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R
ERIE READER

July 8 - July 21, 2015 / Vol. 5, No. 14 / ErieReader.com

POT IN PA?

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AND THE POLITICS
OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA

free

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Continuing the North East Conversation

From The Editors

In case you missed it, we recently made a serious and sincere offer to Erie Mayor Joe Sinnott. In short, we wrote an open letter offering to help plan the entertainment for Celebrate Erie 2016.

Rather than rehash the points we made — chief among them was the booking of contemporary, relevant headliners — we encourage you to read the open letter at ErieReader.com, where, so far, more than 10,000 unique visitors have interacted with the op-ed, many commenting on our site and sharing the link via Facebook and Twitter.

At the time of our publication deadline, neither the Mayor nor a representative from his office had responded to our proposal. But many other Erieites and Erie expats have in the form on an online petition.

A week after we suggested the change, local small-business owner and brewmaster Jason Lavery started the no-frills petition that simply read: "Give the Erie Reader editors a chance to help book the bands for Celebrate Erie 2016." As our deadline approached, the petition had more than three-hundred signatures and more than one-hundred comments.

Instead of reiterating the points we've already made, we've decided to use this space as a follow-up co-authored by some of those who've signed the petition to illustrate that we are in fact not alone in our thinking and that the people of Erie believe in taking risks and embracing change in the recognition that better days lie ahead.

Thanks to everyone who signed the petition. The addition of your voice to this conversation makes it louder and harder to ignore:

Aaron Pacy: The passion that the *ER* crew brings to all things Erie is a perfect reason to let them have the reins. Thank you.

Sarah Lewis: Great article! I've been living in Erie for six years now and have always wished that this event was more than what it is...

Erika Berlin: Do something to show a younger, savvy audience that Erie wants to keep them here and engage them in this event!

Ben Frazier: As someone who left Erie in his 20s, I offer this advice: if you want to reverse Erie's "brain drain" problem: give its youth some reasons to stay, and, well, CELEBRATE their city. Culture and entertainment loom large in the list of points that make a city "livable" — instead of just catering to baby boomers, why not offer a truly diverse selection of entertainers? When you've got people who are well into their 40s bemoaning the washed-up state of entertainers, you know you've got a problem. I guarantee the buzz generated by the addition of an up-and-coming act to the Celebrate Erie roster will downright palpable.

Chris Trabold: Best thing I've read in quite sometime; thank you for trying to fix this yearly trainwreck.

Tom Ferraro: My 25-year-old son told me that he and half of his friends from Pittsburgh would come up to Erie to see every band that the *Reader* listed! Let's give them a chance!

Matthew Allyn: I'd actually go to Celebrate Erie if this were the case.

Sandy Turco: Fresh talent will attract fresh people from surrounding areas. By signing this petition, we are supporting our local businesses and bringing much needed revenue to our town. Thank you, *Erie Reader*, for taking the reins on this. It is beyond time for a change!

Mary Walker: Please give these talented people the opportunity to do something great for the hardworking people of Erie. We deserve to have GREAT musicians/bands at our annual celebra-

tion! Thank you.

Robert Eller: The younger generation is the future of this city, and bringing bands that will attract that audience will help us grow.

Matthew P.W. Rogers: It's time the people of Erie stand up say enough is enough. Stop insulting us by bringing bottom-tier entertainment. There's no reason why Erie shouldn't be on the music scene map. With top-tier acts, we could easily draw crowds from the surrounding cities (Cleveland, Buffalo, Pittsburgh), thus bringing additional revenue to the city.

Tomee Barnes: PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE bring music to Erie from this decade.

Dylan D.: This is too much of an iconic celebration for Erie to just half-step on the music involved.

Sean McGrath: Yes, please! Let's stop inviting (and PAYING) embarrassing has-beens to Celebrate Erie. Have some pride, people!

Angela Coustillac: It's time for this city to start making some changes and investing in the young people we want to stay here!

Luis Pontillo: As someone who graduated college recently and who currently lives and works in Erie, I can't remember the last time I spent a full weekend here. I go to many concerts on the weekends, sometimes during the week and tend to spend most of my leisure time in Buffalo, Cleveland, or Pittsburgh. If we had more bands here that piqued the younger demographic, there would be so much reason to stay...

Jessica Chaplain: Please, god; let this happen.

Editors' note: Not all comments were included, and some have been edited for clarity and length. To read all of the comments, share your thoughts, and sign the petition, visit: ipetitions.com/petition/celebrateerie2016.

Street Corner Soapbox

Lifting the ban on marijuana is easy; legalizing it isn't – and it isn't because of the War on Drugs.



NEETA LIND

I won't tire you with the arguments for medicinal marijuana. Pot is useful for treating cancer, MS, AIDS, and epilepsy symptoms. For pain: backaches, knee aches, heartaches. It slows Alzheimer's, eases anxiety, and makes you thin. And it's all-natural! It's the miracle plant! And some of these things are true. But I expect, like a lot of the typical claims of naturopathy, a lot of it is quackery.

As for the arguments against medicinal marijuana, well, there just aren't any good arguments against it.

In fact, the arguments against marijuana are so weak, there's really no reason to settle for just legalized medicinal use of marijuana. Pot should be decriminalized. Pot should be legal.

It's – what? – 2015 now and just about every one of you reading these lines smokes pot, has smoked pot, or been around pot-smoking friends. You know what I know: it's a relatively harmless drug. So I don't need to look up those studies that show decreases in violent crime and traffic fatalities in areas with

legalized marijuana, do I? Do I have to remind you that you can't OD on pot? Do I have to trot out the medical studies showing that pot isn't anywhere near as addictive as tobacco or alcohol?

No, I don't.

And should I go to the social costs of outlawing the drug? Maybe you know these facts, as well. That hundreds of thousands of Americans each year are arrested for the possession of this relatively benign drug? The billions in taxpayer dollars spent housing them in prisons? The wasted lives, the economic loss of their work and productivity? The damage done to society? The marijuana policing that disproportionately targets African Americans?

The case is so obvious, even the *New York Times* called for legalization last summer. "It has been more than 40 years since Congress passed the current ban on marijuana, inflicting great harm on society just to prohibit a substance far less dangerous than alcohol," wrote the Gray Lady's editorial board. "The federal government should repeal the

Pennsylvania could soon lift the ban on medical marijuana.

ban on marijuana."

That's the easy part. Lifting the ban.

Here's the hard part: legalizing.

It's not just a simple legalize-it-and-go. There are a lot of administrative structures to create. Licensing. Taxing. Oversight. Regulation. And these things are causing headaches for the states – Oregon, Washington, and Colorado, for now – that legalized pot.

In Washington, for example, the slow process of licensing pot dispensaries and the heavy tax rate and onerous restrictions placed on them has caused very slow growth of outlets for the legal sale of pot, and a much lower than expected tax revenue.

And then there are the questions of how to regulate doses and how to label marijuana. We all had a good laugh at *Times* columnist Maureen Dowd when she went to Denver and had a bad trip after eating a pot-laced candy bar: "I strained to remember where I was or even what I was wearing, touching my green corduroy jeans and staring at the exposed-brick wall. As my paranoia deepened, I became convinced that I had died and no one was telling me." But the column had a good point, even if it was like watching a snippet of "Reefer Madness." Labels on marijuana products in Colorado, for example, are notoriously inaccurate. And new users of marijuana edibles may not know – like Dowd! – what the labels are telling them anyway. Eating marijuana gives a much more potent and long-lasting high, something you don't get from an old-fashioned joint or bong hit.

And the legalization of pot hasn't turned out to be a quick solution to the ill-conceived "War on Drugs."

For starters, illegal trade of marijuana hasn't stopped in places where the ban was lifted. In Seattle, Washington, for example, black market pot dealers find that their business is thriving – especially with licensure for legal distributors dragging and the price of legal marijuana sometimes twice as much you'd pay a shady dude handing out baggies at strip clubs. Smuggling still exists, too: Colorado, Oregon, and Washington are being used as bases for the transportation of pot into other states.

And police are still making marijuana-related arrests. Yes, arrests for criminal possession and distribution are down significantly, but dealing without a license and outside state-mandated guidelines is still a felony in those states. Additionally, in Colorado for one, public consumption of pot is illegal – and those being arrested for it are disproportionately African-American, according to a 2015 Drug Policy Alliance report. Those that were arrested in legalized-pot states before the ban was lifted are still languishing in prison, even for relatively minor possession offenses.

Of course, even with legalized marijuana, the War on Drugs continues on

The arguments against marijuana are so weak, there's really no reason to settle for just legalized medicinal use of marijuana. Pot should be decriminalized. Pot should be legal.

in all states. The federal government still considers marijuana illegal, and all states criminalize possession for other illegal drugs. Possession still carries high penalties, and federal civil forfeiture laws still allow federal authorities to seize property of suspected drug users or dealers without conviction.

There is one addiction that proponents of legalization don't talk about much. And that's the addiction of state budgets to tax revenue. We've seen it in Pennsylvania around state liquor stores and across the nation with state lotteries. Once a state relies on the tax revenue, making any real change to those tax sources becomes all the more difficult.

So, yeah. Let's go, pot! Legalize it! But let's not snap on the blinders and think that legalization cures all ills. In fact, any reasonable legalization effort should be prepared with a good plan on how to license, tax, and distribute marijuana, and with an eye towards coupling legalization with prison and drug treatment reform.

And then let's split some brownies.

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

Erie at Large

There's an unlikely convert after the latest City Council meeting.



BRAD TRIANA

By: Jim Wertz

Kudos, Caz! That's not a sentiment I've often offered. In fact, I'll admit that when Casimir "Caz" Kwitowski ran for City Council to take the seat previously held by his friend and longtime local political fixture, Pat Cappabianca, I decried the cronyism of Erie politics and the fact that city voters would allow Caz, the former city controller, to shuffle from one elected position to another. It felt like another local politician was lapping the Grateful Dead.

Mea Culpa. I've come to understand that Caz Kwitowski is respected throughout the community and that he's a dedicated public servant.

Those opinions were reinforced during the June 17 meeting of Erie City Council. If you missed it, you weren't alone (I wasn't there either!), but thanks to the power of the Internet, we can re-live it wherever and whenever we want. Just browse your way to bit.ly/CazK.

Councilman Kwitowski gave his "report," as all councilmembers do at each meeting, telling Erie, for the record, how many committee meetings they attended (or didn't attend) and how many breakfasts and lunches they had in service of the community, and offering overtures of thanks and good tidings to their constituents. Most members of council feign enthusiasm for the task and most members of the gallery politely resist falling asleep. *Quid pro quo.*

Council President Dave Brennan called on Caz to deliver the first report of the evening. Standard fare, really. And then, like a critical moment in a *Peanuts* cartoon or Cameron Crowe film, Caz says, "Just a final note..."

He then proceeded to offer a critique on the state of the City that reflects the feelings of many, but one that is rarely heard from the stage in council chambers.

"There's going to come a time when some council, and I hope it's this one, sits down and says, 'It's our turn, and if not us, who? If not now, when?' We're going to have to start taking some giant steps to turn this city around," he said.

He went on to lament recent news about Erie's status as the eighth fastest declining city in the country and the comparisons to Detroit and the fact that – by the list – Erie trails even places like Flint, Michigan, which achieved infamy for its poverty and decline in Michael Moore's 1989 documentary, *Roger and Me*.

"We've got to start turning things around and it's going to take a lot of political courage. And for some of us it may cost us our jobs. I'm perfectly willing to start the process," he continued, "and it's going to be painful. But if we do nothing, that's not a pleasant picture."

From the outside, Caz appeared to be reacting to his personal feelings about the city as well as the inner workings of city government. The management of liability can't be an easy thing to watch when you have an expectation of leadership or, at the very least, the administration of calculated risk. Moreover, sharing a desk with at least four potential mayoral candidates who are passively waiting their turn at the Democratic wheel and governing as a coalition of the unwilling can't be an easy task. That's what made this all the more impressive. He was talking at council as much as he was speaking to the people of Erie.

"I'm tired of hearing about how we're good enough to have the fifth and sixth wards do business in Millcreek and Harborcreek, but not even good enough to have an IHOP restaurant – or any kind of business – open in the city. That has to stop," he declared.

But this wasn't just an airing of grievances. For the first time in a long time, if ever, a member of City Council indicted the major offenders, the absenteeism, and the ambivalence that leads this community down the path of fear and loathing.

"We as a city have to start taking measures, however painful, to start

"We've got to start turning things around and it's going to take a lot of political courage. And for some of us it may cost us our jobs. I'm perfectly willing to start the process."

cleaning up the landlords that don't live here, the property owners that aren't doing what they're supposed to do...it's going to be very painful and unpleasant for some of us, but we can't afford to watch the decline. I for one don't want to be part of that," Caz concluded.

He wasn't just throwing stones. The non-verbal discomfort of his colleagues was apparent. Jim Winarski autographed enough paperwork to mortgage most of the East side in the time it took Caz to redress his grievances and no one responded to him.

I'm guessing Caz went home that night without much acknowledgment for a gesture that went generally unnoticed and unnoted.

So, Kudos again, Caz. Lead us, if you will. There are plenty of people in this community willing to take giant steps at the side of a leader. Stumble if you will, succeed if you might. Failing forward is better than falling behind.

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

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on WQLN-TV 54.1

LIFE ON THE REEF

Wednesdays at 8pm
July 22-August 5
on WQLN-TV 54.1

News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

LEAD STORY — Update

California inventor Matt McMullen, who makes the world's most realistic life-sized female doll, the RealDoll (with exquisite skin texture and facial and body architecture, and which sells for \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on customization), is working with engineers experienced in robotics to add animation — but according to a June New York Times report, faces a built-in problem. As a pioneer Japanese robotics developer observed, robots that become too humanlike tend to disgust rather than satisfy. Hence, the more lifelike McMullen makes his RealDolls, the more likely the customer is to be creeped out rather than turned on — perhaps forcing the virtuoso McMullen to leave enough imperfection to reassure the customer that it's just a doll. [New York Times, 6-11-2015]

Cultural Diversity

A low-caste minor girl was beaten up by several higher-caste women in the village of Ganeshpura, India, in June (in retaliation for the girl's having disrespected a male relative of the women — by allowing her shadow to partially cover the man). The girl's family managed to get to a police station to file charges, but in some remote villages like Ganeshpura, higher-caste aggressors can intimidate the victims into silence (and in this case, allegedly threatened to kill the girl and members of her family for the shadow-casting). [Press Trust of India via Times of India, 6-16-2015]

Yunessan Spa House in Hakone, Japan, recently began offering guests

supposedly soothing, skin-conditioning baths — of ramen noodles (elevating to health status what might be Japan's real national dish). The pork broth that fills the tub is genuine, but because of health department regulations, only synthetic noodles can be used, and it is not clear that the artificial ramen achieves the same (allegedly) beautifying collagen levels as actual noodles. [Metro News (London), 5-12-2015]

Government in Action

The federal Medicare Fraud Strike Force obtained indictments of 243 people in June in a variety of alleged scams and swindles, and among those arrested was Dr. Noble U. Ezukanma, 56, of Fort Worth, Texas, who once billed the government for working 205 hours in a single day (October 16, 2012). Other indictees were similarly accused of inflating the work they supposedly did for Medicare patients, but Dr. Ezukanma clearly had the most productive day of the bunch. [Dallas Morning News, 6-18-2015]

Republican presidential contender Carly Fiorina, who with her husband earned \$2.5 million last year, disclosed that the U.S. tax system required her to file not just a federal return but returns in 17 states, as well, and a June New York Times report chose one state (Michigan) to highlight the Fiorinas' plight. Ultimately, the Fiorinas determined that they owed Michigan income tax of \$40, but they had no way of knowing the exact amount until they had completed 58 pages of documents (to rule out various Michigan attempts to collect more

because the tax they owed was more justly payable to other states and could thus be excluded). [New York Times, 6-12-2015]

Canada's naval vessels stationed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, currently lack supply-ship services, according to a May Canadian Press report. One of the two supply vessels has been decommissioned, and the other, 45 years old, is floating limply because of corrosion, and work on a replacement will not begin until 2017. Consequently, according to the report, the navy has been forced to order repair parts for the ship by advertising for them on eBay. [Canadian Press via CTV News, 5-18-2015]

News You Can Use

A brief Washington Post review in June heralded the new edition of the Routledge International Handbook of Ignorance Studies, covering "different types of ignorance" in a range of subjects by authors from various countries. Among the valuable conclusions in the book is that while "individual ignorance" may be rational in some cases, it is unlikely that "collective ignorance" advances the society. In any event, the author concluded, "The realm of ignorance is so vast that no one volume can fully cover it all." [Washington Post, 6-16-2015]

Florida!

Because the walkway in front of a Publix supermarket in Fort Lauderdale had seen its share of Girl Scout cookie sellers, Patrick Lanier apparently thought the venue a natural for his

product. On June 4, he plopped down a live, 5-foot-long shark he had just captured, and which he hectored shoppers to buy, asking \$100 (and occasionally tossing buckets of water on it to keep it shimmering). He had less success than the cookie-peddlers, and in short order loaded it back into his truck, took it to an inlet and released it. However, he did avoid the police; it is illegal to sell fish without a commercial license. [WSVN-TV (Miami), 6-5-2015]

Oh, Dear!

The New York Court of Appeals ruled in June that, when a body is taken for official autopsy and organs are removed (including the brain), the deceased's family does not necessarily have a right to receive the body with organs re-inserted. "(N)othing in our common law jurisprudence," the judges wrote, mandates "that the medical examiner do anything more than produce the ... body." The family had demanded the entire body back for a "proper" Catholic burial. [New York Daily News, 6-11-2015]

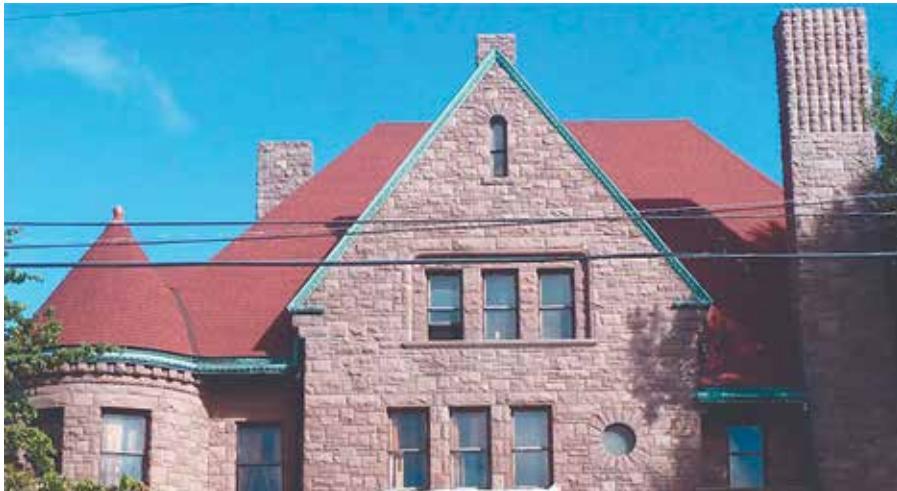
Sounds Like a Joke

In May, police in Anglesey, North Wales, called for a hostage negotiator to help with two suspects (aged 21 and 27) wanted for a series of relatively minor crimes and who were holed up on the roof of a building. However, the building was a one-story community center, and the men (whose feet were dangling over a gutter about 8 feet off the ground) had refused to come down. Even as a crowd gathered to watch, the men managed to hold out for 90 minutes before being talked down. [South Wales Evening Post, 5-15-2015]



Preserving the past, building the present, envisioning the future.

Historical Society of Erie County hosts preservation summit and annual meeting.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Mary Birdsong

With a \$3.5 million capital campaign successfully accomplished, and renovations and additions to the West Sixth Street complex nearly complete, the Historical Society of Erie County is now working to lay the foundation for more local architectural preservation, and wants to educate professionals about the benefits available to them for saving structures rather than tearing them down.

On July 20, the Society will co-host with Erie Insurance an invitation-only preservation summit for local bankers, attorneys, accountants, developers, architects, elected officials, appraisers, and key community stakeholders that will feature a presentation by Jake Schneider, a Buffalo-based developer and tax credit expert. His presentation will outline how to use the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit program. The summit was also made possible with support from The National Trust for Historic Preservation the National Trust Community Investment Corporation.

Caleb Pifer, Executive Director of the Historical Society of Erie County, says that the summit will focus on the federal tax credit program because use of it in the region has been limited. Pennsylvania also has a preservation tax credit program that can be used in conjunction with the federal credit as long as the project meets requirements. According to the website of the National Park Service which administers the program, "tax credits are available for any qualified project that the Secretary of the

The Historical Society of Erie County renovations and additions on West Sixth Street are nearing completion (among them the Watson-Curtze Mansion, pictured).

Interior designates as a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure."

Schneider's presentation will be followed by a tour of recent renovations to historical buildings in the city, including the Dickson Tavern at East Second and French streets, renovated by the architectural firm of Kidder-Wachter, as well as tours of the C.F. Adams Building at East Sixth and French streets, and the former National Guard Armory at East Sixth and Parade streets, both renovated by Erie Insurance.

The Society is dovetailing the summit with its annual meeting and awards reception later in the day. Tom Hagen, well known for his interest in historical preservation and local history, will deliver the keynote address at the meeting. According to Pifer, "[Tom Hagen] has never really spoken publicly about historic preservation. So for many, this will be their first time to hear his thoughts on the subject."

Local history and preservation achievements will be highlighted as well. Eric and Gail Root, who restored the 1897 Schoolhouse at the corner of Rt. 5 and Dutch Road in Fairview and Brent and Mari Willey, who restored the Taylor House in Edinboro, will receive Preservation Awards for Adaptive Reuse; The Jefferson Educational Society will receive the Local History Award for its publication of the chronology of the two-year Perry 200 celebration; and John Baker will be honored as the Volunteer of the

Year for his photo documentation of the restoration and construction of the new Hagen History Center on the campus of the Historical Society.

The meeting and awards reception is open to the public but reservations must be secured and tickets are \$15 per person.

Pifer says the Society has been recognizing local history and preservation achievements since the 1980s. The awards highlight the most significant history or preservation projects in the past year. "It not only honors the people who have pursued these projects, but it makes the community aware of the great things going in preserving the heritage of our region."

The annual meeting will also highlight the Society's recent accomplishments including the building of the King-Mertens Archive Building at the Hagen History Center along with renovations to the carriage house that will become the visitor center, containing a library, reading room and gift shop, and the Watson-Curtze Mansion, which is being renovated. New exhibits are currently being installed in the mansion and the full project will be revealed at a grand opening gala on Aug. 29.

"I cannot be happier with how the new visitor center inside the carriage house is turning out, says Pifer. "I think that folks will find the Visitor Center's Historic Research Library to be absolutely stunning."

The tax-credit summit could be the start of an increased interest in protecting our history, although Pifer says it will "not be a silver bullet to spurring preservation efforts in our region." He does say, however, "we hope that by further educating the professionals that splice together tax credit deals, we will have advanced the understanding of the importance of the credit in making preservation projects possible due to cost savings."

And the newly refurbished History Center should spark interest in our heritage and, perhaps, stay the wrecking ball a bit more often around town.

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

GOODELL GARDENS
& HOMESTEAD



Upcoming Events:

7/10 - Music: Special Guest
7 pm - \$5 admission - rock n roll

7/12 - Permaculture Talk
with Dr. Karen Eisenhart \$7

7/17 - Music: Texter & Friends
7 pm, \$5 admission - Americana

7/19, 26 & 8/2 - Seat Weaving Series
\$30 covers supplies except chair
Register by phone 734-6699

Sing-along with Lori Burke
Wednesdays in July 11 am \$2

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Considering the City

EMTA board needs transit stakeholders.



By: Civitas Member Lisa Austin

On Erie's Zoning Hearing Board, one of five seats is reserved for "the building trades." Having actual construction experience is considered to be an important viewpoint to have in zoning discussions, and this makes sense.

In the last few weeks, there has been a lot of discussion about the current method of making appointments to the board of the Erie Metropolitan Transportation Authority (EMTA). Some propose to decrease City EMTA appointments and to increase County EMTA appointments. While the dialogue has centered around which governmental authority should make board appointments, this conversation doesn't address the skillsets of those serving on the EMTA board.

Perhaps seats on the EMTA board should be reserved for stakeholders, somewhat independent of geography.

Seat #1: DIFFERENTLY-ABLED RESIDENT: Allow the board of Voices for Independence (VFI) to appoint

someone to the EMTA board. VFI was founded "by a group of individuals with disabilities...to provide independent living supports and services that are consumer driven, and responsive to and respectful of people with disabilities."

Ms. Shona Eakin, the VFI Executive Director, commented, "it makes sense to have members of the user community on the board" because "we know how the Authority affects individual lives," and "we know firsthand what it is like to need, and to use the services."

Eakin said the EMTA can be "great" but that an appointee by VFI would "help to impact and implement (EMTA) policy" and "offer advice on training EMTA staff."

Seat #2. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH LEADER: Give one EMTA seat appointment to the Erie Council of Neighborhood Watches (ECNW). Mr. Steve Simmelkjaer, ECNW Chair, responded to this idea saying that having EMTA board members who are also transit users is "absolutely vital." Simmelkjaer added, "I myself am

a user" and that EMTA board members who currently "may not be involved in their communities...have the power to make decisions." He describes the current structure of user input as "minimal."

Seat #3. COMMUNITY TRANSIT LEADER: Give an EMTA board seat to All Aboard Erie (AAE). AAE advocates for local, regional, and national transit – especially bus, light rail, rail, and high-speed rail. AAE's Assistant Executive Director, Julie Minich, is a committed EMTA rider, who says she selected her home "based on its proximity to bus lines." Minich, an expert on the Erie's bus system, already volunteers and attends EMTA meetings. Minich should be invited to serve on the EMTA board.

Seat #4 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENT: Make the EMTA board international by giving one appointment decision to the leaders of the E.F. Smith Quality of Life Learning Center, the Multicultural Center, and the International Institute. These organizations could jointly select an EMTA board member from Greater Erie's community of Latinos,

As the discussion over City and County appointments to the EMTA board continue, perhaps we should consider the stakeholders.

immigrants, refugees, and New Americans.

Seat #5 MINORITY REP: Our minority community represented by the NAACP, the John F. Kennedy Community Center, the Martin Luther King Community Center, and the Booker T. Washington Center could appoint one EMTA board member.

Seat #6 SENIOR VIEW: Erie's Senior Centers could meet with leaders of CAT (Cable Access Television) seniors who organize the "Amazing Grays" program. Together our elders could appoint an EMTA board member.

Seat #7 YOUTH IDEAS: Erie County's colleges, universities, high school student government officers and Young Erie Professionals (YEP) could appoint a youthful EMTA board member.

And while we are on the subject of the EMTA, here are a few more suggestions: Link bus service to Amtrak and Airport schedules; establish bus service on Sundays and holidays; investigate use of smaller vehicles for less-populated routes; investigate the maintenance of an underpass bike and pedestrian path on Division Street; eliminate free parking for EMTA staff and visitors ("free" parking is paid for by taxpayers, and "free" parking discourages transit use.); consider housing some buses overnight in distant points in the county to eliminate empty early morning buses heading from Erie to Edinboro, etc.

Freda Tepfer, a lifelong transit user, served for four years on the Citizens Advisory Committee of Community Transit in Snohomish County, Washington. During that time she successfully worked with

other riders to organize schedule change to accommodate commuters from a Park & Ride in Arlington to their jobs Darlington, 45 minutes away.

Tepfer says that "Transit Agencies are more responsive to rider concerns when they provide a regular means for riders to voice concerns." Tepfer praised EMTA's "incremental" improvements to their website, fare structure, bus service, and smart phone trip planning options. However, Tepfer notes, "the average rider" who cannot attend the weekday daytime EMTA meetings cannot easily question or comment on EMTA policies.

In 1912, famed urban planner John Nolen claimed that many urban problems could be countered by a (single) planning agency with the authority to "exercise collective power in the name of the community" in decisions about streets, transportation, waterfront, buildings, and open spaces. If Erie had listened to Nolen, we'd not have the well-meaning but misguided decisions by our mono-cultured, siloed Authorities.

Because the Erie Metropolitan Transportation Authority's 50 year contract is up for renewal, we have a chance to shorten the contract's length from a half-century to a decade, and, to make the EMTA more responsive and effective.

It's time to make the EMTA board representative of the varied constituencies who actually ride the bus.

Learn more about the candidates at their websites and Facebook pages. Civitas members can be reached at their website www.civitaserie.com.

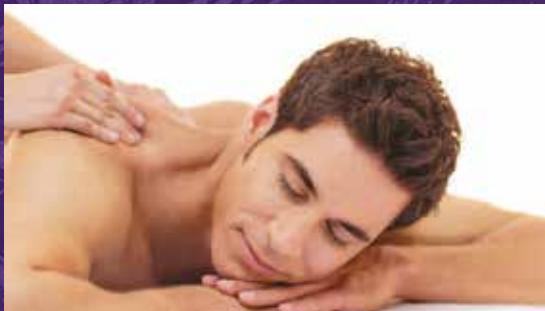
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Nickel Plate Mills

The century-old business continues to thrive on Erie's East Side.



BRAD TRIANA

By: Ryan Smith

Just a couple of decades after the 19th Century took its pivot into the 20th, much of the City of Erie's East Side still looked, well, a lot less like a city.

Look at a map of the 1900 block of Parade Street from that period, and you'll see still countryside surrounding the sizable structure that's now, and was then, Nickel Plate Mills.

Since then, for better in some cases, and for worse in others, much has changed – physically and otherwise – in and around that spot on the map.

And in the nearly 100 years it's been occupying the same half-city-block-long space, Nickel Plate Mills has changed, too – but, really, not all that much.

Sure, the people there are no longer in the business of custom-grinding tons (and tons) of livestock and poultry feed and

flour grains daily. But Nickel Plate still focuses a major portion of its efforts on selling feed – now, mostly, to holistic- and health-conscious dog and cat owners, many of whom are willing to go out of the way of the city's big-box strips to get what the store uniquely has to offer.

That's cool, but get this, too: The business, taken on in 1922 by brothers Phil and F.J. Schmid, has never left the family.

For Nickel Plate's current Schmid-family-descended owner, Gretchen Bonadio (who now runs the place with her husband, Bob) trying to dig deep for past glimpses of her few earliest experiences there brings “just little flashes of memory,” she said recently.

Just seeing the mill itself back then: “I begged and begged [my father] to bring me in. It was *huge* to me as a child,” she said – the old-school loading dock, for example, “looked like it was 10 feet high.”



BRAD TRIANA

But, over the course of the years it was owned and operated by her father, Bill Schmid (after it had changed hands from her great-grandfather to her grandfather to him), Gretchen and her siblings got used to the place, got comfortable there, even got jobs there themselves.

Her brother, who had been Nickel Plate's next presumed predecessor, died young – at only 22 – and

Above: Gretchen Bonadio, along with her husband Bob, currently own Nickel Plate Mills, a business that's been in Gretchen's family for a century.

her sister, she said, simply “wanted to do other things” professionally.

So, Gretchen said, after also doing other things herself (years of work in sales, and the last of them not very fulfilling), “I guess I was it.”

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BUSINESS



BRAD TRIANA

She's been right there, the whole time, along with Bob and their handful of employees – all relatives except one, who has her own generations-long family ties to working there – since 1994.

The business has grown and changed in more recent years to include a lush, full greenhouse and lawn-and-garden section along with its mainstay selling of hard-to-find-elsewhere lines of all-natural (really all-natural) pet foods. They also offer other pet-related supplies, and even have in-house canine obedience classes for beginners.

There's a lot of other learning that can be done there, too – about everything from the best-for-you seed varieties to how to best care for plants and the ground they're in.

And, in some cases, they're busting up preconceived notions, too.

"The east side of Erie has a bad reputation," said Gretchen. But "we're making a pretty good living here. If you have what somebody wants, they're going to come get it."

Now, she said, and for a lot of rea-

sons, "I think people are afraid to take a chance."

The business, taken on in 1922 by brothers Phil and F.J. Schmid, has never left the family.

But "if someone asked me if they should start up a business on the East Side, I wouldn't hesitate to say 'yes.'"

Doing business in Erie, right there – in the very same spot for almost a century now – has sure worked out for the family at Nickel Plate.

Ryan Smith can be reached at rsmith@eriereader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @ryanmsmithplens.



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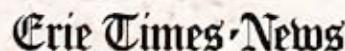
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Helping Hands

Local grassroots groups collaborate efforts to make Erie safer.



Local initiatives, like The Blue Coats, Safe Harbor Behavioral Health, and the Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance are working to make Erie a safe, more vibrant community for all.

School District's then Assistant Superintendent Bob Oliver.

This led to an expanded partnership with the school district (as well as City Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.) to "help the schools by providing a community presence," according to Craig. Presently, in addition to after-school mentorship, their services include grief counseling, truce negotiations, student trips to the YMCA, court advocacy for young people who demonstrate a willingness to change, and an end-of-the-year "Fun Day," which allows children from low-income families to spend an afternoon at Waldameer Park and Water World.

When its members began wearing blue jackets with "Non-Violence Initiative" written on the back of them, students at Wayne Middle School gave the organization its second, informal name – the Blue Coats. The nickname is emblematic of the initiative's down-to-earth approach, which has encouraged at-risk youth to really open up to them. Craig notes that "most people, especially our young people, don't need anybody to tell them when they're messing up... But what usually helps to address that is when you, *sincerely*, communicate to them that – regardless of what they're doing – you believe in them, and that you see something greater."

Craig and Horton are careful to avoid taking a tone of judgment with the students they mentor. Instead they prioritize positive affirmation and honest, direct conversation. "Sometimes it's moral in nature, sometimes it's spiritual in nature, and sometimes it's just the cold, hard facts," according to Councilman Horton.

The success of the Blue Coats in our community was recently rewarded through a \$300,000 grant from the Erie Community Foundation. The funding has led to the group's final name – Creative Community Connectors – as it achieves 501(c)(3) non-profit status. There are currently about 20 "Blue Coats" at work in our region, several of whom are supported with stipends made pos-

By: Dan Schank

When I arrive at the Erie Police Department on a Tuesday morning in mid-June, Chief Randy Bowers has good news. When compared to the previous year, violent crime during the first five months of 2015 appears to be on the decline in Erie.

As our conversation begins, he shares some comparative data. According to EPD statistics, between January 1 and May 31 in 2014, there were 178 reported shots fired in the city of Erie. This year, during the same time period, there have been 157. Of the shots fired, the EPD accounted for 29 people who had been hit by a bullet in the first five months of 2014. This year, there have been 20. Aggravated assaults by firearms are also on the decline – there were 32 at this point in 2014, and 26 this year. The numbers are nearly identical for armed robberies with a firearm – 32 by the end of May in 2014, and 27 in 2015. None of these numbers are ideal, but the overall trends are encouraging.

Chief Bowers is quite humble about these achievements: "We're not doing it alone. What's very important, I think, in Erie is that we have good relationships

in the community." He's quick to stress the importance of communication and collaboration, noting that "people have to trust their police in order to help the police."

To maintain that trust, Bowers encourages police officers to regularly attend Neighborhood Watch meetings. He also cites the importance of the EPD's Ride Along program, informally created in 2014, which allows members of the local clergy to "ride along" with police officers during shifts. Once each month, at L.E.A.D. meetings (that's short for Law Enforcement Agency Directors) overseen by Assistant United States Attorney Marshall Piccinini, all of the police chiefs in the Erie area come together to share ideas and information with local representatives from the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Marshall Service, the Coast Guard, Border Patrol, the IRS, Customs, the Postal Inspectors and the District Attorney's office. Thanks in part to its emphasis on collaboration, the EPD was able to retrieve 175 illegal firearms in 2014.

The list of people, programs, and organizations working together to make Erie safer is too long to list, let alone describe with any real complexity. Don't

expect a comprehensive overview of those efforts from this article. Instead, here is an admittedly-incomplete introduction to a few local initiatives that are doing encouraging work...

Creative Community Connectors (aka The "Blue Coats")

Creative Community Connectors has gone by many names during its decade of local service.

In the mid-2000s, under the leadership of the late Pastor Robert L. Gaines Jr. of Abundant Life Ministries, it was called "The Non-Violence Initiative." Gaines worked closely with County Councilman André Horton to create an after-school program designed to reduce crime in Erie's most at-risk communities. Next, Horton reached out to an old friend named Daryl Craig who was active with an outreach ministry in Buffalo called Back to Basics.

As luck would have it, a job transfer brought Craig back to Erie. Inspired by the Back to Basics model, the three men began to address the needs of young people in our low-income neighborhoods. One of the earliest successes of the Non-Violence Initiative occurred when Craig and Horton helped de-escalate a gun conflict at East High, which drew the attention of the Erie

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FEATURE

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Safe Harbor Behavioral Health

It's difficult to consider public safety in our community without addressing the connections between mental health and dangerous behavior. In 2014, for example, the *Erie-Times News* reported that, among the inmates at Erie County Prison, "a full 30 percent or more of the average daily population of 620 prisoners suffer from a serious mental illness."

Fortunately, Safe Harbor Behavioral Health of UPMC Hamot (SHBH) provides our community with important resources to help ensure that conflicts are resolved peacefully. According to Dr. Mandy Fauble, Vice President of Clinical Operations, SHBH is "the region's largest outpatient mental health facility," whose core mission is dedicated to "helping people with serious mental illness and helping children with emotional disturbance."

Safe Harbor offers a variety of services, including case management for approximately 300 individuals with serious mental health problems. They also operate a Crisis Center on West 12th street, where free and confidential counseling is available 24 hours a day, either by phone, through walk-in services, or through an 8-bed residential unit. For more urgent problems, a mobile crisis unit is available to "respond anywhere in Erie County, any time day or night," according to Fauble. They also work closely with the police, responding in the field when officers encounter people "engaged in behavior that feels unsafe to the community but is rooted primarily in a behavioral health concern."

Through a partnership with Mercyhurst University and UnifiedErie (the EPD's collaboration with the District Attorney and the U.S. Regional Attorney), Safe Harbor was able to participate in a grant project called "PCIT Across Pennsylvania." PCIT stands for Parent Child Interaction Therapy, a technique designed to help parents with young children between the ages of 2 ½ and 7 who display oppositional behavior.

PCIT differs from traditional counseling techniques because the therapist observes the parent from outside the room (via a two-way mirror) and communicates directly with her or him through an earpiece. Fauble notes that one of the dangers of traditional counseling is that "the thera-

pist can, in some ways, usurp the authority of the parent." By moving the professional out of the child's sight, Fauble argues that "it really reinforces that the parent is in the position of authority in the household." From there, PCIT trains parents to improve their child's self-esteem and anger management skills through positive reinforcement.

The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance

When working to improve public safety, it's important to ensure that criminals don't return to a life of crime when they complete their sentences. According to recent data from the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments, 40 percent of the prisoners released in Erie County in 2013 ended up behind bars once again within three years.

To address this issue, Erie Together, an initiative designed to encourage local businesses, organizations, and individuals to fight poverty, has recently established a planning group to "to support the successful reentry of formerly convicted county, state, and federal offenders into the community, so their transition is as smooth as possible and they can reach their highest potential," according to Project Facilitator Mary C. Bula.

The group, which consists of "criminal justice professionals, social service providers, the faith-based community, ex-offenders and others," has proposed the creation of The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA) to help individuals who have recently been released from prison. Although the Alliance is still in the development stages, the group has been working with Pennsylvania CareerLink of Erie County to encourage employers to hire ex-offenders. ECRSSA's proposed strategy is nearing completion, and they will soon begin identifying community leaders for implementation.

Clearly there is plenty of work to be done to make Erie as safe as possible. But important local alliances are approaching the problem from an inspiring variety of perspectives. When it comes to violent crime in Erie, there are more helping hands available than we may imagine. We just need to reach out to them.

Dan Schank can be contacted
at dSchank@ErieReader.com



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The Promise of Pot

Ideology, science, and the politics of medical marijuana.



Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for medicinal use.

ters medication for an acute or chronic illness. It's a problem that keeps patients and caregivers searching for solutions.

Some families affected by CDKL5 have tried medical marijuana to treat the seizures caused by the disorder. But Kelly Barnes knows that, like all treatments, it's a possible solution, not a guarantee.

"It helps in 50 percent of the cases," she says. "The other 50 percent keep looking. But if it helps anyone, it's worth a shot."

Medical marijuana is a controversial treatment for a variety of conditions and its use is driving debate in state legislatures across the United States. The Barnes family hasn't tried medical marijuana, yet. But it's not because they're opposed.

So far 23 states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for medical use. Of those states, only Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington permit recreational use.

Here's where the conversation gets complicated: opponents of marijuana, and medical marijuana, in particular, choose to reinforce decades old stereotypes about "Reefer Madness" and the plant's position as a gateway recreational drug. These anecdotal arguments diminish the impact of medical science that demonstrates the pharmacological benefits of the cannabis plant.

But then again, the medical community hasn't had much of a chance to make a case for marijuana. The Controlled Substance Act of 1970 defined marijuana a Schedule-I drug deemed to have no medical value and a high potential for abuse, placing pot in the same category as cocaine and hero-

in.

This was the era just after the "turbulent sixties," when marijuana was seen by the Nixon Administration as a drug taken by dangerous radicals intent on destroying America. But instead of saving the country, the Controlled Substance Act of 1970 changed the anti-drug paradigm in the U.S. from treatment to crime. No longer would the federal government put financial resources – strained by the Vietnam War and the Cold War abroad, and the federal oversight of domestic police actions on poor and minority communities throughout the U.S. – into the treatment of drug offenders.

Instead, changes in state and federal drug policy led offenders to be imprisoned through the criminal courts rather than rehabilitated in state or federally funded treatment programs. Since 1980, the number of people serving sentences in a state or federal facility for drug offenses has skyrocketed from just more than 41,000 to nearly half a million people, most of whom are non-violent drug offenders with no prior criminal record, according to the research and advocacy group, The Sentencing Project.

The stigma attached to recreational marijuana use limited cannabis research and commerce in the United States for most of the 20th Century.

However, research abroad during that same time – most famously in Israel and the United Kingdom – found that cannabis contained multiple chemical compounds known as cannabinoids. While more than 60 cannabinoids have been discovered, medicinal properties are most significant in two compounds, Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and Cannabidi- [Cont. on page 33]

By: **Jim Wertz**

Leah Barnes struggles every day. She has a rare genetic disorder that hinders normal brain development and causes seizures. To date, Leah has had more than 10,000 seizures.

Leah is eight years old.

Her condition is known as CDKL5, which stands for cyclin-dependent kinase-like 5. It has been diagnosed in approximately 800 cases worldwide. The CDKL5 gene essentially tells the body to produce a protein needed for normal brain development. For Leah, this means she is confined to a wheelchair with limited physical and cognitive abilities. Little is known about the this gene that lives on the X

chromosome – the sex chromosome present in both men and women – or the protein it helps produce, but doctors and parents search for explanations as well as a cure.

Like Leah, who was just eight weeks old when she had her first seizure, people who live with CDKL5 usually suffer their first seizures when they are just a few months old. And like Leah, most cannot walk or talk. They are confined to wheelchairs and need help to feed themselves. They are dependent on others for everything.

Leah's parents, Brian and Kelly, want more than anything for their daughter to be happy and healthy. They are Leah's primary caregivers. They administer to her multiple

medications – most of which are prescribed to control the seizures – and they are at Leah's side when the medication fails.

"She has seizures daily," Kelly says. "Right now, it's pretty controlled, so she has one or two seizures a day. At the beginning, she might have had fifty a day. She's been on twelve antiepileptic medications. They all failed."

Brian and Kelly struggle with the realities of medicating Leah on a daily basis. Where is the balance between enough medication to control the seizures and so much medication that it negatively impacts Leah's physical and cognitive abilities, her quality of life? It's a problem understood by anyone who takes or adminis-



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CALENDAR



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Wednesday, July 8

Erie Art Museum Presents Mid-day Art Break with Zack Orr

The Erie Art Museum isn't just for visual art. Thanks to the museum's Mid-day Art Break, you can hear works from some of Erie's finest musicians, including Zack Orr.

Orr will be putting on a display of his intricately crafted ambient folk rock on the museum's Fifth Street patio, an hour-long performance starting at noon Friday, July 8 that conveniently fits right into your lunch break. And while lovely weather is surely welcome, it's hard to beat hearing Orr's "Storm of the Century" right downtown, a display of musical art for the wonderful price of zero bucks. – Alex Bieler

Noon to 1 p.m. // 20 E. Fifth St. // erieartmuseum.org

Wednesday, July 8

JD Eicher & the Goodnights w/ Man's Room Band to Play at UPMC Sunset Music Series

Pittsburgh's own JD Eicher & the Goodnights will be in town to play one hell of a show with the Man's Room Band July 8 for the UPMC Sunset Music Series. The show, which begins at 5:30 p.m., will kick off with the 16-member blues band from Erie, and will follow up with a little light-hearted, fun pop-rock from JD Eicher & the Goodnights.

With the UPMC Sunset Music Series rapidly coming to a close, this is the next to last week to catch some tunes while sitting in the sand, watching the sunset at Beach 1. But the acts aren't slowing down just yet, and July 8's line-up is an example of that. –Lauren Griffith

5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 8 // Beach 1, 301 Peninsula Dr. // discoverpi.com/upmc-sunset-music-series

Thursday, July 9

Block Party Takes a Trip to the '60s and to Sullivan's Pub

Abbey Road, a Beatles tribute band, is to play alongside "Elvis" and

Jackson Station Thursday, July 9 at Sullivan's Pub on French Street. While they may not look like John Lennon and his crew, they sure do sound like them. The night of covers and renditions will begin at 6 p.m. Jackson Station brings the classic American rock ballads, while Abbey Road will work on the English rock songs. Elvis – or Jim Moore dressed like him – will show off his rockabilly style and bring "Hound Dog" and "Heartbreak Hotel" with him.

This week's event benefits the A.N.N.A Shelter, so come on down and sing a song or two with the King of rock 'n' roll. – Lauren Griffith

6 p.m. Thursday, July 9 // 301 French St. // www.eriedowntown.com/calendar

Friday, July 10

Americana Badasses Dragon Wagon Roll Back into Erie

In the past few years, the Michigan-bred Americana badasses known as Dragon Wagon have come to know, and be known, and love, and be loved, by our fair city.

"Erie has always been so kind and responsive to our music," says mandolinist Troy Radikin, describing the band's latest mellifluous outflow as being mostly "songs about moonshine, the Great Lakes, prison life, and a dead

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CALENDAR

dog.”

Sounds good, especially considering who's doing it, and how.

And they'll be doing it once again (and how) on Friday, July 10, when Dragon Wagon hitches back up for another free show at the King's Rook Club.

If you've not seen Dragon Wagon's jazzed-up, fevered-fun (re)vision of Americana, go check it out.

It's like they say: "Once you hop on the Wagon, you'll never forget the ride." – Ryan Smith

9 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

Friday, July 10

WQLN Brings The Groove Into Sounds Around Town

The Groove, Erie's brassy show band, will provide their award-winning sound for the first of WQLN's Sounds Around Town performance series. The Groove's July 10 show will be accompanied by a beer, coffee, and craft root beer sampling thanks to Erie Beer Company and Mill Creek Coffee.

Come a little early so you can enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at WQLN-

TV and radio production before The Groove starts singing and playing one of the eight instruments the band uses. And don't worry about the weather, because the event will be moved indoors in case June's rain keeps spillin' into July. – Lauren Griffith

7 p.m. Friday, July 10 // 8425 Peach St. // www.wqln.org/Auctions-Events/Sounds-Around-Town

Friday, July 10

Weird Al Yankovic

It's going to get weird in Erie, and that's a great thing.

Comedic mastermind Weird Al Yankovic will be at the Warner Theater Friday, July 10 for part of his Mandatory World Tour. The longtime funnyman and hero to many has been making people laugh for decades with parody songs like "Amish Paradise," "White & Nerdy," and "Eat It." Coming off his Grammy Award-winning, No. 1 hit album *Mandatory Fun*, you'd be crazy not to enjoy this show, or, at the very least, a little bit weird. – Alex Bieler.

8 p.m. // 811 State St. // erieevents.com

Saturday, July 11

Christmas in July: BBQ, Brews, & Tattoos

Joel Brennan from Steadfast Tattoo Parlour has teamed up with his friends and customers – the beer masters at Lavery Brewing Company – to host Erie's first "BBQ, Brews, & Tattoos" celebration. What could be more Christmas-y than porter, pork, and pounding skin with ink?

The food will be top notch, as Dan Kern from 1201 Kitchen will team up with J.J. Brown from Three B Saloon to create original barbecue wonders for your mouth to behold (read: the plan is to smoke a whole pig!). And of course, you can wash it down with Lavery's world-class suds.

Steadfast Tattoo Parlour invites you to get tattooed right at the party! Joel will have many custom-made designs for you to choose from, each one should take about a half an hour to ink up.

More than a dozen local small businesses will be on hand, selling everything from baked goods to jewelry. Rock out with Jake's Blues as Jake performs for the first time in Erie since last fall! Rounding out the bill are: The Tradesmen, The Mulligans, Brooke Surgener, and more.

A portion of all the proceeds will go to support The Erie Community Foundation. So, ink, drink, and be merry! – Bryan Toy

2 to 10 p.m. // Lavery Brewing Company, 128 W. 12th St. // LaveryBrewing.com, 454-0405



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Friday, July 10

Them Bastards and Frame and Mantle at Sherlock's

While it's not conceivable to drink 1,000 beers in one night at Sherlock's, you may have a chance of hearing Youngstown punks Them Bastards play a song by that name. The five-piece outfit will be headlining a show on July 10 with local post-rock quintet Frame and Mantle, who will be stopping back in town for the second day of the band's first tour. Music starts at 9 p.m. sharp, so make sure you're there in time to grab a drink before the pit opens up. — Chris Sexauer

9 p.m. // 508 State St. // facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace

Friday, July 10

Love Letters Opens at PACA

Letters are a way of presenting yourself in the best possible light," observes Andrew Makepeace Ladd III, one of two characters in A.R. Gurney's play *Love Letters*. And it is through 50 years of correspondence that he and the other character, Melissa Gardner, attempt romance, share passions, and find their real selves. This play is different in that there is no true dialogue — no lines memorized — only two actors on a simple stage reading letters that the characters have written each other from boarding school into late adulthood. Through many twists and turns, and laughs and tragedy, Melissa and Andy come to a certain peace, sort of. — Mary Birdsong

Doors: 7:30 p.m., curtain: 8 p.m. // PACA, 1505 State St. // \$10 // BYOB w/ ID // PACA1505.com/tickets

Friday, July 10

Ladies and Gentlemen, Elvis Has Left the Building Opens at the Erie Playhouse

Elvis is hot, and his manager, The Colonel, knows it. But Elvis has not only left the building, he's disappeared. The Colonel is desperate to pay off a debt and fulfill a contract, so he gets creative in finding a replacement impersonator in the 24 hours before the show. Hijinx and hilarity ensue in V. Cate and Duke Ernsberger's play that stretches the imagination and keeps the audience guessing and laughing all the way through. The play features actors Jawn Gross, Sue Hansen, Sean Whaling, Sean Morgan, and Lara Schaaf, under the direction Jeff Rodland, assisted by Almitra Clerkin. — Mary Birdsong

7:30 p.m. July 10, 11, 16-18, 22-25 and 2 p.m. July 19 and 26 // 13 W. 10th St. // 454-2852, erieplayhouse.org/tickets

Saturday, July 11

Romolo Chocolates Presents Veteran Saxophonist Eric Alexander

When veteran tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander appears Saturday night at Romolo Chocolates, he'll be leading a group that represents the organ-tenor and organ-guitar combos of the 1950s and beyond that added soul jazz to the jazz style book.

Guitarist Paul Bollenback earned his reputation with 16 years and 14 albums with Joey DeFrancesco, arguably the best organist since the great Jimmy Smith. Organ will be in the experienced hands (and feet — for the foot pedals) of Greg Hatza. Hatza has led The Greg Hatza ORGANization for 20 years. Drummer Robert Shahid, who's played with scads of well-known folks, rounds out the group. — Bob Protzman

6 to 9 p.m. // Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. Eighth St. // romolochocolates.com

Sunday July 12

Bay City Gardeners' Garden Tour 2015 Welcomes All

Forty-four gardens will be open to the public this Sunday, July 12, with the chance to visit old favorites and discover 17 new gardens. Get fresh ideas, see different plants, and hang out with fellow gardeners; some hosts will even be serving refreshments!

To be official, pay \$5 per person from 12:45 to 3:30 p.m. on the day of the tour at the JMC Ice Arena (near the zoo) or the LEAF Education Center (in Frontier Park), to receive a map to the gardens. Entry fee proceeds benefit Bay City Gardeners community projects. In the past they've contributed to International Flavors Garden and the new Winter Garden at LEAF.

Some eastside gardens will be open until 6 p.m. to give everyone a chance to hit all the locations. — Mary Birdsong

1 to 5 p.m. // 423 W. 38th St.; 1501 W. Sixth St. // Facebook.com/BayCityGardeners

Tuesday, July 14

8 Great Tuesdays Presents Chris Higbee with Next of Kin

The Burger King Amphitheater may be right on the Bayfront, but you'll feel like you're out in the country when Chris Higbee and Next of Kin perform at 8 Great Tuesdays Tuesday, July 14.

Higbee and Next of Kin won't be showing up to the amphitheater alone, however, as the country crew will lead a bike parade from the Harley Davidson of Erie Bikefest [Cont. on page 25]

Wednesday, July 15

Blade Runner Still Packs a Punch in Spite of Its Imitators

If you take a film appreciation class, one of the first phrases you'll learn is *mise-en-scène*. In a nutshell, it's a French term that accounts for the elements that go into a scene before the cameras start rolling – things like costumes, lighting, sets, and props. The stuff that sets the mood before the story propels into action.

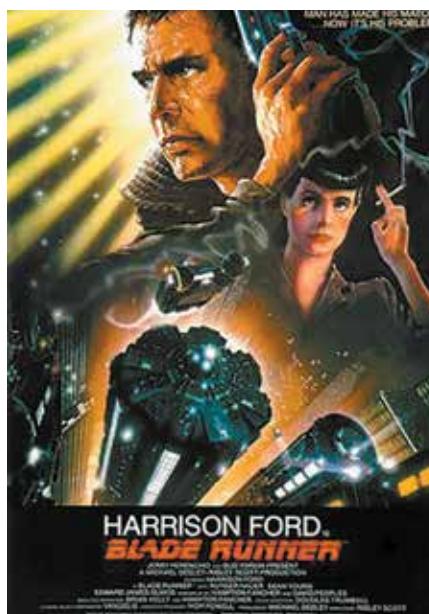
Mise-en-scène helps to explain the enduring popularity of *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott's 1982 sci-fi classic, which the Erie Art Museum will screen July 15. It's not the most thrilling space opera on film – star Harrison Ford did more rousing work in the *Star Wars* franchise, and director Ridley Scott's previous film, 1979's *Alien*, generates far more suspense. But *Blade Runner* has become the gold standard when it comes to atmosphere, with its shadowy, rain-soaked sets, post-punk visual aesthetic, and dystopian vision of the future.

Though *Blade Runner* stars Ford, the sarcastic charisma of Han Solo is brushed aside in favor of quiet disillusionment. Ford plays Rick Deckard, a morally ambiguous ex-cop hired to exe-

cute a gang of bio-engineered androids known as "replicants" – beings who not only look identical to humans, but have begun to develop complex emotional psyches as well. Deckard is the kind of brooding protagonist familiar to

Blade Runner's visual language has been mimicked by virtually every major action-oriented release for at least two decades.

the *film noir* genre; he's much closer to Robert Mitchum or Humphrey Bogart than he is to Buck Rogers. Furthermore, *Blade Runner* mobilizes many of the plot points familiar to hard-boiled



WARNER BROS.

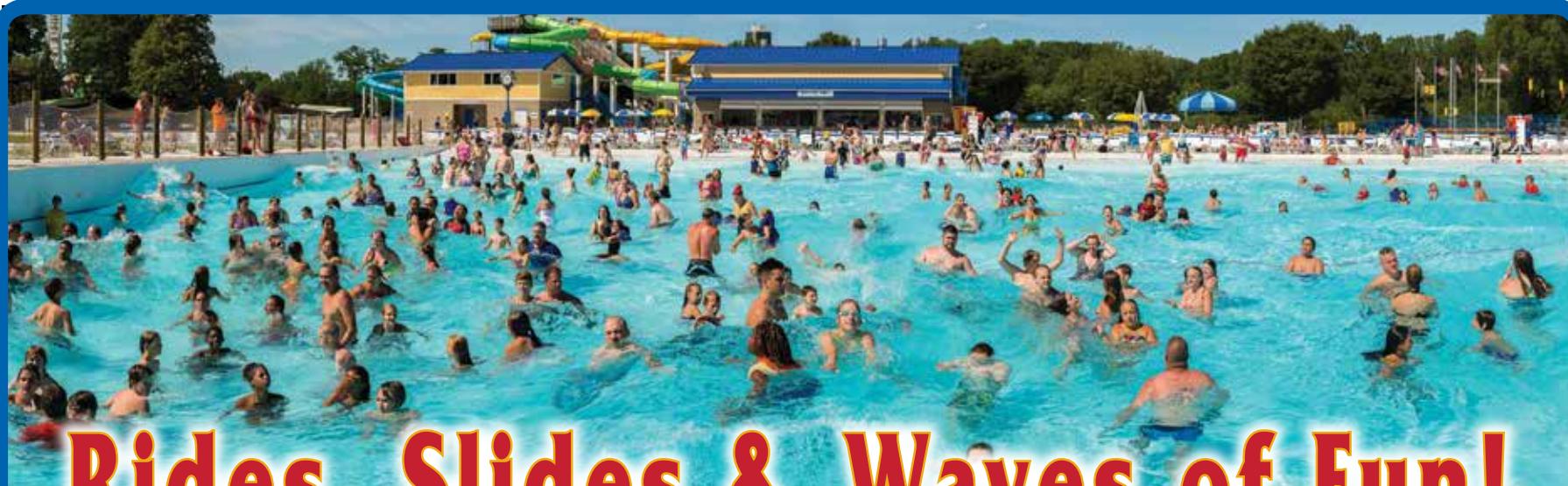
detective stories – mistaken identities, *femme fatales*, insurmountable institutional forces. The stuff that makes movies like *Touch of Evil* and *Chinatown* hold up so well, many years after release.

If your film tastes lean more toward the 21st century rather than the 20th, you'll recognize many of the themes on display in *Blade Runner*. Its visual lan-

guage has been mimicked by virtually every major action-oriented release for at least two decades, consider the *Batman* franchise, or the *Riddick* franchise, or the *Sin City* franchise, or any number of forgettable murder mysteries in which it never seems to stop raining. The film's concern with artificial intelligence and the nature of human consciousness was explored quite thoroughly in the *Battlestar Galactica* series of the mid-aughts, not to mention more recent films like *Ex Machina*, *Under the Skin*, and even *WALL-E*.

Wednesday's screening will feature Scott's final cut of the film, which attempts to correct some of the edits tacked on by the studio for its initial release. If you haven't seen *Blade Runner* since the Reagan years, expect a gloomier ending and a more complex assessment of the film's central character. If you're new to the movie, expect to see something that directly inspired the Hollywood landscape you currently inhabit, only approached from a slower, creepier, and more thoughtful perspective than usual. – Dan Schank

Film at 7 p.m. // Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. // erieartmuseum.org/events/film.html



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Wednesday, July 15

Roar on the Shore Rolls Back into Town

The crowds are monstrously huge, the rock is high-haired hard, and the roar gets rumbling-loud.

And – love it (like many do), or hate it (like many do, too) – Roar on the Shore rolls back into Erie from Wednesday, July 15 through Saturday, July 18, bringing with it a thousands-strong throng of bikers, thousands of spectators, and a select grouping of '80s/'90s hair-metal mavens providing the soundtrack for the Gem City's annual mini-Sturgis event.

Organizers (the local Manufacturing

and Business Association heads up the event) have said for the Roar-loving crowd, this year's lineup and festivities – now in their 10th incarnation – may just be the best yet.

Hair-and-chainsaw-rock monsters Jackyl, who did their thing in, uh, memorable fashion at the 2013 Roar on the Shore, are back again this year, with frontman/biking poster-boy Jesse James Dupree even serving as the Roar's massive motorcycle rally's grand marshal. As part of his given duties (the ones that don't involve live chainsaw solos, that is), Dupree's set to lead an anticipated 5,000-plus bikers to the Hub at Perry Square before taking the stage with Jackyl around 9 p.m. Thursday, July 16.

Beyond that, this year's other hair-heavy headliners will fill the four-day rally with even more high-octane tunes: L.A. Guns kicks things off with a performance at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 15; April Wine's onstage on Friday, July 17; and Dokken wraps up the Roar on Saturday, July 18.

Love it or hate it, it's revving up to be another ROTs to remember. – Ryan Smith

Wednesday, July 15 - Saturday, July 18 // The Hub at Perry Square // roarontheshore.com

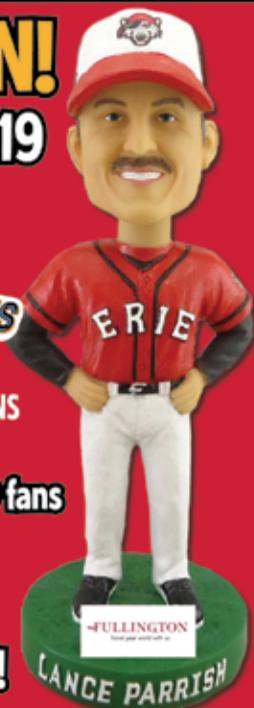
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FRI 7/17

TWO BIRD STONE
+ STEREO NEST
[FREE SHOW]

SAT 7/18

KURT SAHLMANN PURPLE JAM
[FREE SHOW]

DOWNSTAIRS CONCERT COMPLEX

FRI 7/24

HIT N' RUN REUNION
[FREE AFTER PARTY]

DOWNSTAIRS CONCERT COMPLEX
AFTER PARTY WITH RON YARMAN
IN UPSTAIRS LOUNGE

SAT 7/25

ADAM GOULD
[FREE SHOW]

FRI 7/31

CHARLIE WHEELER TRIO
[FREE SHOW]

SAT 8/1

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to Liberty Park. From there, the pair of Western Pa. acts will put on a proper country showdown, with Higbee fiddling up a storm to close out the second 8 Great Tuesdays of the year. – Alex Bieler

6:30 p.m. // Burger King Amphitheater at Liberty Park // porterie.org

Wednesday, July 15

Erie Art Museum Presents Mid-day Art Break with Eric Brewer

Some artists use their hands to paint, others sculpt. Eric Brewer utilizes his ten talented digits to wring some sweet sounds from his trusty six-string. Typically you'd spot the gifted guitarist playing some late night shows or summer festivals, but Brewer will be putting on a show for the Erie Art Museum's Mid-day Art Break at noon Wednesday, July 15.

Grab your lunch – or purchase one from the Art Museum's Wave Café – and head to the Fifth Street patio to check out a local great perform his craft with the skill and grace of a true artist. – Alex Bieler

Noon to 1 p.m. // 20 E. Fifth St. // erieartmuseum.org

Wednesday, July 15

UPMC Sunset Music Series Presents Tennessee Backporch with Tyler Smilo

If you want to hear a certain song, there's a fair chance that Tennessee Backporch can play it. The local variety band covers a lot of musical ground, performing everything from Motown to classical music, and even throwing out a few hit tracks from today. In a sense, the band's members are jacks-of-all-genres, and you can see them close out the final UPMC Sunset Music Series show of 2015.

Joining Tennessee Backporch will be Tyler Smilo, a master at weaving intimate acoustic numbers that burrow right into your heart. Add in the Backporch, and you'll be sure to enjoy a relaxing evening on Beach 1. – Alex Bieler

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

Friday, July 17

Matt Texter Takes His Gritty Growl to Goodell Gardens

Matt Texter's earthy grit and growl have always found good ground at Goodell Gardens in Edinboro. The performance barn there – nestled in the middle of the lush, green, historic Goodell homestead – seems a just-

about-perfect place to see and hear the Erie-based Americana troubadour do his thing.

"It's a great venue," Texter says. "The barn and grounds are beautiful. I really like that it's a family environment, so my wife and little boys can come along to see me 'rockstar.'"

Texter and company will be there again – this time, along with some musical friends – on Friday, July 17, taking another spotlight seat as the next featured artists in Goodell's annual Summer Music Series.

The showcase, part of Goodell's weekly summertime series, is from 7 to 9 p.m. – just the right time for some good, friendly, family fun. – Ryan Smith

7 p.m. // 221 Waterford St. (Route 6N), Edinboro // goodellgardens.org

Saturday, July 18

Romolo Chocolates Presents Renowned Harmonicist



Hendrik Meurkens

For a long, glorious time beginning in the mid '50s, one man from Belgium enjoyed acclaim and fame as the only person playing jazz harmonica.

Yes, Jean "Toots" Thielemans blew harmonica. At 83 he remains *the man* – although he no longer has the harmonica to himself.

Ranking high among other harmonicists is German-born Hendrik Meurkens, who returns July 18 from last year's triumph at Romolo's Sweet Summer Season.

As a rare dual instrumentalist, Meurkens actually first was and remains a capable vibraphonist, but at 19, he heard "Toots" and fell under his spell.

The excellent band joining Meurkens consists of Misha Tsiganov, piano; Gustavo Amarante, bass; and Adriano Santos, drums. – Bob Protzman

6 to 9 p.m. // Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. Eighth St. // romolochocolates.com

MUSIC

Zack Orr at the Mid-day Art Break

July 8 — 12 p.m.
Erie Art Museum,
20 E. Fifth St.
erieartmuseum.org.

JD Eicher & the Goodnights and Man's Room Band at UPMC Sunset Music Series

July 8 — 5:30 p.m.
Beach 1, 301 Peninsula Drive. discoverpi.com.

Rift

July 9 — 10 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Erie Downtown Block Party featuring "Elvis", Abbey Road, & Jackson Station

July 9 — 6 to 10:30 p.m.
Sullivan's Pub, 301 French St., eriedowntown.com.

Colony House Band

July 9 — 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Colony Pub & Grille, 2670 W. Eighth St. jazzerie.com.

Boyd Baker

July 10 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy., presqueisledowns.com.

Chris Higbee

July 10 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy., presqueisledowns.com.

Dragon Wagon

July 10 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Ruby Port

July 10 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Arundel Wine Cellars, 11727 E. Main Road, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

Them Bastards wsg: Frame and Mantle

July 10 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Chris Mathers

July 11 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy., presqueisledowns.com.

Chris Higbee

July 11 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy., presqueisledowns.com.

Eric Alexander Organ Quartet

July 11 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. Eighth St. jazzerie.com.

Lionzie wsg: Sea of Teeth

July 11 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

BT One Year Anniversary Show

July 11 — 4 p.m.
Basement Transmission, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/basement.transmissions.

Tear From Grace wsg: Beneath the Scars & Never to Suffer

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

Black Widow

July 15 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Tennessee Backporch and Tyler Smilo at UPMC Sunset Music Series

June 15 — 5:30 p.m.
Beach 1, 301 Peninsula Drive. discoverpi.com.

Eric Brewer at the Mid-day Art Break

July 15- 12 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. erieartmuseum.org.

BT Brootality Fest

July 16 — 5:30 p.m.
Basement Transmission, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/gimpguyunderground.

Immoral & Rick and the Roadhouse Rockers

July 16 — 8 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Whiskey Road

July 16 — 2 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy., presqueisledowns.com.

Colony House Band

July 16 — 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Colony Pub & Grille, 2670 W. Eighth St. jazzerie.com.

Erie Ale House Acoustics

July 17 — 9 p.m.
Erie Ale House 1033 State St. facebook.com/ErieAleHouse.

Hammerd

July 17 — 9 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Geeks Unplugged

July 17 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy., presqueisledowns.com.

Lorna Shore & Old Wounds

July 17 — 6 p.m.
Basement Transmission, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com/beardedbabyproductions/events.

Two Bird Stone + Stereo Nest

July 17 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Whisky Road

July 17 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy., presqueisledowns.com.

Abbey Road

July 17 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Arundel Wine Cellars, 11727 E. Main Road, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

Jeff Bianchi

July 17 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Gardner Theatre, 910 Market St.,

CALENDAR

Saturday, July 18

The Kurt Sahlmann Purple Jam at Kings Rook Club

The local music scene lost a dear friend when Kurt Sahlmann died this past March, and now the scene will put on a special show in his honor Saturday, July 18 at the Kings Rook Club.

The Kurt Sahlmann Purple Jam will bring together more than 40 local musicians to perform in memory of Sahlmann. Seven bands were drafted from a pool of talented Erie players, leading to combinations where many of the artists are playing alongside a brand new bandmate. While the show is free for Kings Rook Members and guests, donations will be accepted and made to Luther Memorial Church in Sahlmann's name. Year-long membership can be purchased at the door for \$10 with sponsorship from a current Rook member. — Alex Bieler

9 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

Monday, July 20

Shakespeare in the Park Opens at Frontier Park

You can't go wrong experiencing the classic Shakespearian themes of love, humor, subterfuge, and human foibles in Gannon University's Schuster Theatre's productions of *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream and *The Comedy of Errors*, staged outdoors in the glowing dusk of summer at the Lake Erie Arboretum. *Dream*, directed by Alaina Maria Manchester, will be performed July 20, 22, 28, and *Errors*, directed by Fr. Shawn Clerkin, will be performed July 21, 27, 29. Take the family, soak in a beautiful evening, and let the light and the drama wash over you. This is what summer is for. — Mary Birdsong

7 p.m. // Lake Erie Arboretum in Frontier Park (Rain location is the Schuster Theatre, 626 Sassafras St. // Free Admission

Tuesday, July 21

Jake's Blues Return to 8 Great Tuesday's for 15th Year

Jake's Blues is one of Erie's favorite bands, and they will be hitting the stage of the Burger King Amphitheater on July 21, with The Riffriders starting the night at 6:30 p.m. Both bands straddle the border between blues and rock, so expect the night to be both soulful and rocking.

Out of the entire schedule for this year's 8 Great Tuesdays, this show is sure to bring in one of the largest crowds. Grab a blanket or a lawn chair and head down to Liberty Park to see these local legends. — Lauren Griffith

6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 21 // Liberty Park, 726 W. Bayfront Parkway // porter.org/8-great-tuesdays

artsmeadville.org.

The Breeze Band

July 18 — 5 to 9 p.m.
Penn Shore Vineyard, 10225 East Lake Road, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

2 for the Show

July 18 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Hendrik Meurkins

July 18 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. Eighth St. jazzerie.com.

Immoral & French Kiss

July 18 — 10 p.m.
Sherlock's, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

The Kurt Sahlmann Purple Jam

July 18 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Mid-Life Crisis

July 18 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

FILM

The Keeping Room

July 8 — 7 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. erieartmuseum.org.

Blood, Sweat, and Beer

July 24 — 7 p.m.
Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St., eriealeworks.com.

Road to Ball

July 24 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse/events

Airplanes

Ongoing to September 7 — 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive #1 trepci.org

James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge

Ongoing to September 7 — 12 p.m. and 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive #1 trepci.org

Mysteries of the Great Lakes

Ongoing to September 7 — 1 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive #1 trepci.org

Rocky Mountain Express

Ongoing to September 7 — 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.

2015 SUMMER SCHEDULE



814.459.8000

JESerie.org

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

All programs are held at times scheduled at the Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State Street, Erie, PA 16508.

DAY / DATE / TIME	TITLE	INSTRUCTOR
Wed./ July 8/7:00-8:30	The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration as a System of Racialized Social Control	Gary Horton and Liz Allen, B.A.
Sun./ July 12/ 7 to 8:30	Laughter and the Song of Politics	Mark Russell*
Mon./ July 13/7:30-9	Jefferson, Washington, & Franklin - Their Differing Musical Worlds	D Hildebrand, Ph.D.* & G Hildebrand, MM*
Wed./ July 15/7:00-8:30	Echoes of the Deep - The Music of Titanic	Rev. Jay Schultz and Michael Malthane
Mon./ July 20/7:00-8:30	The Universe: New Worlds	David Helfand, Ph.D.*
Tues./ July 21/7:00-8:30	The Universities: Questions, Not Answers: A Process-based Curriculum in the Liberal Arts and Sciences	David Helfand, Ph.D.*
Thurs./ July 23/7:00-8:30	Robert E. Lee vs. Ulysses S. Grant: Revisiting The Question: Who Was the Better General?	William P. Garvey, Ph.D.
Tues./ July 28/7:00-8:30	The Hairstons: An American Family in Black and White	Henry Wiencek*
Wed./ July 29/7:00-8:30	How the Bird is Breaking the News: The Information Age of Twitter	Ben Speggen, M.A.
Thurs./ July 30/7:00-8:30	An Immigrant's Story	Winston Chu, M.D.
Mon./ Aug. 3/7:00-8:30	How Beer Saved the World	Jason Lavery, M.A.**
Tues./ Aug. 4/7:00-8:30	An Evening of Acappella	Lake Erie Sound
Thurs./ Aug. 6/7:00-8:30	Erie's Advanced Industries: A Discussion of the Findings of the Second Jefferson Essay	Jim Wertz, Ph.D. and Perry Wood, M.S.

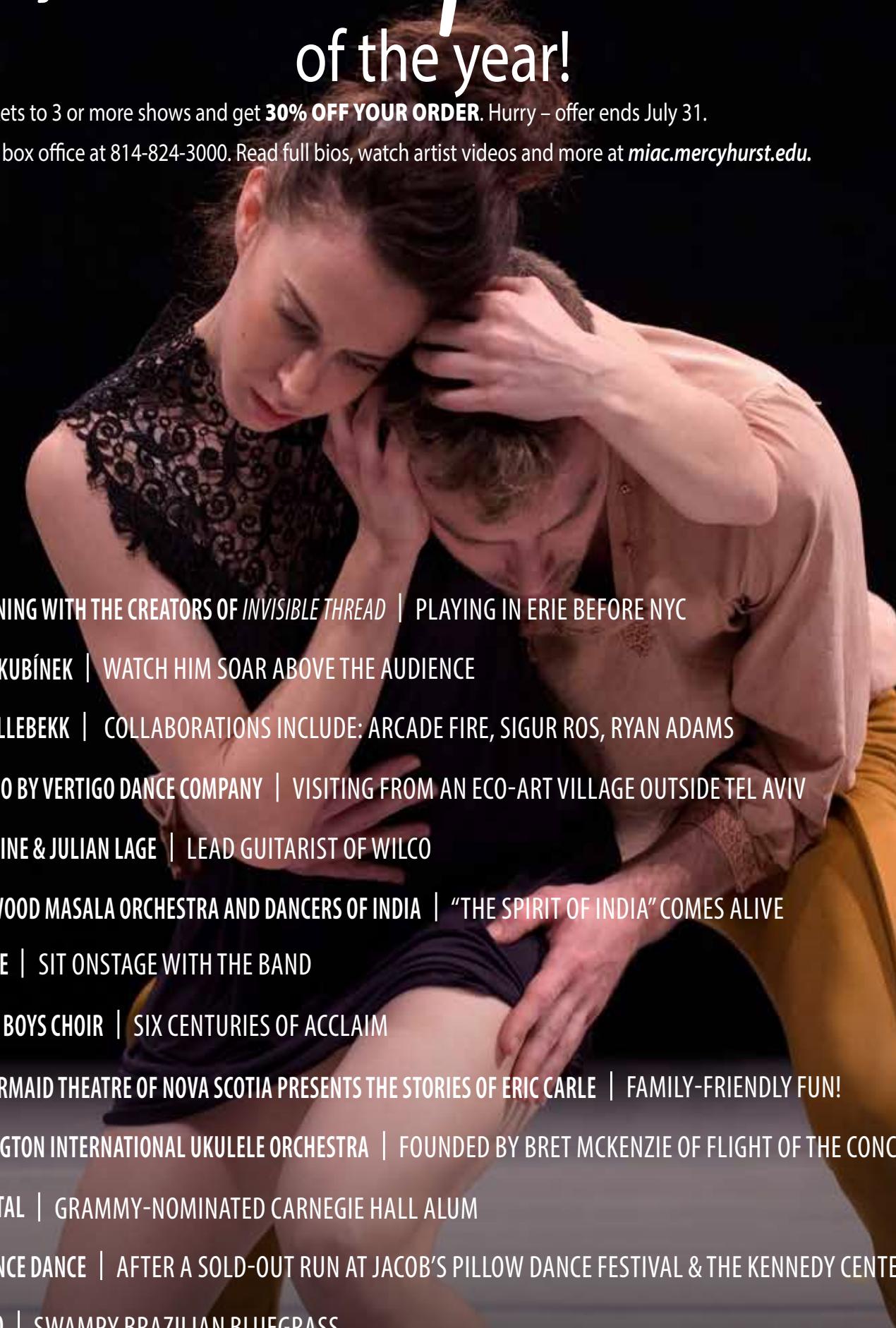
For more information or to register, call 814-459-8000 or visit www.JESerie.org. Visa, MasterCard, AMEX and Discover accepted. Payments must be made at registration.

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- 9.9** AN EVENING WITH THE CREATORS OF *INVISIBLE THREAD* | PLAYING IN ERIE BEFORE NYC
 - 9.19** TOMÁŠ KUBÍNEK | WATCH HIM SOAR ABOVE THE AUDIENCE
 - 9.29** LEIF VOLLEBEKK | COLLABORATIONS INCLUDE: ARCADE FIRE, SIGUR ROS, RYAN ADAMS
 - 10.13** RESHIMO BY VERTIGO DANCE COMPANY | VISITING FROM AN ECO-ART VILLAGE OUTSIDE TEL AVIV
 - 10.24** NELS CLINE & JULIAN LAGE | LEAD GUITARIST OF WILCO
 - 10.27** BOLLYWOOD MASALA ORCHESTRA AND DANCERS OF INDIA | "THE SPIRIT OF INDIA" COMES ALIVE
 - 11.19** SINKANE | SIT ONSTAGE WITH THE BAND
 - 11.30** VIENNA BOYS CHOIR | SIX CENTURIES OF ACCLAIM
 - 2.13** THE MERMAID THEATRE OF NOVA SCOTIA PRESENTS THE STORIES OF ERIC CARLE | FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN!
 - 3.4** WELLINGTON INTERNATIONAL UKULELE ORCHESTRA | FOUNDED BY BRET MCKENZIE OF FLIGHT OF THE CONCOR
 - 3.10** AVI AVITAL | GRAMMY-NOMINATED CARNEGIE HALL ALUM
 - 3.30** DORRANCE DANCE | AFTER A SOLD-OUT RUN AT JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL & THE KENNEDY CENTER
 - 4.7** MATUTO | SWAMPY BRAZILIAN BLUEGRASS
 - 4.28** ALLISON MILLER'S BOOM TIC BOOM | FEATURING MYRA MELFORD & TODD SICKAFOOSE

CALENDAR

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive #1 trepci.org

VISUAL ARTS

Pastel in Three Voices

July 3 through August 4 — all day
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St., glassgrowersgallery.com.

Efforescent

July 3 through August 4 — all day
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St., glassgrowersgallery.com.

Holocaust Exhibit

June 22 through October 28 daily — 8 to 4:30 p.m.,
Gannon, 619 Sassafras St. erieartsandculture.org.

Selected Works from the Mercyhurst University Permanent Art Collection

Ongoing through Aug. 14 — All Day

Cummings Art Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. mercyhurst.edu.

92nd Annual Spring Show

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

Geoff Dunn "Echo of the 7"

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.

Regional Juried Photo Exhibit

Ongoing from June 12-July 15 — All Day
Heeschen Gallery, 910 Market St. (Second Floor). artsmeadville.org.

DANCE

Beginner Yoga/Exercise Combo on the Beach

Mondays until August — 5:15 p.m.
Beach 1, 301 Presque Isle Drive. 814.392.4756.

Ballroom Dancing for Beginners: The Rumba

July 14—3 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St., lifeworkserie.org.

FOOD AND DRINK

Corn and Pig Roast

July 18 — 5 to 9 p.m.
Burch Farms Winery, 9210 Sidehill Road, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

Vine Dining Dinner

July 18—7 p.m.
21 Brix Winery, 6654 West Main Road, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

Free Beer Tasting

June 24 — 5 p.m.
Lucky Louie's, 8238 Perry Hwy. facebook.com/laverybrewing.

Happy Hour Tasting

June 25 — 4 p.m.
Applebee's, 2911 W. 12th St. facebook.com/laverybrewing.

Free Beer Tasting

June 26 — 5 p.m.
Six Pack House of Beer West, 4516 Peach St. facebook.com/laverybrewing.

Picnic Pairing Event

June 26 — 7 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars, 9440 West Main St. piwine.com.

Wine and Art, Wine Glass Event

June 26 — 6 p.m.
Blue Iris Winery, 10431 West Main St. lakeeriewinecountry.org.

THEATER

The Station Dinner Theatre Presents: Celebrate America!

July 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 22 — Fri @ 5 p.m.: Sat @ 5:30 p.m.: Sun @ 2:30 p.m.: Tue & Wed @ noon
The Station Dinner Theatre 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com

Erie Playhouse Presents: All the King's Women

July 13, 20, 27 — 7:30 p.m.
Erie Playhouse 13 West 10 St. erieplayhouse.org

Meadville Council on the Arts Presents: Going Up

July 10, 11, 12 — 7:30 and 4:30 p.m.
Meadville Market House 910 Market St. Meadville, Pa. artsmeadville.org

PACA Presents Love Letters

July 10, 11, 17, 18 — 8 p.m.
Performing Arts Collective Alliance 1505 State Street, paca1505.ning.com.

Meadville Council on the Arts Presents: Next to Normal

July 24, 25, 26 — 7:30 and 4:30 p.m.
Meadville Market House 910 Market St. Meadville, PA artsmeadville.org

Erie Seawolves vs. Akron

July 19—1:35 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10th St., milb.com.

New Worlds

July 20—7p.m. to 8:40 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St., jeserie.org.

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Goodell Gardens, 221 Waterford
St. goodellgardens.org.

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Ongoing to September 7 — 11
a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m.
Pontoon station, 301 Peninsula
Drive, trecpi.org.

Evening Lagoon by Pontoon

Wednesdays and Fridays to
September 4 — 7 and 8:30 p.m.
Pontoon station, 301 Peninsula
Drive, trecpi.org.

Great Books Discussion Group: Clashes of Culture

Tuesdays through August
11 — 1p.m. to 2:30p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St., jeserie.org.

Children's Art Classes

Wednesdays and Thursdays
in July—10:30 a.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum, 1501
W. 6th St., goerie.com.

Arts in the Arboretum

Thursdays in July—7 p.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum, 1501
W. 6th St., goerie.com.

Erie Seawolves vs. Altoona

July 8—7:05 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10th St., milb.com.

Erie Seawolves vs. Altoona

July 9—12:05 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10th St., milb.com.

Back to the Moon for Good

July 9—1 p.m.

Penn State Behrend, 4701
Behrend College Road

Don't Give Up the Disc Ultimate Frisbee Tournament

July 11,12—10 a.m.
Beach 11, 301 Peninsula Dr., goerie.com.

Laughter and the Song of Politics

July 12—7p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St., jeserie.org.

Jefferson, Washington, & Franklin — Their Differing Musical Worlds

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

Echoes of the Deep — The Music of Titanic

July 15—7p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St., jeserie.org.

The Erie Vegan and Vegetarian Society Book Club

July 16—6:30p.m.
Barnes and Noble, 5909
Peach St., goerie.com.

Erie Seawolves vs. Akron

July 16—7:05 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10th St., milb.com.

Erie Seawolves vs. Akron

July 17—7:05 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10th St., milb.com.

Erie Seawolves vs. Akron

July 18—7:05 p.m.
Jerry Uht Park, 110 E. 10th St., milb.com.



MUSIC REVIEWS

Miguel
Wildheart
RCA

★★★★★

There are sexy albums, and then there's Miguel's *Wildheart*. The Grammy Award-winning singer certainly has sex on the mind on his latest album, a release that expands on his eclectic R&B in intriguing ways. The music shifts to his mood, as Miguel's soothing morning-after fantasy "Coffee" swathes the listener in soothing, sensual tones. Just a track earlier, Miguel's carnal desires fly free on the simplistic, propulsive "The Valley," a song that might make your mother faint because of its lyrics. Even the songs not focused on the bedroom come off as smooth, including the sleek "What's Normal Anyway?" Not all of the experiments land, but Miguel's success rate is well worth the occasional miss. *Wildheart* isn't an album for the faint of heart, but those looking for a sleek, sexy set of experimental R&B songs will find Miguel's latest effort to their liking. – Alex Bieler



Desaparecidos
Payola
Epitaph

★★★★★

It's been 13 years since Desaparecidos released its last record, but the Conor Oberst-fronted punk rock group hasn't mellowed in the years since *Read Music/Speak Spanish*. Not that Oberst hasn't been busy since then, putting out music as Bright Eyes, Monsters of Folk, and under his own name, but *Payola* finds the songwriter in a particularly fiery state of mind. Right from opener "The Left is Right," Oberst lets his thoughts be known, singing about people chaining themselves to ATMs and musing "If one must die to save the 99, maybe it's justified." There's little subtlety to be found on *Payola*, as Oberst and company instead rely on a rip-roaring ride of guitars and grievances. It makes for an adrenaline rush of a listen, a fast, fun ride that will leave you gritting your teeth and pumping your fist (as long as Oberst's views don't put you off, of course). – Alex Bieler



Mbongwana Star
From Kinshasa
World Circuit

★★★★★

I listened to this cacophony of electric Afrobeat songs from Congolese seven-piece band Mbongwana Star all day expecting to get bored. That never happened. Occasionally, the repetitive rumba grooves played on steel drums, conga, and a variety of metallic and plastic trash found on the city streets of Kinshasa would lull me and become background noise, but then some interesting and completely unexpected fuzzed-out guitar or multi-layered chant would capture my attention again. A perfect place to hear this mash-up of percussion is a killer groove called "Malukayi." The driving, electric, and slightly off-kilter "Nganshé" is also typical of the exciting vibe this band puts out. To contrast that, "Coco Blues" is sweet and melodious. If you are not a current fan of world music, this album is your perfect introduction. The slick production and western rock-influenced touches of this unique African band will keep you dancing around your house for hours. – Bryan Toy



onewayness + modulator_esp
Astral Bridges
Independent

★★★★★

You'll be hard pressed to find a more meta recording than 2015's astounding *Astral Bridges*. The album features the merged work of two experimental electro-ambient artists, each of whom begins a song, then welcomes the other to join for a duo improvisation, and then departs, leaving the other to finish the work before moving onto the next piece in which the formula is repeated. What's more, these songs were recorded during the duo's East Coast, U.S. tour, culminating in an appearance at the Electro-Music Festival. *Heady* is the concept; *beautiful* and *seamless* are the results. The three ethereal soundscapes flow with ease, each additional layer adding weight to the composition without burying the original foundation. Noticing the division between "bridges" and artists proves challenging, ultimately rewarding the listener with an audacious aural journey with two expert guides working as one. – Ben Spегgen



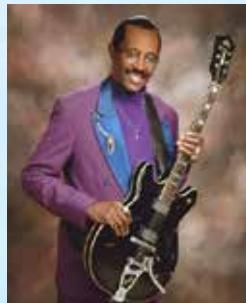
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[Cont. from page 19] ol (CBD).

THC is the psychoactive chemical in pot that gets people stoned. But when THC binds with receptors in the brain, called endocannabinoids, it can also have analgesic, anti-spasmodic, anti-tremor, anti-inflammatory, and appetite-stimulant properties. THC has proven effective in helping patients with HIV/AIDS increase their appetite to help treat weight loss. It's also been effective in helping cancer patients deal with the side effects of chemotherapy, including nausea and appetite suppression, and conditions like glaucoma, Crohn's disease, Tourette's syndrome, asthma, and diabetes.

For the past 25 years, more extensive testing has been conducted on CBD, a non-psychoactive, low-THC strain of cannabis, because it's less controversial than the more common high-THC strains that are prevalent on the recreational drug market. It's being used to treat anti-inflammatory, anti-convulsant, anti-psychotic, anti-oxidant, neuroprotective, and immunomodulatory effects.

"Interest in CBD is in part because of the need to find drugs that don't have the full on effect that other drugs might," says Dr. Peter McLaughlin, a neuroscientist and professor in the Edinboro University department of psychology who studies behavioral pharmacology. He's spent his career researching cannabinoids – marijuana-like chemicals, including THC and CBD – that activate what's known as the CB1 receptor as well as the drugs that block them. "You may be able to give someone more beneficial doses of CBD for seizures without the psychoactive effects," he says. "With THC it's much harder to have that light dose window where it's beneficial but it's not sedating or it doesn't have other detrimental cognitive properties."

This is what makes CBD research so attractive to parents like Brian and Kelly Barnes who have struggled with the sedation caused by prescription medication administered to their 8-year-old daughter, Leah. As CBD research becomes more mainstream in the scientific community and more accepted in political circles, they have more opportunities to seek out medical alternatives that may give Leah the best possible quality of life.

"Leah was accepted into a clinical trial at New York University," Kelly shares. "But we would have had to travel to

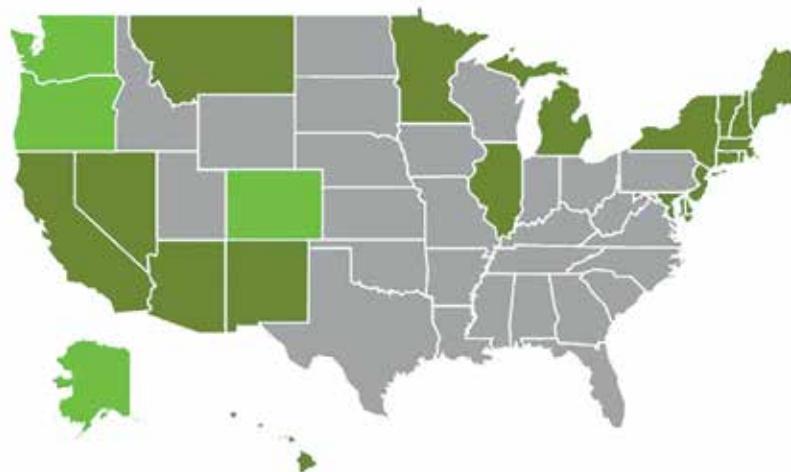
Manhattan every two weeks. We just couldn't afford to do that and there are a lot of logistics involved with getting her to New York and home again. That's an expensive and stressful undertaking for something that may not work."

When Leah was accepted to the NYU trial, Brian and Kelly also had to consider the legal question of bringing CBD oil into Pennsylvania to treat their daughter.

"We've heard horror stories of parents being arrested for giving their children medical marijuana. But if you're participating in a clinical trial, you're allowed to use it and transport it across state lines, even though there are still a lot of unanswered questions," she added.

The Cleveland Clinic is expected to begin a CBD trial in January 2016 and Brian and Kelly expect Leah to participate. She already goes to the Cleveland Clinic for regular treatments. But they continue to hold out hope that maybe one day they could access trials like this closer to home.

CBD research is now legal in 15 states beyond those where marijuana had been legalized previously for medicinal and recreational use because state legislatures took action on behalf of patients who sought alternatives to traditional prescription medication. Those states include Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Utah, Georgia, and Texas, among others. The Keystone State has yet to pass any laws decriminalizing marijuana use of any type for any reason.



Marijuana Legalization Status
 ■ Medical marijuana legalized
 ■ Marijuana legalized for recreational use
 ■ No laws legalizing marijuana

Pennsylvania continues to have no laws legalizing any form of marijuana, but various bills are on the table that could change that in the very near future.

House of Representatives disagree. SB3 sat in the House Health Committee for months, held hostage by the committee's chairman, Rep. Matt Baker (R-Tioga), who opposes the legislation.

"Too many times we allow ideology to get in the way of good decision making on policy," says Wiley. "I really feel that those who are opposing this legislation in the House simply haven't given it enough effort to figure out what we're talking about. Unfortunately we're allowing ideology to get in the way of really supporting and benefiting people across the state, people of all ages and all ailments."

And this isn't a partisan issue. SB3 passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in the Senate and it has lawmakers in the House straddling party lines in a way that we haven't seen in a very long time. One of Baker's staunchest critics on his holdup of the medicinal marijuana bill was Rep. Nick Micarelli (R-Delaware), who initiated a rarely used discharge petition, which would have forced SB3 to the House floor for a vote, where it was likely to pass, if it had enough support from the membership. Before the discharge vote was finalized, Rep. Baker called an emergency meeting that sent SB3 out of his committee to the Rules Committee, and of which Baker is also a member, where it is likely to sit for the remainder of the legislative session.

Gov. Wolf has promised to sign a medical marijuana bill – should one reach his desk.

However, complications in the House make that unlikely to happen. There are currently two medical marijuana bills active in the House in addition to SB3.

Rep. Mark Cohen (D-Philadelphia) sponsored HB193, which more closely resembles legislation in states that allow personal cultivation with few restrictions on how the plant is used. Cohen's bill, which was first introduced six years ago, has been all but ignored in the House because of its breadth.

The other bill, HB1432, was introduced by Reps. Ron Marsico (R-Dauphin), Mike Regan (R-York), and Sheryl Delozier (R-Cumberland) in late June after Baker sat on SB3. Marsico, who chairs the House Judiciary Committee, has cache in the House that may move

GOVERNING DATA

But the Pennsylvania Senate did pass Senate Bill 3, "providing for the medical use of cannabis in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," in May 2015 with a bipartisan 40-7 vote after many amendments since it was first introduced in January.

SB3 requires that patients register for a medical cannabis access card issued by the Pa. Dept. of Health and it limits the use of medicinal marijuana to 15 medical conditions, including epilepsy or seizures, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, post traumatic stress disorder, and chronic pain for which other therapies no longer prove effective. It creates a state board to oversee the regulation of medical marijuana and it also limits the production and sale to regulated dispensaries. It does not allow those with a cannabis access card to grow their own plants at home for personal consumption. There are many other regulations associated with SB3, but legislators saw it as a starting point that needed to satisfy multiple constituencies in order to move the bill forward.

"Overall, it's critical that we offer medicinal cannabis as an alternative in this state," says Pa. Senator Sean Wiley (D-Erie), who co-sponsored SB3. "It's clear that if you look at the statistics and the studies that have been done, this is an opportunity to relieve so many people from across the commonwealth of chronic pain. This is medicine."

But Wiley's colleagues in the state

HB1432 toward a vote on the House floor. Co-sponsors of the bill are mostly Republican by a 14-6 margin, which may help maintain momentum among the cantankerous conservative majority.

Sen. Wiley sees HB1432 as the only possible alternative at the moment, and sources in the state House say that if a medical marijuana bill is going to pass, it would likely be HB1432, not SB3.

Here's the problem: HB1432 is not a great piece of legislation. It tries to fit medical marijuana into extant frameworks rather than creating appropriate bodies that would oversee the administration and potential expansion of a medical marijuana program. Specifically, it outlines the regulation of medical cannabis through the Department of Drug and Alcohol rather than through the creation of a new entity – The State Board of Medical Cannabis – as proposed in SB3. The Department of Drug and Alcohol is the agency that oversees the intervention and treatment of people addicted to drugs, alcohol and gambling. Placing marijuana with the DDA reinforces misguided suppositions about pot that have guided state and federal policies for more nearly half a century. SB3, however, gives the introduction of medical marijuana to the commonwealth the fresh start it needs and deserves. If there's going to be bureaucracy, it might as well be targeted at the appropriate protocol.

Moreover, it limits the conditions that could be treated with prescription pot and limits the ways in which the medicine could be consumed. SB3 included 15 named conditions and allowed medical marijuana to be prescribed in a number of different forms including liquids, liquid extracts known as tinctures, ointments and gels. HB1432 covers only ten conditions, apparently excluding things like PTSD, traumatic brain injury, glaucoma and diabetes, and limits the forms of medical marijuana to vaporizing, oil, and pills.

Perhaps most important, if the general assembly ultimately passes HB1432 and you do receive a medical cannabis card, you may have trouble finding a dispensary. Under the House bill, there will be no more than five so-called “medical marijuana organizations.” Each organization will oversee the growing, processing and distribu-

tion of legal cannabis derivatives, and each organization can have no more than four dispensaries. That's a maximum of 20 dispensaries statewide. A similar system in New Jersey has driven up prices toward \$500 an ounce and curbed access for many of the state's qualifying patients. Exorbitant prices driven up by disparate distribution centers are likely to drive people in need back to the black market, where drugs are plentiful and cheap. The laws of supply and demand have never been more present. By limiting access to medical marijuana with such narrow legislation, the general assembly is drafting a self-fulfilling prophecy that undermines the movement for compassionate healthcare. It's legitimized the needs of patients only to criminalize one's ability to follow the doctor's orders.

SB3, on the other hand, permits 65 growers, 65 processors, and as many as 130 dispensaries, each of which will pay \$50,000 for its license and \$5,000

By limiting access to medical marijuana with such narrow legislation, the general assembly is drafting a self-fulfilling prophecy that undermines the movement for compassionate healthcare.

per year in renewal fees in addition to the taxes paid on the sale of medical marijuana. In times when every bureaucrat in America is looking for alternative revenue streams, this makes cents... lots of them. Colorado reported \$53 million in tax revenue last year. In Washington State, state and local taxes top \$70 million. A Seattle medical marijuana dispensary owner told the Associate Press in late June that his total tax liability – state and federal – was more than \$1.25 million.

Compound those kinds of revenues with a reduction in crime rates in every state with a medical marijuana program and Pennsylvania's got itself a win-win proposition. That's if the legislature chooses to join the majority of U.S. states that now have some form of legalization or active research agenda.

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

Harrisburg Happenings

The majority of the General Assembly continues to ignore the voice of the voter and instead puts forth its own out-of-touch priorities.

By: Senator Sean Wiley

Article IV Section 15 of the Pennsylvania Constitution grants the power of veto to the Governor of the Commonwealth. Gov. Tom Wolf exercised that right late on Tuesday, June 30, sending the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year Budget back to the General Assembly – stamped as “unacceptable.”

Leadership in both chambers had approximately three months to review the \$30 billion plan priorities that the Governor laid out in March of this year. In my column in May, I wrote about conflicting examples of bipartisanship where in the course of two short days we saw bicameral cooperation at its finest ultimately be decimated by partisan rhetoric, a bully pulpit, and a wide enough margin of majority votes to ram through bad legislation. In budget negotiations past, there have been many “keep out” signs that have adorned the proverbial aisle between the sides of the Senate chamber, as was quite evident by the party lines passing of previous budgets bills.

In an effort to uproot those “keep out” signs, Gov. Wolf held a series of budget talks with GOP leaders to provide an agreeable foundation on which to move forward. The Governor had also made it abundantly clear that any spending plan that included budget tricks, unrealistic revenue estimates, and one-time fund transfers would be unacceptable.

I shared the Governor's sentiment in that regard, as I had been forced to vote against the budget for the last two fiscal years, as the spending plans were shortsighted, filled with gimmicks, and woefully underfunded public education. We didn't have a crystal ball then, but it was obvious to my colleagues and me that what was being proposed was not a strategy to move this Commonwealth in the right direction, and it's obvious where those ideologies have landed us – facing a remarkable debt and with historic shortfalls in public education funding.

I still don't have that crystal ball, but we are tremendously well past the stage where this Commonwealth has needed to look for new revenues outside of a property tax increase. We've

relied on the most regressive form of taxation to fill the coffers and are living the reality of record numbers of delinquencies. Couple that with a past reliance on revenues that weren't likely to materialize, and haven't, and this Commonwealth faced over a \$2 billion shortfall, looking at that deficit long-term.

In mid-June, the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released a report noting that actual revenues were on track to be almost \$2 billion above the June 2014 numbers as well as \$360 million more than the Governor's anticipa-

We are well past the stage where this Commonwealth has needed to look for new revenues outside of a property tax increase. We've relied on the most regressive form of taxation to fill the coffers and are living the reality of record numbers of delinquencies.

tions. With much of that revenue being the direct result of one-time factors, the IFO was not able to project whether the coming fiscal year will see the same sort of upward trend, leaving the taxpayer to sort through creative accounting of previous spending plans to determine the baseline on which to move forward.

As with every budget negotiation, I expected much posturing as each side had their own strategy to bridge the gap of the deficit. The GOP focused on sweeping changes to the Commonwealth liquor system coupled with systemic changes to the public employee pension system to drive an influx of one-time revenues. The Governor's plan focused on a tax on natural gas production, true property tax reform utilizing an atypical formula, and a reduction of the pension unfunded liability by modernizing the state run

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liquor system to help cover the cost of the necessary bonds.

Within those two strategies was to be common ground – or so we had hoped. Those hopes were quickly and vehemently dashed when the GOP introduced their own budget vehicle and subsequently rammed the bill through the House and then the Senate. There was nothing bipartisan nor in the best interest of the citizens of this Commonwealth in what happened during these negotiations – if one can even call them negotiations.

Being creative in shifting money around doesn't address the problems faced by this Commonwealth and also doesn't provide an ongoing strategy of sustainability. If you move the ball under one cup, the other cup is still empty. The General Assembly once again sent a budget to the Governor that continued to ignore additional sources of revenue for fear of political consequences.

My Democratic colleagues and I offered a number of good and reasonable solutions to land on a balanced budget, but those doors were shut in our faces, deadbolts locked, and the lights turned off. It was clear that no one on the other side of the aisle was interested in furthering those conversations.

It is quite evident that the voters across this Commonwealth were ready for a fresh start by electing Gov. Wolf, but the majority of the General Assembly continues to ignore the voice of the voter and instead puts forth its own out of touch priorities that don't survive outside the vacuum of their short-sighted ideology.

So we find ourselves back at the proverbial square one. A veto sends the budget bill back to its chamber of origin, in this case the House of Representatives, for further review. Indications are that leadership in both chambers will continue to review the conflicting plans in search of compromise and members of the General Assembly will return the week of July 13 for more of the same reviews.

I do look forward to a time when the General Assembly and the Administration can come together to agree upon a responsible and equitable funding plan in advance of the deadline, avoiding this type of stalemate. Citizens across this Commonwealth deserve better.

Senator Sean D. Wiley can be contacted at SenatorWiley@PaSenate.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @[SenatorWiley](https://twitter.com/SenatorWiley).

Geeked Out

Nic Pizzolatto shifts gears in *True Detective's* second season for a whole new ride.



By: John Lindvay

One of my favorite discoveries of last year was when a good friend of mine slapped the *True Detective* box set in my hand. The writer and creator of the show, Nic Pizzolatto, told the tale of two detectives in the thick and humid bayous of Louisiana in the show's first season. Simply put, by the end of the eight episodes, the show, dark and moody and steeped in philosophical discontent, was being proclaimed a TV triumph. Now with the second season underway, Pizzolatto seems to be switching up the formula, and that has some people worried.

In many ways *True Detective* is yet another crime show about gruff detectives and grisly murders. I remember for me it wasn't until the second episode of the first season when the hooks were sunk. Most of what was so compelling was the rapport between Woody Harrelson's Marty and Matthew McConaughey's Rust. They opposed each other philosophically and there was a brooding humor that ultimately seemed to make the dynamic of their partnership work. And the confines of the story were easy to ingest, as the vehicle we were given was that of a tale being told through flashbacks.

In the show's second season (keep in mind that the two seasons have nothing to do with each other), Pizzolatto shifts gears by not only increasing the

number of main characters to three, but also by thrusting us in the middle of things, giving us very little background as to who these new characters are.

A strength of the first season was seeing the characters as they were years later, then immediately juxtaposing them with who they were back at the time of the case. Just the physical appearance of McConaughey's character, with a long, frazzled pony tail compared to his tight and slick hair cut in the flashback, helped the viewers realize that *some serious shit went down between then and now*.

In season two, we don't get that. Instead, in the first episode we get the quick and dirty on Colin Farrell's Ray, a detective who has found himself in the pocket of Vince Vaughn's Frank, who is something of a mobster turned businessman. Both reside in Vinci, a small factory town that seems thoroughly corrupt and is based on the real and notoriously corrupt city, Vernon, Calif.

Then there's Venture County Sheriff Rachel McAdams' Ani – short for Antigone – and there are some literary references there for you Greek tragedy fans out there. She, unlike Colin Farrell's Ray, is a by-the-books ass-kicker who seems to prefer situations where she is in control. From the start, it seems that Ani and Ray represent the morale spectrum the second season will explore.

Finally, Highway Patrol officer Paul

Woodrugh, played by Taylor Kitsch, rounds out the mix. Woodrugh is a war veteran and seems to have been mentally scarred from his tour.

So far, the major theme of this season revolves around concepts of masculinity. Ray suffers from the pain and guilt of his wife's rape, and has hinted at "handling" the perp who did it. Frank has a certain stoicism and pained relationship with his own wife. Ani exhibits some daddy issues, and Paul seems to be struggling with his own male impotence.

Writing it out like this makes it all sound trite, and perhaps it is, but I am hopeful that these themes get moved into more interesting directions. Because here's the thing: the first season could be reduced in a similar manner, but as the show progressed, the realms it breached made up for any tropes it leaned on earlier.

Two episodes in, it is hard to say if this season is set to supersede that of the stellar first season, let alone keep pace with it.

Two episodes in, it is hard to say if this season is set to supersede that of the stellar first season, let alone keep pace with it. But I think it is a disservice to compare the two too closely, because as it stands, the only connection the two share is in name alone.

Many reviewers are likening the show to novellas or segments in an anthology, and I respect that, and the attempt to not just repeat the success of the previous year. While it might be too soon to cast judgement, and some people feel this season is a bit muddier and harder to attach to, I believe that Pizzolatto will bring us all around, just like he did before.

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

Continuing the North East conversation.

By: James R. LeCorchick

Editors' note: In our June 24 issue, *Erie Reader* Contributor James R. LeCorchick reported on – among other things – in his regular column, ER Sports, recent developments surrounding former North East High School basketball coach Tom Pyle. The column remains available online at ErieReader.com.

At the *Reader*, we encourage our contributors to utilize their columns to offer argument-based writing that features their opinions, regardless of whether they are in-line with that of the publication, as vehicles to create, drive, and continue conversation. The position of opinions notwithstanding, we strive to be accurate and fair in the presentation of any thought in the hopes of creating spirited, purposeful dialogue. And although we strive for excellence in each word we print, sometimes we fall short, a conversation isn't complete, or not all angles are explored, which is why you'll find below a letter we received from North East High School Principal Mr. Regan Tanner, which was edited for space constraints, and a response to it from Mr. LeCorchick.

Dear Erie Reader,

My name is Regan Tanner. I am the principal of North East High School, and I always enjoy reading your publication.

The June 24 issue contains an article about parents affecting roster choices and coaching changes in high school sports. I have in 26 years as a school employee seen this many times. A tru-

ly unfortunate event that occurs as long as society continues to put selfish needs and winning at the forefront of high school athletics.

The article in this issue refers to a former head basketball coach at North East, Tom Pyle. The issues that your article speaks of concerning Tom's coaching status are erroneous. There was not one complaint made to the North East High School athletic director or to me by any parent or player concerning Tom Pyle. There was not one complaint to our superintendent or to any member of the North East School District Board of directors concerning Tom Pyle. Your article indicates that this did occur. Where did you obtain that information?

Tom Pyle is an excellent coach and a personal friend of mine outside of school. His evaluation has always been the highest and never faltered. Because he simply chose not to continue coaching basketball at the varsity level at North East High School does not indicate anything of the sort that your article states. Tom is still coaching 7th grade basketball at North East as an assistant to Jason Keim. In fact, Tom was even asked to reconsider taking the head coaching position for the 2015-2016 school year after the deadline had passed. He asked for the weekend to think about it and chose to decline. The man does coach middle school football in the fall, the varsity throwers in track in the spring, and provides excellent mathematics instruction to sixth graders each year at North East Middle School.

Your story has stirred many rumors

now in North East that are unfair to Tom. Once something is written, it is hard to correct. His former players are asking "What happened", "Who complained", etc. I tell them, "No one did." "But Mr. Tanner, there was an article that said he was fired because parents complained to the school board?" I tell them that this is not true.

Tom Pyle has done a lot of things as a teacher and a coach to help students succeed in life. That is what we hope all of our staff will do. Character and truth are the foundation of what North East High School athletics strives for. Tom was always a model of these ideals.

Why did no one contact me or our athletic director as to these claims? Why add the drama of a story that is incorrect? People's lives are affected by stories like this. Sometimes people just want a break, a rest, or to simply move on to a new place in life.

My sincere hope is that a retraction would be printed that corrects the false information in the article for Mr. Pyle's sake and that of North East High School. Secondly, my other request would be that in the future, when articles about North East High School are written, please call me, and I will gladly give you the truth. I have nothing to hide and will gladly take ownership for whatever I have failed to do. If this had happened, I can assure you that I would have gone with Tom because I would not want to work in a place and represent an organization that would allow something like that to happen. That is what my mentor and former North East Principal Tim Welsh, my father, and 26 years of working for a quality school district have taught me.

Sincerely,

Regan B. Tanner, principal, North East High School

Mr. Tanner,

I read your letter very closely several times, and I have to say that your points are valid and I was a producer of poor reporting. Some people have trouble admitting they were wrong, but I don't have that problem. Maybe I have had too much practice at this.

I did talk to people that I was confident in having the entire story, how-

ever, as you pointed out, I did not contact the correct sources. One thing I have learned in more than 40 years of reporting is to never jump to conclusions and assumptions. Apparently the lesson didn't stick, as I was guilty of both.

Parental over-involvement is a pet peeve of mine, and I definitely jumped the gun. As has been said many times, "The reporter didn't want the facts to get in the way of a good story." I was

Parental over-involvement is a pet peeve of mine, and I definitely jumped the gun. As has been said many times, "The reporter didn't want the facts to get in the way of a good story." I was that reporter.

that reporter.

With this being said, I apologize to the North East School Board and everyone at North East High School, as well as my colleagues at the *Erie Reader*.

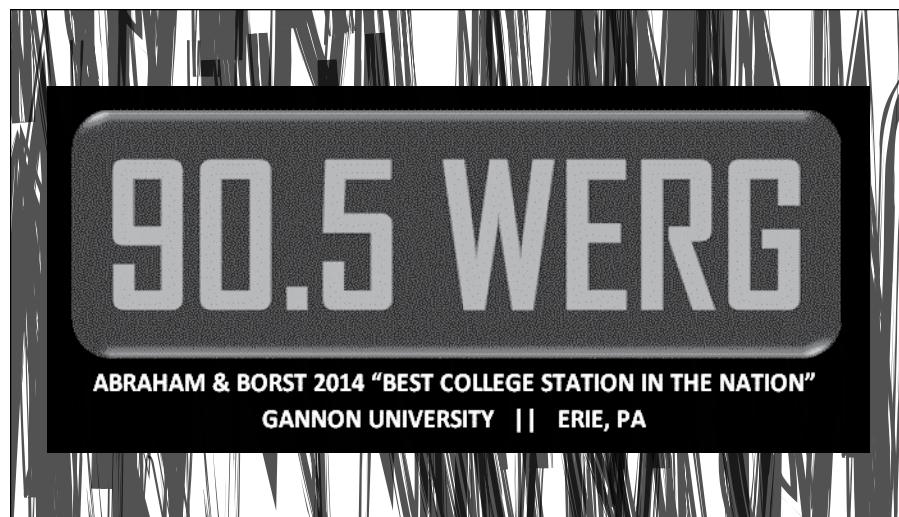
I do want to congratulate Coach Pyle on a great career and wish him nothing but success in his future endeavors. He has been one of the most respected coaches in the Erie area for the past 15 years, and I am sure he will continue to represent the North East District with the same class he has always exuded.

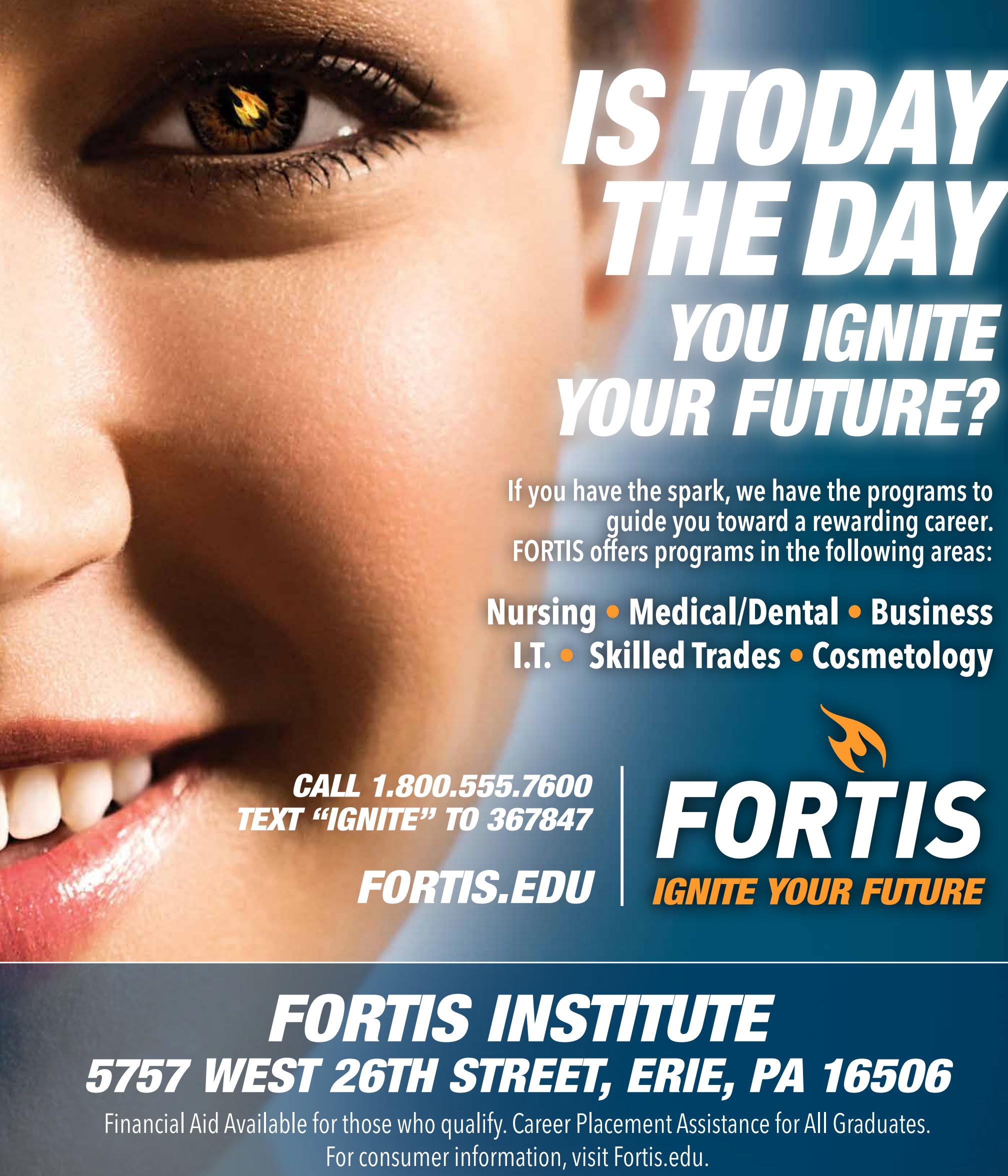
I would also like to wish Coach Keim good luck in heading up the Grape Pickers' basketball program. He is an impressive young man.

I have no excuses.

Sincerely,

James R. LeCorchick





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