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LAKE ERIE

in

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**Editors-in-Chief:**

Brian Graham & Adam Welsh

Managing Editor:

Ben Spегgen

Contributing Editor:

Jim Wertz

Arts & Culture Editor:

Alex Bieler

Contributors:

Lisa Austin, Civitas
Mary Birdsong
Katie Chriest
Pen Ealain
Rick Filippi
Eric Kisner
James R. LeCorchick
John Lindvay
Lili Morton
Bob Protzman
Dan Schank
Jess Scutella
Tommy Shannon
Ryan Smith
Jay Stevens
Rebecca Styn
Sara Toth
Bryan Toy
Jim Wertz

Cover Photo:

Brad Triana

Cover Design:

Liz Venuto

Photographers:Ryan Smith
Brad Triana**Designers:**Liz Venuto
Leah Yungwirth**Interns:**Lauren Griffith
Emily Hanisek
Candice Martone
Nicolas Miller

1001 State St. Suite 901
Erie, Pa., 16501
contact@eriereader.com

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From The Editors

What is the genius of our place?

What is the genius of our place? This little corner of the world we call our own. The genius of any place is defined by what makes it unique ecologically and even spiritually. In order for people to live in harmony with their place, with nature, that genius must be accessed whenever we decide to make changes to our place.

Although opinions may vary as to what exactly the genius of our particular place is, odds are most of you will point north to that big, blue, beautiful lake as your knee-jerk response. Lake Erie defines and sustains us as a people, and is as much a part of our future as it has been part of our past. And yes, it's in trouble.

This issue marks the seventh time we've devoted our cover to the threats facing Lake Erie and our water supply in general. Whether it's delving into the topic of fracking, or exploring the myriad invasive species that wreak havoc on fragile aquatic ecosystems, we revisit this topic often because there really isn't a more pressing threat facing us as we move forward through the 21st century.

Exactly two years ago we published an issue with a feature proclaiming "Lake Erie in Peril," wherein Jay Ste-

Lake Erie defines and sustains us as a people, and is as much a part of our future as it has been part of our past. And yes, it's in trouble.

vens explored four areas of high concern, one of which being the increasing severity of algae blooms on the western part of the lake. One year later, last August, the city of Toledo lost the ability to extract drinking water from their portion of Lake Erie due to the high toxicity of the bloom that festered atop those many hundreds of square miles. As the New York Times observed: "It took a serendipitous slug of toxins and the loss of drinking water for a half-million residents to bring home what scientists and government officials in this part of the country have been saying for years: Lake Erie is in trouble, and getting worse by the year."

Contributor Katie Chriest now tackles this daunting topic, and we echo that same proclamation. This time with a focus primarily on these highly toxic blooms, why they occur, and what we can do to stop them from invading our waters. After all, as she points out, "what's the point of a pretty waterfront if you can't even drink the water?" Good question, and with a whole lot of impending bayfront development beginning to take shape, one everyone should be asking themselves.

It's human nature to alter our surroundings, to adapt to and build upon the places we inhabit. But we must remain connected to the places we live and depend on for life, never ceasing to be good stewards. When it comes to the genius of our place, it doesn't take a genius to see that we must do everything we can to protect it.



ED YOURDON

Street Corner Soapbox

The real problem of travel baseball isn't the helicopter parents; it's money.

By: Jay Stevens

This is a tale of baseball, parenting, and capitalism. It's about travel teams, helicopter parents, and the commercialization of sport. It's the story of free-market capitalism.

And it kicks off with an article by ESPN's Tim Keown. "Judging by the direction we're taking with preteen youth sports," writes Keown in an August 2014 article, "it appears we have completely lost our minds."

The problem? The proliferation of "elite" or "select" sports teams for prepubescents. You know the teams – the ones with professional coaches, extensive schedules, tournaments, crisp matching uniforms, and crazy par-

ents. They're expensive. They stretch families' schedules to the breaking point. And they also wear out children, taking the fun out of sport, and create disinterested, burned-out former ballplayers at the ripe old age of 13 or 14. Or worse. Year-round sport – especially baseball – poses physical risk to children's joints through repetitive exercise.

And, the worst of it all, according to Keown, is that travel team experience and ability at that age aren't indications of anything. "Anyone who has spent more than five innings watching 10-year-olds play baseball," writes Keown, "knows that athletic ability in a kid that young is directly related to physical maturity." The players that mature quicker play better.

Who's to blame? Parents! "This is the age of the special child," says Keown. "This is the age of the parent who believes his or her kid playing Little League for the neighborhood team is beneath them both....This is the age of the youth-sports industrial complex, where men make a living putting on tournaments for 7-year-olds, and parents subject their children to tryouts and pay good money for the right to enter into it."

"Parents say, 'Oh, he plays travel ball,' as a means of separating their kids," says Keown. "It's a status symbol, one promoted by parents." "[I]t's the main reason baseball in this country is widely becoming the province of wealthy suburbia." "[The players] are being worshipped by their parents." "We're raising a generation with too much self-esteem," concludes Keown. "They can't handle failure because they've been conditioned to believe they're too good to fail."

And thus, Keown, who pens a furious tirade against the parents that push their kids into travel sports, completely misses both the real problem with the issue, and the real cause. For starters, the *real* problem isn't spoiled children who don't know the sweet experience of failure.

The biggest problem with travel sports is that they exclude. Many families can't afford travel baseball. And that has ramifications. While athletic success as a youngster often depends on physical growth, select squads provide the professional coaching and the experience to give their players advantages in the sport later on. Travel ballplayers are more likely to win roster spots in college and professional baseball than their non-travel-team peers.

That's the real problem. Travel baseball shuts out too many kids from the sport.

Writing in 2014 about the decline of African-American ballplayers in major-league baseball, *USA Today* columnist

Steven Wetherill pointed to expensive, select squads as a major factor. "Baseball is seeing a decline [of African-Americans]," writes Wetherill, "in large part because the evolution of travel teams and pay-to-play leagues have instinctively turned youth baseball into a corporation that weeds out the under-privileged and promotes the privileged."

It's in that context that the rush to enroll children in select sports teams makes sense. Only in a society where sport is commercialized, where inhabiting elite teams is a sign of social status and an advantage to jobs in sport, and where *not* being on an elite team consigns a child to exclusion does the rush to travel baseball make sense.

The problem isn't parents. The problem is money.

We all know about the increasing wealth gap. The wealthiest people control most of the world's wealth – according to Oxfam, the top 1 percent will control *half* the world's wealth by 2016. And it's not much better here in the U.S. According to U.S. Federal Reserve data, the top wealthiest 1 percent of Americans control 35 percent of the nation's wealth, and the top 10 percent controls 75 percent. And growing.

The problem is that wealth has its obvious advantages. Wealthy parents can afford college tuition for their kids – and those kids are free from student debt, which in turn allows them to work unpaid internships and have a leg up in the job market from the start. And that's just the start. (Hell, the surest way to a career in finance is to have your parents open a large account with a financial firm.)

Which would be tolerable if there were other paths to success. But 30 years of regressive tax policy and anti-government rhetoric have eroded the alternatives. Public institutions – such as schools, libraries, transportation and, yes!, Little League – are seeing con-

stant cutbacks due to funding shortages, while the effective tax rates for the wealthiest Americans shrink.

The result? The U.S. is losing its middle class.

According to a 2015 Pew Charitable Trusts study, every state in the country has seen its middle class shrink between 2000 and 2013, thanks to stagnant wages and rising household costs. And simultaneously, economic instability for us, the unwashed masses, increases. A full fifth of U.S. workers were laid off during the recent recession, and four out of every five U.S. adults has at some time during their lives struggled with joblessness and near poverty, according to a 2013 AP survey.

So you combine millions of uneasy parents, most of whom who've lost jobs and stared down poverty at one time or another, who want their children to have every possible advantage in life, who desperately don't want to slip down the social or economic ladder, who see sports as both a financial opportunity – scholarships! professional ball! – and a status symbol affirming their class, combine that with a society that lavishes *billions* on sport and promotes it constantly...and you get travel baseball.

Not that you see any of that in Tim Keown's tirade against travel baseball.

But then, if you trace a fine line from the helicopter parents who shout from the stands and obsess over their kids' playing time at shortstop through to the sport of baseball itself, you must invariably pass through Keown's own network, ESPN, a *\$40-billion* company that earns its daily bread by incessantly focusing on sports.

If Tim Keown wants to properly assess blame for travel baseball, he doesn't need to look far.

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

Erie At Large

Parks and Recreation

By: Jim Wertz

Erie City parks are one of the most underrated assets in the region. Many of the city's best parks are often underused and to some extent unknown to city residents and visitors because of neighborhood reputations for violence that are often perceived to be rooted in drug traffic and turf wars. Some of the concern is warranted; some of it is not.

If only we had our own Ron Swanson and Leslie Knope of NBC's now retired *Parks and Recreation* to set the record straight and get people back to the park. That fictional duo would try to get people to those long forgotten neighborhood treasures even if it meant poorly staged meet and greets and tearing down aging gazebos in favor of more squatterless accommodations. They may even drop a rib festival in the midst of the construction zone just because they can.

While this may be the premise of your favorite "Must See TV," it's also your city government, trying hard to make aesthetic changes in the face of the real problems so that city residents can better enjoy their brisket.

On the eve of Erie's annual Wild Rib Cook Off and Music Festival in Perry Square, Mayor Joe Sinnott held a press conference to champion the city's many parks and summertime recreational activities for the youth of Erie and their families. The Mayor's office also produced a full color guide to city parks, which is available at erie.pa.us. It all sounded so promising. The city has great parks, and despite what many people believe, the city still has great neighborhoods.

So why wasn't one of those parks in one of those neighborhoods the site for this year's rib festival?

The demolition of the gazebo in Perry Square is part of the vision for downtown Erie and for Perry Square, generally. But were contractors not asked to complete the renovation of Perry Square before the Rib-Fest? If they promised to do so and missed their mark, will they be held accountable by the city? Or is it just a graft-worthy oversight, the kind that seems to be so popular in city folklore?

Regardless of why the beautification of Perry Square carried into an annual



event – on the calendar since last year – why did city leadership not choose to move the festival in order to showcase one of the city's underutilized parks in an underappreciated neighborhood?

There would have been no better way to reintroduce the people of Erie to the beautiful Bayview Park on W. Second and Cherry streets than to move the festival there. Once one of Erie's most

Why did city leadership not choose to move the festival in order to showcase one of the city's underutilized parks in an underappreciated neighborhood?

utilized baseball diamonds, the park is comparatively unused, existing only for the people who live within a few blocks of the park. Festivalgoers could have parked along the Bayfront Parkway and downtown in conjunction with the Front St. footpath. Those with some extra spring in their steps could have walked up the new footpath at the foot of Cascade Street. The pedestrian crossing isn't done yet, but Erie City Police have been directing traffic

Erie has an abundance of beautiful parks — why not spread the love around?

there for years. One more Saturday night would have been child's play.

Or why not take the party to city's East Side? Like Bayview Park, the Wallace Playground at Front and Wallace streets has equally beautiful views of the Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie. Parking is plentiful and people will go there, as evidenced by the success of the Troika Russian Festival a few weeks ago.

East Side, West Side, Uptown or Downtown, the bottom line remains that the city had options but chose not to exercise them because it was simply easier not to. The city still collected fees from the vendors and the vendors still got paid from the visitors that came downtown despite being jammed into half of Perry Square.

But at the end of the day, this rant isn't really about the Rib Fest. It's about a pattern of city governance that's indicative of a much larger problem. If city officials continue to flounder in the paradox of quixotic mediocrity, a *Parks and Recreation*-style mockumentary of a city where "a fairly simple project is stymied at every turn by oafish bureaucrats, selfish neighbors, governmental red tape and a myriad of other challenges" will be the least of our worries.

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

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Mod Apothecary Opens in Colony Plaza

Yogi Stacey Orr introduces Erie to the business of a new aromatherapy and natural beauty store.



West Coast transplant Stacey Orr (left) recently opened Mod Apothecary in the Colony Plaza, where she sells custom blends of essential oils (below). The shop recently celebrated the grand opening with a party (opposite).

storefront, “this vision suddenly came to fruition,” she explains. “I jumped in and said, ‘This is it. This is good.’”

As she prepared to cut the ribbon on Mod Apothecary Thursday, June 4, Orr says the business was “a dream come true,” and cited one last inspiration for not just her store, but the way she lives her life.

“I have to credit my father-in-law, who passed from brain cancer,” she told the gathered crowd. “Having conversations with someone who is dying, transitioning, it was a positive experience. It inspired (my husband and I) to make a great change in our life, our willingness to take great risks, and go for it.”

She and her husband Zack, a local musician, moved to Erie from the west coast and here, she says, they found their home.

“Not being from Erie, I’m thrilled to be opening a business here,” Orr says. “I really am. The community here is just incredible.”

The grand opening was indeed a community affair, as customers and vendors from all over Colony Plaza were on hand, offering well-wishes and house-warming presents. Orr does see the plaza as her second home; she’s been teach-

By: Sara Toth

If you want to find Stacey Orr’s new business in Erie’s Shops at Colony Plaza, just follow your nose.

Stepping out of your car at 2564 W. Eighth St., you’re immediately greeted by a wave of aroma – warm and musky, sweet and deep. You’ve reached Mod Apothecary, a brand new aromatherapy and natural beauty store, which held its grand opening last week.

The sense of smell, Orr says, “is one of our most powerful. You can be blind, deaf, but the sense of smell can influence your mood, your mental health, your state of being.”

It’s a small store, but filled top to bottom with shelves of essential oils; handcrafted, artisan body care products like bath bombs, facial tonics and serums; and all-natural cleaning products for the home. It’s all locally sourced and handmade in small batches by Orr, and when customers walk into her store, she wants them to feel welcome.

“It’s meant to be highly experiential and friendly,” she explains. “It’s not some frou-frou, high-end,

intimidating place. Come in, look around, and smell.”

Tucked in the back corner is an aromatherapy room, quiet and dimly lit with a different blend of essential oils in a diffuser. The day of the opening, the room was filled with lavender, sweet orange, and rosemary – designed to calm, uplift and clarify. There’s salt crystal lamps, and a window that looks out to the rest of the store, but it’s less a window to the outside world than a screen from it. This is a store that wants its patrons to sit, breathe, and be.

The inspiration for Mod Apothecary came from a few places, Orr says. She’s always been inspired by the “age of the apothecary,” when a person could walk up to a botanical bar and have a formula crafted on the spot for them. With perfume, she said she likes to consider it to be “your own personal potion.”

“What are you trying to attract? What are you trying to invoke, and what does it say about you, how you want to feel?” Orr questions. “That’s the whole idea. I like the experience and education that comes from creating your own blend.”

A registered yoga teacher, Orr has been exploring perfumery and aromatherapy for several years on her own, building an e-commerce business called Stinky Yogi, a business born from Orr’s love of yoga and essential oils that allows those exiting a power yoga class to smell a bit, well, less stinky and a bit more refreshed. The inspiration for a brick-and-mortar store, Orr adds, grew over the years. The location next to yogaErie has been vacant for some time, and when she stepped foot into the



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BUSINESS



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ing next door at yogaErie for five years, and many of her students were at the opening as well.

One, Jen Esper, was the very first person to create her own scent at the perfume bar (her 8-year-old son, James, came away with his own concoction as well).

"I'm such a perfume junkie," confesses Esper, who usually wears the high-end Jo Malone line, layering scents like wood, sage, and sea salt to get what she wants. "When Stacey said she was doing this, I said 'sign me up.' Stacey, as my yogi, pretty much changed my life and outlook on everything. She has helped me on my journey, and to see (this store opening), I think things are coming full circle for her. I'm so happy for her."

Esper's custom-blended perfume includes base notes of vetiver and fir balsam, middle notes of ylang ylang and neruli, and top notes of bergamot, and lavender. She says she hopes it "invokes some happiness and some zen" for her.

At the perfume bar, arguably the center of the store, "the customers blend; I guide," Orr explains. She's studied under mentors in Providence and Dallas, and together with her customers, Orr helps create a scent that's all their own from pure, natural oils and absolutes (less than 5 percent of ingredients in typical perfumes are natural, Orr said – it's mostly synthetic.)

"We follow a tried-and-true formula," Orr says. "Honestly, there are no rules. Like attracts like, but I tell people to follow their nose... The philosophy we're invoking is the more ancient practice of perfumery, when all they used were naturals. Synthetics can be overpower-

ing, and your nose has to acquire the sense of the pure, natural aroma."

In the fall, Orr will debut two ready-to-buy perfumes at Mod Apothecary: Boho Gypsy and Amour in Provence – scents she describes as bohemian meets gypsy meets romantic. As her store grows, she says she hopes to work with regional farmers to source her botanicals, and place equal focus on the medicinal side of essential oils, placing a traditional apothecary bar in her store to supply therapeutic products like tinctures.

"The philosophy we're invoking is the more ancient practice of perfumery, when all they used were naturals. Synthetics can be overpowering, and your nose has to acquire the sense of the pure, natural aroma."

Orr admits she didn't always know what her passion was, but now that she's found it, she's ready to share it with everyone who walks into her store.

"Finding this passion and this deep sense of purpose, once you find that, you can't ignore it," she says. "You can try to turn it down, but you have to listen to it. It awakens something special within you."

Sara Toth can be contacted at sToth@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @SaraAToth.

News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

"Meals" 2.0

Silicon Valley code-writers and engineers work long hours — with apparently little time for "food" as we know it. Eating is "time wasted," in the words of celebrity inventor Elon Musk, and normal meals a "marketing facade," said another valley bigwig. The New York Times reported in May that techies are eagerly scarfing down generic (but nutrient-laden) liquids like Schmilks and People Chow, largely for ease of preparation, to speed their return to work. The Times food editor described one product as "oat flour" washed down with "the worst glass of milk ever." "Pancake batter," according to a Times reporter. (That supermarket staple Ensure? According to the food editor, it's "fine wine" compared to Schmilks.) [New York Times, 5-25-2015]

Distracted Americans

Air travelers last year left \$675,000 in (obviously) spare change in

airport screening bins, reported the Transportation Security Administration in April. Of the cars reported stolen in 2014, 44,828 were with keys left inside them, according to an April National Insurance Crime Bureau release. American credit card holders fail to claim "about \$4 billion" in earned "rewards" each year, according to CardHub.com's 2015 Credit Card Rewards Report. [Time magazine, 4-7-2015] [Bloomberg Business, 4-27-2015] [CardHub report (undated except for the year)]

Our Least Hardy Generation

Nursing student Jennifer Burbella filed a lawsuit against Misericordia University (near Scranton, Pennsylvania) for not helping her enough to pass a required course that she failed twice. The professional caregiver-to-be complained of stress so severe that she needed a distraction-free room and extra time for the exam, but claims she deserved even more special

treatment. (2) Four Columbia University students complained in May that courses in Greek mythology and Roman poetry need "trigger" warnings — advance notice to super-sensitive students that history may include narratives of "disturbing" events (that have somehow been studied without such warnings for centuries). [Fox News, 5-13-2015] [Washington Post, 5-14-2015]

In March, following the departure of Zayn Malik from the British band One Direction, an executive with the Peninsula employment law firm in Manchester told London's Daily Telegraph that he had received "hundreds" of calls from employers seeking advice about workers who were requesting "compassionate" leave because Malik's resignation had left them distraught. (Also, a spokeswoman for the charity Young Minds told the Telegraph she was concerned about Malik fans self-harming.) [Daily Telegraph, 3-27-2015]

Bright Ideas

Among recent inventions not expected to draw venture capital interest (reported by Popular Science in June): (1) A Canadian software engineer's machine that unspools toilet paper exactly three squares at a time (but please keep fingers away from the cleaver!). (2) A Japanese shoulder-mounted tomato-feeder that provides nourishment to marathoners without their needing to catch tomatoes provided by supporters. (3) Google software engineer Maurice Bos' whiteboard-mounted clock that writes down the exact time, with a marker, at five-minute intervals (after erasing the previous time). [Popular Science, June 2015]

Fine Points of the Law

Britain's Home Office, judging requests for asylum by immigrants threatened with deportation but who fear oppressive treatment if returned to their home countries, recently turned down asylum for

Nigerian lesbian activist Aderonke Apata, 47, apparently because the office doubted her orientation. Though Apata had submitted testimonials (and even photographs) "proving" her homosexuality, the Home Office was skeptical because she had children from a previous heterosexual relationship. On the other hand, an immigration court in England ruled in April that a Libyan man, identified only as "HU," could not be deported since he is a career criminal and a chronic drunk who would be so unlikely to reform his drinking that he would surely face a lifetime of prison in Libya. [Daily Telegraph, 3-4-2015] [Daily Telegraph, 4-27-2015]

The Continuing Crisis

If Only There Was Somewhere He Could Have Turned for Moral Guidance: Suspended Catholic Monsignor Kevin Wallin, 63, was sentenced in May to more than five years in prison for running a meth distribution ring from Bridgeport, Connecticut, where

he also operated a sex shop to launder the drug profits. (Though he faced a 10-year sentence, he had a history of charity work and submitted more than 80 letters of support from high-ranking clergy.) [Associated Press via WTIC-TV (Hartford), 5-7-2015]

People Different From Us

Walter Merrick, 66, was charged with aggravated assault in the New Orleans suburb of Harvey, Louisiana, in March after an altercation with neighbor Clarence Sturdivant, 64, over the comparative merits of Busch and Budweiser beers. Bud-man Sturdivant fired the only shot, but a sheriff's deputy said Merrick was the aggressor — since he had offered Sturdivant only a Busch. (In Tulsa, Oklahoma, in April, police found two blood-splattered men in an apartment parking lot at 1 a.m., the result of a dual stabbing spree with broken beer bottles — over whether Android phones are superior to iPhones.) [Reuters, 5-13-2015] [KTUL-TV (Tulsa)



Just Toyin' Witcha

By: B. Toy

Lake Erie in Peril

What can be done to protect our most precious natural resource?



BRAD TRIANA

By: Katie Chriest

**Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.**

~ Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

In the memory, I'm floating in endless, uncluttered space. Water. Incomprehensibly vast, as far as I can see. I sit on its surface in a big rasta-hat-colored hunk of polyethylene, awestruck still for a moment. Here. Now. Finally.

I've reached the middle of Lake Erie in my kayak. The generous curve of planet earth clears my horizons for miles around. I see no land, no industry, no traffic. I hear no debates about what to build, or who will profit.

And finally, possessed by this lake, I understand implicitly what that whole

"Great" thing is about.

I've spent many hours on that water over the years, raining petty worries into this enormous, absorbing, life-giving resource. In my wanderlust, I long for redrock canyons, foreign mountains, and acres of sagebrushed desert. Erie offers none of these. But that lake. What a stop-in-your-tracks portal to the present. What a catalyst for contemplation. What a constant, precious gift.

Lake Erie nourishes countless visitors from myriad species each year, including our own. This water determines our survival. Our lake is the source of drinking water for 11 million people, and the source of sanity for even more.

No wonder it felt insane, then, when in August 2014, Toledo residents sud-

denly couldn't drink their water. *Toledo*?! It sits at the western end of the same body of water I can see from our street. And now Toledo couldn't make use of this incredible source of sustenance and comfort?

The *New York Times* reported last August that "It took a serendipitous slug of toxins and the loss of drinking water for a half-million residents to bring home what scientists and government officials in this part of the country have been saying for years: Lake Erie is in trouble, and getting worse by the year."

The *Times* added, "Flooded by tides of phosphorus washed from fertilized farms, cattle feedlots, and leaky septic systems, the most intensely developed

of the Great Lakes is increasingly being choked each summer by thick mats of algae, much of it poisonous."

Terrance Heath of Campaign for America's Future elucidated the causes of what he calls "The 'Perfect Storm' Behind Toledo's Toxic Tap Water": "Agriculture and fertilizer are big businesses, involving big profits. Some of those profits are spent on lobbying against federal legislation and on campaign contributions to lawmakers who can be counted on to oppose federal regulation of the industry."

In this fifth year of "democracy" under Citizens United, it's no secret that corporate control of our elections is epidemic. During the Court's ruling on the case, Supreme Court Justice Stevens dissented, writing, "A democracy



BRAD TRIANA

Lake Erie is one of our region's most treasured natural resources, but it is under threat from runoff, causing toxic algae blooms (below).

Fertilizer Institute, the lobbying arm of the fertilizer industry and agricultural interests that oppose efforts to restore some of the Clean Water Act's authority."

That Act, passed in 1972, helped return polluted and flatlining Lake Erie to vitality by the late 1990s. But as Heath explains, "The Act was designed to regulate pollution from fixed points, like industrial outflows and sewer pipes. Today's agricultural pollution is spread out over thousands of miles." The Act's power has been further undermined repeatedly at the federal and state levels, leaving phosphorus pollution from various sources largely unregulated.

The Lake Erie Improvement Association, a nonpartisan Ohio-based organization focused on "watershed-wide economic sustainability" and "healthy waters and fish by promoting cooperation and wise resource management, reported that "since 1995, dissolved phosphorous has been steadily increasing. There are many sources for this phosphorous: agricultural runoff, manure runoff from factory farms (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations,

known as CAFOs), dishwasher detergents, wastewater discharges, zebra mussel excretions, existing sediments, increasing temperatures, power plants heating the water, failing septic systems, lawn fertilizers and more."

Locally, PA Sea Grant and the PA Department of Environmental Protection are keeping a close eye on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). According to PA Sea Grant, "many of these blooms may produce poisons (or toxins) ... Humans, pets, livestock and wildlife that come into contact with, or ingest HAB toxins can experience sickness, paralysis or even death." PA Sea Grant encourages residents to report blooms observed to the PA DEP at 814-332-6839.

Marti Martz, Senior Outreach Specialist at PA Sea Grant, offered direct practical advice for homeowners to help mitigate HABs locally. "Have your soil tested," she advised. "That way you know if your lawn requires fertilizer and how much phosphorus and nitrogen you should be applying. Excess fertilizer wastes money and adds unnecessary nutrients to the environment. Excess fertilizer applied by farmers, lawn companies and property owners is a big part of the HABs issue. Don't fertilize before it rains. Fertilizer is water soluble and will run off in heavy

cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold."

Whether we believe it or not, the proof is in the genetically modified pudding.

Heath added, "Monsanto, one of the largest fertilizer manufacturers, has

spent \$6,940,000 in this election cycle on lobbying, and \$542,218 on contributions. Koch Industries, which includes Koch Fertilizer, has spent \$10,430,000 on lobbying, and \$2,217,643 in campaign contributions.

"Monsanto is a major client of the



NASA

rain.” She recommended seeking more information via a lawns-to-lakes program at www.lawntolake.org.

“Also important for homeowners,” added Martz, “is to clean up after pets. Pet waste in your yard breaks down and can end up in the nearest body of water. Choosing phosphorous free cleaning products is another way to cut down on the amount of unnecessary nutrients in our waste water (which ends up in the lake).”

“In Lake Erie’s case,” explained the *Times*, “the phosphorus feeds a poisonous algae whose toxin, called microcystin, causes diarrhea, vomiting and liver-function problems, and readily kills dogs and other small animals that drink contaminated water.”

Microcystin poisoned Toledo’s water, about 182 miles across our shared lake from Erie. While it’s thrilling to imagine what Erie’s Bayfront might become in the wake of creative development, what’s the point of a pretty waterfront if you can’t even drink the water?

We need to reframe the discussion. And as long as message-monop-

olizing corporations — like Monsanto — stand to benefit from our ignorance about the potential safety of our food and water, it’s up to us to keep our priorities straight.

This is not simply an environmentalist’s pedestrian plea for us to save our species, though it is that, in part. Unbridled corporate power threatens our health, our future, our food, our water, and our security. And international maneuvering among Big Ag conglomerates like Monsanto creates bitter resentment toward US-branded globalism.

So I am an environmentalist. Yes. But first, I am an American who grew up devouring the ideologies of Jeffersonian independence, Emersonian self-reliance, Thoreauvian Civil Disobedience, and the Whitman-esque celebration of the possibilities of true democracy.

At 18, voting for the first time, I felt like I later would in my kayak. Free. Humbled. Awestruck by present possibility. Suddenly, I had a say in this collective American Dream. My country cared enough to let us decide. Even we women, eventually. And now I honored

those who’d earned this voice for me.

I vowed not to squander my participation in this glorious democracy I was lucky enough to be born into. I saw it as my duty to keep aware of the decisions being made by my representatives on my behalf. I was a moony teenager in love with democracy. But sometimes, love is blindness.

As the years wore on and the veil was lifted, I’ve seen that democracy is a theory, not a practice. Too many lawmakers are chummy with lobbyists. Too many elections are purchased outright by superpacs. And as long we hand over our power to corporate monoliths — even our right to clean water, air, and food — none of us is truly free.

We all deserve clean water to drink, and enjoy, and the right to choose what foods become our cells. But it seems we’re hungry for more than that.

As the wonderfully courageous, long-time food activist Frances Moore Lappé said, “Hunger is not caused by a scarcity of food but a scarcity of democracy.”

I am hungry for the America I thought

I lived in. Hungry for an empowered citizenry who sees that these enormous corporations — like our government —

Unbridled corporate power threatens our health, our future, our food, our water, and our security.

get *their* power from us. And that if we stopped buying their fertilizers, pesticides, and Roundup, stopped eating their industrially-grown food, stopped being duped into overconsumption by their advertising, and stopped voting for the representatives more interested in corporate rights than human rights, we’d end their stranglehold on our freedom.



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Meet the Band

Local shoegazers Barlow talk about their time on the Erie music scene.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Chris Sexauer

The term “shoegaze” has come to cause some confusion amongst those that throw it around all too casually. Originally coined to describe noisy bands like My Bloody Valentine and Slowdive, the term itself actually refers to the use of thick distortion by a guitarist, the distinct, fuzzy sound of true shoegaze coming from heavy effects pedals usage. Because the guitarists look at the pedals they are using so often, they seem to be gazing at their shoes.

As is the case with many genres, the traditions of shoegaze have evolved over the years; often the genre has hybridized with others. I’m sure that somewhere, someone is describing themselves as “post-gaze” by now.

But enough history, because here, in Erie, there is a group of three guys that are making music under the name Barlow that have made their own Gem City-brand of shoegaze.

Comprised of frontman Ethan Oliva, drummer Andrew Yadeski, and bassist Jake Nowocynski, the band plays what they describe as “lo-fi dream pop” (think: somewhere between Yuck’s self-titled album and DIIV’s *Oshin*). Heavily-distorted and intentionally lo-fi, Barlow’s sound is one that lends itself to sleepy summer days spent staring across your lawn but also fits comfortable when having a few drinks with your friends in a low-ceilinged basement. Sure, there are some cobwebs, but they only add to the atmosphere.

And that’s what is at the heart of Barlow’s music: atmosphere. I had the opportunity to see them play at their cassette (yes, their music comes on

cassette) release show back in January. The show took place in a friend’s basement. Throughout the show, all three members of the band were active in the crowd. It didn’t matter who was playing or what the music sounded like, Barlow was there in support and having fun with it.

When it was Barlow’s turn to take the stage, they did so without much fanfare. They plugged in their instruments, made sure they were in tune, and went right into it. Having previously only listened to them online, I was pleasantly surprised by their live sound. Recorded, their sound is everything I’ve already described it as: dreamy, lo-fi, distorted. All of those hold true live, but there’s an inevitable edge that gets added. To put it shortly: they got *loud*.

I got the impression at their release show that the boys of Barlow didn’t quite understand just how good they were. I guess there’s something to being humble, but these guys really don’t act like they’re making anything special. Which is fine; they are making good music and they’re enjoying themselves as they do it.

Chris Sexauer: You guys put out a tape, *Four Castles*, last summer. What can you tell me about that?

Ethan Oliva: *Four Castles* is our second EP. We spent a couple years on it; we rewrote every song on it at least twice before we were happy with it. A lot of cheap analog and digital equipment was busted and bought in that time too. I’m really satisfied with how *Four Castles* turned out, and we finally put it out on tape along with our first EP, *Fell Asleep*.

Jake Nowocynski: *Four Castles* is technically the first album we’ve done, after our *Fell Asleep* EP and our *Sun Split* with onewayness. We took some material from the *Fell Asleep* era, some stuff before that, and the rest of it we wrote during that year, so it’s been a long album in the process.

CS: Anything else coming out any time soon?

EO: We’ve been recording for a split LP with White Pony, our friend Alex’s band, for a while now, and it should be up on our Bandcamp sometime soon.

CS: You’ve played more than a few shows with White Pony, and now

you’re doing a split with them. What kind of a relationship exists between the two bands?

EO: Alex is a great guy. We started hanging with him a couple of years ago, and we were going to do a band together but that never materialized since he’s out in Albion. When he started doing White Pony last year, we loved it and I think it’s awesome a band like that is playing shows here. He got naked one time they played.

CS: How long have you been involved in the Erie music scene?

EO: I started going to the State Street Basement Transmissions when it first opened in 2011 – that’s as early as I’ve been involved. Andy knew Alex Harilla [Gimp Guy Promos] and he got us on what I think was the first show ever at that venue in September that year. My entire group of friends and I met at old BT either that fall or the following summer. It was a great place to be and I’m glad I met all of my friends there.

Andrew Yadeski: I was in a short-lived ska punk band in 2009-10 and attended a few shows before and around that time. Barlow’s first show was the State Street Basement Transmissions’ first, and since then, until recently, we’ve all attended shows there on a regular basis.

CS: What bands have you been listening to recently?

EO: I almost always am listening to Guided by Voices, but I also listen to Tony Malona, 12 Rods, Sonic Youth, My Bloody Valentine, Pink Floyd, and a lot of first wave powerviolence. I listen to stuff that I know I’ll be inspired by later.

AY: Lately I’ve been listening to Guided by Voices, the Ramones, John Maus, My Bloody Valentine, and Cülo.

JN: The bands I’ve been listening to the most of last year and so far have probably been The Replacements, Cleaners from Venus, and Moose.

For those looking to hear Barlow’s shoegaze and find out more about their upcoming shows, visit barlow.bandcamp.com and soundcloud.com/barlow-2. You won’t need a cassette player to listen, but getting one to hear the true lo-fi fuzz is highly recommended.

Chris Sexauer can be contacted at cSexauer@ErieReader.com

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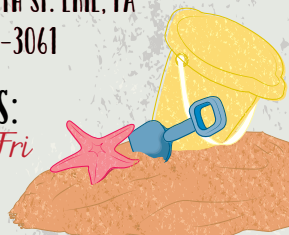
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Romolo's 2015 Summer Music Series

Tony Stefanelli brings back crowd favorites as well as some new faces for this year's lineup.

By: Bob Protzman

True to his word, Romolo Chocolates owner Tony Stefanelli is bringing back a number of crowd favorites for this year's Romolo's-sponsored seven-concert Summer Music Series.

The Romolo's piazza and parking lot will come alive on June 20 for one of Stefanelli's personal favorites: the all-female troupe Cocomama, a Latin and Latin-jazz group led by Mayra Casales. The rest of Cocomama is: Nikki Denner, piano; Christelle Durandy, vocals; Jennifer Vincent, bass/foot percussion; Ariacne Truillo, vocals, piano; and Yanet Montero, timbal.

The first of many "old friends" is alto saxophonist extraordinaire Richie Cole, who has been here often enough between sold-out gigs at Anchor In and visits to the Romolo's sessions that he ought to have a pad here, but the trek up from Pittsburgh – where he's barely able to handle the work he's being offered – isn't too stressing.

On June 27, Cole will work with an Erie rhythm section comprised of the always-reliable team of guitarist Frank Singer and drummer Joe Dorris (sans vocals and harmonica on this occasion). The bassist? In a pleasant surprise, Mr. Stefanelli, as talented a musician as chocolatier.

Yet another returnee to our shores is set for July 11. Veteran tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander has played for JazzErie and Romolo's series. Alexander is hugely popular with listeners, rated highly with many critics, and a prolific recording artist whose High-Note label CDs are often high on the charts.

He's doing something a little different this time, returning to his roots and playing with Hammond B3 organist Greg Hatza, a major artist in his own right, as is guitarist Paul Bollemback, and drummer Robert Shahid will be holding it steady behind the kit.

As mentioned in an earlier *Erie Reader* story, one of the sensations at last year's season was harmonica player-vibraphonist Hendrik Meurkens.

July 18 is his date. He'll lead a quartet, including Misha Tsiganov, piano;



Tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander returns to Erie for a set on July 11.

Gustavo Amarante, bass; and Adriano Santos, drums. The music? Predominately Brazilian, with jazz tunes and standards also in the repertoire.

Flute, pioneered and promoted in jazz by Herbie Manne throughout his long career, is still too seldom heard as far as some are concerned. Well, Ali Ryerson is one of the best in jazz today. She'll be in concert July 25, and is certain to play some things from her new album *Con Brio*. Ryerson's band is Mike Demicco, guitar; Chuck Lamb, keyboard; Kip Reed, bass; and Karl Latham, drums.

Depending upon the size of the local/regional Latin music fandom, this year's surprise hit could be Calje (Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble), scheduled for Aug. 8. This quartet includes Victor Garcia, trumpet; Darwin Noguera, piano; Juan Daniel Pastor, drums, cajon; and John Benitez, bass.

Following the axiom "saving the best for last," Aug. 15 will bring us "by popular demand" (Stefanelli's words) the team of B3 organist Tony Monaco and tenor saxophonist Pete Millls, with Erieites Frank Singer, guitar, and Joe Dorris, drums.

They'll throw in a ballad or two, but mostly will reflect Monaco's musical personality and tear it up!

See you all summerlong at Romolo Chocolates' Sweet Summer Season!

ANGELS IN AMERICA

PART ONE: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

BY TONY KUSHNER

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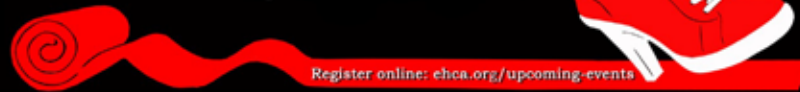


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DNA FILMS

Wednesday, June 10

FILM at the Erie Art Museum Kicks Off Summer Series with Critically-Acclaimed *Ex Machina*

In the realm of science fiction, it's rare to find movies that fully manage to separate themselves from the preconceptions and limitations of their genre. It's equally rare to find a film that, in attempting to do the latter, doesn't wallow and absorb itself in pretense and false complexity.

In Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, we have a movie that is completely comfortable in the conventions of its own genre, but we also get the feeling that it's playing with some of the pieces.

Strikingly, *Ex Machina* is narratively and thematically defined by its front-and-center treatment of human relationships. Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson, *Frank*), is a naive programmer at the world's biggest search engine, who

wins an arbitrary chance to partake in one of the company's top-secret operations. Nathan (Oscar Isaac, brilliantly) is the company's manipulative, alcoholic CEO, and the head of an attempt to create artificial intelligence.

That attempt comes in the form of Ava (Alicia Vikander), a preternaturally intelligent and sensitive robot, who may or may not be the first embodiment of authentic artificial intelligence. Caleb's responsibility is to interact with Ava to determine whether her thoughts, emotions, and actions are a result of computed precision or genuine individualistic ability.

The film is undeniably heavy on ideas, mainly the relationship of humanity and science. It's the film's performances that make these gorgeously rendered connections in idea, but also its technique. For all its densely arranged ideas, *Ex Machina* is remarkable in its calculated look and feel, which, integrated with its writing and performances, allows the movie, which will kick-off FILM at the Erie Art Museum's summer season, to move between its intellectual constructs in natural motion.

Ex Machina is no perfect film, yet it's still ceaselessly enthralling and aware of its purpose. Its greatness can be disputed, but its achievement as an exceedingly rare, thought-provoking science fiction film cannot. — Eric Kisner

6 p.m. // Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. // FilmSocietyNWPA.org

Wednesday, June 10



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EAM Mid-Day Art Break Kicks Off with Steve Trohoske and Tony Grey, Follows up with World Refugee Day

You know the feeling—it is the middle of the week and Friday still

couldn't seem any further away. The Mid-Day Art Break at the Erie Art Museum is exactly what you are missing. The series offers live music from artists, and free gallery tours.

June 10's performance is Steve Trohoske and Tony Grey, which will showcase a new take to modern jazz. The following Wednesday will feature refugee performers from around the world, in accordance with the celebration of World Refugee Day, which celebrates by recognizing and paying tribute to the work of refugees

The Erie Art Museum can also be your new summer destination for Wednesday's lunch. Don't want to brown-bag it to work? The Wave Café at the Erie Art Museum will take care of that for you. — Lauren Griffith

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Thursday, June 11

Erie Reader 40 Under 40 Summer Get-Together

Over the past three years, the *Reader* has highlighted 120 different men and women as official members of Erie's 40 Under 40 – a special club of individuals who have made a difference in Erie before the start of their fourth decade on Earth. Now, they are all invited to the second annual 40 Under 40 Summer Get-together Thursday, June 11 at The Brewerrie at Union Station, bringing a group of game changers together for a

Lesley Ridge and Bob Merski celebrating at last year's 40 Under 40 Summer Get-Together

night of networking and fun.

What's more is that you're invited to the Trackside party too. The Get-together is free and open to the public, allowing everyone to mingle and enjoy drinks, food, and live music provided by DJ Salt. You never know; you might meet the next member of 2016's 40 Under 40 while you're there. — Alex Bieler

6 to 8 p.m. // 123 W. 14th St. // erieread-er.com



BARBARA PETERSON

Friday, June 12

Poets and Painters at PACA

Two poets, two painters, one show at PACA. The State Street venue will host Poets and Painters, a dual book release that will also feature a surrealist art show and live music.

Authors Marisa Moks-Unger and Tracie Morell will release their respective books *Mud and Stars* and *Matilda's Battle Waltz* at the Friday, June 12 event.

Surrealistic artists Ken Johnson and Kris Risto, both of whom are featured in Morell's book, will have their works on display. In addition to Moks-Unger and Morell's words, poets from Erie and Cleveland will be on hand for the evening while local musician Roger Montgomery will play between readings. — Alex Bieler

5:30 p.m. // 1505 State St. // paca1505.com

MUSIC

UPMC Sunset Music Series Featuring Six Year Stretch and The Romantic Era

June 10 — 5:30 to sunset
Beach 1, 301 Peninsula Drive. discoverpi.com.

Midday Art Break at the Erie Art Museum Features Steven Trohoske and Tony Grey

June 10 — 12 to 1 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. erieartmuseum.org.

Erie Downtown Block Party features Key West Express

June 11 — 6 to 10:30 p.m.
Scully's Tavern, 408 State St., eriedowntown.com.

New Horizons Music Project

June 11 — 4 p.m.
LifeWorks, 406 Peach St., lifeworkserie.org.

The Riffriders

June 11 — 6 p.m.

Erie Yacht Club, Ravine Drive. eriyachtclub.org.

Kevlar wsg: Losing September, Saevitia, and Bravura

June 11 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Dave Callaghan & Hardbop

June 12 — 7 p.m.
Goodell Gardens & Homestead, 221 Waterford St., Edinboro. goodellgardens.org.

Hodge Podge

June 12 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Imperial Brown

June 12 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Geeks Unplugged

June 12 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway, presqueisledowns.com.

Chris Higbee

June 12 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway, presqueisledowns.com.

Salmon Frank

June 12 — 6 p.m.
Sprague Farm, 22113 U.S. 6, Venango. sleepingchainsaw.com/brew_works.htm.

Tay Lay

June 12 — 8 p.m.
Bobby's Place, 1202 West 18th Street, Erie, PA 16502, facebook.com/bobbysplace.

Mid-life Crisis

June 12 — 9:30 p.m.
Doc Hollidays, 7425 Schultz Road, dochollidays.net.

Joe Frisina

June 12 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Wegman's Cafeteria, 6143 Peach St. jazzerie.com.

Geek Army

June 13 — 9:30 p.m.
Doc Hollidays, 7425 Schultz Road, dochollidays.net.

Friday, June 12

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches Opens at Dramashop

Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches* begins in 1985 New York City. We're 30 years removed from that starting point; the millennium has approached, been met, and is already passing. And yet the play remains required viewing, as we're still grappling with the issues it explores — oppression, discrimination, acceptance, tolerance, and understanding — and dealing with the fallout of the AIDS crisis at the play's center.

Now it's set to make its premiere at Dramashop Friday, June 12 for a three-weekend run. The cast features a veritable who's-who of Erie talent, and is directed by the Rev. Shawn Clerkin. Clerkin, who has taught *Angels in America* for 15 years in his various courses at Gannon University, called Kushner's work "provocative, relevant, and important." More than being relevant and important, *Angels*

in America is also "just really good theater," Clerkin says. "Kushner is so unafraid of the theatrical metaphor, of demanding us to suspend our disbelief and engage our imaginations."

It is a play rich with metaphor — an angel from the great beyond interacting with earthly characters, a back-from-her-grave Ethel Rosenberg. "Such fantasy helps us understand the realities of our world," Clerkin says.

Angels in America is also Kushner's sharp chastising of "the reluctance to engage with the AIDS crisis," Clerkin says, and a reminder that it's impossible — and damaging — to limit ourselves to prescribed social categories.

"It reminds us of our individuality," he says. "We try to put others, and ourselves, in these external, quantifiable boxes. But we're not just gay, or straight, or Mormon, or Jewish, or rich, or poor. We're ultimately people, with great value unto ourselves." — Sara Toth

8 p.m. June 12, 13, 20, 26, & 27 // 2 p.m. June 21 // Renaissance Centre, 2nd Floor, 1001 State St. // dramashop.org // Tickets \$15, Students \$5, Online advance \$12.-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Friday, June 12

Party on the Patio Returns with Superhero Mania!

Comic book fans tend to fall into camps. DC or Marvel. Batman or Superman. X-Men or The Avengers (And, within that last one: Captain America or Tony Stark — pick up a copy of *Civil War* if you don't believe me).

Well, toss all that aside and head to the Erie Art Museum for a celebration of all things super-human, at the museum's annual pARTy on the Patio fundraiser, triumphantly returning this year as Superhero Mania!

Truth is, there's a lot to celebrate when it comes to comics, from their impact on popular culture to the artistry they hold in their pages (apt, since the event is at an art museum, after all). There will be food, drinks, music, and dancing, and an added bonus: cosplayers dressed as their favorite comic book hero or heroine are entered into a prize drawing, so dig out your old costume from Comic-Con (or, you know, the one you'd wear to Comic-Con if you were ever so lucky to go, someday, somehow). You might just see the Joker and Batman tearing it up together on the dance floor.

Even if you're not a fan of super-human do-gooders in capes and spandex, Friday's event is for do-gooders of all walks of life, as all proceeds directly support the mission and programming of the Erie Art Museum. By purchasing a ticket and turning out for dancing, food, music, and drinks, even the run-of-the-mill Lois Lanes of the world have a chance to indeed do something quite super. — *Sara Toth*

7 to 11 p.m. Friday, June 12// Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St.// erieartmuseum.org // Tickets \$35

Skyepilot

June 13 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

UnSaid Fate wsg: Anthems of Apathy and Kevlar

June 13 — 8 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Chris Mathers

June 13 — 4 to 6 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway, presqueisledowns.com.

Chris Higbee

June 13 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway, presqueisledowns.com.

Eric Brewer and Friends

June 13 — 6 p.m.
Lakeview Wine Cellar, 8440 Singer Road, North East. 16428 lakeviewwinecellars.com

GNOSiS

June 13 — 5 p.m.
Basement Transmission, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/gimpguyunderground.

Southern Drawl Band

June 14 — 4 p.m.
Schickalay's on the Bay, 2860 W. Sixth St. facebook.com/SchickalaysontheBay.

Sarsen

June 14 — 3 p.m.
Bobby's Place, 1202 W. 18th St. facebook.com/bobbysplace.

Tyler Smilo

June 14 — 4 p.m.
Rum Runners, 2 State St., rumrunnerscove.com.

Sean Patrick and the Newgrass Revolution

June 15 — 8 p.m.
Primanti Bros. 5800 Peach St. primantibros.com.

Middy Art Break at the Erie Art Museum Features Refugee Performers From Around the World

June 17 — 12 to 1 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. erieartmuseum.org.

UPMC Sunset Music Series Features The Mighty Sea and Stephen Trohoske

June 17 — 5:30 to sunset
Beach 1, 301 Peninsula Drive. discoverpi.com.

Brandon Santini

June 18 — 6 p.m.
Sprague Farm, 22113 U.S. 6, Venango. sleepingchainsaw.com/brew_works.htm.

Six Year Stretch

June 18 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Erie Downtown Block Party features School of Rock, Next of Kin, Refuge

June 18 — 6 to 10:30 p.m.
SeaWolves, 110 East 10th St., eriedowntown.com.

JC Nickles

Saturday, June 13

Jazz & Blues Walk Features 20 Musicians in Seven Venues Throughout Erie

You might think of JazzErie's annual Jazz & Blues Walk as the city's largest, longest, most reasonably priced, and most entertaining "meet and greet."

This popular jazz jam begins at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, June 13 and ends (at least officially) at 1 a.m. Sun-

day and presents approximately 20 musicians in bands of various sizes, instrumentation, and styles playing in seven restaurants/bars scattered around downtown Erie.

So as you can see, it's a big deal. It usually draws a big crowd, too – weather permitting.

JazzErie folks will cross their fingers on that score because the walk is the nonprofit's main fundraiser, thus determining how many other jazz performances the organization can sponsor the remainder of the year.

Here's the schedule, beginning as mentioned at 6:30 p.m. at a free reception, with snacks and beer, at the Erie Art Museum, on E. Fifth St., between State and French. There, for what JazzErie is calling a \$10 "donation," you'll get an ID bracelet.

If you hang at the EAM from 6 to 8 p.m., you'll hear the Mark DeWalt Quartet: DeWalt, keyboards; Patrik Crossley, bass; Steve McMurray, drums; saxophonist TBA.

8 to 11 p.m.: The Plymouth Tavern, 1109 State: The Duke Sherman Blues Band: Sherman, guitar, lead vocals; Otis James, harmonica; Sam Hyman, drum throne warmer; Mark Murphy, bass, backing vocals.

9 p.m. to midnight: Erie Ale House, 1033 State: Charles Ventrello, saxophones and flute; Katie Christ, vocals, guitar; Sheldon Peterson, guitar, backup

Frank Singer (left) and The Blues Beaters (right) are just a few of the performers at the 2015 JazzErie Jazz & Blues Walk.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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vocals; Dave Blaetz, bass.

9 p.m. to midnight: The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St.: Lydia Marks Quartet: Marks, with bassist Harry Jacobson wrote and produced the album "Lovelight Shining." Other band members not identified.

9 p.m. to midnight: Gigliotti's Restaurant, 1325 State: Monk's Brew, a young pop-jazz band from Mercyhurst University.

9 p.m. to midnight: Calamari's, 1317 State: The Blues Beaters: Jimmy Cuneo, Antoine Jack, Dean Gleason, Dr. Sax, Henry T, and others.

8:30 to 11 p.m.: PACA, 1505 State: Groovology with saxophonist Gerald Albright. In Albright, JazzErie has brought in a ringer in the nationally known saxophonist, one of the major players, especially on sax, in so-called "smooth" or contemporary jazz. — *Bob Protzman*

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SAT 7/18
 THE KURT SAHLMANN
 PURPLE JAM
FRI 7/24
 HIT N' RUN REUNION SHOW
 DOWNSTAIRS CONCERT
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SAT 7/25
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June 18 — 7 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St.
paca1505.com.

2 For The Show
 June 19 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway.
presqueisledowns.com.

Charlie Daniels
 June 19 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway.
presqueisledowns.com.

The Groove
 June 19 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway.
presqueisledowns.com.

Fletcher's Grove
 June 19 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St.
facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

I-90s
 June 19 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St.
facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Malpractice
 June 19 — 6 p.m.
Schickalay's on the Bay, 2860 W. Sixth St.
facebook.com/schickalaysonthebay.

JC Nickles
 June 19 — 8 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St.
paca1505.com.

Sean Patrick and the Newgrass Revolution
 June 19 — 9 p.m.
The Brewer at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St.
brewerie.com.

Mayflower Hill
 June 19 — 9:30 p.m.
Doc Hollidays, 7425 Schultz Road.
dochollidays.net.

Blue Soul + LaMoreVL + Ron Yarman
 June 20 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St.
facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

BT's Acoustic Showcase
 June 20 — 5:30 p.m.
Basement Transmission, 145 W.

11th St.
facebook.com/beardedbabyproductions.

Cocomama
 June 20 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. Eighth St.
jazzerie.com.

Cross Vision
 June 20 — 6 p.m.
Grace Bible Church, 5200 Yale Drive.
facebook.com/gbcerie.

French Kiss
 June 20 — 7 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St.
facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

One World Tribe w/ Gato's Gullah Gumbo
 June 20 — 4 p.m.
Schickalay's on the Bay, 2860 West 6th St.
facebook.com/schickalaysonthebay.

Matt Gavula
 June 20 — 4 to 6 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway.
presqueisledowns.com.

Mid-life Crisis
 June 20 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway.
presqueisledowns.com.

Moonshine
 June 20 — 9:30 p.m.
Doc Hollidays, 7425 Schultz Road.
dochollidays.net.

Saevitia
 June 20 — 8 p.m.
Warehouse Festival, 5433 Woodside Drive.
facebook.com/pages/The-warehouse-show-of-2015.

Sean Patrick and the Newgrass Revolution
 June 20 — 9 p.m.
Rum Runners, 2 State St.
rumrunnerscove.com.

Anthems of Apathy, Lily Among Thorns, Olathia, Jack's Mom, and Storms Within
 June 21 — 6 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St.
facebook.com/gimpguyunderground.

Perdition
 June 21 — 5 p.m.
Bobby's Place, 1202 West 18th St.
facebook.com.

com/bobbysplace.

Zach Deputy
 June 21 — 4 p.m.
Schickalay's on the Bay, 2860 W. Sixth St.
facebook.com/SchickalaysontheBay.

FILM

Tom Weber Films: Retrospective
 June 10 — 7 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road.
facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

FILM at the Erie Art Museum: Ex Machina
 June 10 — 6 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St.
erieartmuseum.org.

Bigfoot: The Movie
 June 11 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road.
facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

Mutiny on the Bounty
 June 12 — 9 p.m.
Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E Front St. #100.
erieartsandculture.org.

Driller Killer
 June 12 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road.
facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

Mutiny on the Bounty
 June 15 — 9 p.m.
Erie Maritime Museum Plaza, 150 East Front Street Erie, PA 16507
flagshipniagara.org.

The 39 Steps
 June 18 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road.
facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

Celluloid Liberation Orchestra plays Fantomas + Joseph Allen Popp
 June 19 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road.
facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

Fundraiser Show
 June 20 — 6 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road.
facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

VISUAL ARTS:

Selected Works from



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saturday, June 13

UnSaid Fate Headline a Night of Hard Rock at Sherlock's

UnSaid Fate is coming from Cleveland to headline a night of hard rock at Sherlock's on Saturday, June 13.

UnSaid Fate has amassed a considerable following since forming in 2013, winning over their fan base with a repertoire of both originals and covers, in-

cluding songs by Rage Against the Machine and The Offspring. The band toured with their hometown brethren Mushroomhead at the end of 2014, which ended shortly before the tour came to Erie this January. This show will give them the chance to see what they missed out on.

Local supporting acts on the bill are Kevlar and Anthems of Apathy, both of which have been making rounds and paying their dues around Erie, frequently playing at different venues and gathering fans along the way.

All three bands are fronted by a female vocalist, proving that rock isn't just a boys club. So come out to have a good time and let these ladies show you what they're made of. — Tom Shannon

8 PM // Sherlock's, 508 State St. // 453.7760`

Wednesday, June 17

Stephen Trohoske w/ The Mighty Sea at the UPMC Sunset Music Series

The UPMC Sunset Music Series will present a pair of powerful local acts right on the sands of Presque Isle Wednesday, June 17.

Bassist and composer extraordinaire Stephen Trohoske will lead a trio to headline the night, as he, fellow bassist Tony

Grey, and drummer Ken "Stix" Thompson put on a display of fiery swing and smooth Latin grooves on the beach. Joining Trohoske's trio is Erie alternative acoustic duo The Mighty Sea, kicking off the evening with the some hauntingly beautiful tunes while playing right next to Erie's mighty lake – all for free in a gorgeous location. — Alex Bieler

5:30 p.m. // Beach 1, Presque Isle // discoverpi.com

Thursday, June 18

13 Ways to Screw Up Your College Interview Opens at PACA

The Performing Arts Collective Alliance is taking us back to high school with Ian McWethy's 13 Ways To Screw Up Your College Interview. The play, with nightly performances beginning June 18 and running through

June 27, includes thirteen high school seniors interviewing for the last open spot at a university. The trick is that each of the thirteen are over-the-top, eccentric characters, whose flaws give a clear guide of what not to do to land the last spot. For just \$10, it's less than a dollar per lesson, so no hefty student loans are required. — Lauren Griffith

June 18-27th // 8 p.m. // 1505 State St. // facebook.com/paca1505

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Sat, June 20: 6-9 pm

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Sat, June 27: 6-9 pm

Richie Cole

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Tony Stefanelli—bass

Sat, July 4:

Closed for Independence Day

Sat, July 11: 6-9 pm

Eric Alexander Organ Quartet

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Sat, July 18: 6-9 pm

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Sat, July 25: 6-9 pm

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Sat & Sun, Aug 1 & 2

Blues and Jazz Festival in Frontier Park

Time out from our series to enjoy various artists sponsored by Erie Art Museum

Sat, Aug 8: 6-9 pm

CALJE

Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble
Victor Garcia—trumpet
Darwin Noguera—piano
Juan Daniel Pastor—drums, cajon
John Benitez—bass

Sat, Aug. 15: 6-9 pm

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Frank Singer—guitar
Joe Dorris—drums

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CALENDAR



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Friday, June 19

Daybreak Radio Joins Sean Patrick and the Newgrass Revolution at The Brewererie

Newgrass and rootsy Americana will come together when local rock bands Sean Patrick and the Newgrass Revolution and Daybreak Radio play at The Brewererie at Union Station Friday, June 19.

Both bands can put on an electric

performance that can blow the roof off of a joint, so it's a good thing the show will be Trackside at The Brewererie, giving you an all-ages outdoor show that will have you dancing along for the wonderful price of zero dollars. You can even get there early and enjoy some craft brews and bocce before the show, making Friday a night for a whole lot of fun. — Alex Bieler

9 p.m. // 123 W. 14th St. // brewerie.com



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Friday, June 19

Eclectic Appalachian Jammers Fletcher's Grove Get Their Groove on at King's Rook Club

I got a little excited a few weeks back when I saw that eclectic Appalachian jammers Fletcher's Grove are on the bill for this year's All Good Music Festival, happening later this summer in their own wild and wonderful home state of West Virginia.

Cool, I thought – those guys are most definitely worth checking out, anywhere they make it out to.

I got good and giddy, then, when I saw that local jam-fans won't even have to wait to head into the mountains in July to hear Fletcher's Grove's grooves: They'll be doing their thing right here in the Gem City, on Friday, June 19, at the Kings Rook Club.

Awesome, right? And definitely worth the cost of the ticket, which is ... zero dollars.

That's right: yet another definitely-should-see, FREE show, presented by the Rook for local audience's sonic edification and enjoyment.

Fletcher's Grove – a five-piece with an ever-growing legion of live-show fans and multiple (really good) albums under its collective belt – are one of those bands that consistently push the boundaries of their instruments and forms, and do it really, really well. And the more they do that, the more they're getting noticed.

So do yourself a nice, big favor, and go check them out right here in Erie while they're here for a little visit. — Ryan Smith

9 p.m. // 1921 State St. // facebook.com/KingsRookClub

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Ongoing through June 30 — All Day
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. Fifth St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

Higherglyphics: Annex Stairwell Project, Annex Stairwell

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

Ian Brill: Storm, McCain Family Gallery

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

Kristen Cliffl, Ronald E. Holstein Gallery

Ongoing through August 22 — All Day
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. erieartmuseum.org.

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Heeschen Gallery 910 Market St. (Second Floor) Meadville, artsmeadville.org.

DANCE

Sunset Music Series, Hoop Dance Playshop

June 10, 17 — 6:00-6:45
Presque Isle State Park, Beach 1, http://www.jenniferdennehy.com/schedule.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Friday, June 19

Botanical Beverages at Goodell Gardens

The first day of summer may not be until June 21, but you can start a couple days early with a proper garden party and fundraiser in Edinboro. Goodell Gardens will host Botanical Beverages Friday, June 19, offering up some tasty drinks and hors d'oeuvres to go along with live music and lawn games.

The event, which marks the

beginning of the venue's Harvest Festival Art Show, will offer a true farm-to-table experience, with food from Goodell and other regional growers. You can sample botanically-themed cocktails or try some craft spirits, all while taking in the sounds of the Picks & Hammers String Band and trying your hand at bocce, croquet, and badminton. — *Alex Bieler*

7 to 9 p.m. // 221 Waterford St., Edinboro // goodellgardens.org // \$45 per ticket, \$25 for designated drivers



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saturday, June 20

Exotically Original Cocomama Opens Romolo 2015 Summer Music Series

While listening to the women that comprise the band Cocomama, just enjoy the music and don't worry about giving it a name.

Latin-Jazz? Uh, uh. Afro-Cuban? Maybe a little. Afro-Caribbean? A touch. Brazilian? Could be.

You see, Cocomama's music is exotically original, probably because its mem-

bers come from six countries and four continents. Talk about international!

The band performs mostly original music — although it's not clear, as their repertoire could include popular songs from different countries.

Cocomama favors slow to medium tempos, probably because they're performing love songs. They can light a fire at times, however.

Several of the women do lead vocals and often three or more will sing together, and that's impressive. They sing mostly, if not always, in Spanish. It

seems as if they are swaying or moving in some way with the music at all times, and that adds to their performance.

How did a group of women from so many different countries and cultures come together and become a band? Pianist and Musical Director Nicki Denner tells the tale.

"The group dates back to 2005 when we got a call to perform at a fundraiser for then-New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg," she says. "The success of the performance led to other gigs and from this Cocomama was born. The band was never anybody's idea. It just happened."

What about the name? Denner again. "Cocomama is the Incan goddess of good health. We thought this was a really good name because it has such a positive connotation and the sound of it was exotic and easy to pronounce regardless of whatever language you speak."

Cocomama's music also is exotic and easy to enjoy no matter what kind of music you like. — *Bob Protzman*

6 to 9 p.m., // Romolo Chocolates outdoor piazza, 1525 W. Eighth St. // RomoloChocolates.com, 452.1933

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Saturday, June 20

Local Favorites One World Tribe Celebrate Summer at Schickalay's on the Bay

For more than two decades, One World Tribe has been providing Western Pennsylvania with earthy, funky world music and memorable performances, including a special 8 Great Tuesdays set in 2014.

The band, which contains a multitude of talented performers, will return to

The Flagship City in 2015, although it'll be moving to a new location. One World Tribe will headline a free afternoon show at Schickalay's on the Bay Saturday, June 20 as part of the venue's summer music series. Joining One World Tribe will be Cleveland reggae crew Gato's Gullah Gumbo, adding even more feel-good vibes to a delightfully funky show. — Alex Bieler

3 p.m. // 2860 W. Sixth St. // facebook.com/schickalaysonthebay

Gentle Yoga with Kate Will

June 16 — 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Lifeworks Erie, 406 Peach Street Erie, lifeworkserie.org.

FOOD AND DRINK

A Night in Spain

June 12 — 6:30 p.m.

Courtyard Winery, 10021 West Main Road, North East, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

Wine With a Sunset

June 12 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Burch Farms Winery, 9210 Sidehill Road, North East, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

Lakeview Erie Wine Cellars Summer Concert Series Features Eric Brewer & Friends

June 13 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Lakeview Wine Cellars, 8440 Singer Road, North East, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

org.

Lakeview Erie Wine Cellars Summer Concert Series Features Ron Yarosz and the Vehicle

June 20 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Lakeview Wine Cellars, 8440 Singer Road, North East, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

THEATER:

The Erie Station Dinner Theater Presents: Always a Bridesmaid

June 10, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28

Fridays — 7 p.m.; Saturdays — 5:30 p.m.; Sundays — 2:30 p.m.; Tuesdays & Wednesdays — 12 p.m.

The Erie Station Dinner Theater, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

The Erie Playhouse Presents: Sunset Boulevard

June 11-13, 17-20 — 5:30 p.m., June 14

and 21 — 2 p.m.

The Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St., erieplayhouse.org.

All An Act's Footlight Theatre Program Presents: Our Town

June 12 to June 20 — Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.

All An Act, 652 W. 17th St., allanact.net.

Dramashop Presents: Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches

June 12, 13, 20, 26, and 27 — 8 p.m.

June 21 — 2 p.m. Dramashop, Renaissance Centre, 2nd Floor, 1001 State St. dramashop.org.

PACA Presents: "13 Ways to Screw Up Your College Interview" by Ian McWethy

June 18 to June 27 — 8 p.m.

PACA, 1505 State St.

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Pontoon station, 301 Peninsula Drive, trecpi.org.

Painting Party with Angela

June 12, June 26, July 24, Aug 7 — 6 to 8 p.m.

YMCA Camp Sherwin, 8600 West Lake Road. www.ymcaerie.org/camp/events.

Whole Foods Co-op Grand Opening

June 12-13 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Whole Foods Co-op, 1341 W. 26th St. wholefoodcoop.org.

YMCA Pilates Class

June 14, 21 — 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Goodell Gardens, 221 Waterford St. Edinboro. goodellgardens.org.

National Pollinator Week at TREC

June 15 — 21 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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

Seawolves vs. New Hampshire

June 16 — 7:05 p.m.

Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. Tenth St., milb.com.

Seawolves vs. New Hampshire

June 15 — 7:05 p.m.

Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. Tenth St., milb.com.

Seawolves vs. New Hampshire

June 17 — 12:05 p.m.

Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. Tenth St., milb.com.

Drawing with Deborah Sementelli

June 16 — 1:30 to 3 p.m.

LifeWorks, 406 Peach St., lifeworkserie.org.

Goodell Gardens Farmers Market

June 17 — 3 to 6 p.m.

Goodell Gardens, 221 Waterford St. Edinboro. goodellgardens.org.

Yoga in the Gardens with EE Studio

June 18 — 4 to 5 p.m.

Goodell Gardens, 221 Waterford St. Edinboro. goodellgardens.org.v

Beach Glass Jewelry

Making Party

June 19 — 6 to 8 p.m.

YMCA Camp Sherwin, 8600 West Lake Road. www.ymcaerie.org/camp/events.

Turtles on Presque Isle

June 20 — 9 to 11 a.m.

Lagoon Boat Launch, Presque Isle, trecpi.org.

Homeschool Day: Adopt a Beach

June 20 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Shelter 2 Waterworks Area, Presque Isle, trecpi.org.

Morning Eco Paddle

June 20 — 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Lagoon Boat Launch, Presque Isle, trecpi.org.

Cruise Town Erie Car Show

June 20 — 2 to 10 p.m.

State Street, from Fourth to 12th streets. eriedowntown.com.

Academic Transition Program

June 22 — August 31

Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Drive, behrend.psu.edu.



MUSIC REVIEWS

Sun Kil Moon
Universal Themes



Caldo Verde

Mark Kozelek is his own muse. The 48-year old musician behind the moniker Sun Kil Moon made that very evident on 2014's *Benji*, a tremendous, intimate album that reflected on the deaths of his loved ones and, well, his tendency to be a pretty melancholy guy. Just like *Benji*, Sun Kil Moon's new album *Universal Themes* not only feels like Kozelek is sharing very real, recent developments in his life, he is. Hell, one song, "Birds of Flims," chronicles his experience acting in Italian director Paolo Sorrentino's latest film *Youth*, which premiered at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival. It's so new, the album sounds like Kozelek would just sing about whatever was on his mind in the studio while Sonic Youth's Steve Shelley played behind him. Kozelek will ramble at times, but that's part of what's fascinating about *Universal Themes*, an album that takes us into the mind of a man making his life into music. — Alex Bieler



VWLS
VWLS



Independent

VWLS comes out of the gate swinging with their first professionally produced, self-titled effort, and it's immediately apparent that these guys aren't pulling any punches when it comes to producing mathy, stimulating rock. While the all too short demo only features four tracks, the disc is packed with technical intricacies and catchy hooks. From the psychedelic, jam-worthy riffage of the opening track "Puppet" to the reverb-heavy refrains of "Falling Down," the demo is an absolute treat. While the vocals might lay a little low in the mix at times, they still provide an excellent compliment to the complexity of VWLS's instrumental ensemble, which remains the true star of the demo. Best of all, this group is one of many remarkable up-and-coming local acts, and their dedication to their craft is a sure sign of hope for the continued growth of the Erie music scene. — Mike Iverson



Welshly Arms
Welshly Arms



Independent

It's appropriate that a band named after a *Saturday Night Live* skit puts out an album that's flat-out fun. That's exactly what you get with Welshly Arms' self-titled debut LP, except the band manages to be much more consistent than the NBC institution. The Cleveland rockers start off the album with a bang on opener "Love is a Minor Key," a bluesy number that sounds like it was made by the love child of Cold War Kids and the Black Keys. That sense of down and dirty rock 'n' roll is the backbone of *Welshly Arms*, with songs like "The Touch" and "Dirty Work" providing a sonic kick to the teeth. While there's plenty of grit on the album, Welshly Arms does show a softer side on closing track "Who Knew," a sweet five-and-a-half minutes of string-aided music that builds into a triumphant finish on a very enjoyable album. — Alex Bieler



Steve Turre
"Spiritman"



Smoke Sessions

Trombonist Turre, voted No. 1 on his horn recently by the Jazz Journalists Association (JJA), fully justifies the award on his new recording. Turre has mastered what some find to be an unwieldy, sonically unattractive instrument. Turre leads a quintet here through 10 tunes — three of his own, a few standards, and two jazz pieces. The jazz numbers steal the show with an appropriately gentle reading of Horace Silver's "Peace," and the spiritual-feeling title tune. Turre introduces to Miles Davis's "All Blues," played more forcefully than the original and featuring an impressive, conch shell Turre cadenza. Except for one faux pas, a swinging version of "Lover Man," everything else is pretty terrific. You gotta love the funky stuff ("Bu," for drummer Art Blakey); the bluesy, Latin-ish Turre tune "Nangadef;" the incredible muted slide work on Rodgers and Hart's "With a Song in My Heart and Gershwin's "Swonderful," and all the rest. — Bob Protzman



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Geeked Out

Mad Max: Fury Road reboot is a winner.

By: John Lindvay

Director George Miller has returned to his beloved Mad Max franchise 30 years later and has created a film that is not only an action movie masterpiece, but also a beautiful, thoughtful film driven by a story that is surprising everyone. My social circles can't stop talking about it, and now I am going to perpetuate the glory and hysteria of *Mad Max: Fury Road* onto all of you here because I can't stop geeking out about it.

Mad Max is a cult classic that with subsequent sequels grew into a genre-defining franchise. Most films and games that are set in a post-apocalyptic nuclear wasteland will often have homages to what began as a 1979 Australian look at a dystopian society, where tribalism rules the barren waste land and the currency is gasoline. *Mad Max* forwarded the imagination of what these types of stories could look and sound like. 2015's *Mad Max: Fury Road* doesn't just meet those imaginations – it exceeds them, giving us an explosive action film steeped in mythology that starts before you are ready and daringly places Max himself in the passenger seat.

Let's start with that.

Max, in this installment played by one of my favorite actors of all time, Tom Hardy, is still the lone warrior, right up there with the Man with No Name, Yojimbo, and any other lone warrior from countless films and stories told through the ages. He is a cipher for us the audience into a world in which we have very little basis in. But while Max (played by Mel Gibson in the first three installments) drives the plot in earlier films, be it for revenge or something else, in *Fury Road*, Max is our eyes rather than our feet. He rarely speaks, and Imperator Furiosa, played by the impeccable Charlize Theron, is our heroine who advances the plot. Furiosa is a truck driver who commands a pack of white-painted "War Boys" who go out on missions for the world's second-most precious resource: gasoline.

The second incredible thing about this film is its abandonment of traditional action film conventions and franchise reverence that is typical in the film industry. Remember, *Mad Max* is a franchise, and Max has been built in pop culture as a bad-ass anti-hero with a kickass car. The car is taken away in the first few moments of the film only to be seen later briefly, as a War Boy is driving it.

The film structure abandons the traditional rise and fall of action. Instead, we get a roughly two-hour-long car chase that was shot, conventionally for the most part, in the deserts of Namibia, Africa. Those car flips and explosions you see? Yeah, most of those are real. Those long poles with dudes swinging to and fro on the back of moving buggies? Also real. That guitar with a flame thrower at the top? ABSOLUTELY real and ABSOLUTELY fitting.

I am going to perpetuate the glory and hysteria of *Mad Max: Fury Road* onto all of you here because I can't stop geeking out about it.

But what makes this *Mad Max*, different is Furiosa. In short, Immortan Joe, the tribal warlord of Citadel, has been using slave wives to continue his lineage. Furiosa, who was herself enslaved as a younger girl and watched her mother die, has been plotting on smuggling the wives out to take them to "The Green Place." So with a War-rig under her command for a supply mission, she smuggles the wives in and rolls out. Joe doesn't like that and sends out his War Boys to recover his property. The plot is just that simple and all the more delightful because what on the surface is a glorious chase turns out to be so much more.

This is where the movie begins to defy logic for what constitutes your typical action movie fodder. Furiosa is an amputee and the hero of the film. The major theme at play in the film is about Joe's supreme capitalism over all resources all the way to human life, but what we are shown is women fighting for the rights of women to not be property. "We are not things" is scrawled on the walls of where the wives were held. The triumph of the film is the subtlety it uses to explore capitalism (water, playing first fiddle in re-

sources to gasoline, rules the masses) and feminism (women are, first and foremost, in this world chattel – good only for reproduction and objectification). The beauty here is Miller's ability to explore heavy issues without being overt, not drawing viewers out of the visceral, sensory blast unfurling on screen.

But let's be clear: the film itself is beautifully shot. While it is awesome to see huge explosions, the composition of the film will make film students and movie nerds like me freak out over each shot we are given. In a quote from the New York Post, Miller said, "I wanted to make a movie [in which], as Hitchcock [once] said, they don't have to read the subtitles in Japan," adding, "A full visual exercise."

I enjoyed how the composition of the film was juxtaposed with the inherent grotesqueness of the world in which *Mad Max* is set. The War Boys are all cancerous with tumorous lumps and chapped lips. Immortan Joe is basically a walking corpse. And the scenes of the life in The Citadel, while all beautifully shot, contain levels of horror that many people might not be comfortable looking at. But this helps really ground this world of "fire and blood" as Max states in the opening.

It has also been reported that Miller's preferred version of the film is in black and white. In a recent interview he confirmed that on the DVD/Blu-Ray release that a black and white version will be on there as well as a version of the film with no color and no sound, except the movies score. Now that has me even more excited because Miller isn't just continuing the genre, he's driving it forward.

Have you seen the latest *Mad Max*? What do you think of George Miller's return to the franchise after his departure to films like *Babe: Pig in the City* and *Happy Feet*? Is Furiosa the most bad-ass character we've seen grace the silver screen this year? Head to *Erie Reader's* Facebook page to let me know in the comments or email me – because this is a summer blockbuster that will be talked about for years to come!

John Lindvay can be contacted at JLindvay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @ [Fightstrife](https://twitter.com/Fightstrife).

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ER Sports

As the 19-year-long Sherry Bassin Era ends, the future of Erie Otters hockey remains unclear.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Connor McDavid: One of the highlights of the Sherry Bassin Era.

By: James R. LeCorchick

The “Sherry Bassin Era” for Erie Hockey is coming to an end very soon.

I have my opinion – make that a very strong opinion – but I’ll let you form your own, based on various facts and figures.

First off, let’s take a peek at his 19-year tenure in Erie.

Maybe I was a bit too optimistic when I was first introduced to Bassin and the Otters, as it seems like it was just yesterday I attended a news conference at a local hotel for the announcement about hockey returning to Erie. I will admit I’m not a huge hockey fan, but I am an Erie fan so I was thrilled as I sat there listening to everyone who praised Bassin, saying how extremely fortunate we were to get a team with him in charge.

He was billed as a “hockey guru” and the best at building franchises. I left the news conference excited that the local icers were in the hands of a genius of this magnitude. The future seemed indeed bright.

After much research, this is what my records show: In the 19 seasons Bassin was in charge of the Erie crew, they played just more than 1,300 games, winning 587 of them. This works out to a winning percentage of approximately 45 percent

This includes one OHL title and one other appearance in

the finals – that being this past glorious season. There were also four conference titles out of 19 tries, including six times when the Otters didn’t even make the playoffs, and that’s hard to do.

If stability in the coaching department is important, then you will see the Otters have had seven coaches in 19 seasons, an average tenure of 2.7 seasons per coach. The men calling the shots were **Chris Johnstone, Dale Dunbar, Paul Theriault, Dave MacQueen, Peter Sidorkiewicz, Robbie Ftorek**, and current mentor **Kris Knoblauch**. McQueen survived seven seasons or the average would’ve been incredibly abysmal.

Bassin, who always proved to be a good interview for the media, came to town as an excellent judge of talent, and he lived up to that advanced billing as he drafted many performers who went on to NHL careers. But also keep in mind that Erie was often drafting in favorable positions after poor seasons.

At the time, the 2011-12 season appeared to be a total disaster, as the Erie squad posted an incredibly dreadful season of 10 wins and 52 losses. However, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as the Otters were awarded with the first-overall

pick and used it to select the legendary Connor McDavid.

It should also be pointed out that everyone in the hockey world knew he was the best player available, so it didn’t exactly take a genius to figure out McDavid should be picked No. 1 overall. However, Bassin should receive some points for at least making the selection.

While responding to the statement, “You be the judge,” one also has to look at the off-ice performance – and this isn’t exactly a pretty picture.

The success, or lack of success, on the ice could be debatable, but Bassin’s legacy may be determined from the business aspect that rears its ugly head way too many times in sports, especially professional athletics.

However, if Bassin’s stay in Erie is going to be judged strictly from the business standpoint, then the decision will be an easy one. Everyone knows the team is for sale – how could you not know? – but the antics that have been going on for the past three years behind the scenes make the Kardashians appear normal.

Personally, I’m sick of hearing about the impending sale, and I can’t wait for new ownership. However, I must point this out: One of the groups interested in the teams is headed by a personal friend of mine (in the spirit of full disclosure) **Owen McCormick**, one of the owners of the Erie BayHawks and an extremely successful businessman with extremely deep roots in Erie. If he and his cohorts buy the Otters, it’s a guarantee they will stay in Erie. If another group, probably from Canada, purchases the franchise, there’s then no guarantee whatsoever they will stay here.

I will share with you exactly what I told my friend: “Owen, I hope you don’t get the team. I think it’s a horrible business decision.”

From my viewpoint, with the presence of the classy McDavid and the miracle season at the beautiful new Erie Insurance Arena, the price of the franchise is way out of line – one to the tune of at least \$2 million.

The frontrunner to buy the team, retired Canadian Broadcaster **James A. Waters**, was quoted as saying he wants to keep the team in Erie, and he “loves Erie.” He pointed out that he ate at Sara’s one day and the food was great. Now I love Sara’s, but I don’t think I would invest nearly \$8 million in an investment based on the food at a local restaurant. With my apologies to owner **Sean Candela** – the onion rings are great! – I would have to draw the line somewhere.

There’s a reason Bassin owes the Edmonton Oilers – and some other people – more than \$5 million. However, that has been rehashed enough already, and there’s no reason to beat that puck into the ground again.

Bassin has repeatedly denied the Otters were for sale or would be moved. He is adamant that he wants the team to stay in Erie. This seems to be a bit of a change in attitude.

Let me point out some viewpoints from a Canadian paper that we’ve never been privy to here in Erie.

This story seems to present a different perspective of Mr. Bassin than the Erie media portrays.

This story (I suggest you Google this extremely long and extremely interesting report) that was written by David Shoalts in the Toronto outlet *The Globe and Mail* under the title, “Hockey lawsuit exposes grimy underside of sports ownership.” Yes, our fair city is almost guilty by association with the Erie Otters’ owner.

One of the main portions of the story explains how a deal was done for Bassin to sell the team to Edmonton Oilers of the NHL who already had a

deal in place to move the team to Hamilton, Ontario. So much for the passionate statement: “I want the new owners to keep the team in Erie.”

One quote referenced the Otters’ “miserable financial performance” in Erie, and another pointed out: “It’ll be up to the new owner to decide if Erie, the innocent bystander caught in the Daryl Katz/Sherry Bassin/Hamilton, Ontario crossfire, will get to keep its team.”

I suggest you read this article before making your judgment.

I sincerely believe the Otters will stay in Erie – as long as they make money. McCormick’s group would be willing to take a financial hit to keep the team here. I’m not too sure about another group.

I will offer a bit of advice to out of town ownership: If you come to Erie, you better know and understand Erie. That’s why I think it’s mandatory they keep General manager **John Frey** and Coach Kris Knoblauch. Frey understands the city and is extremely well-liked. And there’s no doubt Knoblauch can flat out coach.

On a side note, I was shocked on a recent Sports Blitz radio show that I host five days a week as an unsolicited caller called in and said he read a report that pointed out new ownership may keep Bassin around. He definitely wasn’t president of the Sherry Bassin Fan Club and that prompted a deluge of follow-up calls with callers totally agreeing with the initial caller. I was more than a bit surprised.

I was also amazed there wasn’t one caller in support of the Otters’ owner.


So, “You be the judge.”

If I was the judge:

On the ice – C.

Off the ice – F.

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



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