

The local voice for news, arts, and culture.



**ERIE READER**

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# SITTING DOWN

*with*

# SINNOTT

Erie's Mayor Speaks on the Rise in Crime  
and Violence in the City




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The Erie Reader is the local voice for news, arts, and culture, and is Erie's only independent, alternative newspaper. Founded in 2010, the Reader has quickly become the region's award-winning source for arts coverage, a strong cultural compass, and a dynamic resource for news and opinion. With a dedication to long-form journalism and a commitment to provoking thoughtful discussion, the Reader tells the stories of the people and places making and shaping Erie, while highlighting the events and issues influencing life in northwestern Pennsylvania. The Erie Reader is published every other week and distributed at over 250 high foot-traffic locations in Pennsylvania from North East to Girard to Edinboro. In addition to appearing in print, Erie Reader adds new content daily at ErieReader.com as well social media sites. All rights reserved. All content © Flagship Multimedia, Inc. 1001 State St., Suite 901, Erie, Pa. 16501. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission. The opinions of our columnists and contributors are their own and do not always reflect that of the editorial board or organization. Direct inquiries to 814.314.9364 or contact@ErieReader.com.

## From The Editors

For better or for worse, Erie has spent nearly a decade with Mayor Joe Sinnott. And for better or for worse, Sinnott, who ran unopposed for his final of three terms, reaching the imposed limit on all mayors after Lou Tullio's two-decade long stand, isn't an out-and-front kind of guy.

Although there had been some grumblings in years and terms past, not much was made of the public perception of Erie's Mayor. Maybe because citizens thought he was doing the job well. Maybe because no one cared. Maybe because it hadn't been a matter of life or death, yet.

But after the alarming uptick in crime and violence throughout the City, many began questioning his public policy — and there's a trail to follow one of those conversation threads. Local businessman Dale McBrier questioning the Mayor at an open forum on violence, to which *Erie Times-News* Pat Howard responded in his op-ed, titularly arguing that "Erie needs Mayor Sinnott to raise his expectations," to which Sinnott — against his normal policy of not addressing editorials — fired back, defending his stance and his actions.

In short, Sinnott sees the City's core competencies being that of law enforcement and public services, jobs programs a secondary concern, and social services not a role the City should play.

And in short, people want answers, and they want them now.

So Managing Editor Ben Spегgen wrote the Mayor an email. In it, he offered the chance to go on record, the chance to meet off record — either way, the chance to get to know more about the Mayor's philosophy and vision. Mayor Sinnott responded, said he wanted to go on record, a date was set, and Ben and Contributing Editor Jim Wertz headed down to City Hall, not

in search of a silver-bullet-proof-vest answer but to offer a longform interview that would fill as many pages as possible and address as many topics as they could fit in.

Does it answer everything? No. Does it cover all topics from all angles? No. Does it provide a continuation of the conversation in the form of a five-thousand word dialogue that seeks to move the discussion of crime and violence and how the Erie community and the City of Erie Administration address the most pressing concern facing us today? Yes.

We hope that at the very least this helps clarify how the Mayor sees his role in this conversation. At the very most, we hope that it's a conversation you'll join, too, so that it doesn't end here.

What does end here, in this issue, is the longest running column in the *Reader*, Street Corner Soapbox. Aside from his always on-point commentary, longtime *Reader* contributor Jay Stevens has profiled swimmers, teachers, and chefs. He's authored outstanding features on the Eerie Roller Girls, the Paterino scandal and Erie's role in it, Lake Erie and the environmental threats facing it. He covered the controversy surrounding raw milk and numerous political events, and he penned the first coverage of Erie's bayfront development on the former GAF site.

But you likely knew all of that already. What you may not have known was that Jay and his family have since moved to Minneapolis. And as Jay puts it in his farewell column, which you'll find in this issue, "you just can't write for a place like Erie without living in a place like Erie."

We wish him the best of luck as he starts drafting the next chapter of his life. And we encourage you to follow him on Twit-

ter @Snevets\_Yaj, as he'll soon be launching a podcast amongst what we're sure will be many other creative ventures.

The next installment of Erie Gives Day falls on Tuesday, Aug. 11. From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Erieites have a twelve-hour window to donate to the nonprofit of their choice. And if past years' successes and the swell of donations as the event continues to grow are any indications, we can expect to see record numbers yet again. Which spells a good day for nonprofits throughout the region, as the Erie Community Foundation also provides a prorated match to all donations.

For many nonprofits, this day, this twelve-hour window, provides the opportunity to secure the funds necessary to sustain their organizations and their missions in order to ultimately give back to the community. So it seems odd at best that *again* the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership is using the day to raise funds for... fireworks.

"Your support is critical in raising adequate funds to ensure the return of Boom Over the Bay next summer!" read at email that went out July 30. "Thanks in part to YOUR generosity, the ERCPG and the Flagship Niagara League brought back the BOOM this past 4th of July!", it continued.

Doesn't the Chamber have a strong enough network of businesses that could fund this if a true desire for fireworks is clear and present? Must donors with limited resources truly choose between funding their own firework show or any one of the various organizations, like the Erie Neighborhood Watch Council, that endeavor to address, curb, and reduce violence in our community?

Let's also remember that ERCGP tried this last year with a target goal of \$40,000, falling quite short by netting less than \$9,000.

Jim Wertz explores this issue more fully in his regular column in this issue, where he explains that this has never been about fireworks, but instead the fact that a campaign exists to siphon off critical funds from culturally-enriching, social-oriented, educationally-based organizations — for fireworks.

Because let's be honest: If there's anything that's simply "just for show," it's fireworks — bursts of colorful gunpowder in the night sky over which we *ohhhh* and *ahhhh* but for a brief moment, only to return to the very real and very present threat of gunfire throughout our city. Competing in a limited marketplace against organizations in search of real solutions to make Erie a safer, better place to live in simply to fund fireworks is a lot of taking without much giving back.

### Contents — August 5, 2015

**Street Corner Soapbox 4**

Farewell, Erie.

**Erie At Large 5**

Erie Gives Day: an annual day of giving worthy of a fireworks display.

**News of the Weird 6****Harrisburg Happenings 9**

The budget impasse continues.

**West Erie Wonder Years 11**

Local developers re-imagine historic plaza.

**Geeked Out 37**

Kepler 452b gives us hope.

**ER Sports 38**

The Otters enter the Jim Waters era, and Jim LeCorchick is convinced that greatness lies ahead for the team.

## Street Corner Soapbox

Farewell, Erie.

By: Jay Stevens

When I moved to Erie almost eight years ago, the first thing I noticed was the tailgaters. Drivers in Erie love to tailgate. It doesn't matter where you are driving. It doesn't matter how fast you're going. You could be on I-90, 12th Street, or in a goddamned parade on State, there'll be someone on your ass minutes after you take to the road.

Once I was driving on a residential street, going maybe 30 or 35 in a 25 miles-per-hour zone at the back end of a long string of cars, when a kid pulled up behind me and got so close I couldn't see his headlights, his grill, the front half of his hood. If he were any closer, he'd be in my back seat. *What's he doing? I thought. Does he think he's going to make me go faster?* And then, across a double-yellow line, a residential street! a Saturday afternoon! kids out on their bikes! he passes us all.

Which reminds me of one of the first columns I ever wrote for the *Erie Reader*, about crosswalks, and how dangerous they were because no one stops to let you across. Commuters won't stop for schoolkids – unless there's a crossing guard, and even then it's dicey. I held my breath every time our crossing guard stepped into the street. And I've seen cars skid through the crosswalk with my kids in it, nearly running over their toes.

It seems like everybody's in a hurry to get someplace else.

Which pretty much sums up Erie.

And then there's this. Someone I talked to for a *Reader* story, also originally from out of town. We were commiserating about how tribal Erie can be. How friendships and rivalries go back decades, and how hard it can be sometimes to make friends, bust into the community. Living in Erie, he said, is like living at a perpetual high school reunion for a school you never went to.

How many times people asked what street and block I lived on, and then how they had a friend who grew up in the house next door, or how they themselves grew up in the house next door. Once I was at a party, started talking with a guy. As part of our small talk, where I lived in Erie came up. "No shit!" he said. "When I was a kid, I used



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The author of Street Corner Soapbox columns and many Reader features, Jay Stevens bids adieu.

to knock over people's garbage cans on that block!"

And that, too, sums up Erie.

So does the storm that blew over the Flagship Niagara on her way back from Lake Ontario. She was nearly home. You could see the entrance to the harbor ahead, the smokestack in front of the Erie Maritime Museum beyond, Presque Isle on our right. The storm, a solid black cloud laced with brilliant streaks of lightning, raced over us and we had to drop anchor, ride it out. The captain ordered lifejackets, the rain hit us hard and cold, blown sideways by a force 10 wind, and one of the high school trainees was crying, but there wasn't much you could say to him because, yeah, right now you can imagine the ship sinking right here, just outside the harbor.

And then, like that, the rain stops, the wind calms, the cloud barks and shakes its way up the coastline to Buffalo. The anchor's retrieved, the sun's out, and a rainbow arcs over the trees and beaches of Presque Isle, and that, too, is Erie.

So is picking blueberries, peaches, and green beans. And planting green onions with a stick until the backs of your thighs ache. And leaning back on the hill at Liberty Park with a beer, listening to music. And the pirate wolf's head on the crisp, white shirts of our SeaWolves at Jerry Uht Park. And gagging a little at the smell as you round the corner of the Bayfront Parkway where the wastewater treatment plant sits.

Did you know I wrote a piece about the plant? Not unless you're my editor. It never got to print. But I toured the

plant and got to stand at the top of the incinerator tower and look over the bay.

"The view is breath-taking," I wrote then. "On one side are the settling tanks. They look like swimming pools – at least half a dozen in neat rows, filled with oily brown sewage. Some are swirling and bubbling like hot tubs, and you have to remind yourself the jets are feeding air to feces-eating bacteria. On the other side is the lake and peninsula, and as the Assistant Bureau Chief and I stand talking on the incinerator, the Niagara rounds the point with sails aflutter, emerging from the bay. I point out the swallows that dart among the settling tanks.

"Like the Capastrano swallows," says the Assistant Bureau Chief, "they return every year."

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That's Erie, isn't it? Deeply weird and listless at times – but then full of surprises, and vitality.

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That's Erie, isn't it? Deeply weird and listless at times – but then full of surprises, and vitality. If you're trying to, I don't know, build an inland port, it can be a frustrating place. But if you're a writer, Erie is a rich and fertile ground for your work. Thanks to the *Erie Reader*, I got to know this city intimately. Without the *Reader* housing my work and sending me on assignments to meet with people I'd otherwise never know and to go places I didn't know existed, my life in Erie would have been small.

So maybe you can see where this is going. I am done. I'll no longer write for this paper in your hands. Last summer I moved to Minneapolis, and I hung on to the *Reader* as long as I could, but you just can't write for a place like Erie without living in a place like Erie. This is my farewell column.

So, goodbye, Erie. And thank you. You were an excellent neighbor and friend, and you'll live with me always.

For just two weeks more from the date this issue hits stands, you can contact Jay Stevens at [Jay@ErieReader.com](mailto:Jay@ErieReader.com). You can follow him on Twitter @Sneveys\_Yaj.

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## Erie At Large

Erie Gives Day: an annual day of giving worthy of a fireworks display.



By: **Jim Wertz**

Here we go again. It was around this time last year that I published 270 words at ErieReader.com calling into question the ethics of the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership's campaign to collect money from the citizens of Erie for a "Boom Over the Bay" fireworks display, using the Erie Community Foundation's "Erie Give's Day" as its fundraising mechanism. Needless to say, I was underwhelmed to learn that the ERCGP was once again initiating a campaign to raise money for fireworks through Erie Gives Day, which will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 11.

Erie Gives Day provides an annual injection of capital to regional 501(c)3 organizations that are either a member of The Nonprofit Partnership or have an Agency Endowment with the Erie Community Foundation. The day of giving began in 2011. From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. people can donate \$25 or more to a nonprofit of their choice. Donations can be made online at ErieGives.org.

Last year 5,465 individual donors gave \$2,271,693 including prorated matching funds from The Erie Community Foundation, GE Transportation, Erie Insurance, and Presque Isle Downs & Casino. Recipient organizations range from

schools and museums to soup kitchens and safe harbor locations for victims of domestic violence. In short, there are some very worthy organizations that rely on Erie Gives Day to help make operating budgets whole.

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**Last year the Chamber asked the community to pony up \$40,000, but fell woefully short of that goal.**

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Last year the Chamber asked the community to pony up \$40,000, but fell woefully short of that goal. Scott Enterprises pledged \$5,000 in seed money and other contributors collectively gave \$3,366.25. Nevertheless, the Chamber managed to find a partner for its fireworks in the Flagship Niagara League. The bay boomed once more.

But the issue has never been about fireworks. Rather it's the fact that an organization comprised of many of

the region's leading businesses would siphon much needed funds away from the regions culturally-centered and social service-oriented nonprofit groups in order to fund a fireworks display that could easily be supported by a small partnership of a few key community-minded members of the ERCGP.

Moreover, the fact that we must revisit the very same episode on an annual basis is a high-definition illustration of the lack of creative thinking that permeates economic policy and socio-political agendas throughout the region. In twelve months since failing to meet its funding goals in 2014, the organization spent no time thinking about creative solutions to a relatively simple problem; relatively simple, that is, in comparison to gun violence and job creation.

It's problems like these – symptoms of poverty, hopelessness, and other endemic economic plagues – the ERCGP could participate in solving if it only committed to its "core mission of providing the leadership to attract, retain and expand business in the region." That would be, once again, worthy of a fireworks display.

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

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## News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

## There's an App for That

Among the health and fitness apps for computers and smartphones are sex-tracking programs to document the variety of acts and positions, degrees of frenzy and lengths of sessions (via an on-bed motion detector) — and menstrual trackers aimed at males (to help judge their partner's fertility but also her predicted friskiness and likelihood of orgasm). Several have chart- and graph-making potential for data (noise level, average thrust frequency, duration, etc.), and of course, the highlight of many of the apps is their ability to create a "score" to rank performance — even encouraging comparisons across a range of populations and geography. (Sociologist Deborah Lupton's app research was summarized in the July Harper's Magazine.) [Harper's, July 2015]

## We Are Not Alone

Scientists from Australia's James Cook University told reporters in June that they had spotted an aggressive fish that can walk on land making its way toward the country from Papua New Guinea. The native freshwater "climbing perch" can live out of water for days and has survived short saltwater treks from PNG toward Australia's Queensland. (2) In July, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department posted

a warning photo of a so-far-rare Texas Redhead — an 8-inch-long centipede with gangly white legs tipped with venom-delivering fangs and which eats lizards and toads. [Business Insider Australia, 6-3-2015] [Washington Post, 7-6-2015]

## The Continuing Crisis

Reuters reported in early July that a big loser in the nuclear pact between Iran and six world powers was (since all negotiators have gone home to sell the deal) the brothel industry of Vienna, Austria, which hosted that final round. With so many (male, mostly) diplomats in town for two stressful months, business had been robust — especially compared to the previous round in notoriously expensive Lausanne, Switzerland. [Reuters, 7-5-2015]

The Undernews From Wimbledon: The All England Club, host of tennis's most hallowed tournament, is, formally, the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, at which presumably Britain's 11,900 croquet "regulars" aspire to play — although their British Open Championship is actually held at the nearby Surbiton Croquet Club, which this year hosted 50 competitors from four continents, according to a July New York Times dispatch. The leading U.S. player — Ben Rothman of Oakland, California, the "croquet pro" at Mission Hills Country Club near

Palm Springs — is the reputed "world's leader" in prize money (\$4,500). [New York Times, 7-6-2015]

## Profile in Leadership

Maryland state Delegate Mariana Kelly was charged with trespassing and indecent exposure in June after she arrived at her ex-husband's home to drop off their kids and learned that his girlfriend was inside. According to police, she started banging on the door and ringing the bell repeatedly and, aware that her husband had a camera trained on the doorway, she faced it, exposed her breasts and shook them, one in each hand, toward the lens. Eventually, she dared an officer to arrest her. (The Washington Post reported that Kelly is a member of a legislative task force studying maternal mental health issues.) [Washington Post, 7-14-2015]

## Ironies

An 87-year-old man, taking his license renewal driving test in Deerfield, Illinois, in June, accidentally crashed into the driver's license office (based on brake/accelerator confusion). Neither he nor the examiner was injured. [Chicago Tribune, 6-11-2015]

An 83-year-old man, driving around Cape Coral, Florida, in May, suffered a fatal heart attack at the wheel, and the uncontrolled car came to rest in shrubbery ringing the Florida Heart Associates building. [Fort Myers News-Press, 5-11-2015]

Wrong Place, Wrong Time: (1) A court in Lincoln, Nebraska, which had already sent Paul Boye to prison for at least 10 years for shooting his girlfriend, ordered him in June to cover her resulting medical bills. The woman had taken a .22-caliber bullet, which left a scar cutting right through her tattoo reading "Happiness Is A Warm Gun." (2) A task force of Benton, Arkansas, police and U.S. Marshals tracked down Tieren Watson, 26, in June after he had spent several days on the lam as a suspect in a shooting. When arrested, he was wearing a T-shirt reading "You Can Run, But You Can't Hide." [Lincoln Journal Star, 6-13-2015] [The Smoking Gun, 6-18-2015]

## Wait, What?

Mine worker Joshua Clay claimed in a lawsuit that a foreman had twice taunted him for complaining about conditions — by restraining him and spray-painting his testicles white. Clay filed against Kielty Mine in Mingo County, West Virginia, in July, alleging that the company had forced him to work on the dirty side of a coal-dust conversion machine — a practice forbidden by federal regulations — and that when he complained, he was subjected to off-the-books discipline. [Courthouse News, 7-16-2015]

## Inexplicable

KPHO-TV news story in Phoenix featured a local doctor advising expectant mothers against "tweaking"

the result of home pregnancy tests. Some women, apparently, had discovered the magic of "Photoshopping" the pink reading on the home test's strip — to take a faint pink line (not a certified pregnancy) to make it bold (pregnant!). Although the doctor warns of the general hazard of "false positives," the 415-word news story does not explain how Photoshopping a not-positive reading into a positive one improves the likelihood of conception. [KPHO-TV, 7-7-2015]

## Mangoes in the News

Josefina Tometich, 64, was arrested in Fort Myers, Florida, in June, charged with shooting out the back window of Christopher Richey's pickup. Richey had fetched a "perfect-looking" mango from the street in front of Tometich's house, but Tometich insisted it was hers since it had earlier fallen from her tree. (An attorney consulted by WBBH-TV said wind-blown mangoes landing on public property is a legal "gray area.") (2) In one of the most successful redresses of grievance in history, the Venezuelan government gave Marleny Olivo a new apartment in April. Only days before, as President Nicolas Maduro toured her neighborhood in Aragua state, she had hurled a mango at him with her phone number on it, hitting him just below the ear. The new president (a "man of the people") called her, listened to her story, and ordered a housing upgrade. [WBBH-TV, 6-30-2015] [BBC News, 4-25-2015]





# SUMMER CALENDAR

From the **FIRST DAY** till the **LAST**  
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## JUNE

- 21 **FIRST DAY OF SUMMER!**
- 24 Presque Isle Sunset Music Series  
Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break
- 25 Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party  
North East Picnic in the Park
- 26 Harborcreek Township Free Concert
- 27 Erie Homes for Children and Adults  
Red Carpet Run



## AUGUST

- 1-2 Saint Boniface Players "Titanic"
- 1-2 Erie Art Museum 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
Blues & Jazz Festival
- 4 8 Great Tuesdays
- 5 Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break
- 6 Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party  
LEAF Concert in the Arboretum  
North East Picnic in the Park
- 7-8 Saint Paul's Italian Festival
- 7 WQLN "Sounds Around Town"
- 11 8 Great Tuesdays
- 12 Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break
- 13-16 CelebrateErie
- 13 LEAF Concert in the Arboretum  
North East Picnic in the Park
- 14 Safenet French Garden Party –  
An Evening in Provence  
LEAF Movie in the Arboretum
- 18 8 Great Tuesdays
- 19 Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break
- 20 Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party
- 21 Erie Downtown Partnership Bike Night  
Harborcreek Township Free Concert
- 21-23 Zabawa Polish Festival
- 22 Presque Isle Partnership Triathlon  
LEAF ArborEAT'em
- 25 8 Great Tuesdays
- 26 Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break
- 27 Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party
- 31 Erie County Fair



## JULY

- 1 Presque Isle Sunset Music Series  
Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break  
Erie Zoo Wild Wednesdays
- 2 LEAF Concert in the Arboretum  
North East Picnic in the Park
- 3-4 Lawrence Park July 4<sup>th</sup> Festivities
- 4 Erie Maritime Museum Friends & Family Day  
with Boom over the Bay!
- 7 8 Great Tuesdays
- 8 Presque Isle Sunset Music Series  
Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break  
Erie Zoo Wild Wednesdays
- 9 LEAF Concert in the Arboretum  
Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party  
North East Picnic in the Park
- 10 WQLN "Sounds Around Town"  
Asbury Woods Wine & Dine in the Woods
- 14 8 Great Tuesdays
- 15 Presque Isle Sunset Music Series  
Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break  
Erie Zoo Wild Wednesdays
- 16 LEAF Concert in the Arboretum  
North East Picnic in the Park
- 17 WQLN "Sounds Around Town"
- 18 Edinboro 175th Anniversary Founders Day
- 21 8 Great Tuesdays
- 22 Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break  
Erie Zoo Wild Wednesdays
- 23 Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party  
LEAF Concert in the Arboretum  
North East Picnic in the Park  
Saint Boniface Players "Titanic"
- 24-26 Discover Presque Isle
- 24 WQLN "Sounds Around Town"  
Saint Boniface Players "Titanic"  
Erie Art Museum Gallery Night
- 25 Asbury Woods Ridge Run  
Beer on the Bay  
Saint Boniface Players "Titanic"
- 28 8 Great Tuesdays  
Lake Erie Fanfare
- 29 Erie Art Musuem Midday Art Break  
Erie Zoo Wild Wednesdays
- 30 Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party  
LEAF Concert in the Arboretum  
North East Picnic in the Park
- 31 Saint Boniface Players "Titanic"  
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## SEPTEMBER

- 1-5 Erie County Fair
- 5-6 German Heritage Festival
- 7-12 Waterford Community Fair
- 10-13 Edinboro Highland Games
- 11-13 Oktoberfest
- 11 GECAC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner
- 12 Barber Beast on the Bay  
LEAF Festival  
Erie Homes for Children and Adults  
Victory Ride
- 15-19 Albion Area Fair
- 22 **LAST DAY OF SUMMER!**





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***The moment he wakes up, his mind catches on that split second.***

*Pushing it aside again, he gets up and washes the sleep from his eyes. He floats through his day: history class, lunch, therapy, basketball practice. He smiles to himself: Tuesday means swimming after dinner. They're kind to him here. Patient - even on the bad days. His Unit Manager tells corny jokes like his Aunt Sarah, and today he got a B+ on his geometry quiz. He wants to talk about it: to cry, to yell, to let it all out of the darkness - but the words stick in his throat. Panic swells in his chest. His thoughts dissolve and scatter as his heart races. For now, there aren't words...but there **is** his song.*

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## Harrisburg Happenings

The budget impasse continues.

By: Senator Sean D. Wiley

Five weeks ... and counting. Thirty-five days ago Gov. Tom Wolf sent the Pennsylvania budget bill back to the General Assembly to restart the negotiating process, and since that veto, both chambers of the General Assembly have convened for legislative session without considering any budget specific bills.

So where are we? Still at the proverbial square-one with only a series of closed-door meetings on which to hang our legislative hats.

Leadership in all four caucuses has indicated that negotiations do continue while mainstream media continues to beat the drum of a 'budget impasse' and a 'budget stalemate.' How stale those conversations may be remains to be seen, but they do look to be quite chewy as the weeks drag on.

At the core of the impasse lies a true philosophical difference in how the Commonwealth spends its money and makes its money. It is similar to a disagreement in a household as to how and when the bills should be paid and who will be working at what job to garner the necessary income.

Gov. Wolf has made it abundantly clear since taking office earlier this year that he will not accept "business as usual" in constructing a spending plan and any plan to be considered must include a number of priorities: a severance tax to fund our schools, an atypical formula specific to property tax levies, and a plan of attack for the unfunded pension liability of the Commonwealth by modernizing the state-controlled liquor system.

Republican leadership continues to fail in sharing those priorities while rebuking the Governor at every turn. When one has an overwhelming majority in both the House and the Senate, one can do that. But those rebukes have led to 35 days and beyond.

Shortly, there will be sweeping consequences to this impasse. State funding for critical social service programs will stop flowing, forcing many to enact contingency plans.

As we all know, many of the smaller agencies have a tough enough time keeping the lights on and the payroll obligation met each month and con-

tingency plans are only a dream. What happens then? Do those organizations then find a source of income in the form of a loan or do those services continue to operate without any revenue? Or does this community and communities all across the Commonwealth find themselves without vital human services?

School districts will also be in the same predicament when students return to the classrooms in just three weeks. How long can a school district like Erie's Public Schools survive without state funding? I mentioned not having a crystal ball in my July column, and I still don't have one, but one is not required to see that this Commonwealth is on the precipice of a crisis.

The voters in this Commonwealth made their priorities clear by changing leadership in the Governor's office and

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Shortly, there will be sweeping consequences to this impasse. State funding for critical social service programs will stop flowing, forcing many to enact contingency plans.

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rallying behind a necessary fresh start. The General Assembly, elected by the people to do the people's work, needs to actually listen to the voice of the voter where those voices are singing a chorus of property tax reform and increased education funding though a tax on natural gas with lyrics that include a government that works.

What we are doing is not working. And I say we loosely, but I am lumped into the same batter as my colleagues across the aisle who continue to bury their heads in the sand, as we all make up the General Assembly.

The Senate is not scheduled to return to voting session until the middle of September, but it remains under the call of the President Pro Tempore to initiate session earlier. Every move, every step, and every conversation needs to be strategic in ending this deadlock. It is not an exaggeration to say that lives depend on it.

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



**NOMINATIONS  
CLOSE AUG. 18**

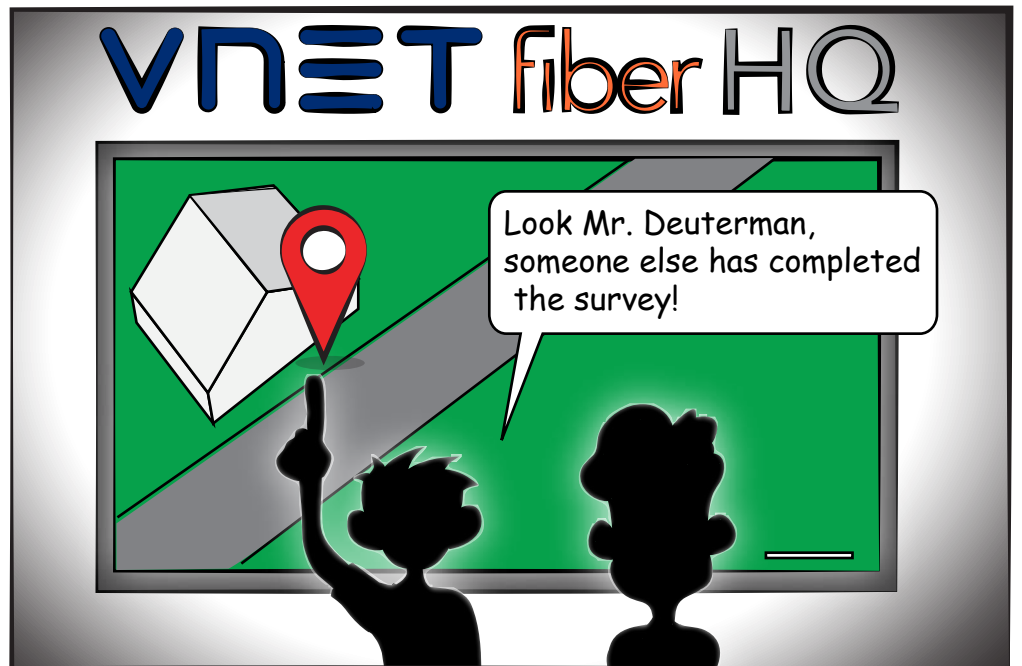
**VOTING BEGINS  
AUG. 20**

# VNET fiber Q&A

## Q How do I get fiber internet to my home? A Let's walk through the process...

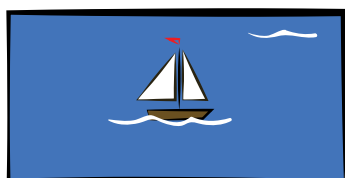
Visit [www.vnetfiber.com](http://www.vnetfiber.com) and complete the survey.

Once the survey has been completed, your address will be added to the VNET Fiber map.



When there is enough interest in a particular neighborhood, VNET will start taking pre-orders for service.

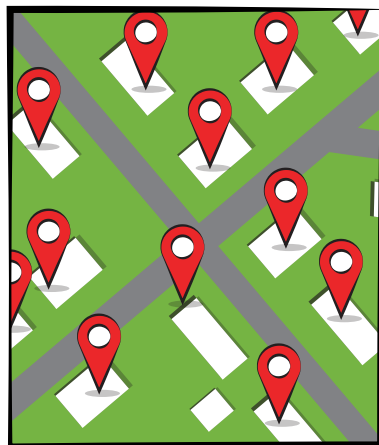
VNET will then help to spread the word in your neighborhood with barbecues and other awareness initiatives.



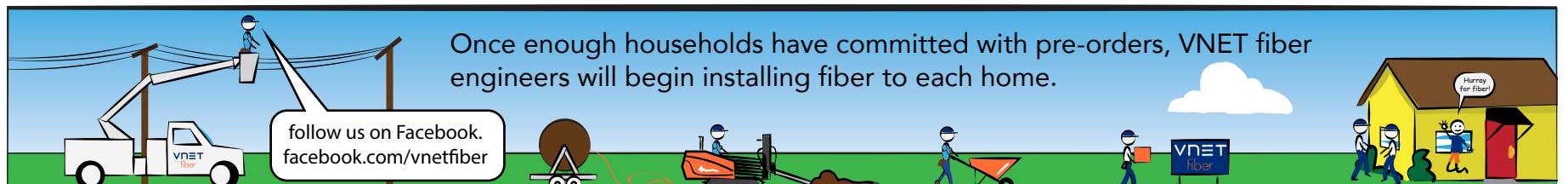
Not so much here...



or here...



but right here.



Once enough households have committed with pre-orders, VNET fiber engineers will begin installing fiber to each home.

## West Erie Wonder Years

Local developers re-imagine historic plaza.



BRAD TRIANA

By: **Jim Wertz**

Long before the marquee came down at the Plaza Cinema in West Erie Plaza, the Plaza lights had gone dim. Several businesses remained there despite the fact that the property had not been upkept in any substantive way for several decades. It's hard to renovate around tenants, on one hand, and it's pretty easy to ignore age and time, on the other.

A map of the fully stocked West Erie Plaza published in the *Erie Times-News* in 1971 thanked Millcreek Police for making the plaza "a safe place to shop," and in the top corner of the advertisement an invitation to potential shoppers read "free parking for thousands."

By the time Erie-based development firm VCG Properties acquired the Plaza in 2012, it had literally been decades since the parking lot – or the storefronts, for that matter – accommodat-

ed thousands. In recent years, the plaza became little more than a relic, supporting its few remaining tenants, but serving most people with only a dose of nostalgia, be it memories of the music lessons taken in Osiecki Music or the kisses stolen in a dark theater at Dipson's Plaza Cinema.

"Let's just erase the last 30 years," says Chris Conrad, managing director of VCG Properties. "Let's look at the beginning. You went to the Boston Store, you went to West Erie Plaza. There's a lot of history here. That means there's a lot of memories here too."

Those memories and the history of the West Erie Plaza – a formerly bustling destination complete with department stores, grocers, and even miniature golf – is at the heart of its redevelopment. Bricks from the movie theater complex, some inscribed with reflections of former patrons, are being incorporated

into the design.

VCG also set up a suggestion box on site before construction began and established a Facebook page to solicit feedback on the redevelopment and to keep the public engaged in the process. Most of the comments were positive, but many people wanted to preserve the old theater.

"I walked into the theater, and I wanted it to work," Conrad remembers. "It was a great space, but it wasn't a viable structure. There was just too much deterioration." The cinema marquee has been crated for safekeeping and is incorporated into the final site plan.

Moves like that are an attempt by developers to show the public that they understand what the space once meant to the community.

The redevelopment has entered phase four of the project. Much of the demolition work is complete. Tenant spaces are be-

ing redefined.

"I think people see the work we've done and the different tenants that we've already brought in and they want to be a part of it," says Chris Greene, a managing partner in VCG Properties.

Hertel and Brown Physical Therapy and Dairy Queen occupy the plaza's only renovated spaces at what will eventually be the north end of the plaza, once the movie theater is completely removed. The rest of the structure is literally wide open.

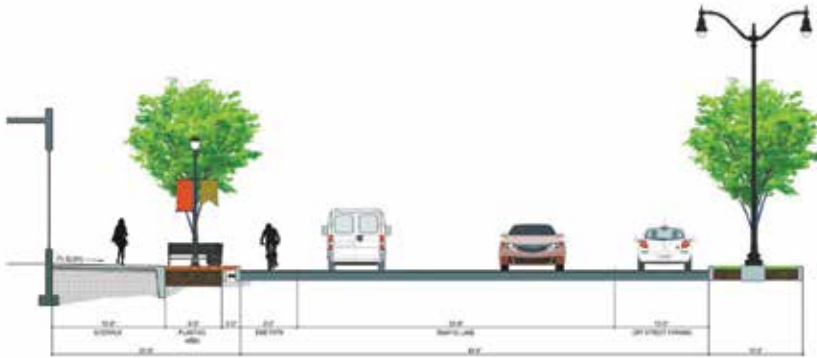
"We took the bones of the building down to the nitty-gritty. The only things remaining are the firewalls. Everything else came out so that we can define the space as best we can," Conrad says.

VCG Properties is treating this as an opportunity to bring to Erie the kind of outdoor mall that other communities across the country have experienced since the beginning of the post-mall revolution in the late 1990s.

Tell us that you're interested by taking the survey at:  
[www.vnetfiber.com](http://www.vnetfiber.com)  
 Help spread the word. #GetYourGig facebook.com/vnetfiber

VNET fiber

SECTION



# COMING SOON

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exclusively through  
**ERIEPAJOBS.COM**

**Page 11: A view of the construction at West Erie Plaza from the northeast corner of the property. Left: A concept rendering of planned development, including bike lanes and trees.**

If you've traveled or lived outside of Northwestern Pa., you've probably experienced this kind of community centered retail space. Wide pavements, bike lanes, and greenspace where people can sit, meet, and enjoy the space define the area. You spend as much time milling around and hanging out as you do shopping.

"We want people to loiter," Conrad quips. "We went through a three-year planning process where we researched what tenants want, what shoppers want, what's working and what's not working across the United States and beyond."

And apparently what shoppers and tenants want is not your grandparents' stripmall, but it's also not exactly the big box plazas to which Erie has become accustomed. In those developments, small tenants are situated next to a major retailer, like the Tar-

get or Walmart plazas on upper Peach Street. Conrad and company understand that model; it's tested and it works – it's just not their approach.

"Placemaking defines your space," says Conrad. "It defines your future. It defines your tenants. So if you start by placemaking and you create a destination where there is already traffic, you have the conditions to bring in the right kind of tenants."

Greene says he hopes to see a full compliment of tenants and completed renovations on the mall structure by late Spring 2016.

If public feedback is any indication, the community is as hopeful as the developers for a successful tenure. A ten-year old dropped a note in the suggestion box asking for a dog park to be included in the plans. After signing the suggestion, the kid wrote three times, "We can do this."

It sounds like someone's ready to make new memories under those old plaza lights.

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

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# FIND THE BEAST IN YOU!

The 3rd Annual Barber Beast on the Bay - Erie's biggest obstacle course challenge, on Saturday, Sept. 12 at Presque Isle State Park. A 10-mile course over sand, trails and water and 20+ obstacles. Form a team or go it alone!

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All proceeds benefit the Barber National Institute serving more than 4,200 children and adults with intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges.

Registration and information at [WWW.BARBERBEAST.ORG](http://WWW.BARBERBEAST.ORG)



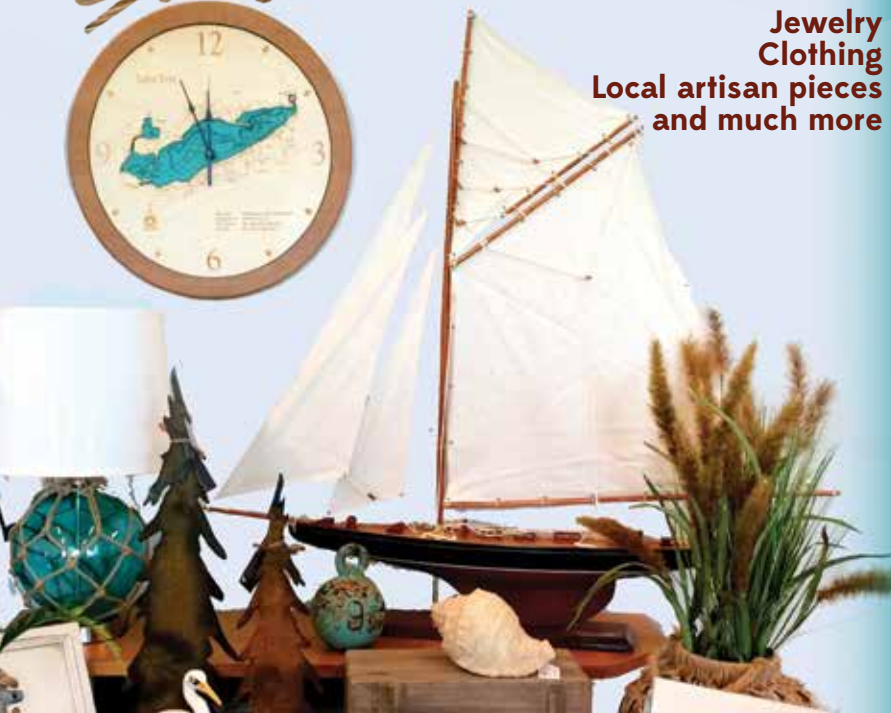
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AUGUST 11, 2015



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# Sitting Down with Sinnott

Erie's Mayor speaks on the rise in crime and violence in the city



BRAD TRIANA

By: Ben Speggen and Jim Wertz

Erie's 47th Mayor took office amidst choppy waters. In 2005, the City found itself adrift politically, unsure how to cope with the then subsiding tide of the real estate scandal that severely weakened at best and wrecked at worst Incumbent Mayor Rick Filippi's run at a second term. Although Filippi was acquitted on all charges – from criminal conspiracy, to conflict of interest, to accepting improper influence, which resulted from his involvement in a company interested in purchasing land for an \$80 million gambling complex – he lost the election to then-City Councilman Joseph Sinnott.

Like his predecessor, Sinnott was a Gannon University grad-

uate, a practicing lawyer, and a one-term member of City Council who opted to swing from the legislative branch to the executive. But unlike his predecessor, Sinnott – when all's said and done – will have held the Mayor's office three times, reaching the maximum term limit. Moreover, he didn't face a single challenger on the ballot in either bid for re-election, suggesting we'd reached calm waters and a cool breeze.

Read recent headlines or watch the top-of-the-hour reports and it's impossible to ignore the rash of crime and violence across the City.

Yet since he took office in 2006, Sinnott says that addressing crime and violence has been at the forefront of

his administration's concerns. He says he campaigned on the core competencies of the City being that of law enforcement and public services. Jobs programs were secondary and social services, the Mayor has echoed throughout the years, are not a concern of the City. Despite the recent rise in crime, comparatively, Erie is still a relatively safe city when stacked against the national average, as examined in the inaugural Jefferson Essay, published by the City's think tank, The Jefferson Educational Society.

But times change, crime evolves, and solutions remain elusive.

Again, we find ourselves in choppy waters and looking

to the helmsman to steer us through to the brighter, safer potential on the horizon.

From City Council candidates to local reporters to concerned citizens, many hold the perception that the Mayor's preferred role out of the spotlight means he "doesn't care, is aloof, and is disconnected," as one City Councilman remarked. His resignation has been called for in the pages of the *Erie Times-News*, after he responded to Pat Howard's column "Erie needs Mayor Sinnott to raise his expectations."

Admittedly – even opening with it in his response to Howard – Sinnott hasn't been one to respond publically to editorial commentary. But he did. And he's defended his view that he's seeking substantive results – something not ob-

**Contributing Editor Jim Wertz (far left) and Managing Editor Ben Speggen met with Mayor Joe Sinnott (right) in his office in City Hall to discuss the reason rise in crime and violence in Erie.**

tained by public marches and demonstrations.

Mayor Joe Sinnott says he has solutions to the current crime plaguing our City. He recently sat down with Contributing Editor Jim Wertz and Managing Editor Ben Speggen to answer their questions about his plans, his philosophy on City government, and his decision to publicly defend his image and his actions against violence as our Mayor.

**Ben Speggen:** You said in the Lisa Adams' [of WICU] interview that at the forefront of your administration has been targeting [Cont. on page 31]

Wednesday Aug. 5

**Digging for Fire Brings 'Mumblecore' to the Mainstream**



GARRETT MOTION PICTURES

Director Joe Swanberg is a busy guy. Over the past ten years, he's directed 17 feature films – a few of which helped people like Greta Gerwig and Mark Duplass become recognizable stars. He's considered one of the key figures of the “mumblecore” movement, which emphasizes naturalistic dialogue and relatable, everyday experiences (usually alongside a bare-bones budget). Directors like Woody Allen and Eric Rohmer anticipate the style, and contemporary filmmakers like Lena Dunham (creator of HBO's *Girls*) have certainly been influenced by it.

*Digging for Fire* promises to stick to the mumblecore template for the most part – the sparse plot concerns an un-

happily married couple who discover a gun and a (potentially human) bone while housesitting for a friend. Though ostensibly a mystery, there's far greater emphasis on character development and interplay among the film's impressive ensemble cast. Expect to see rising stars like Brie Larson (*21 Jump Street*, *Trainwreck*), major stars like Anna Kendrick (*Pitch Perfect*), people you most likely already love (charismatic cowboy Sam Elliott), and people you may, in fact, loathe (Orlando Bloom, possibly in search of an image makeover).

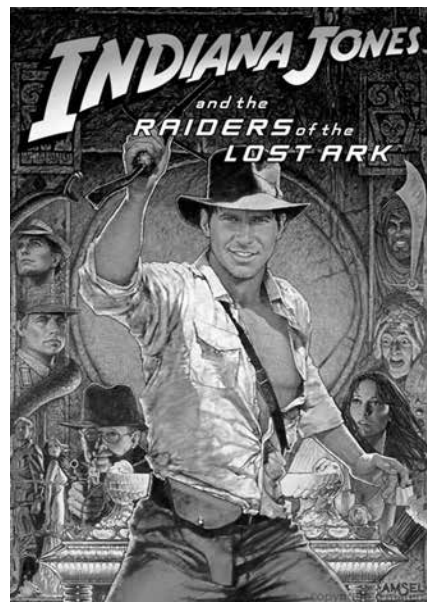
If you're tired of superheroes and vampires, or if you've lamented a lack of relatable characters at the box office, drop by the Erie Art Museum on Aug. 5 for a down-to-earth alternative. – Dan Schank

7 p.m. // Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. // [erieartmuseum.org/events/film.html](http://erieartmuseum.org/events/film.html)

Thursday, Aug. 6

**Raiders of the Lost Ark is Still the Gold Standard for '80s Action**

As a suburban boy in the '80s, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was as beloved and inescapable a part of my upbringing as an afternoon game of whiffle ball. As globetrotting adventurer In-



PARAMOUNT PICTURES

diana Jones, Harrison Ford's combination of swagger, sarcasm, tough love, and bravery exemplified everything I wanted to be around age ten (save maybe a ninja?). I can even remember my disappointment when my father informed me that *real* archeologists were more likely to work in a university lab than an Egyptian pit filled with cobras.

So how does *Raiders* hold up over 30 years later? Its most memorable scenes still pack a punch, and the film's com-

bination of wit and action anticipates many of the most charismatic blockbuster of recent years. It's tough to imagine *Guardians of the Galaxy* or *Iron Man* without it. On the other hand, its handling of race is occasionally troublesome, and its central narrative lacks the epic mythology of Ford's other super-sized contribution to popular culture, the *Star Wars* trilogy.

These concerns are small potatoes though – see it on Aug. 6 at Porreco College for its sharp sense of humor, or for Karen Allen's refreshingly hard-boiled (and hard-drinking) take on the “damsel in distress.” Hell, see it for its merciful lack of Shia LeBeouf. And bring the kids – it's still as welcoming and fast-paced as it was in the Reagan era. – Dan Schank

9 p.m. // Edinboro University's Porreco College, 2951 W. 38th St. // [Bringblanketsorlawnchairsforanoutdoorscreening//edinboro.edu/porreco-college/movies-under-the-stars.html](http://Bringblanketsorlawnchairsforanoutdoorscreening//edinboro.edu/porreco-college/movies-under-the-stars.html)

Thursday, Aug. 6

**Dramashop puts new spin on Shakespeare Classic**

Shakespeare's plays aren't for everyone. Most people get flashbacks to high school, when they were forced to read

MUSIC

**BT's Mid Week Punk Night**

August 5 — 5:30 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com/basement.transmissions](http://facebook.com/basement.transmissions).

**Erie Art Museum Mid-day Art Break presents The Loose Change Band**

August 5 — 12 p.m.  
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

**Erie Downtown Block Party featuring The Romantic Era and Small Town Revolution**

August 6 — 6 to 10:30 p.m.  
Sluggers Sports Bar and Grill, 14 E. 10th St. [eriedowntown.com](http://eriedowntown.com).

**Kevlar**

August 6 — 9 p.m.  
Sherlock's, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](http://facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

**The Falconers + Adam Mckillip**

August 7 — 9 p.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Goodell Gardens Summer Music Series Presents Patchouli**

August 7 — 7 to 9 p.m.  
Goodell Gardens, 221 Waterford St., [goodellgardens.org](http://goodellgardens.org).

**Indierealm**

August 7 — 5 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com/basement.transmissions](http://facebook.com/basement.transmissions).

**"Old Skool," Cleveland's Tribute to Old School Hip-Hop**

August 7 — 9 p.m.  
Sherlock's, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](http://facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

**Whiskey Road**

August 7 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs and Casino 8199 Perry Highway, Erie, PA 16509 [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com)

**Mid-Life Crisis**

August 8 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs and Casino 8199 Perry Highway, Erie, PA 16509 [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com)

**Arundel Cellars Summer Concert Series presents Cheeseburgers in Paradise and Key West Express**

August 8 — 2 to 5 p.m.  
Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Road, [lakeeriewinecountry.org](http://lakeeriewinecountry.org).

**Black Bear Prodigy**

August 8 — 9 p.m.  
Sherlock's, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](http://facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

**Calje Chicago Latin Jazz Ensemble**

August 8 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. Eighth St. [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**Dance Party with DJ Weazildust**

August 8 — 9 p.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Penn Shore Vineyards' Summer Concert Series presents Abbey Road**

August 8 — 5 to 9 p.m.  
Penn Shore Vineyard, 10225 East Lake Road, [lakeeriewinecountry.org](http://lakeeriewinecountry.org).

**Bearded Baby Summer Jam with Shai Halud**

August 8 — 4 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com/basement.transmissions](http://facebook.com/basement.transmissions).

**Radio Age**

August 9 — 2:30 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs and Casino 8199 Perry Highway, Erie, PA 16509 [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com)

**The Classic Rock Experience w/ The Nied's Hotel Band and Mia Z at 8 Great Tuesdays**

August 11 — 6:30 p.m.  
Burger King Amphitheatre, Liberty Park, [porterier.org](http://porterier.org).

**Erie Art Museum Mid-day Art Break presents Erie Philharmonic Brass Quintet**

August 12 — 12 p.m.  
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St., [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

**You, Me & Everyone We Know**

August 12 — 6 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com/basement.transmissions](http://facebook.com/basement.transmissions).

**Cosmic Rhythm**

August 14 — 9 p.m.  
Sherlock's, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](http://facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

**Stoned & Beautiful**

August 14 — 9 p.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St., [facebook.com/kingsrookclub/events](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub/events).

**Chrome**

August 14 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs and Casino 8199 Perry Highway, Erie, PA 16509 [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com)

**Tennessee Backporch**

August 15 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs and Casino 8199 Perry Highway, Erie, PA 16509 [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com)

**Abbey Road**

August 15 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Sprague Farm, 22113 US-6, [sleepingchainsaw.com](http://sleepingchainsaw.com).

**Armitan Hand**

August 15 — 10 p.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Celebrate Sherlock's with French Kiss**

August 15 — 9 p.m.  
Sherlock's, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](http://facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

**Tony Monaco, B-3, and Pete Mills**

August 15 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. Eighth St., [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**M4**

August 16 — 2:30 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs and Casino 8199 Perry Highway, Erie, PA 16509 [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com)

**Psychostick**

August 16 — 6 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com/](http://facebook.com/)



## CALENDAR

the likes of *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet*. The language can be tricky, and the characters confusing. But thanks to Dramashop and Gannon University's Shakespeare Summer Nights, this time around it is different—and it has changed for the better.

*Gertrude, Queen of Denmark* puts a spin on the story of *Hamlet*, and tells it from the female perspective. I was skeptical that Robert Michael Morris's take on *Hamlet* wouldn't be any more convincing or grabbing than Shakespeare's original classic, but I was pleasantly surprised that it was. I caught myself laughing out loud, and feeling for Gertrude. The play unfolds straight through (with no intermission) and lasts roughly an hour and a half.

Dramashop's casting was excellent. For both Sue Ellen Wojciechowski, who played a maid, and Justine Julia, Gertrude herself, the acting was genuine and believable. Dramashop – utilizing a sparse setting – didn't leave out any details, and had an intricate set-up for a small stage. The actors and actresses used every corner of the stage, as Gertrude saw *Hamlet*, her dead husband, in a dream or as Gertrude's new husband, Claudius, tells Gertrude that her son has gone mad.

The show features plenty of young talent as well, in the roles of *Hamlet*, and Marcus, played by Matthew Crays and Eudora Baltusavich, respectively. Because the majority of the Shakespearian language was

dropped, it is easier to understand, yet the play itself never loses its complexity and detail.

The first night of the play was a success, with 47 others and myself in the theater – leaving only two empty seats. Even if you hated Shakespeare in high school, what Robert Michael Morris has done with his characters is worth seeing. Just three chances to see Dramashop's take on this adaptation. This time, make sure there aren't any empty seats left in the theater. – Lauren Griffith

8 p.m. // Renaissance Theatre 1001 State St.  
// [Dramashop.org](http://Dramashop.org)

### Thursday, Aug. 6

#### Sluggers Block Party w/ The Romantic Era and Small Town Revolution

Sluggers Sports Bar and Grill is set to host a Block Party that will please both pop-rock fans and country lovers alike when The Romantic Era and Small Town Revolution take to East 10th Street Thursday, Aug. 6.

Both acts will bring plenty of punch to the Block Party, with The Romantic Era providing dance-inducing pop jams and Small Town Revolution covering artists ranging from Blake Shelton to Eric Church. Even more, proceeds from

*basement.transmissions.*

#### Donna the Buffalo w/ Tiger Maple String Band at 8 Great Tuesdays

August 18 — 6:30 p.m.

Burger King Amphitheatre,  
Liberty Park, [porter.org](http://porter.org).

#### Gem City Jazz Ensemble

August 18 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church,  
2216 Peach St., [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

#### FILM

Digging for Fire

August 5 — 7 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth  
St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

#### Raiders of the Lost Ark

August 6 — 9 p.m.

Porreco College, 2951  
W. 38th St. [edinboro.edu/porreco-college](http://edinboro.edu/porreco-college).

#### Slow West

August 12 — 7 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth  
St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

#### Moonrise Kingdom

August 13 — 9 p.m.

Porreco College, 2951  
W. 38th St. [edinboro.edu/porreco-college](http://edinboro.edu/porreco-college).

#### Airplanes

Ongoing to Sept. 7 — 11  
a.m. and 3 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula  
Drive #1 [trepci.org](http://trepci.org).

#### James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge

Ongoing to Sept. 7 —  
12 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula  
Drive #1 [trepci.org](http://trepci.org).

#### Mysteries of the Great Lakes

Ongoing to Sept. 7 — 1 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula  
Drive #1 [trepci.org](http://trepci.org).

#### Rocky Mountain Express

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

Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula  
Drive #1 [trepci.org](http://trepci.org).

#### VISUAL ARTS

#### Watercolor-

#### Zentangle Class

August 8 — 1 to 4 p.m.

Sensory Winery,  
10953 W. Main Road.,  
[lakeeriewinecountry.org](http://lakeeriewinecountry.org).

#### Photographic Impressions

August 7 through  
September 8 — Daily

Glass Growers  
Gallery, 10 E. Fifth St.,  
[glassgrowersgallery.com](http://glassgrowersgallery.com).

#### Erie Open Figure Sessions

Thursday evenings  
— 6:30 to 9 p.m.

1505 Artworks, 1505  
State St., [erieofs.com](http://erieofs.com).

#### Erie Open Figure Session

July 26 — 5 to 9 p.m.

1505 Artworks, 1505  
State St., [erieofs.com](http://erieofs.com).

#### Minyao: Chinese Folk Pottery, Imperial Porcelains, and Brother Thomas

Daily July 17 through  
November 15, 2015

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth  
St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

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## CALENDAR

the Block Party benefit the Make-a-Wish Foundation, giving you just another reason to head downtown and celebrate another summer night in Erie. – Alex Bieler

6 p.m. // 14 E. 10th St. // [sluggerserie.com](http://sluggerserie.com)

### Thursday, Aug. 6

#### Potwhole at LEAF



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Embrace gypsy fever when Potwhole heads to Frontier Park Thursday, Aug. 6. The local gypsy-tonk quartet will be performing for the Lake Erie Arboretum's concert series, rocking

out the Patricia McCain Outdoor Classroom in style.

The fiery folk foursome has already made an impression on Erie, enough so that the band was awarded top Alternative group at the 2014 Blue Pike Awards. Now you can see them in action for the low price of zero dollars at Frontier Park, so do yourself a favor and swerve around to this Potwhole. – Alex Bieler

7 p.m. // 1501 W. 6th St. // [leaferie.org](http://leaferie.org)

### Friday Aug. 7

#### Erie Playhouse Presents All Shook Up

When you take the King of Rock 'n' Roll and The Bard and put them together, you get *All Shook Up*. The 2004 musical combines the music of Elvis Presley and William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* to create an energetic adventure that begins an 11-performance run Friday, Aug. 7.

Joe DiPietro's musical tells the story of Chad, a cool guitar player who visits a quiet town and shows them how to rock – because that's what Elvis would want. *All Shook Up* marks the third and final Elvis-themed show during the Erie Playhouse's Summer of

Elvis, meaning you have 11 chances left to hear songs like "Heartbreak Hotel" and "Jailhouse Rock" performed on the Playhouse stage. – Alex Bieler

7:30 p.m. Aug. 7, 8, 13-15, and 19-22, 2 p.m. Aug. 16 and 23 // 13 W. 10th St. // [erieplayhouse.org](http://erieplayhouse.org)

### Friday, Aug. 7

#### The Falconers Fly in to Kings Rook



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"I listened to your beautiful album for a week straight," one fan wrote recently on the Falconers' Facebook page. "The music is powerful. The lyrics are powerful. It's such a beautiful work of art."

People seem to have a lot of that kin-

da talk when it comes to the Binghamton, N.Y.-based indie roots-rock duo, and, in our books, that's something to hear, to listen to, to get to know.

Luckily for us – and you – we'll soon have the chance to do just that, as the Falconers are set to perform on Friday, Aug. 7 at the Kings Rook Club.

Jamestown-based stringman Adam McKillip is opening the show, which is free, so that makes at least two, or three, hell, a good number of good reasons, anyway, to go check out what's going on. – Ryan Smith

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

### Friday, Aug. 7

#### Tune in to Daybreak Radio at WQLN Sounds Around Town

Daybreak Radio are the stars of the next – and this year's final – installment of WQLN's Sounds Around Town summer concert series. Sounds good.

The show – free and open to all – starts at 7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 7, pond-side at the pavilion on WQLN's campus. If it rains, no worries – they'll be taking it indoors. And, like this summer's previous Sounds Around Town events, craft beer and coffee samples from Erie Beer and

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We invite you to attend the opening reception of the LECOM Medical Fitness & Wellness Center "Art of Healing" Art Show on August 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6pm to 8pm.

The art show will be open to the public at the LECOM Medical Fitness & Wellness Center on Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12pm to 6pm and Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup> during normal business hours.

Join the LECOM Medical Fitness & Wellness Center during the Art Show and receive 50% off the enrollment fee!

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In 2014, Crime Victim Center:

- helped over 6,500 victims
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Our local funding is being cut, but you can help us help others.

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McCormick Coffee will be on hand for enjoying.

Sounds Around Town (all of which are being recorded for airing both on WQLN radio and TV stations) are emceed by WQLN Radio's own groovy Gary Finney, host of "The Third Set."

In short, it's good, local music (and other good, local stuff) presented by people in the know about such things.

And, with Daybreak Radio rounding out this year's series lineup, it's definitely worth tuning in (and, by that, we mean attending) on Aug. 7. — Ryan Smith

6 p.m. // 8425 Peach St. // WQLN.org

**Friday, Aug. 7**

**Attack of the PACA, Take 3(D)**

Every good movie sequel has to offer up new and dazzling special effects to impress the audience. PACA is no different as it rolls out its third annual Attack of the PACA, now a three-day celebration of the arts. "We have been using the '50s sci-fi, B-Movie concept for the first two Attacks," says Jeff Rodland, chief impresario of the event. "So I thought, many of those cheesy movie series had a third installment that was in 3-D." So expect a 3-D look or feel wherever it can be accomplished.



BRAD TRIANA

As always, theater, music, poetry, and visual arts fill the dance card, but PACA has a few new tricks up its sleeve. Alongside the host of monologues, skits, and short works presented on both Friday and Saturday evenings will be the play *Funeral Parlor* by Christopher Durang that will be presented in Sense-O-Vision. Lares Floral is supplying the sense of smell via a funeral ar-

range, and Duskas-Taylor Funeral Home is donating prayer cards and other funeral home items, according to Rodland.

PACA has also rearranged the schedule a bit compared with past Attacks. Rather than interspersing all genres throughout the night, the theater acts will take place from 6 to 10 p.m. and the music will start after that. Friday night features an opening act by Brett Fallon and Saturday opens with a group of monologues from the likes of writers Kelli Powell, Maya Angelou, Will Levesque, Sojourner Truth, Dudley Randal, Wade Bradford, and Alice Walker.

Both nights include the musical review, *Kelly and Friends*, short plays and some monologues done by John Stockhausen, as well as *Funeral Parlor*.

Rodland says "many people are turned off by theater because it means sitting in a chair for three hours, but these are 45 to 50-minute sets, so you can come and see one, or two, and book it; or you can stick around and see some really awesome live music."

Bands booked for the music lovers include Liquid Nixon, Desmond Collier, and Human Flux on Friday; Teatime, The Lower Eastside Connection, and Matt "Broke" Boland on Saturday. Poet-

ry on the back stage will take place at 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. both nights.

New this year is a third day, designed especially for the younger scene. Starting at noon on Sunday, enjoy a marionette version of *Pinocchio* presented by the National Marionette Company and move on to making pirate sock puppets, playing pirate games, and learning pirate songs. At 4 p.m., PACA will present *13 Ways To Screw Up Your College Interview*.

But wait there's more! A Kung Fu demonstration will take place each evening and a visual arts show will be mounted where artists were encouraged to incorporate 3-D elements into their works. Several more fun activities and artists have yet to be finalized.

So, as always, PACA delivers a full-throttle worth-the-price-of-admission event. And no need for awkwardly fitting 3-D glasses. —Mary Birdsong

**Friday, Aug. 7**

**Italian Festival Kicks Off**

Mangia, mangia! The Italian Festival returns to St. Paul Catholic Church, providing Erie with plenty of food, entertainment, and history from "the boot."

The three-day event has a little bit of

**Erie Art Museum**

**8/5—Digging for Fire**  
2015. Drama/Comedy  
Jake Johnson, Sam Rockwell, Anna Kendrick

**8/12—Slow West**  
2015. Action/Western  
Michael Fassbender, Kodi Smit-McPhee

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

**Efforescent**

July 3 through Aug. 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.

**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 Aug. 22 — All Day  
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. erieartmuseum.org.

**DANCE**

**Mid-Day Dance Breaks**

August 6 — 12 to 1 p.m.  
Perry Square, State St. and Rt. 5 jenniferdennehy.org

**Children's Beginner Division Summer Camp**

August, 6, 7 — 12 p.m.  
Lake Erie Ballet 701 Holland St. lakeerieballet.org

**FOOD & DRINK**

**Vineyard Walk and Tasting**

August 13 — 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
Johnson Estate, 8419 US Route 20, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

**Pasta Pairing**

August 14 — 7 p.m.

Presque Isle Wine Cellars, 9440 West Main Road, piwine.com.

**THEATER**

**The Station Dinner Theatre Presents Celebrate America!**

Aug. 5 — 12 p.m.  
The Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

**All An Act Theatre Presents Oliver!**

August 5, 6 & 7 — 7 p.m.  
All An Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th Street allanact.net.

**Dramashop Presents Gertrude, Queen of Denmark**

Aug. 6, 7 & 8 — 8 p.m.  
Dramashop Renaissance Centre, 2nd Floor 1001 State St. dramashop.org.

**Erie Playhouse Presents All Shook Up**

August 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 — 7:30 p.m. (Sundays at 2 p.m.)  
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. erieplayhouse.org.

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## CALENDAR

everything for families, from live music to the procession of a statue of the Virgin Mary through Little Italy. And of course, there's always the food. At the Italian Fest, you can try a variety of cuisines, dining on delicious dishes ranging from pasta fagioli to cannolis. If you're still feeling a little puckish, perhaps the spaghetti-eating contest is for you. – Alex Bieler

1617 Walnut St. // [stpaulcserie.org](http://stpaulcserie.org)

### Saturday, Aug. 8

#### Shai Hulud Headlines Bearded Baby Summer Jam at BT



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

It wouldn't be summer without at least one hardcore fest in Erie, and this year Shai Hulud is bringing it down at Basement Transmissions on Saturday, Aug. 8 for the Bearded Baby Summer Jam.

Hailing from Pompano Beach, Fla., Shai Hulud was at the forefront of the melodic hardcore/metalcore scene in the late '90s and early '00s. The band was perhaps a little ahead of their time, as the style from their earlier albums, such as 2003's *That Blood Ill Tempered*, is still being emulated by modern bands, like Counterparts and The Ghost Inside.

Next on the bill is Such Gold, a pop-punk/hardcore hybrid from Rochester, N.Y., whose first two EPs are some of this writer's favorite music to come out in the last six years, giving a perfect blend of aggressive-yet-melodic riffs, and catchy, memorable lyrics. Their debut full-length album *Misadventures* was released in 2012 and reached No. 6 on the Billboard Heatseekers chart.

The third highest spot in the lineup goes to xBishopx, another Florida-based band with a heavier, beatdown style of hardcore, a distinct reflection of the style of most straight edge bands of the mid-'00s. Three of the band's albums are distributed through Down For Anything Records, a label started in Edinboro.

Filling out the bill is Forty Winters, After The Fall, The Moms, Until We Are Ghosts, Burn Book, as well as Erie's own

xRepresentx and Sea of Teeth. Each band is bringing their own diverse styles of hardcore to the stage (save for The Moms, who play a mix of emo and indie rock).

11 bands for \$15 is a steal, so don't miss this opportunity to kick off the beginning of the end of summer. – Tom Shannon

4 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // \$15 Advance, \$18 day of show

### Saturday, Aug. 8

#### Fiery Foursome Calje Take to Romolo Stage

Think of fiery, infectious, danceable rhythms and incessant grooves, and often a floor crowded with dancers or folks moving to the music standing in front of (or in) their seats.

Chances are you're thinking about a musical style called Latin jazz, brought to the U.S. from Cuba in the early '40s, and hugely popular ever since in America and around the world.

We're going to get a taste of this exciting, exotic music with the appearance of a group called Calje (Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble) Saturday, Aug. 8 at Romolo Chocolates' free Sweet Summer Season.

Calje, formed in 2006, performs in various-sized units, from duo to a 16-piece band. They'll be a quartet at Romolo. Co-leaders are trumpeter Victor Garcia and pianist Darwin Noguera. Juan Daniel Pastor plays trap drums and the cajon, a percussion instrument, and John Benitez,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

bass. Benitez, a major international player, is sitting in with the band.

Interestingly, none of the four is from Cuba, the hotbed of Latin jazz, but are natives of other Latin American countries. Most now live in Chicago.

"Although we do have a large selection of Afro-Cuban compositions, our focus is and has always been to feature the music from ALL Latin American countries," said Noguera.

Sounds like the audience will get a little learning with their listening. – Bob Protzman

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

**Tuesday, Aug. 11**

**'70s Arena Rock Show at 8 Great Tuesdays**

Time travel may not be an option quite yet, but you can head back in time when 8 Great Tuesdays presents The Classic Rock Experience '70s Arena Rock Show Tuesday, Aug. 11.

The Experience will bring the sounds of Led Zeppelin, Queen, Deep Purple, Styx, Journey, Grand Funk Railroad... well, you get the point. In short, if it was performed by a powerhouse '70s band, The Classic Rock Experience could play it at the Burger King Amphitheater. Joining the Experience will be Mia Z from NBC's *The Voice* and Pittsburgh rockers The Nied's Hotel Band, adding a modern twist to a classic night. — Alex Bieler

6:30 p.m. // Burger King Amphitheater at Liberty Park // [porterie.org/8-great-tuesdays](http://porterie.org/8-great-tuesdays)

**Wednesday, Aug. 12**

**Upbeat Pop-Rockers You, Me, and Everyone We Know Headline Diverse Lineup at BT**



You, Me, and Everyone We Know will be at Basement Transmissions on Aug. 12. No, I don't mean you and every person you literally know, I mean the band of the same name.

YMAEWK's upbeat pop-rock tunes are sure to set the mood for a fun and exciting night, with songs like "Some Things Don't Wash Out" and "I Can Get Back Up Now."

Contrasting YMAEWK's cheerful style on the night are emo/punk bands Bonfires, and local act Archway. More opening bands are yet to be announced.

Come out to Basement Transmissions for a fun night of diverse music, and bring everyone you know. — Tom Shannon

6 p.m. Aug. 12 // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // \$10 advance, \$13 day of show

**Wednesday, Aug. 12**

**Woodwinds of the Erie Phil Fill the Art Museum Patio with Airy Delight**

If you went to the Erie Art Museum's Blues and Jazz Fest this past weekend, you heard the shredding sounds of a guitar, the euphonic ballads from a harmonica, combining to make those ever-present, heavy blues tunes.

Head to the Erie Art Museum's Fifth Street patio this week to hear something else entirely—the light, airy sounds of the flute, the clarinet, and the other members of Erie Philharmonic's woodwind quintet. The warmth and quiet clarity that the music brings cannot be found elsewhere, especially at noon on a Wednesday.

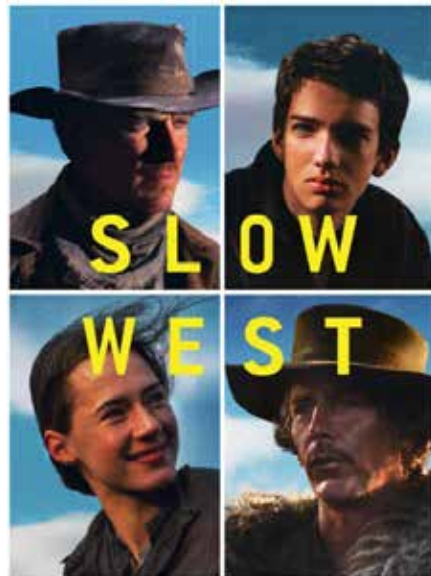
Stick around for a gallery tour, and let the sounds transcend the Mid-day Art Break with this free performance. Grab a bagged lunch or a sandwich from the Wave Café and enjoy the show. With only two more performances left in the series, now is as good of a time as any to enjoy live, free music during your lunch break. —Lauren Griffith

Noon // Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. // [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org)

**Wednesday, Aug. 12**

**Slow West is an Offbeat Take on a Classic Hollywood Genre**

It's an exciting time for Westerns these days, with everyone from Quentin Tarantino to Ang Lee to the Coen brothers looking to the rugged genre for inspiration. *Slow West*, the debut film from director John Maclean, follows a similar dusty path to tell a story about lost loves and questionable



allegiances.

The cast features a who's-who of talented familiar faces. Erie folks may recognize Kodi Smit-McPhee as Viggo



Erie's community and nonprofit events calendar, brought to you by Country Fair

**Color Run Erie**

August 8 — 8 a.m.  
Perry Square, Sixth and State street. [thecolorrun.com](http://thecolorrun.com).

**St. Paul's Italian Festival**

August 7-9 — 6 to 10 p.m.  
West 16th and Walnut streets. [goerie.com](http://goerie.com).

**Octopi Your Library**

August 8—9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Blasco Library, 160 E. Front St. [goerie.com](http://goerie.com).

**Presque Isle Bay Messabout**

August 14 — 4 p.m.  
Bayfront Maritime Center, 40 Holland St. [goerie.com](http://goerie.com).

**Attack of the PACA 3D**

August 7-9 — all day  
PACA, 1505 State St. [erieartsandculture.org](http://erieartsandculture.org).

**Jump Back to School**

August 9 — 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier. [erieartsandculture.org](http://erieartsandculture.org).

**Karaoke for Crohn's**

August 14 — 6 to 10 p.m.  
Coach's Sports Bar, 3804 Elmwood Ave. [facebook.com/events/1621127921492327](http://facebook.com/events/1621127921492327).

**Erie's Advanced Industries: A Discussion of the Findings of the Second Jefferson Essay**

August 6 — 7 - 8:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

**Block by Block**

August 5 — 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Country Fair, 9030 Main St. [erietogether.org](http://erietogether.org).  
Block by Block  
August 7—11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Country Fair, 12th & Peninsula streets, [erietogether.org](http://erietogether.org).

**Flagship City Chorus Open House**

Monday nights in August beginning August 3 — 7 to 9 p.m.  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1002 Powell Ave. 449-1855.



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## CALENDAR

Mortensen's son from *The Road*, which was partially shot in the Gem City. He's in search of his endangered lady-friend, whose father is played by Rory McCann, aka "The Hound" from *Game of Thrones*. Australian actor Ben Mendelsohn – one of those character actors who seems to be in everything (Netflix's *Bloodline*, most recently) – shows up as the leader of an outlaw gang. And Michael Fassbender, an A-lister whose talent matches his striking looks, portrays a morally-ambiguous bounty hunter.

I wouldn't expect a classic John Wayne sort of thing from this one. Maclean is drawing from arthouse cinema as much as the old shoot-em-ups of Howard Hawks or John Ford. Instead, expect the unexpected – and marvel at the makeover the Wild West is receiving lately, many years after its heyday. – Dan Schank

7 p.m. // Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. // [erieartmuseum.org/events/film.html](http://erieartmuseum.org/events/film.html)

**Thursday, Aug. 13**

### **Moonrise Kingdom** Exemplifies the Wes Anderson Formula for Filmmaking

If you walk around a hip, urban neighborhood in this country, you'll quickly see that Wes Anderson's fingerprints are everywhere. Ever since the 1998 release of *Rushmore*, the poker-faced romantic comedy that put him on the cinematic map, Anderson's storybook world of prep-school uniforms, vintage



paperbacks, and twee apparel has increasingly begun to resemble our own.

This has been a blessing and a curse for the filmmaker, whose subsequent features often rely too heavily on the same ingredients that made *Rushmore* so unique: Take one lovestruck male protagonist, add a variety of eccentric supporting characters in '60s-mod blaz-

ers, put a Kinks record on in the background, make Salinger-esque observations about personal maturity, and pop it into the oven.

*Moonrise Kingdom* is no exception – it takes place at a Boy Scout camp in the mid-'60s, for Pete's sake – but it's also the most focused of the director's later works. By concentrating exclusively on a deepening love between two pre-teen outcasts, the director's trademark preciousness feels thematically appropriate. It's a childlike film that tells a childlike story. Anderson has never been the deepest director in the world, but *Moonrise Kingdom* makes it clear that he loves what he loves quite deeply. On Aug. 13, at Porreco College, the film will be screened under the stars at 9 p.m. For a film so committed to maintaining a sense of wonder about the world, it may prove to be the perfect setting. – Dan Schank

9 p.m. // Edinboro University's Porreco College, 2951 W. 38th St. // Bring blankets or lawn chairs for an outdoor screening // [edinboro.edu/porreco-college/movies-under-the-stars.html](http://edinboro.edu/porreco-college/movies-under-the-stars.html)

**Thursday, Aug. 13**

### **LEAF Series Presents** the Heliotropes

So far this summer, the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier (LEAF) has presented several very worthwhile, totally-free musical performances: Stephen Trohoske's Art Groupies; Familiar Spirit Band; Bronsen Euard; Bangerzz; Abbey Road; and Potwhole have all taken the stage at Patricia McCain Outdoor Amphitheater.

And the series continues, fittingly, on Thursday, Aug. 13, with a return performance by Heliotropes, a band that also graced the series with its signature stylings in 2014.

Featuring a wide variety of local talent, the concerts are supported by the McCain Foundation and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

So grab a chair, and support this coolness in an intimate, pretty setting. – Ryan Smith

7 to 8:30 p.m. // Frontier Park // [leaferie.org](http://leaferie.org)

**Thursday, Aug. 13**

### **CelebrateErie Kicks Off**

CelebrateErie returns for a four-day run starting Aug. 13, offering up a variety of entertainment options down on State Street. The annual street festival gives Erieites a chance to check out local artists, dancers, and of course, live music.

If you're looking to check out CelebrateErie's three headliners, Fran Cosmo, Kool & the Gang, and Tanya Tucker,

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## CALENDAR

then you'll want to be at the Main Stage at 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. If you're not too keen on the headliners, there are several talented Erie performers that will on display at the street festival's stages, including what's sure to be a highlight set from Eric Brewer and the Erie All Star Band. – Alex Bieler

Downtown State Street // [celebrateerie.com](http://celebrateerie.com)

### Saturday, Aug. 15

#### Tony Monaco Closes Out Romolo Chocolates' Seventh Season of Free Jazz Concerts

Inspired by the playing and advice of the legendary jazz Hammond B3 organist Jimmy Smith and encouraged by today's reigning organ master Joey DeFrancesco, Tony Monaco has achieved critical acclaim of his own.

Monaco, a frequent performer in Erie,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

returns Aug. 15 to close out Romolo Chocolates' seventh season of free concerts. It's a Sweet Summer Season gift to us all, but especially for jazz fans in a city pretty much starving for big-time jazz.

Monaco, who lives in Columbus, Ohio, will bring along tenor saxophonist-composer Pete Mills, his Columbus comadre, while awaiting them will be the talented and popular Erie tandem of guitarist Frank Singer and drummer Joe Dorris.

Some fans have called Monaco a "monster" on the B3 recently, and it likely wasn't because the word is alliterative, but rather because Monaco is a fiercely physical player. As large and imposing as the B3 is, Monaco seems to tame it, getting as much sound from it as possible and exerting every bit of his skill and energy.

A boyhood accordionist at 8, that phase ended at 12 when Monaco heard Jimmy Smith and had an epiphany. He immediately started playing organ.

At 16, Monaco got a phone call from Smith, who continued to call with playing tips for a number of years.

Talk about the importance of a good teacher. – Bob Protzman

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

### Saturday, Aug. 15

#### Gallabalo 2 Comin' Up Around the Bend

It's its own kinda festival, alright: A little country, a little punk-rock, a little psychobilly, and a little blue-grassy, too.

That's the now-annual event known as Gallabalo, and its second-ever go-round is coming up Saturday, Aug. 15 at Jim N I Music Park in nearby West Springfield, Pa.

This year, the one-day festival features quite a tasty mix of a lineup: Jayke Orvis, Whiskey Daredevils, Sean Patrick & the Newgrass Revolution, The DredNeks, The Coffin Bangers, Lunch Munny, and several other genre-spanning bands and performers from throughout the region and country.

"It gives everyone an opportunity to see a vast array of very high-caliber bands and be exposed to different styles of music that they might not know that they like," festival organizer Dan Biscoff told the *Reader* before the first Gallabalo event last year.

Sounds like plenty of good reason to go.

And, oh yeah, there'll be some bangin' barbecue, too. – Ryan Smith

Noon // 14301 West Ridge Road, West Springfield // [gallabalo.com](http://gallabalo.com)

### Tuesday, Aug. 18

#### Donna the Buffalo to be Heard on 8 Great Stage

Over the years, lots of us have seen roots-jam mainstays Donna the Buffalo do their thing on stages large and small, from the Gem City to the wilds of West Virginia, and various points in between.

And no matter where you've heard 'em do what they do, chances are you remember them doing it well, with tons of high energy and the ability to get a crowd *really* movin' and groovin'.

It's a sure bet, then, that the Aug. 18 installment of 8 Great Tuesdays will be one to move to, and groove to, as Donna the Buffalo – along with opening act Tiger Maple String Band – perform at the amphitheater at Liberty Park.

The two bands have always played well together, and their spot on the 8 Great lineup could very well be one to remember for old and new fans alike.

And, just like all 8 Great Tuesdays, the show's free, too. – Ryan Smith

6:30 p.m. // Burger King Amphitheater at Liberty Park // [porter.org](http://porter.org)

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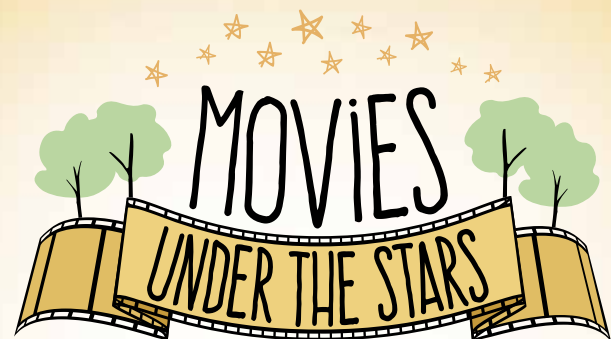


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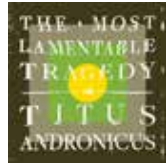
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## MUSIC REVIEWS

### Titus Andronicus

The Most Lamentable Tragedy  
Merge



Patrick Stickles and his Titus Andronicus bandmates are no strangers to ambitious endeavors, so the release of a 29-song, 93-minute punk opera isn't as surprising as it usually would be for another act. The lengthy rocker centers on Our Hero, an insecure, confused man who is confronted by his well-adjusted doppelganger. The album may not be directly about Stickles (although you can never be too sure), but the frontman still imbues the album with a passion matched by few singers, giving fiery performances backed by Springsteen-inspired punk rock that can't help but rouse your spirit. Sure, *The Most Lamentable Tragedy* may seem a bit bloated at times, but that's because it acts more as a film than an album. Close your eyes and delve into Stickles' detailed lyrics and you can immerse yourself into the story of Our Hero. Titus Andronicus swung for the fences with *The Most Lamentable Tragedy*, and the band knocked it out of the park. — Alex Bieler

### Iron And Wine & Ben Bridwell

Sing Into My Mouth  
Black Cricket Recording



Iron And Wine's Sam Beam and Horse's Ben Bridwell are both gifted singers who have enchanted listeners with impassioned performances. *Sing Into My Mouth* brings the pair together, as both men tackle some of the songs of the artists they admire. What you get are a dozen lovely performances that never really feel all that essential. Beam and Bridwell can certainly sing, and their vocals are the highlight of the album, but many of the songs end up running together in a mix of folky covers that don't always stand out from one another. Opening track "This Must Be the Place" is one of the exceptions, as the duo transforms the track in a warm, fingerpicked version of the Talking Heads track. Each singer has his highlight moments on *Sing Into My Mouth*, which become the best parts of the album, a covers project with some nice, but ultimately unspectacular results. — Alex Bieler

### Indigo Girls

One Lost Day  
Vanguard



Amy Ray and Emily Saliers put together a string of bewitching albums in the late '80s that helped keep me from punching out my eardrums to avoid the pop-crap found everywhere during that era. Their perfect harmonies molded poignant storylines and poetry into enthralling set pieces that were, themselves, perfect – which makes songs like "Kid Fears" and "Galileo" a tough act to follow. If you are a die-hard Indigo Girls fan, by all means, you have to check out this album, if only to hear Amy's "The Rise of the Black Messiah," a straight-ahead rocker done with no overdubbing that tells the story of three inmates at Angola Penitentiary held in solitary confinement for 30 years. If you are new to this faultlessly-matched duo, listen to "Findley, Ohio 1986," to get some idea of the heartache that Emily's stories can evoke when she's on her game. Otherwise, you would be best served to pick up a copy of 1990's *Nomads, Indians, and Saints*. – Bryan Toy

### Russell Malone

Love Looks Good On You  
HighNote



Guitarist Russell Malone has proven long ago to jazz and guitar lovers, critics, and, most importantly, himself, that he can play a set or even a night full of blistering, note-filled guitar. Time for a change of pace, however, he says and demonstrates on his new album, primarily a warm and wonderful set of melodic balladry, with just a taste of funk, soul, blues, and medium and up-tempo, straight-ahead jazz. It's Malone's first outing for his new label, and for several weeks after its release, was No. 1 on the jazzweek.com Top 50 chart. Standing tall among today's slew of superb jazz guitarists, Malone – when not leading a group – has played on four Grammy-winning albums. Here, heading a fine piano, bass, and drum quartet, Malone's cushioned, easy-on-the-ears tone alone makes this album worth hearing. – Bob Protzman

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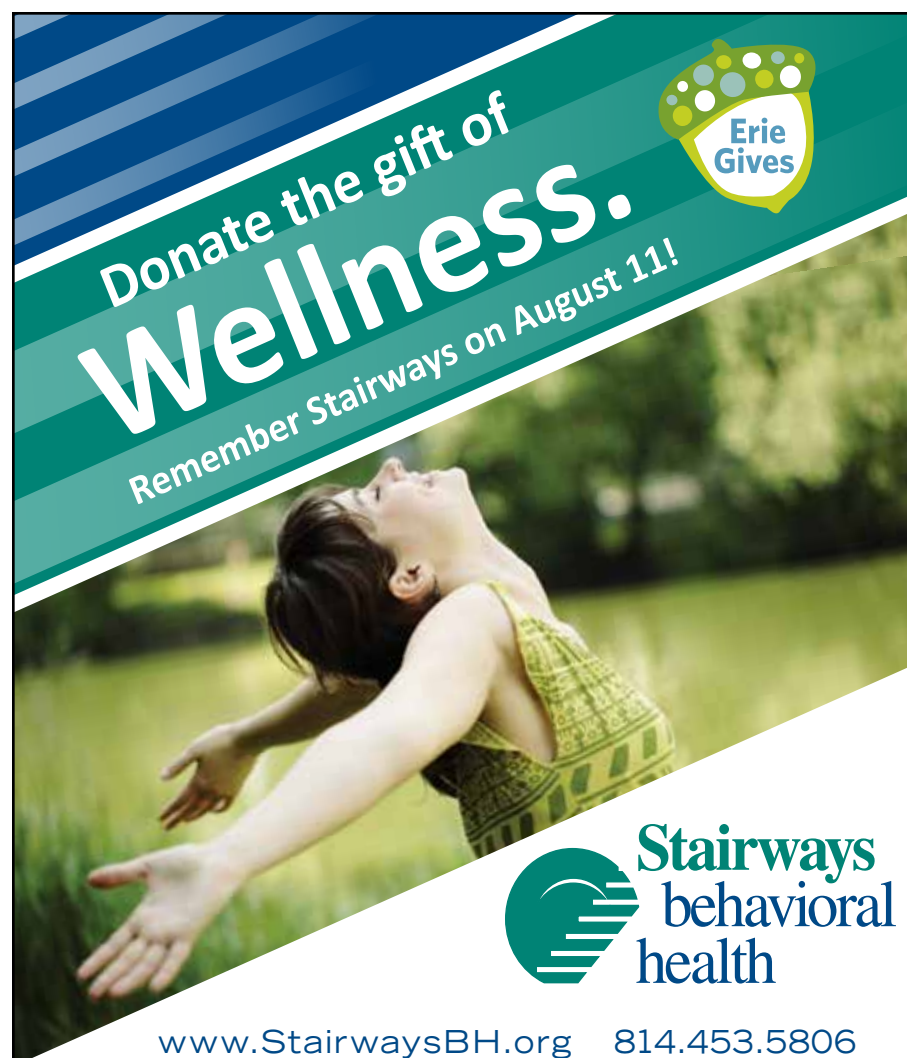
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[Cont. from page 15] crime and violence. You've been re-elected twice, which is clearly an affirmation that what you've been doing is working. I'm curious what you see as your three or four key successes in addressing crime and violence during your time in office.

**Joe Sinnott:** Well, the way crime has been...I think what has been most successful for us over that time is our ability to transform, for lack of a better word, our operations and our deployment to address the way that crime has changed. Crime tends to morph. As different things happen, different circumstances arise, you

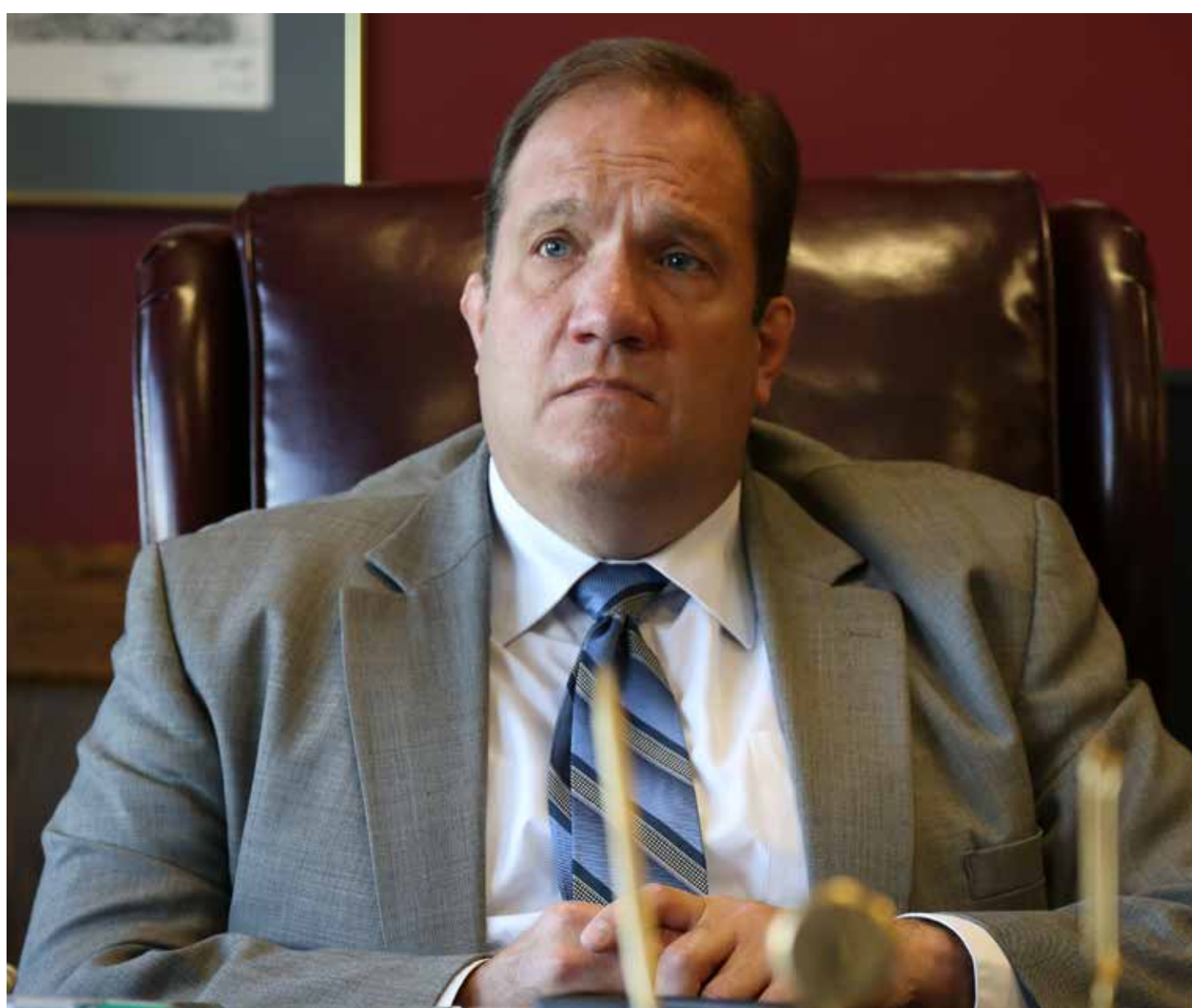
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“What I think we've been successful doing when looking at crime overall is changing our deployment, changing our special operations – things like that – to try and address the changes that are giving rise to some of these things and really attack the root causes.”

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have crime changing, and I'll give you an example: The first couple of years – and it's not responsive to your question, but it's an example of how things tend to change – one of the troubles we used to have in the summertime was that we'd have these large groups of kids fighting in the streets over in the 24th and Ash area. There'd be 50 kids – not kids, but young adults, actually – and today, we see none of that. None of it.

In a couple of years, the way disputes are handled, the things that are giving rise to that type of thing is that you're seeing more gun violence than you are seeing kids in the streets fighting. That's a rudimentary example of what



BRAD TRIANA

I'm talking about, but even on the larger scale, if you look at drugs, we have a much greater heroin issue now than we ever had because that has changed, the model has changed, the culture has changed, so to speak.

What I think we've been successful doing when looking at crime overall is changing our deployment, changing our special operations – things like that – to try and address the changes that are giving rise to some of these things and really attack the root causes. Right now what we're looking at doing as we're seeing more gun violence, we're seeing more guns on the street, we want to look at what is putting them there. Is it part of the way the drug trade has changed? Is it part of the way that the ille-

gal gun market has changed? If that is in fact the case, then maybe our focus has to be a little different as to how to get to that supply line.

In other words, if we're seeing drug dealers putting guns in the hands of younger people because they're co-opting them into the drug trade at a younger age, then we get after that – to stop it before it gets there. What puts a gun in a 14-year old's hands? That could be a multitude of different answers, but we have to really start getting to some of the root crimes. We've taken a lot of guns off the street, we really have, but are we getting there when it's too late? Should we be getting to it sooner? Is there a way to get to it sooner? So that's what we're working on. We've been successful over the

years.

[Former Police] Chief [Steve] Franklin had a number of special operations in the course of his tenure here designed specifically to deal with certain issues and they worked. So I think our success overall isn't one specific thing. Yes, we've got a lot of guns off the street; we continue to do very well with chronic violent offenders, targeting what we believe to be the most violent people in the community. Those have been very successful, but still we're seeing this. I think probably our greatest success has been our ability to change as we've needed to.

**Jim Wertz:** What's changed in this community? What factors have changed over time that have led to some of the changes in violent behavior

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**Mayor Joe Sinnott took office in 2006 and has won both of his re-election bids uncontested.**

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and criminal behavior? We've seen an increase in crime over the past ten years. Where's that coming from?

**JS:** That's a difficult question, because it's something that you've seen across the country. Gun violence is on the rise everywhere, so what has caused that? We haven't seen a large uptick in the drug trade here. We have seen it change in profile, somewhat. Poverty is an issue. There's a plethora of things that lead to it, which is why it's not a singular answer. It's law enforcement, there has to be the social service, and the community has to be involved as well to stop it. You can't put your finger on one thing and

say, “Okay, this changed, and this is why,” because otherwise the solution would be much more prevalent.

**JW:** You talk a lot about root causes, and you’ve been talking more about root causes. Last year when you and I spoke about the City’s decision not to participate in the funding of the Summer Jobs And More program you said, “Our core competencies are public safety and public services. Job training is not one of our core competencies that we would normally fund.” Then in your response to Pat Howard in the *Erie Times-News* you said, “I view this city’s primary responsibility as law enforce-

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**“The City’s role is primarily law enforcement. It’s the way we’re structured; it’s the way we’re funded. County government deals with social services. That’s the way they’re funded. That’s what they do.”**

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ment, jobs programs are secondary and social services are not our responsibility.” Where do the City and social services blend? What’s the role of social services and what’s the role of the city in aiding them?

**JS:** The City’s role is primarily law enforcement. It’s the way we’re structured; it’s the way we’re funded. County government deals with social services. That’s the way they’re funded. That’s what they do. We have our summer recreation program, which bleeds into that a little bit with giving young people alternatives, and we’ve been very successful with that. We serve 5,000 kids a summer doing that. And we

do employ 140 people over the summer months, but it’s not really what I call social service in the things that are out there to help families and to help structure solutions.

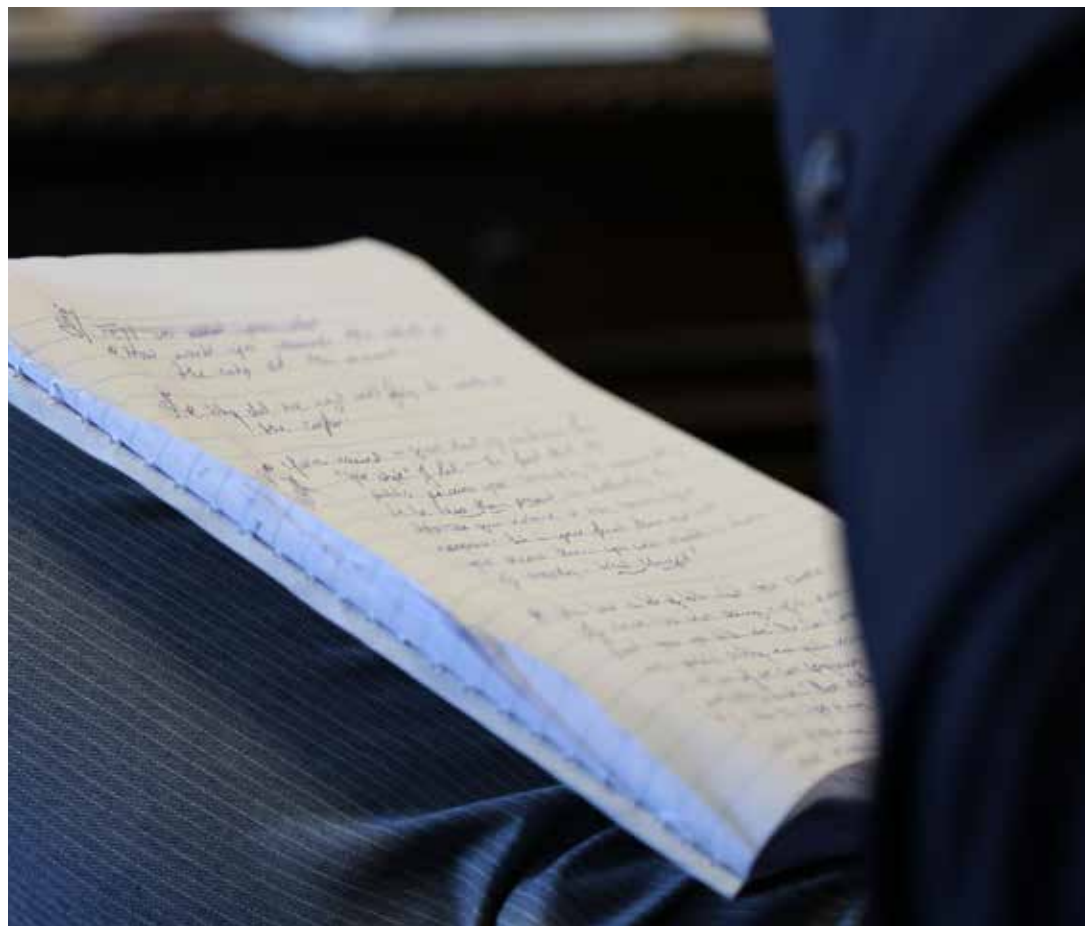
**JW:** Let’s talk about the non-governmental services, because those seem to be an area of contention because they’re not contributing to the tax base, but they play a really important role in this community. So what’s that bridge? What’s that mean in addressing root causes? Doesn’t the city play a role in allowing these non-governmental service agencies to persist?

**JS:** Sure, and when I talk about playing a role, I’m talking more along the lines of what we’re able to fund, what we’re able to support, and we don’t really fund and support those things – granted they are nonprofits within the city so the community overall helps to support them. But they play an invaluable role.

I think part of the issue, one of the facets in the overall picture, is the way that social services have been systematically funded over the years. There aren’t as many resources as there used to be. We’re fortunate here. We have a lot of very good ones, so they still make a really good impact, I believe, so we’re fortunate here in Erie, but they struggle every day to be able to stay in operation. I’ve talked to the Senators – federal Senators and Congressmen – and the state officials about our need to continue to keep funds going to these social services because without them who knows what these cities would become. I’m not just talking about Erie, Pa., I’m talking about cities everywhere.

**JW:** So doesn’t the city have a responsibility to intervene or fill in the gaps?

**JS:** We don’t have the resources to fund that. It all comes down to funding. The tax base of the city cannot afford paying for everything. What do you want your taxes



BRAD TRIANA

to be? As it is you have people moving to the suburbs because of what it costs tax-wise to live in the city. So part of keeping the tax base under control and keeping it affordable for people to live in the city is to stay with your core competencies, to fund the things that we have to fund. The funding for those other things is designed to be different. The city taxpayers can’t afford to pick up the bill for everything.

**BS:** Funding is the bottom line for everything. We have limited resources and one of the things that you’ve been credited with doing is keeping the budget within means and fiscally managing the city well. So hypothetically, if money was not an object and we had all the resources necessary, how do we address crime and violence if we have all the resources we need?

**JS:** I think the funding would be best served being diverted into support areas, into social service-type of areas. Law enforcement, it’s a challenge obviously, and I’ve said this many

times that our police are getting guns off the street, they’re getting criminals off the street, they’re solving crimes where we have the right cooperation, or evidence, or whatever, almost as quickly as they’re happening. So where is the chain broken? The chain is broken in the other areas, in the community areas. Structurally those are funded and supported through some of the other services that aren’t here at City Hall.

So, I think that even an unlimited supply of money – while sure, getting more police officers would be great because it would alleviate the burden on the ones we have – but deterrent-wise, which is where you really have to focus and where you really have to make a dent into why this is happening, you have to get to the families, you have to get to why these young people are heading down these paths. Is it educational opportunities? There’s been a lot of talk about that. That’s much more complicated. That is where we

really need to find systemic solutions for the long term, so that’s where I think a lot of the resources I would say would need to be focused. Coincidentally, that’s where you’ve seen a lot of the resources go away.

**JW:** In terms of deterrents, wouldn’t asking City police officers to live within the city facilitate some of that deterrence?

**JS:** That’s something that I think everybody would agree, that if officers still lived in the neighborhoods, it would be a good thing. But that’s something that was awarded to them years ago, and it’s just not going to change. You can’t force that. It’s outside of our providence to be able to force that, but I think myself and others would agree with you that it was definitely a positive when you had city police living in the neighborhoods.

**JW:** Couldn’t that be initiated for new hires?

**JS:** No.  
**JW:** How does it work in other communities that enforce that policy? Pittsburgh city





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**A peek inside the Mayor's office: A memorabilia case filled with items collected throughout the years.**

not governed by the curfew. Now we're starting to see some younger people getting more involved. We just think it's going to be a more useful tool. It's certainly not going to be a solution to it, but it does give the officers the opportunity to approach young people after ten o'clock as opposed to waiting until midnight. So that's more why we did that.

**BS:** Do you feel like the media is accurately portraying you and your vision and your thoughts on [the rise in crime and violence]? Do you feel like the perception is accurate, from a longer interview with Lisa (Adams) to a shorter interview with [WJET's] Caroline Collins, where the cameras are turned off and then brought back on?

**JS:** Well, I think the media is clamoring around one or two singular events, but what they're not privy to or accurately portraying because they haven't been around this issue is the work that we've done for nine years here. We've been working on these issues every day for nine years. It's not about one event. It's not about two events. It's about how we've been following the culture of crime in this community over nine years and that's not really been brought up at all. I understand what their mission is currently, but my philosophy on everything I've done here is to focus on solutions, not focus on photo ops or media or things of that nature, and I'm not going to start.

**BS:** Do you think one of the things that has been challenging for you is that there hasn't been [embrace of] that idea of "let's roll up the sleeves and get to work," rather than being out for a photo op shaking hands? That the media lose sight successes of because there's no public presentation of all the guns taken off the street?

**JS:** The media's mission isn't

the same as ours. It's not the media's responsibility to have the institutional memory of everything that's been done in the past nine years. It's more to deal with what's happening right now, and I understand that. But there's a lot of people in this community that have been working very hard on this for a very, very long time. The district attorney, the U.S. attorney, UnifiedErie that we started to put together a few years ago and we've done a lot with it.

The legwork is done primarily by the NRO (Neighborhood Resource Organization) at Mercyhurst University, and these guys are surveying young people, these guys have

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**"I think the media is clamoring around one or two singular events, but what they're not privy to or accurately portraying because they haven't been around this issue is the work that we've done for nine years here."**

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been out there and nobody sees the need to make that a photo op, which I think is fine. They're focusing on the solutions as well. But I think the immediate inclination when something catastrophic happens is to just focus on that, and really you lose the whole picture.

Again, it's not the media's mission to focus – nor do you guys have the real estate to write about everything that's gone on in the past nine years. I don't fault the media for anything that's happened. It's about perspective, and I think a lot of the people in the community have developed the right perspective over the years as to what's happening. I think our primary issue right now is that people in this com-

police and Allegheny sheriffs are all required to live within their respective jurisdictions.

**JS:** I'm not familiar with it, because our circumstances are that we're not permitted to do that.

**BS:** One of the things that you had mentioned – going back to the Lisa Adams interview – was that by comparison, Erie is a safe city. What cities are your administration looking at in comparison, and what can we learn from those cities in terms of addressing violence? One of the things I'm thinking of is the Cleveland Heights second-tier policing model. I don't know if that's something Erie is considering or would find beneficial, but by comparison, where else are we looking outside of ourselves to say "these cities are doing it right" or "here are some things to avoid"?

**JS:** We've looked at cities all across Pa. and other parts of the country as well. What we're

finding is that we are a safe city by comparison. A lot of it is circumstance. You see a lot of smaller cities that are more dangerous because they're along different drug lines that are known drug lines going from the North to the South. They have more gang activity that we don't really have here. So our circumstance is safer by comparison.

Some of the cities that are safe, if you look at the statistics that were out a few years ago, a lot of the safer cities are small, wealthier communities that aren't really prone to a lot of violent activity and crime, so I think for cities of our size, we're doing very well.

What we're seeing now are things that have been atypical for Erie for a long time. That's what we're trying to deal with. Of course we've looked at cities all over and what they've done, what works, what doesn't. There are problems with a two-tiered police system. You

have civil service laws that govern hiring; you have veterans' preference and things of that nature. So I don't believe that is the solution. If it's more officers, then you'd hire them through the normal hiring practice, and I think that is the way to do it.

**JW:** In terms of action items, you've just initiated a restriction on curfews. Why did you wait until now? By the time that City Council passes the ordinance it seems that most of the kids would be back to school and the curfew would have been adjusted anyway. Why not do this in May or June? There seemed to be some sense that this was going to be a tough summer given the violence during the school year.

**JS:** What we weren't really seeing was a lot of violence among the age demographics that we've seen in the last couple of shootings. It was more of the 19-27 years old, and they're

munity need to feel safe and we want them to. That's what we need to focus on as well.

**JW:** You've received some criticism for saying that you believe marches are ineffective and you want to see substantive actions, that's what you're trying to do here. Empirical evidence is on your side that marches don't have an impact on crime rates, but early on in your administration you seemed to be present at catastrophic events. Do you feel like if you were at 29th and Summit last week, would that have lent some sense of public perception of security or boots on the ground that may be lacking?

**JS:** I don't think my personal presence makes that kind of difference. People want to see results, and that's what gives them the sense of safety. I'll tell you, when I first started I went to all those things – and I still go to a lot of the fires – but I went to a shooting at Seventh and Ash with then-District Attorney Brad Foulk and I ended up in the wrong place. I was with Brad and we ended up inside the police tape. The police chief came up shortly thereafter and said, "I appreciate you coming out to these things, but when you go onto a crime scene it's not the best thing for us if you're inside police tape. You could end up on the witness stand or if something gets kicked or touched; that's not the right thing." So I said, "Okay, I'll stay away from some of the crimes just because I'm not a necessary party there." I took his expertise, and I don't go to as many of the police things anymore for that reason.

I still go if there's a big fire, because there's more room for extraneous folks there, but it was more along the lines to be supportive of our folks who were doing it. It was never for photo ops. It was just to show that I care what they are doing – and I do – and they know that. I continue to talk with them and be supportive of

them. It's just that having another person at a crime scene might not be the right thing.

**BS:** I'm not sure if it was any one particular thing he wrote or his column in general, but your response to [ETN's] Pat Howard's column seemed like a tipping point where you felt like you had to respond publicly – you had to address it. Was that the tipping point? Or was it just the time you needed to be public and to get your thoughts on the record? What was going through your mind?

**JS:** You and I have actually talked about my stance to responding to editorial content. I don't think it's appropriate, and that's how I started that piece. However, when someone editorializes about whether an elected official cares about their community, then I think it's a bit much, especially if you look at what I've done here. I think that just becomes personal at that point. That's why I responded to that. Hopefully, it won't continue to go to that level, but if it does, I'm not going to sit idly back and let him tell me after everything I've gone through in nine years that I don't care about my community. The only reason I'm here is because I care about my community. That's the only reason I'm here.

**JW:** In your response to Pat Howard's column, you were dealing with Pat and [small-business owner] Dale McBrier and you made this turn to the Jefferson Society and nonprofits in the community. Why take that turn? It seemed an outgrowth of your interactions with Mr. McBrier.

**JS:** It wasn't to be critical of the Jefferson or any nonprofit in this community. The irony of it all – and you guys weren't at that meeting – if you had seen the whole thing you'd understand better. I actually got an email from the Jefferson afterward and I emailed back and said if you had been there you'd understand better. It wasn't an attack on you or nonprofits; it was simply a re-

sponse to an attack on me in a public forum. Because the irony of it is that you stand up there and say we're not doing enough to find the money, when they're trying to get out of paying their taxes, and that's already gone somewhat down the road. But it was like look everywhere else, but not to me. That was what prompted that. My point is don't be hypocritical.

**JW:** Wasn't there an offer made by the Jefferson to pay taxes like other community nonprofits?

**JS:** There was an offer of a PILOT (payment in lieu of tax-

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**"I'm not going to sit idly back and let him (Howard) tell me after everything I've gone through in nine years that I don't care about my community. The only reason I'm here is because I care about my community."**

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es), but we've been of the belief from the beginning that they should have a valuation and go through the process like the others do. That was what the board felt as well, but I don't want to talk too much because it's still an open issue. But the process of that valuation is the appropriate way to do that. We've talked to them about the pilot.

**JW:** Isn't the PILOT program a good value for the community? The city spends a lot of money on research and assessment.

**JS:** They don't have a lot of services for us. They could do more along the lines of what the (Erie) School District does.

We wanted the money, which they were fine with. We also think that through the process it's not going to be that different between the PILOT and what the valuation is.

**BS:** Going back to solutions within the community, where do you see yourself in that dialogue with organizations? Creating dialogue? Or just being supportive and allowing those community solutions to happen organically while the city focuses on law enforcement?

**JS:** The established social services have been doing their part for a long time. They have been. And those services continue to be there and there's been ongoing dialog over nine years between myself and different organizations and then the community organizations that need to get to rowing the boat in the same direction. That's really what has to happen. That's why the UnifiedErie movement is really the mechanism for that. We need more of the community groups to get involved in that initiative because right now we have a lot of folks out there doing good work, it's all very well intentioned, but you have a lot of small groups doing their own things.

My message has always been – and I've had many meetings with members of the clergy, members of the African-American community over these nine years to discuss just this – that until everyone is on the same page working in the same direction to create a united front and focus your resources on these problems. Unified Erie has taken a very technical, almost scientific approach to this, using stats and other things to formulate a solution. So people need to get going on that same page, and I think that's the right vehicle. That's where I'm focusing as well. Getting everyone to do that is a different issue but we've been focusing on that.

**BS:** In your role, you clearly can't be everything to everyone, but do you feel that the

current tone of the city and the current understanding of the City's role – or misunderstanding of the City's role – makes you feel more inclined to focus more time and attention on violence and crime-based meetings so that people know you're plugged into that?

**JS:** This is something that's been a part of every single day that I've been here. I've spent time every day since I've been here – not on the problem as it is today – but on the problems that we've had with crime and violence over the years, whether it was the young people causing trouble in the streets or others. We've spent time every single day working on that and I will continue to. I'm not going to be at every meeting. That's just not possible. I have responsibilities to many other things and I will continue to serve those responsibilities as I see fit. I have a staff that goes to a lot of things that I'm not able to be at and when my staff is there, I'm there. I meet very regularly with each of my staff members to discuss, not only this issue, but all of the issues we face. So they go with my message and my plan and they represent me. That's why in positions like this you have people like that.

**BS:** To our demographic, to those who pick up the *Erie Reader* throughout the City and the County, what would you say your mission is as simply put as you possibly can?

**JS:** My mission has not changed since the day I walked through the door. That is to make this the best city we can. That includes making it safe, making it vibrant, bringing as many new opportunities here as we can and that mission hasn't changed.

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## Geeked Out

Kepler 452b gives us hope.



An artist rendition of Kepler 452b, the recently discovered Earth-like planet two-thirds larger than our own planet located 1,400 light years away.

By: John Lindvay

Recently, NASA announced the discovery of exoplanet Kepler 452b, which has since then been dubbed “Earth’s older cousin.” This is a momentous announcement for many space fans, but I want to help explain why a rock floating 1,400 light-years away nestled in the Cyngus constellation is a big deal for *all* of us.

First, a brief history lesson in NASA’s Kepler Mission.

Kepler is a spacecraft named after Johannes Kepler – the scientist who discovered the laws of planetary motion – that is currently orbiting the sun with the mission to observe other star clusters in search of Earth-like planetary candidates. Launched in 2009, The Kepler Space Observatory has had its ups and downs due to hardware failure, but in short, the spacecraft has been staring at stars in our galaxy in search for exo-

planets. It is looking for planets that fall inside the “Goldilocks Zone” – circumstellar habitable zones, which, in this case, would be areas in which planets orbiting a star would have liquids pooling on the surface, just like Earth (you know, places where everything is *just* right).

How does a space observatory orbiting our sun discover planets orbiting stars that are just small dots off in the distance? It’s pretty radical actually. The telescope focuses on a cluster of stars and observes them over the span of a few years – or in this case since 2009. As it observes the stars, it records the brightness of the light given off. What it is looking for is drops in brightness as planets transition in front of that star. They then wait for the planet to transition again to remove any doubts of passing celestial bodies. After a year, you know how long it takes for the planet to orbit, and the change in the stars’

brightness lets scientists determine the size, position, and orbit of the planet.

Here’s another explanation. Turn on a flash light and point it at a wall. If you bounce a ball in front of that flashlight, the light on the wall will dim slightly as the ball passes the beam of light. If you compared the light value of those two states, you can science your way to knowing the size of the ball.

So that’s what NASA has been doing with the Kepler Mission. But what does this mean?

Well, we know that planet Kepler 452b – the “b” indicating the planet and “452” referring to the star – is roughly 60 percent larger than Earth. It is the smallest exoplanet we’ve discovered to date that is orbiting in the Goldilocks Zone around a star that is similar to our sun. Research suggests that it *may* have a rocky composition, like Earth. It has a yearly calendar that is 385 days. Its star is 1.5 billion years older than ours and

has the same temperature.

While the Kepler Mission has discovered thousands of candidates, only a handful have been confirmed exoplanets that orbit in that precise zone. Kepler 452b is also the first discovered planet that is close to the Earth’s size, as all previous confirmed planets were significantly larger, significantly younger, or too close to the edges of the habitable zone. Since Kepler 452b is older than Earth, it raises questions of the potential of life existing there. With 6 billion years to work with, the likelihood of life existing there seems significant and is what is driving much of the excitement for space geeks like me.

For the more pragmatic science fans, knowing that we have discovered yet another potential Earth-like planet can be reassuring. For a long time, it was difficult with current technology to discover small garden worlds like ours; finally, we know, we’re not an anomaly in space.

Will we ever see this planet – and whether it has, is, or could support life – in our lifetime? Consider the following: Kepler 452b is 1,400 light years away. Right now the fastest moving spacecraft is the Voyager 1. Shot out into space 37 years ago, it is traveling at its max speed of 38,610 mph or 11 mps (miles per second). The speed of light is 670 million mph. So our fastest space craft only travels at a fraction of the speed of light, and even if we could travel at the speed of light, it would still take 1,400 years to get there. So based on our current technology, it doesn’t look like we’ll be booking trips there any time soon.

Regardless, this latest discovery gives us hope of finding even more Earth-like planets out there in the night sky. It’s discoveries like these that help fuel the creative spirit that leads to scientific breakthroughs. And each discovery helps us understand more about our place amongst the stars.

*John Lindvay can be contacted at [jlindvay@ErieReader.com](mailto:jlindvay@ErieReader.com), and you can follow him on Twitter @Fightstrife.*

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## ER Sports

The Otters enter the Jim Waters era, and Jim LeCorchick is convinced that greatness lies ahead for the team.

By: James R. LeCorchick

Great news for local hockey fans, as the Erie Otters have a new owner, and even greater news for the Otters' faithful as the new main charge is Jim Waters, an extremely impressive, and successful, businessman who appears ready to run the OHL organization in a way it has never been run before. And that is in a first-class manner on and off the ice.

If first impressions count for anything, Waters is off to a flying start.

He actually called me when he heard I would like to set up an interview with him and was a guest on my Sports Blitz show that very same day.

It was a positive delight talking to an owner that wanted to discuss the team, the city, the fans, and the future – rather than himself. I had to actually prod a bit to get some information about his life.

Refreshing to say the least for a man who came to town with very little fanfare and did not have a self-proclaimed "Mr. Hockey" title.

If the Otters play with the same enthusiasm the new owner has shown since the purchase, it's going to be a great ride. I'm sure I'll never know what it's like to spend more than \$7,000,000 for a sports' franchise, but I'm not too sure I would be in such a good mood.

However, he did show his management philosophy for the Erie team

when asked if he was going to be a hands-on owner.

"It would be crazy to spend that much money and not be on top of things," Waters told the *Erie Reader*.

Personally, I don't think the Toronto native is crazy, so I believe Otters' fan will see his prints all over the organization. He adds that he will be involved with many of the business decisions – along with NHL veteran Roy Mlakar – and will leave the on-ice and personnel moves to the experts – that being coaches, scouts, and general manager.

The Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Blue Jays die-hard has already done his homework on Erie and the organization. "I was here several times to watch the Otters in the playoffs, and it was a great experience. The fans are incredible."

He admitted he had never been to our city before that, but was told by the hockey people he trusts that the arena was absolutely beautiful and that he would love Erie. He added, "They were absolutely on point."

As a former radio mogul, Waters knows the value of "knowing the market" and pointed out, "I have really been impressed with the people already on board, and I will be counting heavily and John (Frey) and Jaime (Cieszynski) for direction. It's obvious they are well-respected in the community, and there's no doubt they are great assets."

The Canadian broadcaster accumulated numerous awards during his radio days, including being honored as the Broadcasting Executive of the Year, and he was also inducted into the Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame

The new owner, who played a lot of hockey growing up, told the *ER*, "This is a dream come true for me, and I am not going to let it fail."

That's a refreshing attitude and a cause for local fans to be optimistic about the future of the team.

It also bodes well for the future of the front office, as Frey, who is extremely well-respected in the local sports community after 11 years as General Manager of the Erie SeaWolves and another three with the Otters, pointed out, "After one meeting you know Jim is the kind of person you want to work for. He has a presence that excites the whole organization and he's such a successful businessman that everyone wants to observe and learn from him."

He added, "With Jim and Roy Mlakar, the Erie fans are blessed. This will be a great organization."

Hopefully the Waters Era will not turn into the roller coaster ride that was the trademark of the previous administration, seemingly leaving the Otters to fall into an abyss following three consecutive first-place finishes. After winning the OHL crown in 2001-2002, it was rough sledding – or skating – the next 11 seasons. Included in this streak was the 2011-2012 season when the locals finished with just 10 wins and only 26 points.

Ending the year with just 26 points is the equivalent getting a 500 on your college boards when you get 400 for spelling your name correctly. However, on the plus side, it enabled the Otters to get Connor McDavid with the first pick in the OHL, draft this leading to a second and a first place in the division, including a runner-up spot in the OHL playoffs.

Mlakar, who the new owner is extremely confident in, will bring some much needed business acumen to the Erie front office, as he was the former president and CEO of the NHL's Ottawa Senators, as well an executive with the

Los Angeles Kings and also has front office experience with the Pittsburgh Penguins. He is a native of Parma, Ohio, and is in the process of moving to Erie from Cleveland.

Waters is also thrilled to have Knoblauch back as coach. "Kris has established himself as one of the premier coaches in minor league hockey," explains Waters, adding, "there is no doubt we will see him in the NHL some day."

I have to admit that in the 19 years the Otters have been in Erie, I have seen one period of action (that's correct, a total of 20 minutes of action) so far. However, after two telephone sessions (I haven't even met him face-to-face and I'm this excited) with the new main man, I expect that one period total to triple after just one game in the upcoming season. With many more to follow.

Also, I know you may think I was neglecting my duty when I didn't ask the Otters' owner the inevitable question, "Are you moving the team?" However, there is a reason I didn't pose this question. I firmly believe it's a moot point, as there's no doubt in my mind Waters did not buy the team to move it.

As a matter of fact, at the end of the interview, he commented that I was the first person that didn't make that the initial query to him. I took that as a compliment.

The new owner is a charismatic individual, and I am a believer already. After two phone interviews, I am totally convinced our great community is getting an owner "that just gets it!"

Go Otters!

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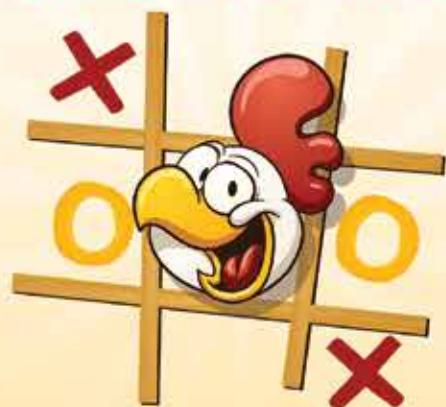
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