to high-quality blues and jazz

from around the world.

On Radars Because: Blues and Jazz Fest brings in some pretty great performers, leading people to commit their weekend to hanging out at Frontier Park. Past standout acts have included George Burton, Roby "Supersax" Edwards, and Red Baraat, creating a festival atmosphere right on the corner of West Eighth Street and the Bayfront Parkway.

You Should Attend Because: It's two full days of blues, jazz, and fun right in Frontier Park. The No BS! Brass Band and Eddie Henderson's Trumpet Summit are set to play on Sunday – the fest's traditional jazz day – and given the event's success rate, the rest of the lineup should be pretty intriguing when it gets announced as well. Plus, Blues and Jazz Fest is a great place to see familiar faces and enjoy some entertainment all for the wonderful price of zero dollars, and we all know how great of a word "free" is.

Aug. 1-2 // Frontier Park // ErieArtMuseum.org
– Alex Bieler

CelebrateErie

The Skinny: Every summer, a large section of State Street in the heart of downtown Erie gets shut down so that Erieites can do two of the area's favorite things in the name of The Flagship City: listen to loud music and legally drink in public. Welcome to CelebrateErie.

On Radars Because: It's an Erie tradition. The event always brings in past classic rock heroes – although some may say that some of them might be a bit past their prime – with highlights including last year's Cheap Trick.

You Should Attend Because: It's another way to support your city. Regardless of how you feel about whoever gets named as a CelebrateErie headliner, there are always plenty of performances from Erie all stars, and sometimes even from a supergroup conveniently called the Erie All Stars. Add in the regular fea-

large gatherings of friends, and friendlies) that a lot of people in and around Erie wait through every fall, winter, and spring for: the Downtown Block Party series.

On Radars Because: Presented by the Erie Downtown Partnership as a way of promoting local, cool culture (and, at the same time, raising substantial funds for various area agencies and organizations), the block parties kick off June 4 with Geek Army and Whisky Road Rock Show performing at U Pick 6 Tap House on State Street, and keep happening every Thursday, with a new spot and new headliners every week, through Aug. 27.

You Should Attend Because: This year's installments of the series – now 10 years old and celebrating 'Rockin' the Block for a Decade' – features plenty of well-known-and-loved local performers and locales, along with lots of worthwhile causes to help.

Good reasons to party like it's (almost) the weekend. June 4 through Aug. 27 // Various Downtown Erie Locations // ErieDowntown.com, 455.ERIE
– Ryan Smith

UPMC Sunset Music Series

The Skinny: Between the middle of June and July each summer, right smack-dab in

the middle of the week, each week, majestic Presque Isle State Park becomes even more alive – with the sounds of some of the region's best live music.

On Radars Because: The UPMC Sunset Music Series brings it – open to and free of charge for everyone – to Presque Isle's beautiful Beach 1 every Wednesday evening, with shows starting up at 5:30 p.m.

You Should Attend Because: This year's Sunset Music Series kicks off June 10 with performances by The Romantic Era with Six Year Stretch, and runs through July 15, when it will wrap up with a show from

tures like the always fun chalk walk that adds some color to State Street and the artist colony and you have an event that has a little something for everyone.

Aug. 13-16 // Downtown Erie // celebrateerie.com – Alex Bieler

Erie County and Crawford County Fairs

The Skinny: As is tradition, both Erie and Crawford counties will put on a pair of fairs to celebrate the summer and provide Northwest Pennsylvania with live music, alternative events, and, of course, fair food like funnel cake.

On Radars Because: Both the Erie and Crawford county fairs have been providing Northwest Pennsylvania with good, family fun for years and give attendees plenty of chances to go see different musical acts and other interesting performances and eat funnel cake.

You Should Attend Because:

There's always a festive atmosphere at a county fair. Crawford already has a couple big country music names planned for this year, with both Justin Moore and Jake Owen set to visit Meadville in August. As for the Erie County Fair, there are a whole bunch of different events that should grab your attention, from Buffo the World's Strongest Clown to the antique tractor pull. And of course, there's always the funnel cake.

Erie: Aug. 24-30 // 13993 Route 8 & 89, Wattsburg // wattsburgeriecountyfair.com

Crawford: Begins Aug. 22 // 13291 Dickson Road, Meadville // crawfordcountyfairpa.com

– Alex Bieler

Presque Isle Downs Outdoor Summer Concert Series

The Skinny: Presque Isle Downs is going to help Erieites feel a little country this sum-

mer with five star-studded Friday night shows. The series will kick off The Charlie Daniels Band June 19 and won't stop packing plenty of country punch until Jamey Johnson closes out the quintet of concerts on Sept. 11.

On Radars Because: Erie loves a good country concert and the Outdoor Summer Concert Series has five of them on tap in 2015. Plus, you won't be cooped up inside for these shows; you'll be out next to the horse racing track. Plus, if you ever need to find a way to spend some time before and after the shows, there's always the casino itself.

You Should Attend Because: The Outdoor Summer Concert has something for country fans old and new. Ever wanted to hear The Charlie Daniels Band play "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" under an Erie sky? Here's your chance. Add in other big country

names like Travis Tritt, Jamey Johnson, Crystal Gayle, and Pam Tillis and Lorrie Morgan's Grits & Glamour Tour and you have a noteworthy music series on your hands.

June 19, July 3, Aug. 21, Aug. 28, and Sept. 11 // 8199 Perry Hwy. // presqueisledowns.com

– Alex Bieler

Schickalay's Summer Music Series

The Skinny: Of all the cool Erie gyro joints to go catch awesome, live summer-night shows, Schickalay's on the Bay is the one ... well, it's the one.

On Radars Because: Heading into only its second year of presenting its Summer Music Series in the large greenspace/open-air venue behind Schickalay's West Sixth Street establishment, the lineup is looking tasty, and damn stacked.

You Should Attend Because: Returning favorites Badfish (a Sublime tribute band) are

headlining the first night of the series on Sunday, May 31, along with local pop troupe The Romantic Era.

From there, there's eight more good shows (including a hum-dinger pro-wrestling event!) to try hard not to miss: Ark Band with Chaka on June 7; Zach Deputy with The L.E.C., June 21; Guns N' Roses tribute band November Rain with French Kiss, June 28; Freekbass with DJ Sneek, July 12; Jake's Blues with Eric Brewer & Friends, July 19; Pro Wrestling Rampage (PWR) Live, July 26; ekoostic hookah with Big Leg Emma, Aug. 9; and Mosaic Foundation with Preach+Connect, Aug. 23.

Head to the Schickalay's Facebook page for more details, and get ready to get nice and sun-and-sound-kissed close to home this summer. – Ryan Smith

May 31 through Aug. 23 // 2860 W. Sixth St. // facebook.com/SchickalaysOnTheBay

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May 13 — 6 p.m.
Victor's Restaurant, Bel Aire Clarion, 2800 W. 8 St. jazzerie.com.

Colony Club House Band

May 14 — 6:30 to 7 p.m.
Colony Club Pub & Grille, 2670 W. 8 St. jazzerie.com.

Donna the Buffalo at the Edinboro Arts Festival

May 14 — 7 p.m.
Parkers Framing Gallery, 111 Erie Street, Edinboro, edinboroartandmusic.com.

Gideon, Texas in July, Kublai Khan

May 14 — 5:30 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/beardedbabyproductions.

JazzErie's Next Generation Concert

May 14 — 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

General McLane High School, 11761 Edinboro Rd., Edinboro jazzerie.com.

Jesse James Weston

May 14 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Sprague Farm and Brew Works, 22113 US-6, Venango sleepingchainsaw.com.

Abadon Faluz and Uncle Tony's Pizza Shop

May 15 — 9 p.m.
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Chris Higbee

May 15 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy presqueisledowns.com.

Court of Mayhem

May 15 — 9 p.m.
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Dave Callaghan Quartet

May 15 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Wegman's Cafeteria, 6143 Peach St. jazzerie.com.

Erie Ale House Acoustics

May 15 — 9 p.m.
Erie Ale House, 1033 State St. facebook.com/ErieAleHouse.

Geeks Unplugged

May 15 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy presqueisledowns.com.

The High Life!

May 15 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Sprague Farm and Brew Works, 22113 US-6, Venango sleepingchainsaw.com.

Jeff Fetterman Band

May 15 — 8 p.m.
The Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. oasispuberie.com.

Next of Kin

May 15 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Doc Holiday's, 7425 Schultz Rd. 868.3267.

Sleepwave with Special Guests

May 15 — 6 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/beardedbabyproductions.

Sound City Saints

May 15 — 7 p.m.
The Beer Mug, 1108 Liberty St. facebook.com/pages/The-Beer-Mug.

Chris Mathers



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

After a Nearly Two Decades-long Break, The New Dylans are Back

Don't call the reformation of The New Dylans a comeback. No, the band - led by Jim Reilley and Reese Campbell - is taking care of some unfinished business after an 18-year hiatus, which includes a show at the Erie Art Museum Saturday, May 16.

Reilley and Campbell originally grew close after each had a parent pass away while they were young. That bond brought them back together again after Campbell's father passed away recently, causing Reilley to reminisce about how Campbell's dad helped support the band in its infancy. Eventually, it just made sense to bring the band back together after almost 20 years of silence, except now Reilley and Campbell have even more experience, and a Grammy nomination for Reilley back in 2003 to boot.

"To honor the blood, sweat, and tears and hundreds of days a year of not making any money and the people even 18 years later asking about The New Dylans, we figured we should honor that legacy and put out another record we could be proud of," Reilley says in his current hometown of Nashville.

While The New Dylans didn't domi-

nate the sales charts back in the '80s and '90s, the band certainly had quite a few fans, including R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe and notoriously picky critic Robert Christgau, and the new album *Meta* shows that Reilley and Campbell haven't lost any of that old magic.

The band's upcoming show at the Erie Art Museum is a homecoming for Reilley and Campbell, who are both originally from Warren. The concert will feature a documentary done by Nashville's *The Tennessean* about the band's return, followed by a show by the rejuvenated group, which now features former Wilco drummer Ken Coomer and Jo Dee Messina bassist Chris Autry.

"I'm sure there are people that don't understand why we're doing this at 53 years old, but the only reason I ever do anything - musically at least - is for myself," Reilley says. "It feels good and we feel like we have something to say."

You'll be able to hear The New Dylans message loud and clear when they return to Northwest Pennsylvania for a triumphant gig at the Erie Art Museum, an exhibition of a band that never truly quit and may be better than ever.

- Alex Bieler

7 p.m. Saturday, May 16 // 20 E. Fifth St. // erieartmuseum.org

New Exhibit features 'Loveletters to Erie', opens during Gallery Night

"To love is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken." - C. S. Lewis
 Oh, Erie... you break out hearts every day. To love you is like loving a child. Willful, stubborn, endearing. You could be so much more, but we give you our hearts, and our faith, and our energy in the fervent hope that your beautiful soul will see you through. Our options are to nurture you and embrace you or to give up on you and abandon you in our disappointment. But since we truly love you, we'll embrace the heartache along with the joy.

Stephanie Westley and Jeff Urraro haven't given up on Erie or on Urraro Gallery. With a new management structure and a committed team, they are putting energy and creativity into re-booting the gallery with artist, dancers, and writers in the new "Love Letters to Erie, PA" exhibition. The show opens Friday, May 22 (Gallery Night) and celebrates the variety of ex-

periences and creative expression in the Erie region. The show features the work of 20 artists including: Karley Miller, Vincent Harris, Scott McGrath, Cara Jung, and Jenna Colby, with intense poetic and musical performances by C. Brown and Shen & Bones.

Anyone who loves Erie (whether or not like a child) and wants what is best for her should consider participating in this dialog. The exhibition will make a strong statement by communicating individual experiences for viewers, open to their interpretation relative to their own experiences. "Love Letters to Erie, PA" will be a great opportunity for collectors and patrons of contemporary art, art lovers, and people inspired by cultural experiences, as well as those who want to feel the energy of something new and creative happening in Erie. - Bryan Toy

7 to 11 p.m. Friday, May 22 // Urraro Gallery, 135 W. 14th St. // facebook.com/urrarogallery

May 16 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy presqueisledowns.com.

Chris Higbee

May 16 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy presqueisledowns.com.

HipHop I.N.C. featuring Nino Bless

May 16 — 5 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/basement.transmissions.

Junction PA

May 16 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Sprague Farm and Brew Works, 22113 US-6, Venango sleepingchainsaw.com.

Kiss This (Kiss Tribute)

May 16 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

CALENDAR

Lords of the Highway, Sonic Medusa +2

May 16 — 9 p.m.

The Beer Mug, The Beer Mug, 1108 Liberty St. facebook.com/pages/The-Beer-Mug.

The New Dylans

May 16 — 7 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5 St. erieartmuseum.org.

Next of Kin

May 16 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Doc Holiday's, 7425 Schultz Rd. 868.3267.

Rodger L. Montgomery

May 16 — 10 p.m.

Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. 459.3800.

Six Year Stretch

May 16 — 8 p.m.

The Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. oasispuberie.com.

814 Woodfest

May 16, 17 — 12 p.m.

7099 Crane Rd., Edinboro, facebook.com/woodfest814

Liss Victory

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May 19 — 9 p.m.

King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

2Blue w/ Dave VanAmburg

May 20 — 6 p.m.

Victor's Restaurant, Bel Aire Clarion, 2800 W. 8 St. jazzerie.com.

Big Dog Acoustics

May 21 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Sprague Farm and Brew Works, 22113 US-6, Venango sleepingchainsaw.com.

Colony Club House Band

May 21 — 6:30 to 7 p.m.

Colony Club Pub & Grille, 2670 W. 8 St. jazzerie.com.

Saevitia, Pleading With Iris, and Altered Perceptions

May 21 — 6 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/basement.transmissions.

Six Year Stretch

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King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

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Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy presqueisledowns.com.

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May 22 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Doc Holiday's, 7425 Schultz Rd. 868.3267.

New Wave Nation

May 22 — 8 p.m.

Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Nick I am a Don



JOE JURIEWICZ

Celebrate Memorial Day Weekend with a Dance Party, Vinyl DJ Bash at Bobby's Place

Sometimes you just have to dance. It doesn't matter if you're light on your toes or if you've got two left feet, a little boogie can lead to a whole night of fun, especially when there's an all-vinyl DJ bash going on in The Flagship City.

Fortunately for you, there is an all-vinyl DJ bash planned for May 23 at Bobby's Place, with the Memorial Day Weekend Dance Party providing you the perfect outlet to move and groove. A talented trio of DJs will be pumping out jams from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m., as Ben Frazier, Steve Maynard, and Matt Texter will serve as music central for the dance party. Locals will know Maynard from his days as host of Bring Your Own Vinyl Night at the crooked i and Texter from his soulful solo work and emceeing skills at Bobby's Place's Open Mic Nights. Frazier current-

ly resides in Rochester, N.Y., but has some strong ties to Erie, thanks to the years he spent behind the counter at The Record Den in the '90s.

The three men will wield their vinyl collections in an attempt to make the most groovetastic, booty shake-inducing bash Erie has seen in a while (or at least this Memorial Day weekend). Between some classic hip-hop, Motown, new wave, and any other music that will get your toes a tappin' and your hips a swingin', Frazier, Maynard, and Texter are on a mission to make you move, so get your dancing shoes ready for a night at Bobby's Place May 23.

—Alex Bieler

9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Saturday, May 23 // 1202 W. 18 St. // 455.9840

The Voice Alive: A Celebration of Women's Voices Explores Theater, Poetry, and Music



JAY MORRISON

Sometimes, it's easy for women to get lost in the noise. The noise of work, the noise of the Internet, the noise — let's be honest — of men.

But if you listen, there are the women. And with *The Voice Alive: A Celebration of Women's Voices*, Doing Erie Productions is spending an entire day exploring theater, poetry, and music by and featuring strong women.

The docket is loaded with events, the highlights beginning with a 1 p.m. production of *Steel Magnolias* (not the movie, the play, which will still probably

make you cry) — written by Robert Harling as a way to cope with the passing of his sister; Saturday's performance is produced in arrangement with Dramatists Play Service. Krista Perry Lamb follows at 3 p.m. with her "Phenomenal Woman," a series of poetry and theatrical performances. Jane Martin's *Keely and Du*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning play, comes at 4 p.m., produced in arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Ibsen's classic *A Doll's House* takes the stage at 7 p.m., in what Doing Erie Productions is calling "the first modern play to promote the power of women." At 9 p.m., Karen Schelinski presents a female-driven *The Tell Tale Heart*, a spin on the Edgar Allan Poe short story. Alyssa Dreihaupt wraps things up with some last thoughts, and all throughout the day, Julia Kemp will provide music and act as Master of Ceremonies.

All told, it will be a day of not only listening to, but celebrating the female voice.

— Sara Toth

1 p.m. May 16// PACA 1505 State St.// \$10; \$5 after 6 p.m.

May 22 — 8 p.m.

The Hirt Auditorium, Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org

Rankin and Shell

May 22 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Sprague Farm and Brew Works, 22113 US-6, Venango sleepingchainsaw.com.

Salmon Frank

May 22 — 7 p.m.

Sunset Grill, 12690 Edinboro Rd., Edinboro edinborolakeresort.com.

Small Town Revolution

May 22 — 6 p.m.

Coconut Joe's, 28 N. Park Row. facebook.com/coconutjoes.

New Wave Nation

May 22 — 9 p.m.

Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Geeks Unplugged

May 23 — 5 to 7 p.m.

Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Geek Army

May 23 — 9 p.m.

Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Gordon Lightfoot

May 23 — 8 p.m.

The Warner Theater, 811 State St. erieevents.com.

I-90s

May 23 — 9 p.m.

Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Jim Tobin

May 23 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Sprague Farm and Brew Works, 22113 US-6, Venango sleepingchainsaw.com.

Man Woman Machine, Angelspit + 2

May 23 — 6 p.m.

Basement Transmission, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/beardedbabyproductions.

The Observers

May 23 — 9 p.m.

King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Head North, Bonfires

May 24 — 6 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/beardedbabyproductions.

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RAIN or SHINE

www.troikafestival.com

Refuge

May 22 — 6 to 9 p.m.
*Doc Holiday's, 7425
 Schultz Rd. 868.3267.*

FILM

Rocky Mountain Express

Ongoing — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
*Tom Ridge Environmental
 Center, 301 Peninsula
 Drive. trecpi.org.*

Living in the Age of Airplanes

Ongoing — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
*Tom Ridge Environmental
 Center, 301 Peninsula
 Drive. trecpi.org.*

Wonders of the Arctic

Ongoing — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m..
*Tom Ridge Environmental
 Center, 301 Peninsula
 Drive. trecpi.org.*

VISUAL ARTS

92nd Annual Spring Show

Ongoing — All Day
*Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5
 St. erieartmuseum.org.*

Geoff Dunn "Echo of the 7"

Ongoing beginning
 May 22 — All Day
*Glass Growers
 Gallery, 10 E. 5 St.
 glassgrowersgallery.com.*

Higherglyphics: Annex Stairwell Project, Annex Stairwell

Ongoing — All Day
*Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5
 St. erieartmuseum.org.*

Ian Brill: Storm, McCain Family Gallery

Ongoing — All Day
*Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5
 St. erieartmuseum.org.*

Heeschen's Creatures, Robert E. Holstein Gallery

Ongoing to May
 16 — All Day
*Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5
 St. erieartmuseum.org.*

Into the Common Ground by G.C. Meyers

Ongoing — All Day
*The Kada Gallery, The
 Shops at the Colony, 2632
 W. 8 St. kadagallery.com.*

Kristen Cliffl, Ronald E. Holstein Gallery

Ongoing beginning
 May 22 — All Day
*Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5
 St. erieartmuseum.org.*



Lake Erie Ballet Reimagines the Classic Book and Film: *The Wizard of Oz*

It's time to take a trip down the yellow brick road — but make sure your ballet slippers are laced up first. Lake Erie Ballet presents *The Wizard of Oz* this weekend, so find your sparkly red heels and give Toto a pat on the head as you walk out the door to head to the historic Warner Theater.

The production is a premier of a full-length, original ballet conceived by Lake Erie Ballet's new artistic director, Darren McIntyre, and features the company's dancers who hail from across the United States, Cuba, Brazil, Colombia, and Japan. Scoring the background will be the Lake Erie Ballet Orchestra, under the direction of Hugh Keelan, performing the original music of the 1939 classic film.

If an original ballet interpretation of a beloved book and film still isn't enough

for you, Sunday's performance will be a Matinee Masquerade, where all audience members are encouraged to come dressed as their favorite *Wizard of Oz* character. (Any favorite, including the flying monkeys. The flying monkeys just don't get any love.) Additionally, Lake Erie Ballet will present two special performances at the Warner: one for area students and one autism-friendly show, both Friday.

So whether you're a cowardly lion, a heartless tin man, a brainless scarecrow — or even a Dorothy, longing to find a way back home or back to the memories of your youth — Lake Erie Ballet's production of *The Wizard of Oz* will have something for you. Head off to see the *Wizard*: the wonderful *Wizard of Oz*.

— Sara Toth

**7 p.m. May 16, 2:30 p.m. May 17//
 811 State St. // 814-452-4857 or
 erieevents.com// Tickets \$26
 for adults; \$9.50 for children**



HipHop I.N.C. Featuring Nino Bless is an All-out Hip-Hop Extravaganza

On Saturday, May 16, Erie will be treated with more than just a hip-hop concert. You see, HipHop I.N.C., featuring Brooklyn rapper Nino Bless, will be an all-out hip-hop extravaganza at Basement Transmissions.

What makes a hip-hop extravaganza, you ask? Well, first you need some dope artists. Bless will lead a rock-solid lineup that will include fellow gifted emcees K Sanz, Odub, Heresy, Rastik, Elias, J2X, and CG, so this show has the music down pat. Next, a DJ exhibition would be pretty great. Good thing HipHop I.N.C. has four different DJs in store for May 16, DJ TZ, DJ Nitro, DJ Vanni, and DJ Robb all ready to impress.

Want more? You'll get more thanks to

a b-boy competition and a graffiti demo planned for the night, giving you some breakdancing and art to go along with a heavy dose of music. Add in some black lights and neon glow sticks into the mix, and you've got plenty of visual treats to pair with some high-quality hip-hop.

That's a lot of action in a single show, so it would be a shame to have to shut anyone out of the fun, which is why the event is open to all ages. From the audience to the entertainment, HipHop I.N.C. provides some all-inclusive hip-hop entertainment at Basement Transmissions.

— Alex Bieler

**5 p.m. Saturday, May 16 // 145 W. 11 St.
 // Tickets online at eventbrite.com.**

Mark Hulings: Original Paintings

Ongoing to May
 30 — All Day
*Meadville Fine Arts, 242
 Chestnut St., Meadville
 meadvilleart.com.*

Scott Rispin, Recent Paintings

Ongoing to May
 19 — All Day
*Glass Growers
 Gallery, 10 E. 5 St.
 glassgrowersgallery.com.*

The Stories We Don't Tell

Ongoing — All Day
*Kada Gallery, 2632 W. 8
 St. kadagallery.com.*

Up-Cycled Runway Project

May 16 — 9 a.m. to noon
*Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5
 St. erieartmuseum.org.*

DANCE

Lake Erie Ballet Present *Wizard of Oz*

May 16, 17 — 7 p.m.,
 May 18 — 2:30 p.m.
*Warner Theatre, 811 State
 St. lakeerieballet.org.*

FOOD & DRINK

The Brewerrie Release Night

May 13 — 4 to 11 p.m.
*The Brewerrie at Union
 Station, 123 W. 14 St.
 brewerrie.com.*

Erie Ale Works Release Night

May 13 — 5 to 8 p.m.
*Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12
 St. eriealeworks.com.*

Erie Brewing Company Parking Lot Party

May 13 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

*Erie Brewing Company,
 1213 Veshecco Dr.
 eriebrewingco.com.*

Lavery Brewing Release Night

May 13 — 5 to 10 p.m.
*Lavery Brewing
 Company, 128 W. 12 St.
 laverybrewing.com.*

814 Collaboration Tasting and Cheese Pairing

May 14 — 6 to 8 p.m.
*U Pick 6 Tap House, 333
 State St. upick6.com.*

Brewerrie Cellar Release Party

May 15 — 4 p.m. to midnight
*The Brewerrie at Union
 Station, 123 W. 14 St.
 brewerrie.com.*

CALENDAR

Erie Ale Works Small Batch Night

May 15 — 5 to 8 p.m.
Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12 St. eriealeworks.com.

Spring Into Spring Beers Sampling

May 15 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
1000 Beers Erie, 3852 Peach St. facebook.com/1000beerserie.

Lavery Brewing Cellar Release Party

May 15 — 4 p.m. to midnight
Lavery Brewing Company, 128 W. 12 St. laverybrewing.com.

Wine and Cheese Weekend

May 15 to 17 — All Day
Arrowhead Wine Cellars, 10273 E. Main Rd., North East arrowheadwine.com.

Wine and Spirit Store Tasting

May 15 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Wine and Spirits, 2421 Asbury Road courtyardwineries.com.

2015 Beer Run

May 16 — all day
Union Square, Downtown Erie. brewerie.com.

Meet and Tweet at the Brewery

May 16 — 5 to 7 p.m.
The Brewery at Union Station, 123 W. 14 St. brewerie.com.

Wine and Spirit Store Tasting

May 16 — 4 to 6 p.m.
Wine and Spirits, 2501 W. 12 St. courtyardwineries.com.

Wine and Watercolors

May 19 — 6 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. erieplayhouse.org.

Sushi Made Easy Cooking Class

May 20 — 5:30 p.m.
Frankie and May, 1101 Peninsula Dr. frankieandmay.com.

Wine and Spirits Store Tasting

May 22 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Wine and Spirits, 4466 Buffalo Rd. courtyardwineries.com.

Wine and Spirits Store Tasting

May 23 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Wine and Spirits, 3702 Liberty St. courtyardwineries.com.

Beach Glass Jewelry Making and Wine

May 24 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Courtyard Wineries, 10021

W. Main St., North East courtyardwineries.com.

THEATER

All An Act Presents Play On!

May 15, 16, 22, 23 — 7:30 p.m., May 17, 24 — 3 p.m.
Al An Act Theater, 652 W. 17 St. allanact.net.

Erie Playhouse Presents Peter Pan Jr.

May 15, 16 — 7 p.m., May 16, 17 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. erieplayhouse.org.

PACA Presents: "Calling the Moon" by Margo Wolfe

May 21 — 8 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. paca.ning.com

COMMUNITY/VARIETY

Erie SeaWolves vs Akron RubberDucks

May 13 — 11:05 a.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10 St. milb.com.

Edinboro Arts Festival

May 14 to 17 — All Day
Parkers Framing Gallery, 111 Erie St., Edinboro, edinboroartandmusic.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Richmond Flying



BRAD TRIANA

Seeing Believers: UFO Network Landing in Erie

With over 300 reports filed in the state each year, Pennsylvania is at the nation's epicenter for alien-sighting activity. That's according to the Pennsylvania branch of the international Mutual UFO Network, which, with thousands of members, has been monitoring reports of alien comings and goings around the world since 1969. "We're getting clusters of sightings from every town from Erie to Pittsburgh to Philly," MUFON Pennsylvania State Director John Ventre said in a recent news release. "I get reports of UFOs coming in from Lake Erie and across Wheeling, West Virginia; into the Pittsburgh area and they are seen minutes later on the eastern part of the state."

Fitting, then, that Pennsylvania MUFON will present its third annual UFO Conference at the Bayfront Convention Center on

Saturday, May 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The event will present a range of expert UFO speakers and investigators, including original Roswell case investigator Don Schmitt, a cast member from the History Channel's 'Hangar 1: The UFO Files' series, and several other MUFON officials and investigators from Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, New York and New Jersey. If you're already into these sorta things, there's good chances you've already gotten your tickets (some of the \$29 cost of admission benefits the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, by the way). If not, maybe consider checking it out— it just might make a believer outta you, too. — Ryan Smith

Saturday, May 16, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. // 1 Sassafraas Pier // mufonpa.com

vVictory on Vinyl: Artist formerly known as Life(Liss) Releasing Album in Erie

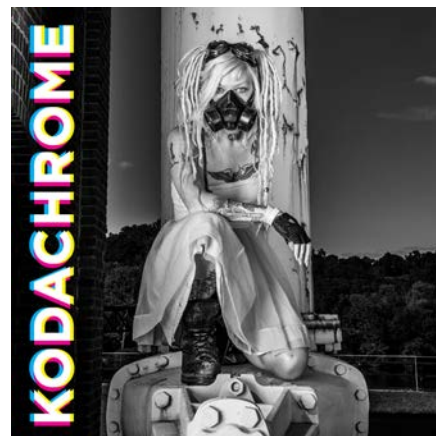
Erie-native artist Liss Victory is returning home to release a record that she says is a love letter, of sorts, to her new home city of Pittsburgh.

The album, *Kodachrome*, "wouldn't exist without the people I've met [there]," she said recently.

The result of the 'Burgh-inspired project is a limited edition, 7-inch vinyl record of new, original Victory songs, recorded and mastered at Pittsburgh's Electric Eye Recorders and Treelady Studios, respectively.

Victory, her new album, and her band, The Graveyard Orchestra, come to the King's Rook Club on Saturday, May 16 from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. to officially release the record, and rock the house with both Victory solo-acoustic and electrified full-band sets.

She'll be joined for the evening's free



MICHAEL P. SWEENEY & ERIN MCCANDLESS

show by local friends Andi Wonder-sound, Chet Atkins, and Matt (Broke) Boland.

Sounds like a few good reasons to join Victory for a lap back through her hometown.

— Ryan Smith

Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/LissAVictory

Squirrels

May 18 — 6:35 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10 St. milb.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Richmond Flying Squirrels

May 19 — 6:35 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10 St. milb.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Richmond Flying Squirrels

May 20 — 11:05 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10 St. milb.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Trenton Thunder

May 22 — 6:35 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10 St. milb.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Trenton Thunder

May 23 — 6:35 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110

E. 10 St. milb.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Trenton Thunder

May 24 — 1:35 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10 St. milb.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Trenton Thunder

May 25 — 1:35 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10 St. milb.com.

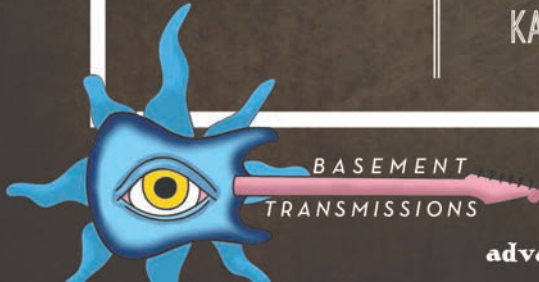
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It's Never Too Late: Financial Planning for All Ages

May 13 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Erie Center On Health
and Aging, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.com.

Teaching With Games: Does It Work

May 13 — 12:30 to 2 p.m.
Erie Center On Health
and Aging, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.com.

Taking Stock In Our Treasures

May 13 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

Erie Phil Lite Performance

May 14 — 5:30 to 7 p.m.
Erie Center On Health
and Aging, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.com.

Smoking Cessation Class

May 14 — 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Erie Center On Health
and Aging, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.com.

Understanding Medicare with Kendra White

May 14 — 12:30 to 2 p.m.
Erie Center On Health
and Aging, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.com.

Theodore Roosevelt and the Creation of the Modern Presidency

May 18 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

The Challenges of Being a Judge

May 19 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

Color Your World

May 19 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Erie Center On Health
and Aging, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.com.

"Il Duce" Benito Mussolini: The Rise and Fall of a Dictator

May 20 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

Making Your Case: Presented by Robert Wooler

May 20 — 9 to 11 a.m.
WQLN Learning Center,
8425 Peach St.

Free Clothing Giveaway

May 30 — 10-2 p.m.

The Church of
Jesus Christ
3126 State Street, Erie
814-860-1184



CALENDAR



GEEKERIE

Erie Library Comic Con Takes Over the Blasco

The first-ever Erie Library Comic Con is happening Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Blasco Library. With a slew of planned events and vendors lined up, local organizer Sean McGrath is looking to build an event for the community to celebrate comics, movies, games, geek culture, and more.

Interested in what to expect from Erie's first Comic Con? Let's take a look at some of the things slated for this year's schedule.

Kicking things off at 9 a.m., we have Comic Book Jeopardy! Sean described this as a "battle for geek supremacy!" Previous Jeopardy! contestant and winner Erie-native Adam Holquist will serve as the day's Alex Trebek (word's still out on whether he'll be sporting a mustache).

Right after that at 9:30, my personal good friends Forest Taylor and Cory Carr of Slaughterfilm, a podcast 'devoted to the movies that are legendary... even in hell!' will be hosting a William Castle, the Father of Interactive Cinema, Film Tribute - packing a lot of cool into just one hour.

There are also three panels to attend, including one with local professor Kris Wheaton, who will talk about his experience on Kickstarter and will give tips on how to keep production local while crowdfunding. And if you want to get your

hands dirty with creating comic books, attend one or all three of the Comic Book Activities where participants will learn how to design a character, write a story, and lay out a comic book page.

The Retrocade Erie will be showcasing the history of home video game consoles on the second floor (I hope they have a Vectrex! Those things were awesome!). And finally there will be a Warhammer 40k Tournament hosted by Game Corps, registration starts at 10 a.m. with a \$15 fee.

There will also be artists and vendors from around the tristate area selling merchandise in the main lobby. Vendors include Books Galore, Action Toyman, Games Corps, World War Games and Distractions, and Super Awesome Comics.

The entire thing - save the Warhammer Tournament - is free (as in, no admission fee to get into this whole-day event!) but there will be raffles of book baskets contributed by the Erie Library and an awesome basket graciously provided by none other than Erie's own Action Toyman.

So what are you waiting for? Head to the Blasco and explore and embrace your inner geek and revel in nerd culture - without having to leave the Gem City. - John Lindvay

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 16 // 160 E. Front St. // Facebook.com/TheGeekERIEofNWPA

Q.	TIME	REMARKS	NO.	TIME	REMARKS
HOUSE DRAFT - ON TAP - ABV %					
•		RAILWAY HEFE WEIZEN			4.5% <small>Try With Lemon or Orange!</small>
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•		HOPNESS MONSTER I.P.A.			6.7%
•		APPARITION AMBER ALE			7.2%
•		MAJOR MCNAIR'S NUT BROWN ALE			5.6%
•		BIG EASY			8.5%
•		DUNKEL WEIZEN			5.1%
•		MAI HONEY BOCK			7.8%
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Local Brewers Unite for First-ever Erie Craft Beer Week

Erie Craft Beer Week begins May 11 and continues through to May 17. With Erie becoming a craft beer mecca, more beautiful words have rarely been uttered in this town. Pittsburgh has been celebrating Craft Beer Week for several years now, but now you don't have to travel to celebrate these elixirs and the brewers who make them.

To help commemorate ECBW, eight Northwestern PA brewers came together to brew an 814 Collaboration Beer – a pear IPA – which can only be found at local

pubs this week.

Below is a sampling of some of the sudsy events planned for Erie Craft Beer Week at Erie Ale Works, Erie Brewing, Lavery Brewing Company, and The Brewerrie at Union Station:

Wednesday, May 13: 814 Collaboration Brewery Release Night – Erie Brewing Company Parking Lot Party: Open sampling for \$10 includes free pizza and cupcakes.

Thursday, May 14: 814 Collaboration Bar & Restaurant Release Night – U Pick 6 Tap House from 6 to 8 p.m. 814 Collaboration Tasting & Cheese Pairing.

Friday, May 15: Special Events Night –

Cellar release parties and limited edition tastings at 1000 Beers on Peach Street and the breweries themselves.

Saturday May 16: Meet & Tweet – Join all eight collaborative brewers for eats, drinks, and mean tweets! Hosted at The Brewerrie at Union Station from 5 to 7 p.m. Meet the brewers, learn about their beers,

and watch them read mean tweets! Additionally, each brewery will have two styles of beers on hand for an open tasting with hors d'oeuvre. Tickets are \$25/person.

We don't know about you, but we at the Reader plan on being late to work a lot this week.

—Bryan Toy






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LISS VICTORY
KODACHROME
RECORD RELEASE
+CHET VINCENT
+BROKE BOLAND
+GRAVEYARD ORCHESTRA
- FRI 5/22**
ALEX HALL'S FIGUREHEAD
- SAT 5/23**
THE OBSERVERS
- FRI 5/29**
AFTER FUNK
- SAT 5/30**
GNOSIS
+WANYAMA
- FRI 6/5**
TWO BRIDGES
+SEANN CLARK
- FRI 6/12**
IMPERIAL BROWN
- SAT 6/13**
SKYPILOT
- FRI 6/19**
FLETCHER'S GROVE
- SAT 6/20**
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+RON YARMAN

MUSIC REVIEWS

My Morning Jacket

The Waterfall
ATO



Over the years, Jim James has given his all for My Morning Jacket – including a few life-threatening injuries sustained during touring – so it's no surprise that the band goes all out on new album *The Waterfall*. That fact doesn't change on *The Waterfall*, an album that finds My Morning Jacket channeling everything from R&B to synth-rock, all with James' tremendous voice leading the way. James' vocals are the highlight of this album; this is the man who could send shivers down peoples' spines on past songs like "Wordless Chorus." James can bend listeners to his will just by making noises, his mastery of singing on soaring tracks like "Believe (Nobody Knows)" certainly don't come as a shock. But then he still manages to add that trademark gravitas to songs like the slinky "Compound Fracture" or add some extra brawn to "Spring (Among the Living)." It all adds up to a memorable album from the veteran band.
– Alex Bieler

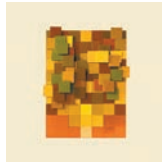


Frame and Mantle

While Our Fields Lie Fallow
Independent



After the first track, you know this album is a journey. A band concerned more with dynamics and ambiance than wailing moments of guitar virtuosity, the debut EP of Erie's Frame and Mantle functions much like a sine wave on both the level of song and album. Each individual piece takes us through the highs and lows of life in Western Pa., expertly overlaying melodies with fluctuating rhythms. The EP itself opens in a neutral space, a winding grind that eventually culminates in the heaviest track, "A World of Numbers." The next track, "Somewhere Out There, Someone's House Is On Fire," is the album's lowest sonic space, its eerie drone and distant, spoken-word lyrics reminiscent of *The World is a Beautiful Place & I am No Longer Afraid to Die's* 2014 release, *Between Bodies*. In this track, and many others, vocalist Richie Colosimo finds a way to work in a good scream. This EP takes you places, lets you soar, and knocks you down, only to bring you back to Earth.
– Chris Sexauer



Jose James

Yesterday I Had the Blues: The Music of Billie Holiday; Blue Note



"Billie would be proud." Singer Jose James pays that high compliment to his accompanying trio, but it could just as easily be applied to James and the album. With his unique voice and style – soft, delicate, quietly expressive – he proves perfectly suited to tribute Holiday. He gives super-sensitive readings – without wallowing – to several Holiday signature songs. Of those, "Lover Man" stands out vocally and gets a big boost from the dynamic pianist Jason Moran, who is marvelous throughout. As soulful balladeer, James interprets several standards, the highlight being an exquisite "Tenderly." Not overlooking the swinging side of Billie, James romps at a racehorse pace through "What a Little Moonlight Can Do," turning loose Moran, bassist John Patitucci, and drummer Eric Harland. "Strange Fruit," the powerful song about lynching of blacks in the South, appropriately ends the nine-song CD with passion (rage?) from James and a mournful "chain gang" chant hummed by the band. – Bob Protzman

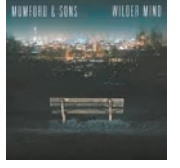


Mumford and Sons

Wilder Mind
Gentlemen of the Road/ Glassnote



For many, *Wilder Mind* will be the most scrutinized album of 2015. And for decent reason; when resident folk rockers who became both the darlings and poster boys of the vest-donning, handlebar-mustache scene decided to ditch the banjo and kick-drum in favor of solid-body guitars and swelling synths, listeners had to at least wonder why – why depart from what you know will sell out stadiums packed with hipsters and bros alike standing shoulder to shoulder in Americana unity? And for many, comparisons will abound in an attempt to define Mumford's new sound – a little bit of The National here, some of The Killers over there, hints of Coldplay throughout, and undertones of The War On Drugs all aren't without merit. But neither is *Mumford and Sons*. The underlying propulsion and drive remain, and *rawk* has always been there. But the raw, frenetic energy of Marcus Mumford's vocals coupled with the band's rich, thick harmonies is dialed back – the one place the volume knob should've been left on eleven. – Ben Speggen



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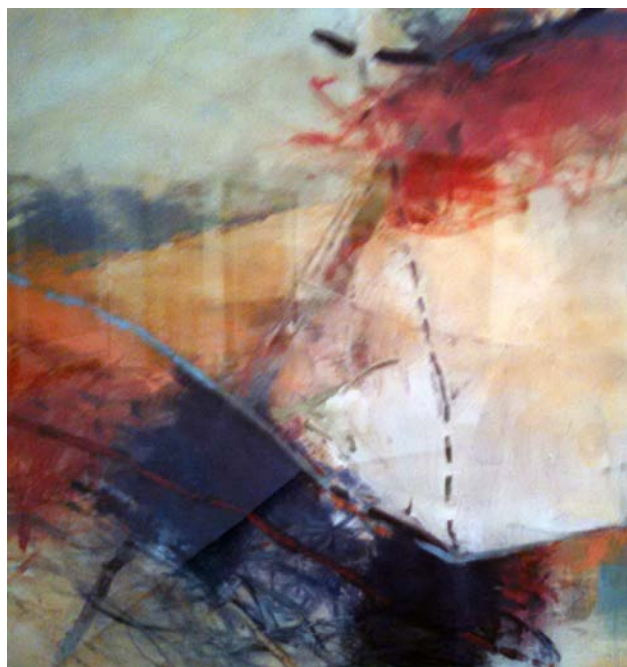
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Erie Art Museum's 92nd Spring Show

The annual exhibition showcases the best of Erie artists and beyond.



By: Bryan Toy (formerly writing as Pen Ealain)

It's common knowledge that a juried show is only as good as it's juror. Curator, author, and museum professional Jo Farb Hernández served as the juror for this year's Spring Show. She has put together dozens, if not hundreds of exhibitions in her lifetime and knows how to showcase art in a unified, dynamic, and compelling way. She used that expertise to great effect when she selected from more than 800 new works from artists residing within 250 miles of the City of Erie to populate this year's absorbing Spring Show.

The level of visual arts talent in Erie and its environs on display here is astounding. I've said it before, but it bears repeating: Erie can give any city ten-times its size a run for its money when it comes to the arts. Evidence is everywhere as you wander through this exhibition.

Our first confirmations are some truly evocative photos that instantly pull up memories of times and places past. Mac Kinsch's photo of lonely ice machines standing inexplicably in a row, "Ice" is a cross between a graveyard and a circus, but may have you revisiting every convenience store you ever frequented in your mind's eye. Kathleen Prosperi-McClord reminds us of the impermanence of all things and the ultimate victory of nature with her spooky winter depiction of the collapsed Kinzua railroad bridge.

Street photography is a tradition dat-

ing back to the late-1800s. Mike Conway brings us up close to a man with emphatically expressive hands engaged in a front stoop conversation with an unseen listener in "Favorite." Dorothy Kloss has been using her primitive darkroom techniques to bring us consecrations of the haunting and ghostly for several years

Erie can give any city ten-times its size a run for its money when it comes to the arts. Evidence is everywhere as you wander through this exhibition.

now, and her gelatin silver print, "Window of Time" is as spooky as they come.

If you are looking for virtuoso painting prowess put toward the use that it was intended, look no further than Alison Stinely's "Nocturnal Emissions." Voted on by the membership of the Northwest Pennsylvania Artist Association for their yearly merit award, this feat of accomplished technical anatomical representation brings the viewer to question

issues of misogyny and female sexual empowerment. Spend some time with its disturbing sexual content and marvel at the discrepancy between the image's disconcerting perspective and the exquisite colors of the artist's flesh tones.

Speaking of technical mastery of the artists' chosen media, be sure to check out Max Paich's expressive line work in his intaglio print, "Indeterminate" and the impressive lighting and realistic textures achieved in the trompe l'oeil, "When the Devil Beats His Wife" by Paul McMillan from Pittsburgh. This oil painting deservedly won a Juror Award.

You might also be impressed with another Juror Award winning oil painting, Josh's Mitchell's "La Mia Lotta," a life-sized male nude study that, despite its initial impression of realism, will throw you for a loop when you look at it a second time.

Any artist who entered but was not selected for this year's Spring Show has nothing to be ashamed about. The level of craftsmanship and imagination displayed here is astonishing. I like to pick up my rejected work early so I can peruse the great pieces that didn't get in. This year, as always, there was some wonderful stuff sadly waiting to go home unseen, but that simply can't be helped. Four/fifths of the entries don't make the cut.

With that said, it seems inevitable that each year the juror makes at least a couple of choices of poor or mediocre art that

92nd Spring Show: Ron Bayuzick's "Wrapper Stop" (left), Kathleen Prosperi-McClord's "Drama in the Valley," and (opposite page) Paul McMillan's "When the Devil Beats His Wife."

end up excluding truly excellent work. There two pieces of art here that were obviously done by children. Say what you will about the creative spirit of the child, but allowing these pieces to take up a place that could have held a Schanz or a Borowicz is akin to a Michelin three-star restaurant having Twinkies on the desert menu. It's baffling to see but might be understandable with the dizzying array of art that the juror sees during the process of putting together a show.

Some well-known artists did make the show, of course. Daniel Burke usually impresses jurors who have not seen his work before, despite that his layered cut-up wooden wall sculptures often have little new to say. Here, "with UPS, Downs, and Sideways," it's refreshing to see the iconography he uses switched up a bit, with his usual birds replaced with rats and subtle but recognizable UPS shields. Potter Tom Hubert has a couple vessels in this show. His teapots always struck me as wholly unique, so in years when the Spring Show is devoid of ceramics, it's been disappointing.

Not so this year. This year we get treated to a huge variety of media. Ceramics, photography, and painting, of course, but

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

also jewelry (“Mineralogy” by Jennifer Laird impresses), paper collage (“Calculation” and “Hello From” by Sandra Lopez are small, but intriguing), and even computer game design and animation (unfortunately, Brandon Lipchick’s interactive digital environment “Spin Racer” is glitchy. I managed to make it not work with the accidental pressing of the escape key. Oops. It just goes to show that if an artist wants their artwork touched by art critics, they should make it more idiot-proof.)

Ms. Hernández, the juror, has expertise in art from across time and culture so she was unafraid to mix it up and give us a show that showcases dozens of different styles. Abstract master Ron Bayuzick impresses as always with his deft handling of color and composition. Found object assemblages abound throughout the gallery. There is a fairly traditionally pieced quilt by Lynn Marie Fizzel. Hard-edged geometrics show up from Jason Oros and George Roland. A painting on cardboard by Hayden Siebert will satisfy your craving for outsider art. There are even a couple landscapes by William D. Simon and Douglas Unger – a rarity in any Spring Show.

Perhaps the most intriguing piece in the show is a multi-media parody of Ameri-

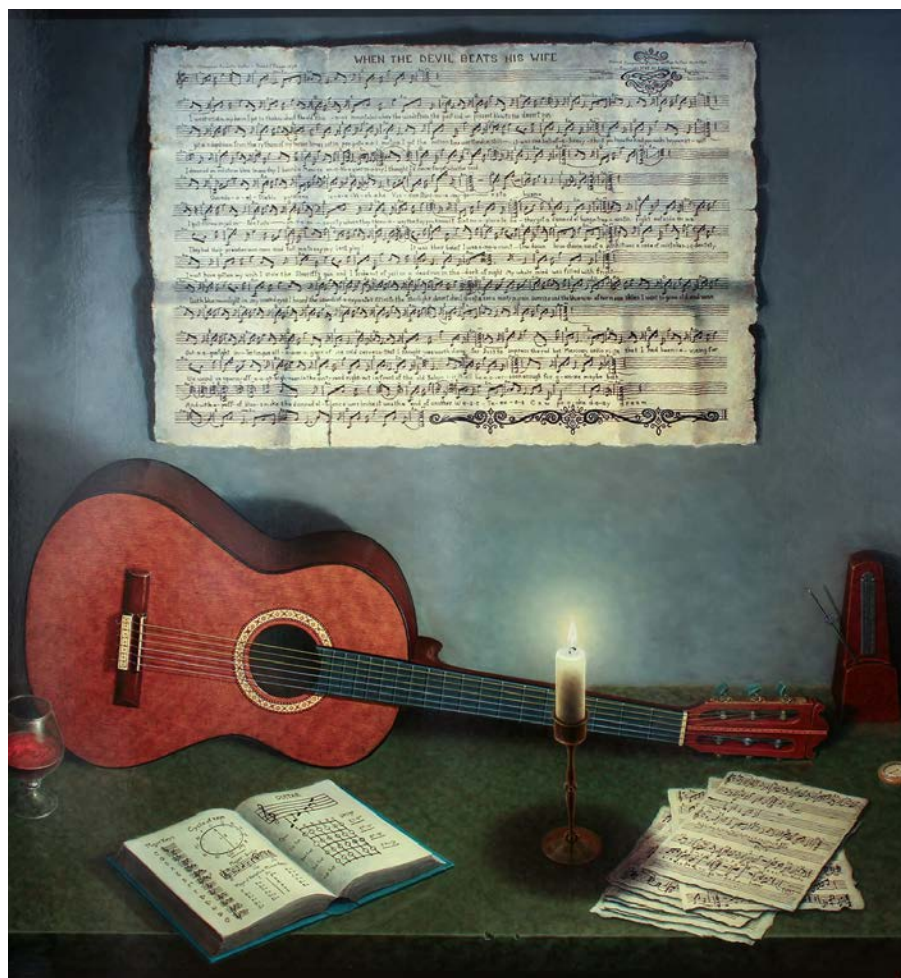
can media and its relationship to society by Rich Tomasello of Buffalo. It defies description here in limited space, so you will just have to check it out yourself.


The Erie Art Museum Spring Show is well worth you checking out this year because it showcases something that Erie does incredibly well – make art.


Overall, the Erie Art Museum Spring Show is well worth you checking out this year because it showcases something that Erie does incredibly well – make art.

The Erie Art Museum is located at 411 State St, Erie, PA, but the entrance is just around the corner at 20 E. Fifth St. Museum Hours: Tuesday – Thursdays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m.

Bryan Toy can be contacted at bToy@ErieReader.com








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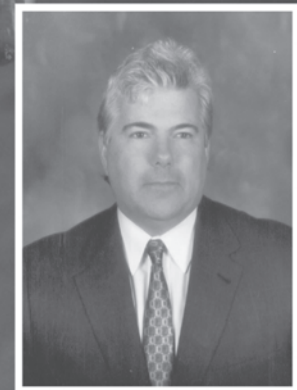
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Geeked Out

Avengers: Age Of Ultron features the building-smashing and city-destroying scenes you'd expect, but two unexpected characters steal the show.

By: John Lindvay

Avengers Assemble! *Age of Ultron* is in theaters now and fans of the Marvel Comic Universe (MCU) have been ravenously culling through it to see how it forwards both the Avengers and MCU plotlines.

As a fan of the previous film and of Joss Whedon's work in general, I finally got into the theater to see how the latest *Avengers* film shook out. My interest in the film was especially piqued when I heard some rumblings about Scarlett Johanson's Black Widow and how her story would be advanced.

So let's jam about superheroes. First, I should note that I really liked *Avengers*. It was everything that I wanted from a comic book-turned blockbuster film – chiefly because comic book movies featuring yet another origin story for characters who have existed in pop culture for decades have been leaving me fatigued (I'm looking at you, Spidey and Wolverine!). With *Avengers*, the main team is established, they have a mission, and more time is spent on the dynamics of these super humans than on where they each come from.

Whedon is also notorious for his ability to have groups of strong characters interact and to make those interactions meaningful and interesting; just ask any fan of *Firefly* why it was so great and witness a frothing mouth of excitement. Marry in that great character interaction with glorious fight scenes, featuring the Hulk tearing through the city in one of the greatest, and probably most fun to make, CG action sequences of all time and you've got a truly amazing – and worthwhile – comic film.

Age of Ultron starts off at a sprint and rarely slows down. The Avenger crew – with multiple independent films – has



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

been at this awhile; here they're at work trying to relocate Loki's staff and snub out the remaining forces of Hydra. Snarky lines – great writing! – are exchanged between the characters as they assault a Hydra base, establishing that this is just another day in the life of the Avengers.

But a lot of a cool thing can be heavy and exhausting. A good friend of mine related his experience of the film to me like this: "The movie was like chocolate cake; I love it... but by the end, I ate a whole chocolate cake..." I know the feeling, both figuratively and literally. *Ultron* was exactly what I expected it to be (great!), but by the end, I didn't have the same satisfaction I did from the first one. I enjoyed the pace, the dialogue, and the action completely, but I wanted

something... something unexpected – something more than rich, sweet chocolate cake.

I find it hard to blame Whedon, as he doesn't have much leeway to put major characters like Iron Man or Captain America on the chopping block. That being said, they do set Hawkeye up as this film's martyr, but I won't spoil that for you (a Black Widow spoiler ahead, though).

My main complaints were that the camera work was shakier than before, which is a bummer after seeing films like *John Wick* that remind everyone that action shots doesn't mean the camera needs to be strapped to the back of a dog chasing his tail. I also found myself wanting more scenes like the brief respite in action we get as the team crawls to Hawkeye's 'secret

hideout' in a Midwest ranch. Hawkeye reveals that he is just a plain guy, with a wife and kids; he is literally the antithesis of superheroes like Iron Man and Captain America and this calming commonness serves as a nice break from all of the building smashing. I wanted more of that human side of the characters – not just the balls to the wall, battle-brothers that is the entirety of the film.

Though what was most surprising to me, after seeing the film was the discussion of Black Widow's 'monster reveal.' Somewhat of a spoiler alert here (in case you haven't been on the Internet lately): There are debates and conversations happening right now about the lack of attention given to Natasha and to make her big reveal be that she is sterile, her weakness thus being her inability to have children. Some argue that this scene is anti-feminist and that the Black Widow is more window dressing for the male superheroes to play off of, as she cleans up after them, and flirts with all of them to push them towards doing the right thing.

However, I viewed this scene differently. From my point of view, Natasha and Bruce (touching scene, Hulk!) were commiserating not on the fact that they can't have children, but that they both have had the option of a different path revoked from them. Natasha was trained to be a killer, and in her 'graduation', she was sterilized, thus removing any other path to her life other than being the killer she was designed to be. Bruce similarly doesn't want to be the Hulk and wants to see peace, but given the situation, there is no other option. To me, it is extremely sensitive to the choice of both men and women and the insanity of living in societies that remove choice.

I don't think Natasha wants to be a 'baby factory' as some may have you think, but knowing that she can never have a child is something that weighs heavily on her, because it is not just some internal struggle, it is something that exists in the physical world as a constant reminder of what she was designed to do. In that respect, she identifies with Bruce as a scientifically created 'monster' – which it should be noted that there are *constant* references of the heroes being monsters or mad scientists in *Ultron*.

***Ultron* was exactly what I expected it to be (great!), but by the end, I didn't have the same satisfaction I did from the first one.**

I agree that it is a shame we've gone this long without a single female super hero focused movie, and there are legitimate concerns over the lack of representation of women, even as far as the lack of a Black Widow toy for Pete's sake. But I feel there is far more nuance to the Black Widow than many give credit. Hawkeye and the Black Widow are in my opinion the real stars of *Avengers 2*, and if anything I wanted more time spent on them than those other shield-slinging, iron suit donning, hammer-wielding knuckleheads.

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

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ER Sports

Western-Pa. native George "Doc" Medich on the Yankees, the "tough town" of Aliquippa, and Mike Ditka.

By: **Jim LeCorchick**

IN MY MORE THAN 40 years of covering sports, I have interviewed a slew of athletes; several I perceived as total jerks, many were interesting but not too exciting, while a number of them were entertaining and enjoyable – and memorable. Recently on my talk show, I had an in-studio guest that was entertaining, enjoyable – and memorable. And he was a former New York Yankee no less.

I have to admit when I was told former Yankee **George "Doc" Medich** was going to be coming to the 1330AM The Fan studio for an interview, it was almost impossible for me to put my extreme loathing for the NY team aside. My first concern was for my own behavior, as I have never been rude to a guest in my life, and I didn't want to break the streak. But sitting with a Bronx Bomber was certainly going to put me to a test.

And I would be a liar if I didn't admit I was hoping he would turn out to be one of the biggest jerks I've ever interviewed.

After meeting the Aliquippa native (Hopewell High School grad), I am proud that I still have never been rude to anyone (on the air), but I guess, much to my displeasure, as embarrassed as I am to admit it, Medich wasn't one of the biggest jerks I have ever interviewed. As a matter of fact, it almost pains me to point out that the ex-New York Yankee is on the other end of the spectrum. He is extremely likeable, very personable, and truly humble.

I have interviewed so many people over the years, it's not hard to get a feeling if they want to be there or not. The first question from someone who is in no mood to being interviewed is usually, "How long is this going to take?" Doc's first comment was, "I've always liked Erie.

"A friend of mine used to take me fishing in this area a lot, and



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I really enjoy the people. It's a great sports town, and I can stay on as long as you need me."

And he stayed for nearly an hour, and I must point out it was one of the most enjoyable interviews I've ever had.

And just for the record, if I didn't think much of him I probably would've kept that to myself, as he poses quite a presence. Medich, who stood 6-5 and weighed in at 225 when playing for the Yankees, Pirates, A's, Mariners, Mets, Rangers, and Brewers, still looks totally capable of twisting someone into a pretzel whom he found offensive – as in a smart-mouthed talk show host.

He was extremely soft-spoken, but once he started conversing, I learned several interesting things, including the fact he went to the University of Pittsburgh on a football scholarship and was a three-year starter as

tight end for the Panthers, while also handling the punting duties.

He was also a three-sport star at Hopewell High, but basketball fell by the wayside, and when he was at Pitt, baseball finally became his dominant sport, as he established himself one of the top hurlers in the East while performing for the Panthers.

It was his mound work at Pitt that caught the attention of the Yankees, but he still wasn't considered a future star, as the New Yorkers used their 30th pick in the 1970 draft to select him. He spent just two years in the minor leagues before getting the call to the bigs, the hard-throwing right-hander then going on to post an overall record of 124-105 for seven different teams.

His best season was 1974 when he picked up 19 wins for the Yanks.

Medich, who earned the nick-

name "Doc" because he attended medical school in the off-season, finished his career with a fine earned run average of 3.37 while compiling 955 strikeouts.

The Aliquippa native still had some years left on the diamond, but he retired from the sport to devote himself to his career as an orthopedic surgeon.

He also enjoyed talking about his high school days, and he still has fond memories of those days from the Aliquippa area, which he points out with a lot of pride, commenting, "The people in the area loved their high school sports, and if you ever wanted to rob a bank down there, Friday night was the perfect time.

"People jammed the high school stadiums on Friday to watch their favorite teams."

He also spoke with great fondness of Aliquippa native **Mike Ditka** and his brother **Ashton**. "No one messed with the Dittkas," he explained, "and Aliquippa was a tough town."

Medich also enjoyed telling a story about a Yankees old-timers game at Yankee Stadium when he went to his locker before the game and some one was sitting in his chair. "I had a bit of an attitude when I was ready to tell the guy to move," he laughed, "and **Mickey Mantle** looked up and asked me if I could just wait another minute so he could get ready for the game."

The ex-Yank added, "Mickey and **Whitey Ford** were two of the nicest guys I met while playing baseball." Ford was the NY pitching coach when Medich was with the Yanks.

As usual, I felt compelled to share with him some of the nice people I've met in sports and some of the ones I perceived as jerks.

I told him the story how I had the unfortunate incident of meeting former Cy Young Award-winner **Pete Vukovich**, and what a total [fill in the blank here] I thought he was. Medich laughed and told me, "He's one

of my best friends." I of course laughed and then wiped the smile off my face when I figured out he was serious.

Fortunately, though, Medich didn't feel a need to defend his friend's honor, and I thought this would be a good time to finish the interview while I was still unscathed.

With all this being said, the main reason Medich was in Erie was to talk about UFOs, a subject that is extremely near and dear to him. He has as many interesting stories on that subject as he does on sports.

Medich, who earned the nickname "Doc" because he attended medical school in the off-season, finished his career with a fine earned run average of 3.37 while compiling 955 strikeouts.


But that's another story for another time.

I have to admit that Medich was extremely enjoyable and classy, so I have decided to look at him as an ex-Pirate and not an ex-Yankee.

I feel much better about myself, and I'm still able to continue my incredible hatred I have for the "Pinstripers." ESPN would like that term.

Ex-Pirate Doc Medich – what a guy!

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