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Nov. 25 to Dec. 8, 2015 / Vol. 5, No. 24 / ErieReader.com

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**Contents: November 25, 2015****The Truth About Islam 4**

One Bosnian woman's prayer for understanding in the wake of the Paris attacks.

Erie at Large 6

Parents Just Don't Understand.

Just a Thought 7

The Paris Climate Conference, or COP21, has been about violence all along.

ISIS knows what it is. Does America? 9

Islamic State attacks in Paris force the U.S. to come to terms with what it means to be "American" in the 21st Century.

Pennsylvania and the Paris Pledge 9

Our moral obligation to care for the environment must transcend political and religious boundaries.

News of the Weird 10

Doctors' excuses are so passe. Now if you want to blow off studying, bank on the ole Rapture dodge.

Budding Solutions to Violence 13

Using theater to interrupt the cycle of violence in Erie.

The Rising Tide of TEDxErie Triumphs Through a Sense of Community 14

Local lawyer hosts first-ever TEDx event in Erie.

Waiting for a Recall 17

Boom, Bust, and the future of GE Transportation.

Tom Kennedy's Renaissance 21

The engineer-turned-developer has always been a dreamer.

Spotlight on Erie 24

Here we are now. Entertain us.

A Conversation with Ahmed Gallab 32

The current leader of Sinkane, and former member of Yeasayer, Caribou, Of Montreal, and the Atomic Bomb! Band talks about finding unity through music.

Gallery Night: A Tale of Two Galleries 35

Box of Light and The Secret Squirrel hope to encourage the artist in all of us.

Karen Ernst's Elemental "Land, Sea, and Sky: Details from Nature" 35

This contemplative exhibit is on view at Erie Art Museum's Holstein Gallery until Jan. 8.

The Myth and Matters of Erie's First 'Strong' Mayor 38

Review: Cory Vaillancourt, Lou Tullio: A Real Erie Guy

Erie Arts & Culture's Fall for Arts & Culture Awards 40

Honoring those who strengthen our community by creating Erie's cultural landscape

Geeked Out 42

#PeaceforParis

From the Editors

Finding beauty in a broken world is creating beauty in the world we find.

– Terry Tempest Williams.

Though divisiveness is the order of the day, at least according to most news outlets, surely we can all agree that we're living in a broken world. Each cycle of layoffs, each report of violence, and each horrifying climate change projection fractures our hearts and splinters our humanity.

In her book *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*, Terry Tempest Williams writes, "There are long skeins of time when I feel so confused and lost in this broken world of our own making. I don't know who we have become

So long as dignity and equal rights are denied to any of us, they're impossible for all of us. So long as it's "they" and not "we," no peace can propagate. But hope is easy to find if we look around us. And so many Erieites are creating beauty in the world they've found.

or what to believe or whom to trust."

And yet.

A common theme has arisen in this issue.

In exploring how theater might be used to curb violence, David Szymanowski writes, "conflict can be transformed into an opportunity for compassion through interaction instead of reaction. Through slow thinking instead of fast thought. By viewing commonalities instead of contrasting differences."

In describing recent symbols of solidarity in social media, John Lindvay writes, "Finding a way to show your

support is an attempt at creating a human connection in the world. That's where the real power is, and what fear and terror are ultimately trying to destroy."

In addressing rampant misperceptions about Islam, Ajla Glavasevic writes, "I pray that we heal. I pray that we communicate and that we forgive so that we can finally start working toward a better future."

In clarifying how climate change is a moral issue, Pat Lupo, OSB, writes, "The earth that we live on, our air, and water are sacred. We have a moral obligation to care for the planet – to act for the well being of all generations."

Williams cites the U.N. General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on Dec. 10 of 1948, which states that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world."

Almost 70 years later, we're still stumbling over that "all members of the human family" part. So long as dignity and equal rights are denied to any of us, they're impossible for all of us. So long as it's "they" and not "we," no peace can propagate.

But hope is easy to find if we look around us. And so many Erieites are creating beauty in the world they've found.

"What is real to me is the power of our awareness when we are focused on something beyond ourselves," Williams continues. "Our ability to shift our perceptions and seek creative alternatives to the conundrums of modernity is in direct proportion to our empathy. Can we imagine, witness, and ultimately feel the suffering of another?"

Our community is filled with people proving that we can. And for that, we should all give thanks.

The Truth About Islam

One Bosnian woman's prayer for understanding in the wake of the Paris attacks.

By: Ajla Glavasevic

At a time when the world is shaken by terror and Paris mourns, I sit baffled, angry, frustrated, and worried about the present, past, and the future that is unfolding for our generation. *Why the violence? Why the murders? Why the chaos?*

I have no answers, only heartbreak. I offer no consolations or promises that it will get better; that people will learn or grow. I offer no excuses, reasons, or solutions. I offer nothing but my unrelenting sadness in a situation that only seems to highlight the ideology of institutionalized fear served to U.S. citizens in pill form – a dangerous pill that we willingly swallow repeatedly without question, only to be devastated by a loss of promise in humanity; and yet, we stay conditioned to take, drink, and repeat.

My blood is boiling. Because as unspeakable terror strikes innocents again, the people who have swallowed another dose of institutionalized fear have taken to social media calling for more violence and a desecration of the Muslim population. And while I completely understand that such terrorist attacks carry Islamic connotations, it cannot be stated that all Muslims deserve to be “wiped from the earth;” that “these *animals* all deserve to die.”

Come again?

I am a Muslim. I have for *years* listened to narrow-minded, bigoted, uneducated, and “patriotic” people list heinous things that should happen to Muslims – the kind of fate that Muslims should meet – a disgusting hellish death. I have listened to people who know *nothing* about Islam bash Muslims using hateful terminology and spread untruthful bigotry about the teaching of violence and submission.

I have listened and I have said nothing to rebut; nothing to highlight that *all* major religions require an element of submission; nothing to note that the hundreds of millions of Muslims in Indonesia and Bangladesh have not caused a peep in our media; that violence is *not* taught, but is a characteristic that can be brought to *any* religion by the individual submitting to its practices.

I have said nothing because I have



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Left: On her blog, Ajla Glavasevic writes that she found out she had passed the Pennsylvania bar exam and made the USA Women's Bobsled Team in the same week. She has recently accepted a position as an issue brief specialist and blog writer with Law Street Media. This essay is a version of her recent personal blog post by the same title.

been embarrassed. Following 9/11, being a Muslim became a Scarlet Letter: “M” for “Muslim.” M for traitor. M for perpetrator. M for cold-blooded terrorist. M for murderer.

It meant being ashamed of your core values. It meant being condemned by society at large for the morals that shaped you. It meant siding with Al-Qaeda and ISIS. It meant that *you* were a terrorist supporting all of the unforgivable things that terrorists did “in the name of Islam.” It meant being searched at airports. It meant doubting yourself.

It meant becoming a whipping post for bigoted misunderstanding. A misunderstanding on which propaganda capitalized as U.S. media prepared its pills of anti-Islam indoctrination for the American people to take, all the while knowing that most of the population would without any questions.

And they were right. The population at large did not take more than a prayer's moment before religion, instead of reason and logic, was used to distort public opinion and spread misunderstanding about Islam on Nov. 13.

It is insulting. Imagine if I suggested that *all* Christians encompass the values and morals of the Westboro Baptist Church. Or worse, the Ku Klux Klan. Imagine if I thought that the Christian faith believed and supported the heinous things that those two organi-

zations do and believe – the murders on their hands. Imagine if I thought that all Christians were racist and homophobic.

Just imagine that those organizations were the faces of the Christian faith. That those were your mascots. That the things you believed and valued were depicted by the most nonsensical and extreme interpreters of your faith.

Now imagine that you had absolutely no way to show the world otherwise.

Islam is a beautiful religion with nurturing surahs and hopeful prayers. It encourages understanding and selflessness and teaches compassion – a sense of doing good not only for your-

Media has distorted Islam, just as jihadists and terrorists have, into something unrecognizable by its peaceful followers who do not support the acts of groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

self, but for others. Anyone who has read the Quran would agree.

Anyone using logic would also understand that the Quran is open to several interpretations and that it can be used in a malicious way just like *all* scriptures. No major religion's history is clean. All major religions have in some

capacity killed innocent people for the sake of religious beliefs. That is a fact.

Media has distorted Islam, just as jihadists and terrorists have, into something unrecognizable by its peaceful followers who do *not* support the acts of groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS. Non-extremist Muslims are horrified at what their religion has turned into. We have been robbed of the ability to practice and believe without alienation and isolation. We have come to suffer the utmost hate for consequences that were not ours to bear; punishments that weren't ours to carry out; a history that we did not make.

And yet, here we are. Unimaginably watching “Islam” become a synonym for “terror.”

This time, I will not sit silently as we all mourn the victims in Paris. I pray for their families and for the people brutally taken from this life. I pray that we mend our scars and build stronger understandings. I pray that we come to better understand religion and Islam so that we can eradicate terrorism from our everyday “norm.”

And I pray that we heal. I pray that we communicate and that we forgive so that we can *finally* start working toward a better future. I pray.

Because here's the truth about Islam – it is not what you see splattered across your news screens at night, but rather, it is an artfully crafted ideology that teaches people respect, faith, solidarity, understanding, patience, kindness, worth, hard work, and that love – well, love is the whole thing. And we – we are only pieces.

Ajla Glavasevic is a first-generation Bosnian immigrant full of spunk, sass, and humor who was raised in Erie and very much still considers it home. She graduated from SUNY Buffalo with a Bachelor of Science in Finance and received her J.D. from the University of Cincinnati College of Law. Ajla is currently a licensed attorney in Pa. and when she isn't lawyering and writing, the former Team USA Women's Bobsled athlete (2014-2015 U.S. National Team) likes to stay active, travel, and struggle through learning the German language. Contact her at ajla.glavasevic@gmail.com or read her blog at ajlaglava.wordpress.com.

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Erie at Large

Parents Just Don't Understand.

By: Jim Wertz

Parents just don't understand. That was the mantra of my generation, ushered in during the spring of 1988 by DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince.

The generational divide between parents and their children has been a common theme in teen culture since the 1920s. But today that generational divide is compounded by a technological divide that many parents are ill-equipped to bridge. Teenagers communicating via social media and text message have deafening and sometimes dangerous conversations ... in silence.

So when the Millcreek Police announced Nov. 14 that they were investigating allegations that several students had received inappropriate text messages on their phones, it seemed an inevitability of the digital age. Just the day before, the Chester County District Attorney charged a fourth student from an affluent suburban Philadelphia school district with criminal charges related to the dissemination of a photo sent by a young girl to her then-boyfriend when she was just 13.

To be clear, we don't yet know the details of the McDowell case and Millcreek Police did not respond to our request for an interview. But sources inside McDowell High School suggest that the situation may be similar to the Chester County case and so many others saturating national media throughout the past decade.

The common trope goes as follows: two underage teens engage in consensual sharing of erotic photographs as a sign of affection. Somewhere along the path of love and roses, the teens argue or break up and the jaded partner, often a young man armed with an arsenal of not-so-harmless underage erotica, shares the



Left: Who, me? Telling a teenager like this guy that he could end up registered as a sex offender might get you a similarly incredulous look. But until legislation catches up to technology, such an outcome is entirely possible.

predatory adults. The law was not designed to address teens' technological indiscretions.

Pa. lawmakers have proposed legislation that would address teen sexting as an act separate from child pornography. But until such legislation passes, teens like those in Chester County can be charged with a felony offense under the state's sexual abuse of children statute, subject to up to 25 years in prison, \$25,000 in fines, and required registration as a sex offender.

What's different about the Chester County case is that the boys who shared the photos did so with the intent of harassing the victim by humiliating her on social media. Even under teen sexting statutes, such behavior warrants a greater penalty because the offenders acted with malice.

For those who have been victimized by sexting, the social consequences can be equally brutal. When the photos go from private to public the subjects are often ridiculed or shamed, leaving them psychologically scarred, reputation-damaged, or worse. In 2008 a Cincinnati, Ohio teen hanged herself after a photo she sent to her boyfriend was circulated across several Cincinnati schools. She became the victim of cyberbullying because someone shared her photo.

Kids are predisposed to making serious and sometimes terrible mistakes, but research indicates that those educated about the consequences of their cyber-actions are less likely to engage in such behaviors.

To many observers, the cul-

photos with his friends and acquaintances at the expense of his once beloved.

What began as a consensual, albeit stupid, act has now become a gross invasion of privacy with legal and social consequences for both the subject of the photos and the people who shared them. If the offending party happens to be an 18-year-old senior who dated or simply received pictures of an underclassman, the stakes are even higher.

Most states do not have legislation to deal with underage sexting and therefore prosecutors lack the latitude to exercise any legal option other than charging the students under state child pornography laws. Depending on age, this could land the offender in prison and on child sex offender registries alongside adults who prey on children in the worst ways imaginable.

In 2009, a trio of teenage girls in Greensboro, Pa. were charged with disseminating child pornography for sending photos of themselves to their boyfriends, who were charged with possession of child pornography.

That same year, 18-year-old Florida resident Phillip Alpert

had to register as a sex offender when he shared photos of his 16-year-old girlfriend with her friends and family after an argument with the girl, who had taken and sent him the photos weeks before.

Cases like Alpert's have been repeated across the country many times each year. A 2014 Drexel University survey of undergraduate college students found that 54 percent of respondents reported sexting as minors, 61 percent of respondents were not aware that such actions could be considered child pornography, and only 2 percent of respondents reported telling a parent or teacher that they had received a sext. The majority of people surveyed by Drexel said that had they known the legal consequences of their actions, they would have behaved differently.

Parents need to explain these uncomfortable realities to their children. Kids across time have engaged in risky behavior, but digital technology gives them a means to broadcast their stupidity.

And here's the problem: they're being held to an antiquated legal standard that was intended to protect kids from

ture of short messaging and self-absorbed imagery is evidence of a great unraveling of social mores. But the paradoxical truth is that the world of our children has simply become much smaller and more aggressive even within the vast expanse of the Internet. Rumors are no longer spread slowly with the tacit nod to the fiction that underlies them. Instead their lives – real and imagined – have become a significant part of the real-time picture of social media. The box has been opened and there is no turning back, and most of us would never choose the past if given the option.

Our challenge now is to protect our children, innocent and naive. To do that our legis-

Parents need to explain these uncomfortable realities to their children. Kids across time have engaged in risky behavior, but digital technology gives them a means to broadcast their stupidity.

lators will have to ensure that our laws keep pace with the actions they regulate, which means keeping pace with technological change. The last generation of analog parents are raising the first generation of digital natives who live life in the palm of their hands. They're going to need some guidance, even if parents still don't understand.

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

Just a Thought

The Paris Climate Conference, or COP21, has been about violence all along.

By: Katie Chriest

I'm going to admit something here that might at first seem pretty insensitive. When news of the Paris attacks broke, part of me thought: *So much for a meaningful climate summit.*

It's not that I don't feel deep sorrow for the loss of innocent lives in Paris, or the ensuing fear and suspicion that has ramped up globally.

Instead, I'm troubled by the tendency to push climate issues to the back burner, as though they're something we'll get to as soon as we solve everything else. Never mind that what happened in Paris is happening elsewhere, all of the time, and is often traceable back to the poverty and marginalization that breed extremism – which climate change will only continue to exacerbate.

Where is the outrage when non-Western peoples suffer violence? And when will those of us not yet directly affected by environmental degradation – caused by wealthy nations and corporations – understand that for many, terror is constant?

Of course, I'm not the only one feeling this way.

In *The Guardian* on Nov. 20, Naomi Klein discusses French President François Hollande's banning of protests at COP21.

"The Hollande government has made a series of decisions that reflect a very particular set of values and priorities about who and what will get the full security protection of the state," Klein writes. "Yes to world leaders, football matches, and Christmas markets; no to climate marches and protests pointing out that the negotiations, with the current level of emission targets, endanger the lives and livelihoods of millions if not billions of people."

Klein references Rebecca Solnit's piece, "Call climate change what it is: violence," from an April of 2014 edition of *The Guardian*.

"People revolt when their lives are unbearable," explains Solnit. "In every arena, we need to look at industrial-scale and systemic violence, not just the hands-on violence of the less

powerful."

Obviously, violent acts like the recent ones in Paris get our attention. They should. But Solnit argues that "Climate change is global-scale violence, against places and species as well as against human beings."

So why are we so quick to dismiss it?

"That's a tired phrase, the destruction of the Earth," Solnit recognizes, "but translate it into the face of a starving child and a barren field – and then multiply that a few million times."

Meanwhile, she cites a 2014 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture statistic that almost 16 million U.S. children now live with hunger. Locally, the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pa. reports that 29 percent of the individuals they serve are children.

That's not for lack of food being produced. There's plenty. But only for some.

"We are a country whose distribution system is itself a kind of violence," states Solnit.

It's easy to feel outrage toward a target as clear as ISIS. The challenge is to recognize that collective outrage born of human empathy is likewise warranted against corporations and governments who knowingly ruin the lives of millions for the sake of profits. Who make water undrinkable. Fields infertile. Air carcinogenic. Who also kill people, albeit more slowly.

Right here in Pennsylvania. Right here in Erie.

Can we expand the solidarity we feel with Paris victims to include *all* of those suffering terrorized lives? Can we acknowledge that countless innocent people – even in Erie – are *also* living their lives in fear of violence and hunger?

As we practice support and compassion, let us not forget that deliberate ignorance by powerful governments and corporations – who perpetuate practices which harm marginalized peoples – is another form of terrorism worthy of our attention and action.

Katie Chriest can be contacted at katie@ErieReader.com

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ISIS knows what it is. Does America?

Islamic State attacks in Paris force the U.S. to come to terms with what it means to be “American” in the 21st Century.



Left: In Iraq, members of ISIS rally together. Erieite Maitham Basha-Agha took this photo while visiting Iraq, where he is from originally. “This is not my country,” he told Jim Wertz in August of 2014. “It’s not the country I left.”

MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

By: Ben Speggen

In the wake of the Islamic State attacks in Paris on Friday, Nov. 13, Americans have been forced into an existential moment of identity crisis. Need proof? Search Facebook to witness the widening chasm between conservatives and liberals. You’ll find plenty of conservatives barking that the U.S. must close its borders to Syrian refugees and many liberals shaming them for being anti-American.

Conservative xenophobia case in point: Reacting to the news that President Barack Obama would raise the number of refugees the U.S. accepts from 7,000 to 10,000, one man – from Erie – posted on a Fox News thread that the refugees should be sent to Erie, because here, he could shoot them.

Yes, shoot them.

Less hostile but still anti-Syrian refugee, Erie County’s own State Rep. Curt Sonney, who represents the 4th Legislative District, posted the letter he signed with a hundred other state representatives addressed to Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf after Wolf declared he would still work with federal authorities in accepting refugees.

“We were disturbed to learn that you will continue to welcome Syrian refugees into the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” begins the letter. “This decision places the welfare of individuals who live thousands of miles away above the welfare of the Pennsylvanians you were elected to serve.”

To be clear, under the Refugee Act of 1980, POTUS “has explicit statutory authorization to accept foreign refugees into the United States.” Which means that no governor has the authority

to ban or accept refugees. Which also means that there’s no apparent endgame in the representatives’ letter to Wolf.

Do they want him to follow Republican governors’ political posturing in declaring that he’ll ban refugees? Do they want him to assert that he won’t work with the federal authorities in resettling refugees, thus breaking the law? Do they expect Wolf to begin construction on a wall around the Keystone State?

Incidentally, Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto maintained his position that the city should accept Syrian refugees, noting that the second-largest city in Pa. brings in 500 refugees a year from different countries, and that shouldn’t change after the Paris attacks.

“You just can’t ignore it,” he told WTAE’s Sheldon Ingram. “It’s not going to just go away. The idea that the United States or other countries would walk away from this world effort, I don’t think is possible to do at this point.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. isn’t exactly throwing open the floodgates to loose throngs of refugees upon Pennsylvania – or other states for that matter – as the U.S. vetting process is far stricter and more complex than the European Union’s or that of Greece.

Since Oct. 1, 14 Syrian refugees have been settled in Pa., according to the state’s Department of Human Services. According to the *Erie Times-News*, three Syrian families currently live in Erie, two of which arrived this year, the other in 2014. Although Erie settles roughly a quarter of the state’s refugees, those refugees represent 31 countries, according to the Pennsylvania

Refugee Resettlement Program.

Nationally, the U.S. – from 2012 to 2015 – has settled fewer than 2,000 Syrians compared to Germany’s nearly 93,000. The same report from *The New York Times* revealed that of the top 15 nationalities resettled in America, Syrians rank seventh, behind, for example, Iranian and Iraqi.

Before being accepted, those seeking refuge in the U.S. must apply through the U.N., while also being screened by the F.B.I. and run through Department of Defense databases. Those arriving this year, according to NYT, would come from “18,000 referrals already submitted by the United Nations,” more than half of which are children.

The real problem, though, is that the call to close our borders because any Muslim or Islamic person may be a terrorist is the rhetorical equivalent of deeming all Christians terrorists because of the Ku Klux Klan.

While safety should remain an American priority, rescinding “The New Colossus” call is un-American at best and unjustifiably xenophobic at worst.

“The bosom of America is open to receive not only the Opulent and respectable Stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges, if by decency and propriety of conduct they appear to merit the enjoyment,” George Washington once wrote.

More than 200 years later, we are still determining America’s collective ideology when it comes to refugees.

“An army of principles can penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot,” wrote Thomas Paine.

ISIS knows what it is. If we are to triumph over terror, Americans must know who we are.

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bSpeggen@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpeggen.

Pennsylvania and the Paris Pledge

Our moral obligation to care for the environment must transcend political and religious boundaries.

By: Pat Lupo, OSB

*The Pa. DEP recently held 14 “listening sessions” statewide to solicit public input regarding how Pa. might best comply with the federal Clean Power Plan (CPP), including one at Erie’s Blasco Library on Oct. 29. In our last issue, we included the testimony of Erie Art Museum Director John Vanco. Below, we’re featuring the testimony of Benedictine Sister Pat Lupo, who urges Pa. to join Interfaith Power and Light in signing the Paris Pledge. As the U.N. Climate Change Conference convenes, all eyes have been on Paris for reasons we could not have foreseen a few weeks ago. Nevertheless, as Robert Pollin wrote in *Grist*, “it is especially critical that we make clear how an effective global climate stabilization project will serve as a powerful tool for fighting global poverty” and the inequality and insecurity it creates.*

I am involved in environmental issues for a number of reasons but they all have their roots in my religious tradition. The earth that we live on, our air, and water are sacred. We have a moral obligation to care for the planet - to act for the well being of all generations. Faith communities are called to demonstrate their commitment to environmental action in partnership with environmental organizations, their local communities, and civic and governmental entities.

Speaking from this faith perspective, the call to stewardship, and the moral imperative of doing no harm to Creation, I urge Pennsylvania to enforce the Clean Power Plan (CPP). This plan seeks to mitigate climate change and improve public health by limiting carbon pollution from existing power plants. Our best evidence indicates that power plants are the largest stationary source of carbon emissions in the U.S., and major contributors to climate change.

The time to act is **[Cont. on page 12]**

News of the Weird

Doctors' excuses are so passe. Now if you want to blow off studying, bank on the ole Rapture dodge.

By Chuck Shepherd

The Patient Will See You Now

Professional patients now help train would-be doctors, especially in the most delicate and dreaded of exams (gynecological and prostate), where a becalming technique improves outcomes. One "teaching associate" of Eastern Virginia Medical School told The Washington Post in September that the helpers act as "enthusiastic surgical dummies" to 65 medical colleges, guiding rookie fingers through the trainer's own private parts. The prostate associate might helpfully caution, "No need for speed here," especially since he will be bending over for as many as nine probings a day. A gynecological teaching associate, mentoring the nervous speculum-wielder, might wittily congratulate pupils on having a front-row sight line the "GTA" will never witness: an up-close view of her own cervix. [Washington Post, 9-3-2015]

Latest Religious Messages

American Sharia: (1) U.S. parents have a right to home-school their kids, but are subject to varying degrees of regulation, with Texas as the most lax, and one El Paso family will have a day before the Texas Supreme

Court after one of its kids was reported declining to study because education was useless since he was waiting to be "raptured" (as described in the Bible's Book of Revelation). (2) U.S. courts increasingly allow customers to sign away state and federal rights by agreeing to contracts providing private arbitration for disputes rather than access to courts even if the contract explicitly requires only religious resolutions rather than secular, constitutional ones. A November New York Times investigation examined contracts ranging from Scientology's requirement that fraud claims by members be resolved only by Scientologists to various consumer issues from home repairs to real estate sales limited to dockets of Christian clerics. [Associated Press via Dallas Morning News, 11-1-2015] [New York Times, 11-3-2015]

Leading Economic Indicators

First-World Spending: According to estimates released by the National Retail Federation in September, 157 million Americans "planned to celebrate" Halloween, spending a total of \$6.9 billion, of which \$2.5 billion would be on costumes, including \$350 million dressing up family pets. [National Retail Federation press release, 9-23-2015]

At a ceremony in Kabul in November, prominent Afghan developer Khalilullah Frozi signed a \$95 million contract to build an 8,800-unit township and was, according to a New York Times dispatch, toasted for his role in the country's economic rebirth. However, at nightfall, Frozi headed back to prison to resume his 15-year sentence for defrauding Kabul Bank of nearly \$1 billion in depositors' money. Because he remains one of Afghanistan's elite, arrangements were made for him to work days but spend his nights in prison (in comfortable quarters). Said one Western official, laconically, "(I) f you have stolen enough money, you can get away with it." [New York Times, 11-4-2015]

Cultural Diversity

Before the terrorist murders gripped Paris, President Francois Hollande and Iran's President Hassan Rouhani had been trying to arrange a formal dinner during Rouhani's planned visit to the city to celebrate the two countries' role in the recent accord limiting Iran's nuclear development. France's RTL radio news reported that "dinner" is apparently more vexing than "nuclear weaponry" as Rouhani demanded an alcohol-free meal, which was nixed by Hollande, who insisted that the French never dine without wine. [Washington Times, 11-11-2015]

Compelling Explanations

Skeptics feared it was just a matter of time, anyway, until the "political correctness" movement turned its attention to dignity for thieves. San Francisco's SFGate.com reported in November on a discussion in an upscale neighborhood about whether someone committing petty, nonviolent theft should be referred to by the "offensive" term "criminal" (rather than as, for example, "the person who stole my bicycle," since "criminal" implies a harsher level of evil and fails to acknowledge factors that might have caused momentary desperation by a person in severe need). [SFGate.com, 11-2-2015]

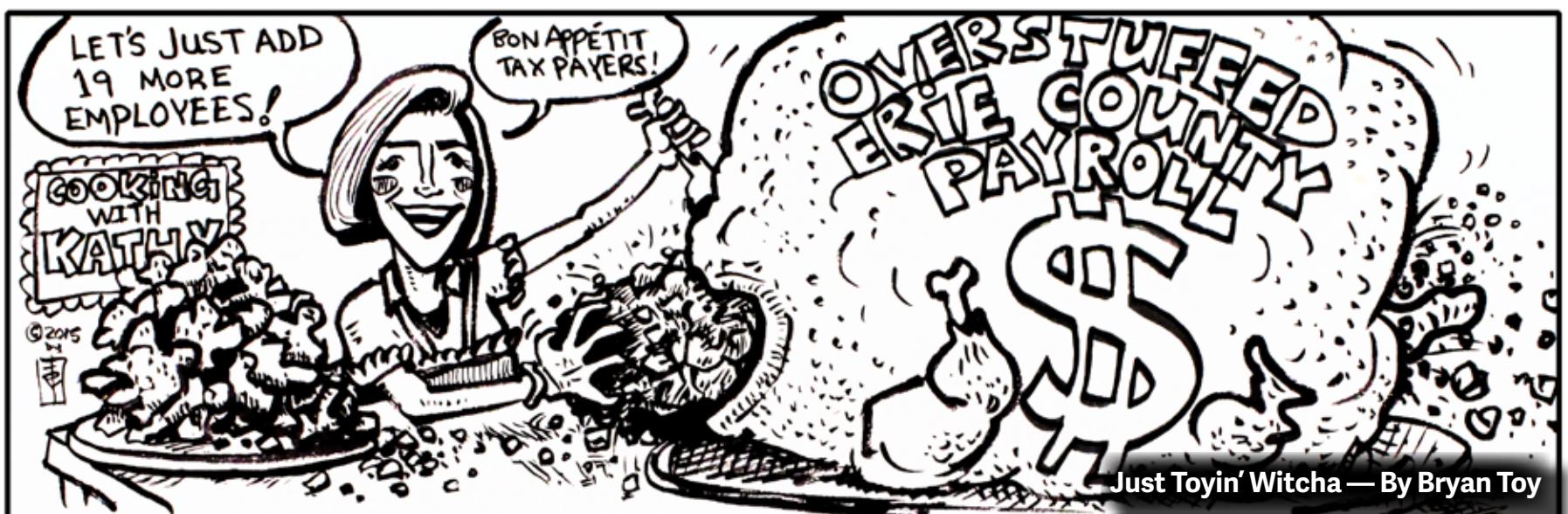
Reginald Gildersleeve, 55 and free on bond with an extensive rap sheet, was waving a gun as he threatened a clerk and tried to rob a store in Chicago on Halloween night until a customer (licensed to carry) drew his own gun and, with multiple shots, killed Gildersleeve. Closer inspection revealed Gildersleeve's weapon to be merely a paintball gun, leading the deceased man's stepson to complain later that "Some people (the licensed shooter) don't actually know how to use guns. They go to firing ranges, but it's not the same ... as a bullet going into flesh. ... Someone's got to answer for that." [USA Today, 11-2-2015]

The Continuing Crisis

U.S. and European entrepreneurs offer extreme "games"

in which liability-waiving "players" volunteer for hours of kidnapping, pain and death threats, but the cult-like, under-the-radar "McKamey Manor" in Southern California (said to have a waiting list of 27,000) is notable for the starkness of its threats of brutality and the absence of any "safe word" with which a suddenly reluctant player can beg off. (Only Russ McKamey himself decides if a player has had enough.) The "product" is "100 percent fear," he said. "We're good at it," he told London's The Guardian in an October dispatch from San Diego (whose reporter overheard one of McKamey's thugs promise, "I'm going to tear that girl (player) apart" and "No one is leaving with eyebrows today"). [The Guardian, 10-30-2015]

In October, the student newspaper of Toronto's Ryerson University reported a mighty scandal that upset the student body: The school's executive offices' restrooms routinely supply two-ply toilet paper while most other campus buildings offer only one-ply. Following up on the hard-hitting Ryerson Eyeopener's expose, The Canadian Press noted that the universities of Guelph, Ottawa and Toronto comfort all toilet-users' bottoms the same. Ryerson officials defensively noted that older plumbing in many of their buildings cannot handle two-ply paper. [Inside Higher Education, 11-2-2015]



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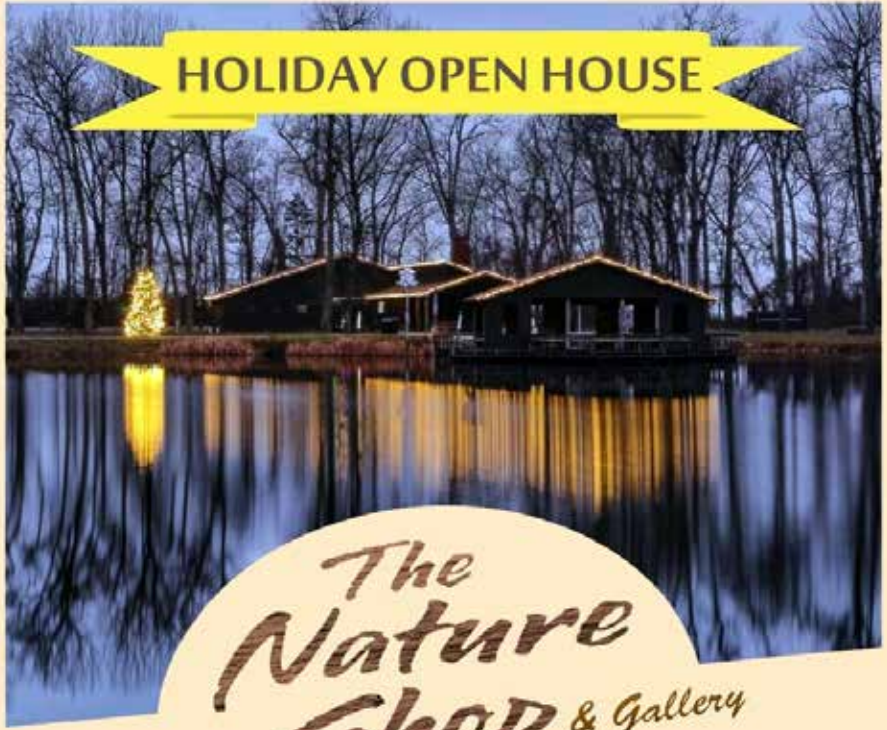
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[Cont. from page 9] now; we cannot step backward each time there is pressure to do so. I do not speak as an expert on carbon pollution or climate change, but as an advocate for people present and future and for our wonderful planet.

Clearly, Pope Francis' encyclical and visit to the U.S. were timed to coincide with the 2015 U.N. Climate Talks in Paris this December.

In his campaign for action on climate change, Francis proclaimed the existence of a "right of the environment" and pleaded with countries to stop abusing it. He connected climate change to the wider pursuit of equality, security, and justice for all, stating, "Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, and political ... it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day."

The world will be watching the Paris Climate Talks to see if leaders finally hammer out concrete carbon-reduction goals. Meanwhile, the CPP creates federal limits on power plants, providing a platform and mandate to continue

shifting to clean energy, energy conservation, and healthier communities.

Pennsylvania, the third-largest carbon-emitting state, plays an important role in the plan's success. By 2030, the CPP requires Pennsylvania to reduce carbon emissions from power plants by 33.3 percent (below 2012 levels).

In contrast, Interfaith Power and Light, people of faith from across the U.S., are asking faith groups to sign the Paris Pledge. Signers will strive for a 50 percent carbon emission reduction by 2030, with a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050 (below 2005 levels). They will hand deliver pledges from congregations at the U.N. Meeting and ask global nations to sign the pledge.

U.N. Secretary Ban Ki-moon has challenged government and civil society leaders to bring bold initiatives and proposals which will drastically lower carbon emissions, close the emission gap, and put us on track for an ambitious legal agreement.

Pennsylvania can meet the EPA emissions levels. But I challenge Pennsylvania to

take the Paris Pledge.

Being carbon neutral requires that we leave fossil fuels in the ground. Continued reliance on them to simultaneously provide energy and drive our economy is no longer a realistic option. The shale gas boom of the past decade has reinvigorated the ener-

As citizens of the Earth, we need to develop an ethic of stewardship, of responsibility and sustainability, in every facet of our life and society – in our businesses, our governments, our churches, and our schools.

gy industry in the state, but not without profound and far-reaching consequences. We need a ban on fracking and we need it now.

I am concerned about all of the environmental and health impacts of fracking; but especially about water, which is life

itself.

We simply can't support a form of energy extraction that intentionally poisons and permanently removes large amounts of precious freshwater from the hydrologic cycle. We can't permit an exchange of life-giving water for climate-damaging oil. Let's not repeat our coal industry legacy with fracking.

Erie's economy depends on the tourism industry. The impacts of climate change, including fracking, will lead to continuing changes in temperature, rainfall, snow cover, and other climate variables: all things that affect activities which draw tourists to our area.

We must redirect our steps; the challenge that we face demands nothing less. Climate change threatens every facet of our economy: agriculture, energy, transportation, and tourism. It threatens the health, happiness, and future of our children.

As citizens of the Earth, we need to develop an ethic of stewardship, of responsibility and sustainability, in every facet of our life and society –

in our businesses, our governments, our churches, and our schools. One way to make a difference is by implementing the CPP.

Pope Francis' encyclical is a call to action that includes honest dialogue; it is also a call to urgent actions that seek solutions in both our personal and public lives; and finally it is a call to a change in national and international policy. We must respond to the call because the Earth is on loan to each generation, and because caring for the environment transcends political and religious boundaries.

Benedictine Sister Pat Lupo, an environmental educator at the Inner City Neighborhood Art House, is involved in environmental advocacy at both the local and statewide level. Contact her at plupo@neighborhoodarthouse.org.

Online extra: Local Climate Reality Leader Janine Fennell's piece "COP 21: Framing our future in France" delves further into what's at stake in Paris. Learn more at eriereader.com.

Budding Solutions to Violence

Using theater to interrupt the cycle of violence in Erie.

By: David Szymanowski

Bang, bang, you're dead. Some say that guns don't kill people, people kill people. Others say removing the guns from the streets will reduce violence.

I don't believe either is accurate. What people think and how they think kills people. Although emotions play a role, especially in individuals who have Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the defining factor is the way people act on their emotions through the "what" and "how" of their thoughts.

The "what" is the content; whereas, the "how" is the thinking that can be toxic: faulty reasoning, illogical statements, and cause and effect reversals.

Now people who run in the same

circle will most likely think and act similarly. Viewing the same TV news shows, listening to similar radio reports, or interacting with related websites, results in comparable thoughts and behavior. Likewise, imbibing at identical bars and clubs, frequenting the same social events, and standing on the same street corner repeatedly leads to groupthink. There is no novel input. Each individual is constrained within a closed, stale system.

Presently, Erie's anti-violence action

Right: In October, All an Act Theatre Productions staged *Death and the Maiden*, a play with the sort of "intellectual and emotional resonance" that could offer insight into the urge for revenge.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

plans are products of that sort of a system. They're not solution-oriented. They are mechanisms of containment and control: curfews, gun buy-backs, and reallocated police presence.

Thinking and consequent emotions and actions need to be the target of intervention. Yet, is this enough to alleviate our epidemic of teenage violence? Regrettably, not all teenagers are capable of change. Traditional legal methods need to be used with those individuals.

Fortunately, there are also those who overcame obstacles to become role models. One individual who spent many years in prison became a leading expert on combating addiction and criminal thinking. Another grew up in the worst, most violent, and gang infested area of South Chicago and became a successful law enforcement professional.

How might a person's thought processes be changed? One way is through therapy; however, this is an unwieldy and inefficient method to reach numerous people. Moreover, it is not just the gun-toting teenagers whose cognitions need altering, but the citizenry in general. One-dimensional media in all its manifestations needs to be transformed. Stirring up emotions does not inspire solutions. Neither does investing in outrage, maligning others, and further divisive activity.

Could theater change a person's mindset? Our society, in general, focuses on book learning. Yet teenagers learn predominantly through action and play. They model others on the street corners. They repeat thoughts and behaviors of those they value. It is lock-step groupthink. They are acting out a play within their play.

Ancient Greeks used plays to explore tragedies that ensue with rash thinking, grave emotions, and fateful behavior. Medieval churches staged Passion Plays to teach the illiterate. Natural behavior is mimicked through theater. Ordinary play is transformed through simulated play.

Might not a solution be writing, practicing, and performing original scripts?

Who can write these plays? Our teenagers.

Who can act in these plays? Our teenagers.

Who can learn from these plays? Everyone, but especially our teenagers.

Plays by teenagers susceptible to violence could be performed in a theater or, naturally, at our parks, many of which are seldom used. What are the implications of creating such drama? Resolution, change, and release. These dramas are commonly used within prison programs, called "Therapeutic Communities." Although this approach has not been tested in Erie, now would be a fantastic opportunity to attempt it in our community.

There are so many serious manifestations of violence that could be presented through acting, a natural storytelling form where everyone can learn. Of all arts, theater is the most direct route to human thoughts, feelings, and actions.

One play with the needed intellectual and emotional resonance is *Calling the Moon*, which I saw at PACA last May. This play was written and directed by Margo Wolfe to cope with the thoughts and actions of a distressing violent suicide. Another, *Death and the Maiden*, presented in October by All an Act Theatre Productions, featured only three actors. Its theme is best summarized by an unanswered question: "Can the psychological damage of torturous rape only be purified through revenge or does paranoia take an intractable mental foothold?"

On the streets of Erie, many teenagers consider being "dissed" a traumatic insult that demands killing as revenge, regardless of the speaker's intent. But conflict can be transformed into an opportunity for compassion through interaction instead of reaction. Through slow thinking instead of fast thought. By viewing commonalities instead of contrasting differences.

Consistent, healthy, and frequent parenting would, of course, make many of these interventions unnecessary. Loss, trauma, and a stress-filled environments can be surmounted by nurturing attachments.

In the meantime, this is a "Call to Solutions" for brainstorming sessions, partnerships, and action. None of these changes will be instantaneous or easy.

Ending violence depends on you, me, and our Erie community: being indifferent or involved.

David Szymanowski is a writer living in Erie and a frequent volunteer with the group Pennwriters.

The Rising Tide Triumphs Through a Sense of Community

Local lawyer hosts first-ever TEDx event in Erie.



ANDY COLWELL

By: Ben Speggen

As his ship neared the end of its maiden voyage, Jonathan D'Silva took a moment to sit down. He'd been steadily steering, guiding, managing, coaching, and directing. He reclined, kicked his feet up, and watched as the coast drew nearer. This journey had begun nearly nine months earlier, when the partner at MacDonald Illig Attorneys submitted his application to host the first-ever TEDxErie.

Under the banner of "ideas worth spreading," TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) began in 1984 as a one-off event featuring talks centered on those three topics. From its Silicon Valley roots, it grew to a perennial conference in 1990. As TED flourished, topics became more diverse, but the name stuck. And later, TED added the "x" – and a lot more conferences.

The "x" stands for an "independently organized TED event," meaning the TED flagship is available for franchise. As its website explains, "In the spirit of TED's mission, the TEDx program helps communities, organizations, and individuals produce TED-style events at the local level."

For better and for worse, TEDx is a branding and funding vehicle for TED. To date, more than 14,000 TEDx events have been held, with 1,000-plus conferences scheduled out to November 2017. On Saturday, Nov. 14, Erie was amongst more than 20 TEDx conferences spanning the globe, from Brooklyn, N.Y. to Damanhur, Egypt.

Although TED provides much freedom for planning a TEDx conference


– organizers determine the theme, select the speakers, and determine the logistics – TED does impose restrictions, most notably how many people can attend an event. Only TEDx license holders who've attended a TED conference can host an event with more than 100 people in attendance.

Standard membership to TED 2016 runs \$8,500 – and is sold out already – while a Donor level – which remains open – costs \$17,000; both depend on one's application being accepted.

A TEDx license must feature official TED material. Events lasting less than half a day must show two videos; those running longer must incorporate official TED material into at least 25 percent of their programming.

The list goes on, from sponsorship details to social media specifications, but at the heart of TEDx is the TED mission – its connection of quality material (chosen at the hand of a TEDx license holder and her/his volunteer staff) with an audience yearning for knowledge and entertainment. Overall, despite encountering some choppy waters (a couple of presentation slide deck glitches, a speaker losing his place, and the event running longer than anticipated), D'Silva and his team succeeded admirably on their maiden voyage.

After reviewing applications to TEDxErie, D'Silva (who hasn't been to a TED conference but attended TEDxColumbus) and crew right-sized the event to 12 speakers, three performances, and a handful of videos accounting for a quarter of the afternoon's TED programming. "Community" and "triumph" emerged from D'Silva's "The Rising Tide" theme as the lasting im-



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pressions, with speakers discussing an eclectic mix of topics.

Two of the strongest talks came back-to-back at the conference's beginning.

Photographer Natalie Brasington is an Erie native who resides in New York City and works as a photographer for *Rolling Stone*, among others. She discussed her work with the Art Start Portrait Project, which provides "homeless and court-involved NYC teens access to the arts." A visually stirring presentation, Brasington's talk explored the impact of arts on personal identity in the presence of challenges all-too-often overlooked.

Brad McGarry, director of the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst University, followed with another highlight of the conference: A talk that began with an introduction to his son Connor, who was diagnosed with Angelman Syndrome. Brad discussed how their family would not let that *define* Connor. Brad embarked on a quest to "crack the code" and ensure his son would have a meaningful and enriching life. In short, he's done that and more.

In the second half, Greenville, Pa.-native Nick Cianci talked about surfing the Great Lakes. In winter.

A simple yet oddly striking topic evolved into a clarion call for conquests and achieving greatness against perceived odds. Drawing on Joel Garreau's *Nine Nations of North America*, Cianci explored the difference between thinking of ourselves as Rust Belt material and of those borne of The Foundry – how Garreau refers to the area.

Perception and self-perception are key. In this region, we're makers and doers, some of whom are bold enough to be Great Lakes surfers. Such passion, energy, and spreading of ideas this first time around make it exciting to see what D'Silva and team come up with next year, as he's already put in his bid for a 2016 license with the new theme: Don't Give Up The Ship.

More information – including updates on when the archived TEDxErie talks will be available to stream – can be found at TEDxErie.com.

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bSpeggen@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpeggen.

Waiting for a Recall

Boom, Bust, and the future of GE Transportation.



BRAD TRIANA

By: Jim Wertz

For 25 years, Bill Crawford has made his way each workday from his home in Meadville to the GE Transportation facilities in Lawrence Park. The work, the pay, the camaraderie: These are the things that bring him back every day. Job security, however, has been a daily concern.

"I was actually here a year and one day and I got laid off for over two years," Crawford remembers.

He went back to Meadville and took what he calls cash jobs, day labor that helped him stay afloat. It was familiar to him, the resilient necessity of having a backup plan.

"I thought it was like any other job I had in my life, I'd get laid off and I'd come back," he says. "But it was literally 25 months before they called me back."

By that time he'd found steady work at a sawmill. But when the call came, he answered.

"The money was twice what I was making on the sawmill," he says.

That experience is typical of what are known as "permanent layoffs," or

PLOs, at GE Transportation. Members of UE Local 506 – United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America – are laid off indefinitely and placed on a five-year recall list. Both the layoffs and the recalls are based on seniority. Employees with the most service are the last to go and the first to be recalled, while those with the least seniority are the first let go and the last to be brought back.

But there's another class of layoffs known as "temporary layoffs," or TLOs. These occur when a laborer gets moved to a different job or classification because of company reorganization; like when, for example, 1,500 people get sent home on a PLO.

"I've been laid off out of every building here," Crawford admits. "There was one time that I went through five jobs in a year. I've gone from being a 20 code welder, to being a 17 code welder, to being a 14 code welder, which means that I could lose as much as five dollars an hour in pay and it's not always easy to adjust for that."

He's got two kids in college plus expenses of his own.

"This union is strong and we don't want to see anyone get laid off or lose their job," he says. "But the reality is that we're all trying to hang on to what we've got and that can get pretty cut-throat at times."

Especially when GE Transportation announces a major layoff.

Federal labor legislation known as the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act requires companies with more than 100 employees to provide at least 60 days notice in advance of plant closings and mass layoffs. And while that provides employees with some time to prepare for their next moves, the stress they feel isn't mitigated by knowing what lies ahead.

"For 25 years that stress has always been there," Crawford says. "Now, I'm the chief steward of Building 7, so I represent 310 guys. The stress I had before was bad, but the stress I have worrying about those guys is worse."

Crawford's unit is expected to lose 212 people in this round of layoffs.

In 2009, the company downsized by nearly 1,500, a third of which came by

way of retirements. But 800 jobs were eventually recalled.

"In 2012, they moved corporate headquarters out of the area. In 2013, they announced a transfer of work [to Fort Worth, Texas]," recalls Scott Slawson, president of UE Local 506 and a 10-year veteran in the GE facility. "In 2013, they also announced the layoffs and gave the WARN Act. Now here we are in 2015 and they issue the WARN Act again for 1,500 workers and that's just the union workers. That doesn't include the salaried employees and we haven't heard that announcement yet."

Many of the hourly employees expected to lose their jobs in January are people who have only been at GE since 2013, when the company laid off 379 union plant workers in addition to relocating some management to its new Fort Worth plant. There were also approximately 100 retirements at that time, which saved some positions from being placed on PLO. But many of those positions were not replaced.

"With a corporation this big none of us know what our future holds," Crawford says. "Ten years ago, I wouldn't have expected the Texas plant. Now that's another factor we have to consider."

And it's a big factor in the current round of layoffs. That's because GE Transportation pegged the Fort Worth plant to be home base for domestic locomotive production in the U.S.

The Erie facility was reclassified for international production and domestic overflow production. Fewer domestic and international orders for locomotives are the primary reason for the impending layoffs.

"On the domestic front there's about 400-500 locomotives for next year, which is low," says Slawson. "On the international front, orders are weak. There are simply not a lot of locomotives to be built."

That's the result of a number of factors, all of which are beyond the control of GE Transportation and its employees. Historically, as the country endures the presidential election, domestic macroeconomic fluctuations have residual macroeconomic effects on global markets. When the gross national product of developed nations gets stronger, it creates a more competitive international marketplace. Furthermore, GE Transportation produces very expensive products with long replacement cycles.



BRAD TRIANA

But perhaps the biggest factors looming over the future of GE Transportation and its Erie plant are the cost of fossil fuels and the unresolved status of the U.S. Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank.

Oil is cheap right now, so it costs less to move freight by truck than it does

The WARN Act requires companies with more than 100 employees to provide at least 60 days notice in advance of plant closings and mass layoffs. And while that provides employees with some time to prepare for their next moves, the stress they feel isn't mitigated by knowing what lies ahead.

by rail. Oil producers are also hanging on to their reserves until prices go up, which impacts rail companies responsible for transporting oil across North

America. In addition to volatile oil markets, federal emphases on clean energy in the U.S. and an economic downturn in China, which historically purchased large quantities of U.S. coal, have had a significant impact on a coal industry that primarily uses rail freight to deliver coal domestically and distribute it to U.S. ports for foreign markets like China. That's led to job cuts across the railroad industry.

In August, Union Pacific announced it would permanently eliminate – not lay off – hundreds of management positions following an announcement by the Omaha Group that coal production was down by more than 26 percent in the first half of the year and not expected to rebound in 2015. On Oct. 1, Norfolk Southern suspended operations on a line that serviced the mining industry between Mullens and Princeton, W.Va., which cost 100 people their jobs. CSX closed a rail yard in Erwin, Tenn. in mid-October leaving 300 people unemployed. Five days later CSX laid off another 180 workers in Kentucky.

This considerable downturn in domestic rail traffic would have been bad for employees of GE here under the old production model. It's much worse now that local workers are waiting for do-

Weathered pavement, a forbidding gate ... these images of one entrance to GE Transportation's East Lake Rd. facility seem to be emblematic of the plant's overall vitality, and its uncertain future down the road.

mestic overflow from the Texas facility while they process international orders, which are also down. Both Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railway have collectively laid off nearly 2,000 people in the past year because of falling shipments of oil, grain, and coal, according to the Canadian press. It's a pattern that's replicated across the globe and it means fewer locomotives coming out of GE Transportation.

International orders are further softened by the U.S. Senate's failure to ratify the charter for the Ex-Im Bank, which helps American companies connect to international markets by financing foreign purchases of goods produced in the U.S. This allows governments and companies in the developing world to purchase expensive products from American firms without acquiring high risk loans from private lenders.

"With Ex-Im being [Cont. on page 41]

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VNET

IT's about time.

Tom Kennedy's Renaissance

The engineer-turned-developer has always been a dreamer.



Left: Detail of a mural by Edward Turnbull, who also painted murals in the Chrysler Building in NYC, Opposite: Kennedy's copy of Real Estate Development Workbook & Manual, clearly well-used.

By: Ben Spegen

Behind an austere door on the third floor of the Renaissance Centre, Tom Kennedy buzzes about his office. Time pauses between early and late morning and settles into an otherwise average Thursday in Erie, Pa. Inside the tallest building in Pennsylvania's fourth largest city, Kennedy shifts quickly between his two desks, searching for something.

"I don't know if you want this or not, but I have a recent copy of my résumé – a list of my employment background," he says, handing over two pieces of paper stapled together. "That way we don't really have to talk about it."

Kennedy shrugs off his catalogue of accomplishments not because they're unremarkable, nor out of hubris. Experience quantified by bullet points belies the real story of this real estate developer – one of hard work, humility, and an innate ability to not fear failure. And he knows this; he's lived it. Success is an easier story to write than the come-up – the long hours, late

nights, weekends sacrificed on the altar of achievement. And the president of Professional Development Associates, Inc. knows this, too, better than most.

Kennedy's from New York City. Because of that, people can be quick to assume that he comes from money. His last name conjures images of wealth; weekends spent at Martha's Vineyard, not hanging drywall in low-income properties in Erie. But Kennedy is a self-made man, unrelated to the royal U.S. bloodline. Both of his parents' collars were blue. They worked hard and encouraged their children to do the same. He didn't grow up with a silver spoon; rather, in a borough where youth looking to excel slung newspapers early in the morning and swept shops late at night, carving out their share of the American Dream.

Moving from paintings and photos of boats to his bookcases, Kennedy speaks in bursts. He smiles often and laughs genuinely. He shifts topics with little regard for transitions. He's not hard to follow – his excitement

is contagious and comes on without warning; he's friendly, and it's easy to feel like you've known him for years in minutes – but it can be difficult to keep up. He knows this, too, and finds anecdotes along the way to slow down his thoughts.

Just a few years ago, he explains, he boarded the Renaissance Centre elevator on the fourteenth floor. A woman and her son were already there. He did what any decent person would do: said hello and asked how she was doing.

"Not so good," she responded. Her son had just been diagnosed with ADD, she told him.

"Oh, I said, 'that's great! I also have ADD – and I own the building!'" he says, laughing. "We're so quick to put labels on things. My mind is always thinking about things... you know, it can be a real strength if you use it."

Kennedy channels that gift by embracing his curiosity and a fearlessness to, as he puts it, act on the "ready, fire, aim" mantra. Which explains his success as a developer.

Standing on the corner of State and Ninth streets, he eyed up the

Palace Building. "If I could do anything and not fail," he recounts thinking, "I'd buy that building." So he did.

The what-would-you-do-if-you-knew-you-couldn't-fail notion came to Kennedy while Zig Ziglar piped through his car's stereo system, when he'd travel from job site to job site as a sales and application engineer, after studying mechanical engineering at SUNY Maritime College in the early '80s. Kennedy daydreamed. Took notes. Observed his surroundings constantly. Thought about what his future might look like.

"Ask someone who's been doing what you want to do for ten years and you'll get a good sense of where you'll be in ten years," he says. "A lot of people I worked with gave up on their dreams for various reasons and didn't seem happy about that."

After living in New Orleans, then New Jersey, and then Pittsburgh, Kennedy landed in Erie because of General Electric. As his time as a twentysomething neared the threshold to becoming a thirtysomething, he thought about life outside of his 9-to-5. Before Kennedy would purchase the Palace Building – his first large acquisition – he started small: \$4,000 investment small.

He purchased his first property at the corner on Fourth and Cherry streets, heeding the advice of an economics professor. That professor told his students if they took anything away from the class, it was to purchase property where they work and rent it out to their colleagues. Kennedy laughed it off as odd guidance, but after renting a room from a fellow engineer at his first job with Ingersoll Rand in New Jersey, the counsel took on real

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BRAD TRIANA

meaning.

Kennedy soon amassed twenty-odd more properties, including the Palace Building, and quit his full-time job before turning 30, which caught the eye of the press. In his office, he has an old *Erie Times-News* clipping. He's photographed mid-glimpse, gazing out of his office window at the nearby Baldwin Building.

"If I could do anything and know I wouldn't fail ..." he says, smiling.

The Baldwins, Kennedy had discovered, planned to auction off the building and give the proceeds to charity. Although he had sunk his savings into the Palace Building, Kennedy headed to a local bank the day of the auction and obtained \$25,000 on a line of credit to make him an eligible bidder. When he showed up, he was handed a placard with "2" on it. There wouldn't be a "3" or "4" or any other number but "1" – held by the Baldwins.

When the bidding opened at \$300,000, Kennedy raised his hand. Then a bid of \$310,000 – the Baldwins – came in. So Kennedy raised \$315,000. That was the last number said at the auction.

After getting the closing period extended from thirty to ninety days, Kennedy scrambled to find the funding. It's not that he doubted his ability to purchase the building, or didn't realize he would need the money; it's that not having the money first hadn't scared him out of taking action. It was ready, fire, aim, and he hit his mark.

Since then, Kennedy's been busy. Almost too busy to stop and measure his success. "It's always on to the next project, on to the next thing that catches my eye," he explains.

In the mid-2000s, Kennedy secured the former Meadville Junior High School – equal in size to the Renaissance Centre – and converted it into apartments. Then he sent a message to the president of Cobblestone Hotels via LinkedIn. Kennedy now has seven hotels – including one planned for the Bayfront, one at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, and one in Texas – underway.

"When we first met, I told them our plan was to have five hotels in five years," he says, explaining that Cobblestone officials said they hear that often but don't see it. "We're on our seventh project in year three."

Tom Kennedy, the engineer, the developer, the New Yorker, the not-that-Kennedy Kennedy, has never dreamed of returning to New York City. "Sometimes I get frustrated when people don't realize all of the things we have here," he says. "We have our challenges, sure, but we'll overcome them."

From the highest point in the tallest building in the city, he has a good vantage point.

"It's really beautiful, isn't it?" Kennedy says, gazing out a fourteenth floor window of the Renaissance Centre. It's unclear whether he means the Lake, the City, a nearby building, or something else he sees that others don't. What is clear is that he's still looking. And he's still seeing. And failure isn't on the horizon.

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bSpeggen@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpeggen.

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Spotlight on Erie

November 25 to December 8, 2015

Wednesday, Nov. 25

The Great Pumpkin Jam Continues a Tasty Tradition at the Brewerrie



There's just something about late fall, around Thanksgiving, that brings out the drinker in a lot of us.

And when the drinks are beers, and the beers are (mostly) born of pumpkin, and all choice-quality, and all local, I mean c'mon - that's autumnal splendor right there.

Ergo, the Brewerrie at Union Station once again presents the Great Pumpkin Jam, a Thanksgiving Eve party to commemorate, celebrate, and/or mourn the tapping of this year's final kegs of its "Pumpkin Pie," "Pumpkin Bomb," and "Gourd Lourd" harvest-season brews.

There'll also be local guest taps featuring Lavery Brewing Company's "Devil's Pumpkin," Erie Brewing Company's "Johnny Rails," and Meadville-based TimberCreek Tap & Table's "Creek O' Lantern," plus other seasonal bottles on special.

Along with all that, there's a return (and what's become a traditional) performance by Erie rockers East Ave, jamming out a live acoustic set.

Happy Thanksgiving, indeed. – Ryan Smith

7 to 10 p.m. // The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. // brewerrie.com

Saturday, Nov. 28

3 Records. 4 Bands. 1 Night. Welcome Presque Isle Records in Seven-inch Style at Kings Rook Club

This American Song has some cool friends. They also love records. On the Saturday after Thanksgiving, they're combining them. Carrying on

the noble punk rock tradition of split seven-inch records, they'll be releasing three in one night. Drop by this free show, and you'll be able to hear everything that was so recently emblazoned in wax.

Erie's own Rust Belt troubadour, Matt Texter, will open the show. Inspired by his country idols of yesteryear, Texter's soulful baritone and engaging personality will win you over instantly. Second on the bill is Planet Claire. This charming foursome is sweet enough to give you a mouthful of cavities. Sue Martin's vocals have the bite to nail



their twee punk sound perfectly. Taking the stage next will be Erie's favorite MC, C. Brown. Catch every beat while Brown brings out verse after verse of soul-searching rhymes. As one of the strongest talents to come along in a while, it's no wonder he's won virtually every award the area can bestow.

After that, get ready for a rapid-fire treat, as each band will recreate the vinyl tracklist live. Sharing equipment, they'll alternate to play every song in order.

Local favorites This American Song will close out the night. You might already know members of this five-piece from previous bands like Telefonics, Black Rose Diary, Smoke and Mirrors, Plato's Cave, and the Go Go Rays. They bring their signature blend of Americana and indie, with a punk rock ethos.

But wait, that's not all! This show will also see the debut of Presque Isle Records, a new musical collective. The three records will be the first releases to bear the new logo (designed by Texter) for this budding label. Keep your eyes peeled, because you'll undoubtedly see more great independent artists added to this inclusive stable.

C. Brown and This American Song's Larry Wheaton recently sat down with *The Whenever Show* podcast to detail the event. Brown described his

motivation, noting that "I'm trying to show people from the hip-hop world, and the scene as a whole, that even though we're all different, we should be working together."

This showcase might seem like it

Carrying on the noble punk rock tradition of split seven-inch records, they'll be releasing three in one night.

varies too widely in genre, but it feels just right. The acts are all personally connected to each other. And all of the songs were recorded by TAS guitarist John Johnston, right in his home studio.

Get your turntable ready for a six-sided chimera of local talent. The seven-inches will be available individually, or you can pick up a box set containing all three splits. The multi-colored records were pressed in very limited quantities, so be sure to snatch up this beautiful collaboration while you can! – Nick Warren

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

Saturday, Nov. 28

Always Get a New Toilet Seat, and Other Things My Mother Taught Me



Gabe and Olivia are moving into their first apartment when both sets of parents show up unexpectedly. What could go wrong? Delightfully, just about everything.

Katherine DiSavino's comedy, *Things*

My Mother Taught Me, at All An Act Theatre, promises to be hilarious and heartwarming. As the four arrive to "help" the young couple start a new life in Chicago, they come armed with wisdom and cleaning supplies. Things go downhill fast, as possessions are lost and surprises ruined. Add in a building super who only understands English when it's convenient – and provides liquor at critical moments – and the stage is set for comedic errors laced with every parental gem of wisdom the elders have acquired about life and love.

The mothers fuss over cleaning and quiz Olivia about the relationship road ahead. The dads go on an odyssey, end up a bit tipsy, and give Gabe genuinely wise advice.

You will recognize, and laugh at, the classic parental clichés, but you will also see the screwy beauty of family. There's a happy ending here, of course, but the journey to it may have you both laughing and crying. – Mary Birdsong

7:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 28, 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 29 // 652 West 17th St. // 450.8553 or 449.6554

Sunday, Nov. 29

Even Craftier Handmade Fair Supports PACA



The holidays are upon us, and that means shopping. If the madness of Black Friday isn't for you, sleep in, eat some leftovers, and plan your shopping for Sunday, Nov. 29 at the Even Craftier Handmade Fair.

The fair is a community of local makers and musicians, with crafts as far

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CALENDAR

as the eye can see. A local nonprofit is supported at each fair (usually once a month), and in November, the Performing Artists Collective Alliance (PACA) will reap the benefits of your holiday cheer.

There will be acoustic sets, too, from Tommy Link, Zach Chylinski, Optimistic Apocalypse, and Justin Moyer (so much better than mall muzak, right?). It's the perfect opportunity to give homemade presents (Jewelry! Afghans! Warm cuddly things!) to your loved ones, without all the stress.

Because let's be honest here: you are not going to finish those hand-knitted scarves for all of your friends. Nor will you complete the irreverent emoji needlepoints, or the hand-made soaps and candles. What you will end up doing is dropping half a paycheck at JoAnn Fabrics. Then, a few days before Christmas, covered in hot glue, paper scraps, and possibly glitter, you will admit defeat and plead mercy from the Amazon.com gods. And you know how expensive shipping is.

The Even Craftier Handmade Fair saves you all that hassle — and you'll be doing a bit of good in the process. Tis the season! — Sara Toth

12 – 4 p.m. // Tickets \$1 // PACA, 1505 State St., 2nd Floor // facebook.com/evencraftier

Sunday, Nov. 29

Hinder with Special Guests Shaman's Harvest and Within Reason Rock Sherlocks



It's Sunday evening. Thanksgiving Eve is a distant memory — if it's a memory at all (you probably started at Plymouth, because in Erie we do as the Pilgrims did). Turkey Day and all its tryptophan-fare have paraded their way into cold storage. Your waistline has expanded while your wallet has contracted. And still you ask yourself, "Have I overindulged enough?"

If that's a void yet to be filled in your life, let Sherlocks be the place to fill it

— with a heaping helping of rock-n-roll. Headlining are Oklahoman post-grunge/sleaze rock veterans Hinder, touring in support of their latest release, *When The Smoke Clears*. Marshall Dutton replaces original lead singer Austin Winkler, and the result is a little less boozy and a lot more Bon Jovi.

Joining them are special guests Shaman's Harvest and Within Reason, who also fit well within the template of 2000's modern rock radio — riff-centered verses and poppy choruses. Joining these special guests are special guests Revolve, Six Years After, and Six Year Stretch. That's a whole lot of special — but then again, you've already established that *nothing* is too much for you. — Matt Swanseger

7 p.m. // Sherlocks // 508 State St. // \$25 // sherlockspub.com

Thursday, Dec. 3

Laugh/Riot Performing Arts Company Stages *The Twin Menaechmi* at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania



A local theater company will soon be offering some old school laughs; and by "old school" I mean positively ancient.

Currently in its fourth season, Laugh/Riot Performing Arts Company, a resident theatrical ensemble loosely based at Edinboro University, will present *The Twin Menaechmi* by the Roman playwright Plautus.

Written over two millennia ago, *Menaechmi* is a true classic. A comedy of mistaken identities, it's survived and been retooled in various versions throughout the annals of theater: Shakespeare poached the play to create *The Comedy of Errors* during Elizabethan times; and last century, Rodgers and Hart "borrowed" it from the Bard to create their 1938 musical, *The Boys from Syracuse*.

"Laugh/Riot has from the beginning prided ourselves on doing works that

people do not often get the opportunity to see," explained Laugh/Riot's board member and head of P.R., Joshua Mizikowski. "We have made doing Greek and Roman plays part of our mission statement." Directed by Shaun Taylor and Rob Connick, who was selected as one of *Erie Reader's* 2015 "40 under 40," the play fits in with Laugh/Riot's "season of duality," said Mizikowski in a press release.

Mizikowski noted that *Menaechmi* complements the heavy dramas the company is also staging this season. "This is a great comedy for our audiences that everyone can enjoy," he added.

So, when in Rome, do as the Romans do; when at EUP this December, watch what entertained them over 22 centuries ago. — Gregory Greenleaf-Knepp

7:30 p.m. on Dec. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12; 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 6 & 13 // Edinboro University's Diebold Center for the Performing Arts // 219 Meadville St., Edinboro // 323.1147 or laughrioterie.com

Friday, Dec. 4

Take a Visual and Artistic Journey through "Assembled Visions"



Shining brightly in the sky of Gallery Night on Dec. 4 will be the opening of "Assembled Visions," a group show featuring four regional artists. All faculty members in the Art Department of Edinboro University, Shelle Barron, Geoff Beadle, Terry McKelvey, and Fred Scruton are masters in their chosen disciplines who, together, will create a new dialogue transcending all of them. "Visions" will explore their creative processes to seek out how artists go about their work and arrive at the final piece.

Barron designs and prints her own disparate imagery and then re-constructs these fragments into new, larger, compositions where "some kind of inner truth appears." She writes in her statement for the show, "Experimenta-

tion affords me the opportunity to discover something both unknown and remembered, beyond the trappings of my overactive habits of mind."

Beadle explores the interactions of figures in illusory three-dimensional form and space, saying, "I compose these pictures with the goal of engaging the viewer in dynamic design, using the lyrical positioning of figures, shifting perspective of architectural space, and strategic arrangement of pattern, texture, color, and light." He uses multi-

Shelle Barron, Geoff Beadle, Terry McKelvey, and Fred Scruton are masters in their chosen disciplines who, together, will create a new dialogue transcending all of them.

ple sources such as direct observation and photographs, but he "intentionally obscure[s] this process of compilation, attempting to create images that are seamlessly unified and convincingly real."

McKelvey says he attempts to capture the dynamic tensions or contradictions in spaces and forms in his paintings. The degree to which individual works appear realistic, expressionistic, or abstracted varies, he says, depending on his response to forms he observes and what he is trying to convey. He does, however, prefer enigmatic images which "have a greater capacity to feel compelling and universal."

Scruton, a photographer, embraces the "truth is stranger than fiction" tradition of street photography. His work revolves around capturing the efforts of self-taught "outsider" artists throughout the country. He sees their work as less shaped by mass media or the academic art tradition. He wants to record this outsider art because he says it is often ephemeral, saying his project is intended to "preserve the artists' transient visions, and break through the confines of one imagination."

To reveal more about their working methods, a video will accompany the exhibit wherein they describe the process of creation. Collectively, these artists have a lot to say with language — and also imagery. This promises to be a fascinating show, with works speaking to each other and creating rich and meaningful dialogues with their viewers. — Mary Birdsong

11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday // Nov. 28 to Mar. 26, 2016 // 411 State St. // 459.5477 // erieartmuseum.org

CALENDAR

Saturday, Dec. 5

Driftwood Floats in with Tyler Smilo at Kings Rook Club



“Sometimes a band can just appear out of nowhere and make a sound so agreeable and enticing it almost seems like they’re the product of some divine destiny. Driftwood offers an ideal example of that phenomenon,” wrote a reviewer in *Country Standard Time*.

Yup.

The Binghamton, N.Y.-based quartet – driven by strings and incorporating elements of, well, everything into their sound – has made substantial waves in the Northeast’s music scene and beyond in recent years, sharing stages with the likes of Donna the Buffalo, Emmylou Harris, Bela Fleck, and many other notables.

And soon, Driftwood will float its way back into the Gem City for what’s sure to be a stellar show at the Kings Rook Club.

They’ll be joined for the evening by special guest-opener Tyler Smilo, who (in case you didn’t know) is a Rust-Belt-hewn musical force unto himself.

Both Driftwood and Erie’s own Smilo have been taking the Americana-influenced scene by storm of late – and with good, sound-based reason – so it behooves fans of live music to take the opportunity to catch them all together. — Ryan Smith

8 p.m. // Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

Sunday, Dec. 6

Best of Enemies Explores the Partisan Bickering of a Bygone Era

Watching liberal novelist Gore Vidal spar with conservative journalist William F. Buckley in the late sixties is like entering the *Twilight Zone*. In tone, appearance, and rhetoric, the two call to mind almost nothing about contemporary politics. In fact, the presidential failures of aristocratic insiders like Mitt

Romney or John Kerry rely, in part, on their lingering resemblance to patrician elitists of this sort.

Although Buckley and Vidal were political opposites, their personal similarities take center stage in Morgan Neville and Robert Gordon’s 2015 documentary *Best of Enemies*. Both are petty, adversarial, impeccably dressed, and fiercely intellectual. Both sound strikingly similar to Thurston Howell III from *Gilligan’s Island*. And for a few months during the summer of 1968, their public sparring (especially over Vietnam, sexuality, and police brutality) propelled ABC studios into the media spotlight.

Best of Enemies would have you believe that these debates signaled a sea change in our political discourse,



as partisan bickering came to replace objective facts and figures. The documentary also identifies Buckley as an important precursor to the “Reagan revolution” that rolled back the accomplishments of the New Deal. Beyond that, I’m not sure that Vidal and Buckley indicate much about American politics in the 21st century. Vidal’s sexual frankness is more Oscar Wilde than Nicki Minaj, and it’s tough to picture Buckley making any sense out of a Republican party enthralled by reality television stars and low-affect lunatics who think that Jesus’ dad stored grain in the pyramids of Egypt.

Ironically, *Best of Enemies* indicates the degree to which anti-intellectualism has taken over political discourse in our country. At its best, this impulse can minimize the reign of rich white guys in seersucker suits. At its worst, we get pointless debates about “killing baby Hitler” when we need insights about foreign policy. I’m not sure *Best of Enemies* steers us in a more productive direction, but it gives us a look at another flawed model for political discourse. — Dan Schank

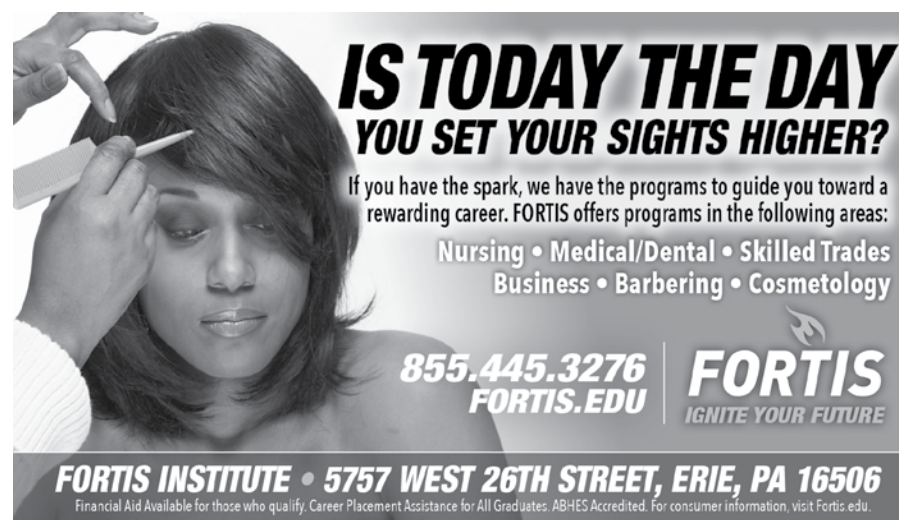
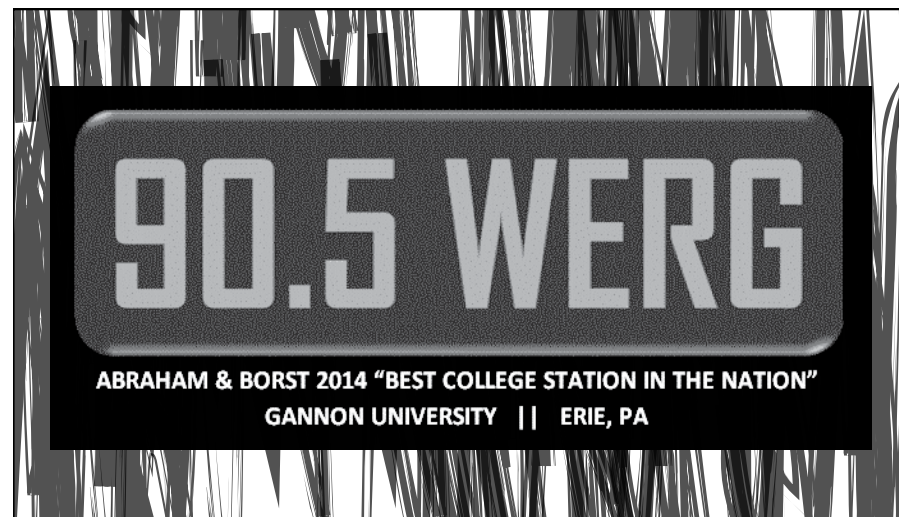
2 p.m. // Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture, 501 E. 38th St. // miac.mercyhurst.edu/events/best-of-enemies/



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• FREE CONSULTATIONS •



Events Calendar

November 25 to December 8, 2015

MUSIC

Basement Transmissions Turkey Trot

Nov. 25 — 6 to 10 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 West 11th St. [facebook.com/basement.transmissions](https://www.facebook.com/basement.transmissions).

Thanksgiving Eve Party with Steve Trohoske's Art Groupies

Nov. 25 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](https://www.facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

Vibe & Direct

Nov. 27 — 1 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](https://www.facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

Gem City Jazz Ensemble at Festival of Trees

Nov. 27 — 2 to 3 p.m.
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](https://www.erieevents.com).

Gem City Concert Band at Festival of Trees

Nov. 27 — 3:15 to 4:15 p.m.
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](https://www.erieevents.com).

Basement Transmissions Acoustic Showcase

Nov. 27 — 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 West 11th St. [facebook.com/basement.transmissions](https://www.facebook.com/basement.transmissions).

Friday Night Jazz

Nov. 27 & Dec. 4 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Oasis Pub, 3122 West Lake Rd. [jazzerie.com](https://www.jazzerie.com).

Geek Army

Nov. 27 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs &

Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://www.presqueisledowns.com).

New Wave Nation

Nov. 27 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Sherlocks Erie PA, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](https://www.facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

Saturday Night Blues, Latin, Jazz and More

Nov. 28 & Dec. 5 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Oasis Pub, 3122 West Lake Rd. [jazzerie.com](https://www.jazzerie.com).

Mushroomhead

Nov. 28 — 8 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Sherlocks Erie PA, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](https://www.facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

This American Song, C. Brown, Planet Claire & Matt Texter

Nov. 28 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](https://www.facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

Legend

Nov. 28 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://www.presqueisledowns.com).

Hinder, Shaman's Harvest & Within Reason

Nov. 29 — 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Sherlocks Erie PA, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](https://www.facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

Vienna Boys Choir

Nov. 30 — 7:30 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](https://www.mercyhurst.edu).

Gem City Concert Band: Holiday Concert

Dec. 1 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church, 2216 Peach St. [gemcitybands.org](https://www.gemcitybands.org).

Mannheim Steamroller

Christmas

Dec. 1 — 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [erieevents.com](https://www.erieevents.com).

Mercyhurst String Ensemble Concert

Dec. 2 — 7 p.m.
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](https://www.mercyhurst.edu).

Dave VanAmburg & Friends

Dec. 3 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Bel Aire Marriott Hotel, 2800 W. 8th St. [jazzerie.com](https://www.jazzerie.com).

Colony House Band

Dec. 3 — 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Colony Pub & Grille, 2670 W. 8th St. [jazzerie.com](https://www.jazzerie.com).

Eugene Perry Faculty Recital

Dec. 3 — 7 p.m.
Dr. William P. Alexander Music Center Recital Hall, 110 Kiltie Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](https://www.events.edinboro.edu).

Alex Hall's Figurehead

Dec. 4 — noon
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](https://www.facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

First Friday Concert

Dec. 4 — 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.
Dr. William P. Alexander Music Center Recital Hall, 110 Kiltie Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](https://www.events.edinboro.edu).

Mercyhurst Concert Choir Holiday Concert

Dec. 4 — 7 p.m.
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](https://www.mercyhurst.edu).

The Groove

Dec. 4 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://www.presqueisledowns.com).

Come Home for the Holidays

Nov. 5 — 2:30 & 8 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [eriephil.org](https://www.eriephil.org).

Driftwood, Tyler Smilo & Bootleggers Bible Club

Dec. 5 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](https://www.facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

Mid-life Crisis

Dec. 5 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://www.presqueisledowns.com).

Holiday Concert

Dec. 6 — 3 p.m.
Louis C. Cole Auditorium - Memorial Hall, 205 Meadville St. [events.edinboro.edu](https://www.events.edinboro.edu).

Mercyhurst Wind Ensemble Concert

Dec. 6 — 4 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](https://www.mercyhurst.edu).

Merry Mozart to All!

Dec. 6 — 7 p.m.
First Alliance Church, 2939 Zimmerly Rd. [jessiecollura@roadrunner.com](https://www.jessiecollura@roadrunner.com).

Mercyhurst North East Cultural Series: Herald the Season!

Dec. 9 — 7 p.m.
St. Mary's Chapel - Mercyhurst North East, 16 W. Division St. northeast. [mercyhurst.edu](https://www.mercyhurst.edu).

DANCE

The Nutcracker

Nov. 28 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 29 — 3 p.m.
McDowell Intermediate Little Theater, 3320 Caughey Rd. [eriecbt.org](https://www.eriecbt.org).

Cheer & Dance Extravaganza

Dec. 5 — all day
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](https://www.erieevents.com).

FOOD & DRINK

Pre - Order Christmas Baked Goods

Ongoing through Dec. 6
Saint Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, 25636 N. Mosiertown Rd. [orthodoxcrossingville.org](https://www.orthodoxcrossingville.org).

Happy Hour with Acoustic Jukebox

Nov. 25 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Sherlocks Erie PA, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](https://www.facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

The Great Pumpkin Jam & Thanksgiving Eve Revelry

Nov. 25 — 7 p.m.
The Brewerrie At Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. [brewerrie.com](https://www.brewerrie.com).

Wild Turkey Wednesday with the I-90s

Nov. 25 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Sherlocks Erie PA, 508 State St. [facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace](https://www.facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace).

Thanksgiving Buffet

Nov. 26 — 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Riverside Inn at Cambridge Springs, One Fountain Ave. [theriversideinn.com](https://www.theriversideinn.com).

Support Local Everything

Nov. 27 — noon to 10 p.m.
Erie Ale Works, 416 12th St. [facebook.com/ErieAleWorks](https://www.facebook.com/ErieAleWorks).

Breakfast With Santa

Nov. 28, 29 — 9 a.m. to noon
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](https://www.erieevents.com).

An Evening of Cocktail Creations by Local Mixologists

Dec. 5 — 5 to 9 p.m.
Grape Discovery Center, 8305 W. Main Rd. [grapediscoverycenter.com](https://www.grapediscoverycenter.com).

International Dining Series: French Provincial

Dec. 5 — 6 p.m. (Dinner served at 6:30 p.m.)
Lake View Country Club, 8351 Station Rd. northeast. [mercyhurst.edu](https://www.mercyhurst.edu).

Ladies Day Brunch & Art Day

Dec. 6 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd. [arundelcellars.com](https://www.arundelcellars.com).

FILM

Deepsea Challenge

Ongoing through Dec. 31 — noon & 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. [trecpi.org](https://www.trecpi.org).

Tiny Giants

Ongoing through Feb. 1 — 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. [trecpi.org](https://www.trecpi.org).

D-Day: Normandy 1944 Movie

Ongoing through Feb. 1 — 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. & 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Drive. [trecpi.org](https://www.trecpi.org).

Ink (2009)

Nov. 28 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](https://www.facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse).

Love Me or Leave Me

Dec. 3 — 5:30 p.m.
Corry Area Primary School, 423 Wayne St. [corrypa.com](https://www.corrypa.com).

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Dec. 3 — 8:30 to 10:30 p.m.
Edinboro University, 405 Scotland Rd. [facebook.com/edinborofilmseries](https://www.facebook.com/edinborofilmseries).

Of Dice and Men (2014)

Dec. 4 — 8 p.m.



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Showcasing the Strings of the Heart Orchestra. Including a Holiday Sing-along! Free and open to the public. Ample free parking.

MUSIC REVIEWS

Joanna Newsom

Divers
Drag City

★★★★★

Divers gives us another complex album full of lush instrumentation and erudite songwriting. Fans won't be disappointed. Newsom – probably the world's most recognizable harp player – has cemented herself as a critical darling. Listeners can submerge themselves in the dark fragility of her distinctive sound. Notes cascade and unfold like a steampunk music box. The format of the album is easier-to-swallow than the triple-disc opus of *Have One On Me*, without the lengthy tracks of *Ys*. While not the game-changer that her 2006 album was, *Divers* is still studiously dense. It's rife with historical allusions. For example, "Sapokanikan" is named for a Native American settlement eventually known as Greenwich Village. The album expands on subjects like war, love, and time. Beginning with the shimmering first verses of "Anecdotes," she notes that "time in our camp is moving." Emotions rise and fall, culminating with the sweeping tones of "Time, As A Symptom." Bonus fact: she's married to Andy Samberg. Catch her in Pittsburgh Dec. 12, or Buffalo the next day. – Nick Warren



Grimes

Art Angels
4AD

★★★★★

You might be surprised by how genuinely poppy Art Angels sounds. No one would describe the widely acclaimed 2012 bedroom album *Visions* as a mainstream sensation. Claire Boucher has moved from her darker, dream pop sound to something brighter and more marketable. Usually, an evolution like that would throw up red flags of insincerity. That isn't the case here, and that's why it works. I had my doubts, but around the sixth listen, the catchiness won out. At 28, the Canadian songwriter is poising herself as a true "post-internet" pop star. Boucher has described Grimes as "ADD music." That makes sense when you hear the millennial schmaltz of "California" followed by Taiwanese rapper Aristophanes' guest spot on "Scream." The first side of the album is front loaded with a string of club-ready cuts. The highlight of that later half is "Venus Fly," where she teams up with the venerable Janelle Monáe. After the dust settles, will we see Grimes be seated as Pitchfork's answer to Katy Perry? – Nick Warren



Trey Anastasio

Paper Wheels
Rubber Jungle Records

★★★★★

Phish's Trey Anastasio is one of the best guitarists of our time. That doesn't mean he's perfect. It's difficult for this album to hold your attention. Anastasio seemed most interesting with his cranked up, brassy 2002 debut. A few years later, *Shine* did an amazing job showcasing his controlled, subtle side. This album takes the lukewarm approach. Some segments are more frenetic, but end up sounding goofy ("In Rounds"). Whenever Phish would go to sillier places, the entire band was gung ho about it, and it would work. Here, you don't hear any connection between the band and the bandleader. They sound great, but they sound like studio musicians. A few lifeless tracks and awkward moments stand out, like "Bounce." The album has an uptick with "Invisible Knife," and there are a few more highlights along the way. Tracks like "Liquid Time" smooth out the edges. In the end, though, it probably doesn't matter much. Anastasio was never really known for his studio albums. – Nick Warren

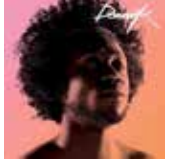


Dornik

Dornik
Universal

★★★★★

Don't be fooled by his unusual name (a portmanteau of parents Dorothy+Nick) or South London upbringing – Dornik's self-titled debut is the greatest Michael Jackson album to be released since, well, Michael Jackson. Whereas posthumous Jackson releases *Michael* (2010) and *Xscape* (2014) were unmistakably the products of studio necromancy, *Dornik* feels like a reincarnation. The eponymous singer is a medium through which Jackson speaks – from the familiar falsetto to the rhythmic presence of his delivery, wherein the gasps and yips between vocal phrases are as vital as the melody itself. Many of these tunes could be confused for *Thriller* outtakes, but in a way that seems genuine and not contrived. Album opener "Strong" is the spiritual successor to "Wanna Be Startin' Something" with its incessant bass figure and aerobic pace. The slower and mid-tempo tracks that comprise the bulk of the album recall MJ before his tragic descent, when he was more invested in his music than preserving his image – at turns daydreamy, rhapsodic, and vulnerable, but consistently delightful. – Matt Swanseger



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erienewsnow.com

Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](#).

Reuse! Because You Can't Recycle the Planet

Dec. 5 — 3 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](#).

Rain (1932)

Dec. 5 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 Westlake Road. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](#).

Best of Enemies

Dec. 06 — 2 p.m.
Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](#).

VISUAL ARTS

Assembly Required

Ongoing through Dec. 4
Bruce Gallery, Doucette Hall 215 Meadville St. [brucegallery.info](#).

American Landscapes

Ongoing through Dec. 4 — noon to 7 p.m.
Bruce Gallery, Doucette Hall 215 Meadville St. [brucegallery.info](#).

Clay and Fiber Partners

Ongoing through Dec. 13
Heeschen Gallery, 910 Market St. [artsmeadville.org](#).

Stitches: Contemporary Fiber Art Show

Ongoing through Jan. 3 — 9 a.m.
Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](#).

Afternoons with Henry

Ongoing through Jan. 5 (Opening Reception Dec. 4 — 7 to 10 p.m.)
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 East 5th St. [glassgrowersgallery.com](#).

Land, Sea and Sky: Details from Nature

Ongoing through Jan. 8
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Ian Brill: Storm

Ongoing through Jan. 10
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Connect: Grassroots Efforts to Reshape Our Community

Ongoing through Jan. 10
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartsandculture.org](#).

Art of the Comic Book

Ongoing through Feb. 7
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Assembled Visions

Nov. 28 through Mar. 26 (Opening Reception Dec. 5 — 7 to 10 p.m.)
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Holiday Show

Nov. 29 & Dec. 4, 13 — 1 to 4 p.m.
Bayfront Gallery, 17 E. Dobbings Landing [npaaonline.org](#).

Gallery Night

Dec. 4 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Senior Projects & Advanced Studio Projects

Dec. 8 through 13 (Opening Reception Dec. 8 — 7 to 8 p.m.)
Allegheny College Art Gallery, 520 N. Main St. [allegheny.edu](#).

THEATRE

A Taffeta Christmas

Nov. 28 & Dec. 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 29 & Dec. 6, 13 — 2:30 p.m. & Dec. 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 — noon
Riverside Inn at Cambridge Springs, One Fountain Ave. [theriversideinn.com](#).

Things My Mother Taught Me

Nov. 28, 29 — 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. & Nov. 29 — 3 to 5 p.m.
All An Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th St. [allanact.net](#).

Christmas Memories

Dec. 1 — noon & Dec. 4 — 7 p.m. & Dec. 5 — 5:30 p.m. & Dec. 6 — 2:30 p.m.
The Station Dinner

Theatre, 4940 Peach St. [canterburyfeast.com](#).

The Twin Menaechmi

Dec. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 — 7:30 p.m. & Dec. 6, 13 — 2:30 p.m.
Diebold Center for the Performing Arts, 219 Meadville St. [laughrioterie.com](#).

A Christmas Story the Musical

Dec. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 & Jan. 2 — 7:30 p.m. & Dec. 6, 13, 20 & Jan. 2, 3 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. [erieplayhouse.org](#).

Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge

Dec. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 — 8 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. [pacal505.com](#).

Twelfth Night

Dec. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 — 8 p.m. & Dec. 6 — 2 p.m.
Schuster Theatre, 109 University Square [gannon.edu](#).

'Tis the Season with The Little Match Girl

Dec. 4 — 4:30 & 7 p.m. & Dec. 5 — 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](#).

Confection

Dec. 4 — 8 p.m.
Struther's Library Theatre, 302 W. 3rd Ave. [strutherslibrarytheatre.com](#).

Next Fall by Geoffrey Nauffts

Dec. 5, 12 — 8 p.m.
Renaissance Centre, 2nd Fl. 1001 State St. [dramashop.org](#).

COMMUNITY

Mindfulness, Movement & Meditation Class

Nov. 25 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](#).

Festival of Trees

Nov. 25, 27, 28 — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Nov. 29 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Bayfront Convention

Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](#).

Rumble on the Bay Live Boxing

Nov. 25 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](#).

Erie Otters vs. Kitchener

Nov. 26 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](#).

Man Up Day

Nov. 27 — 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Sprague Farm & Brew Works, 22043 US Hwy 6 & 19 [facebook.com/SpragueFarmBrewWorks](#).

Warner Winter Wonderland Art & Craft Show

Nov. 28 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Nov. 29 — noon to 4 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [erieevents.com](#).

Christmas Craft Show

Nov. 28, 29 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Riverside Inn at Cambridge Springs, One Fountain Ave. [theriversideinn.com](#).

Erie Otters vs. Sault Ste. Marie

Nov. 28 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](#).

Porreco College Open House

Dec. 1 — 3 to 7 p.m.
Red Barn Classroom Complex, 2941 W. 38th St. [events.edinboro.edu](#).

Rolling the Dice

Dec. 1 — 4 to 6:30 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartsandculture.org](#).

Oxfam Hunger Banquet

Dec. 1 — 6 p.m.
Van Houten Dining Hall - North, 345 Scotland Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](#).

Erie Otters vs. Guelph

Dec. 2 — 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](#).

Commemoration

of North American Women Martyred in El Salvador

Dec. 2 — 7 to 8 p.m.
Mt. St. Benedict, 6101 E. Lake Rd. [eriebenedictines.org](#).

Talk, Chanting and Meditation with Kedarji

Dec. 2, 16 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
The Bhakta School of Transformation, 1421 W 41st St. [bhaktaschool.org](#).

Outside the Window: Ice Fishing

Dec. 3 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](#).

Ms. Loretta's Story Time

Dec. 3 — 11 to 11:30 a.m.
Erie Children's Museum, 420 French St. [eriechildrensmuseum.org](#).

Hometown Holidays at the Manse

Dec. 3, 4, 5, 6 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
The Historical Society of Erie County, 356 W. 6th St. [eriehistory.com](#).

Erie BayHawks vs. Iowa

Dec. 3 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](#).

Opera Scenes: "Let's Have a Party"

Dec. 3 — 8 p.m.
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](#).

LifeWorks Erie Holiday Party

Dec. 4 — noon to 3:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](#).

Justice for Immigrants Vigil

Dec. 4 -- 12:15 to 2:45 p.m.
Federal Building, 6th and State St. [eriebfp.org](#).

Erie Otters vs. Owen Sound

Dec. 4 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](#).

TREC the Halls

Dec. 5 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](#).

Schoolhouse Craft Festival

Dec. 5 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Dec. 6 -- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
McDowell Intermediate High School, 3320 Caughey Rd. [asburywoods.org](#).

Book Signing: Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister

Dec. 5 — 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Werner Books, 3514 Liberty St. [wernerbooks.com](#).

Erie Otters vs. Owen Sound

Dec. 5 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](#).

Decorate Your Own Christmas Wreath

Dec. 6 — 10 a.m. to noon
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](#).

Wise Words for Wellness with Rebecca Wise, PharmD

Dec. 8 — 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](#).

"Time of the Season" Student Art Sale

Dec. 8, 10 — noon to 5 p.m. & Dec. 9 — noon to 7 p.m. (Reception 5 to 7 p.m.)
Bruce Gallery - Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St. [events.edinboro.edu](#).

Planetarium Show: Star of Wonder

Dec. 8 — 6 & 7:30 p.m.
Cooper Science Center, 230 Scotland Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](#).

The Compassionate Friends

Dec. 8 -- 6 to 8 p.m.
Wheezie's Kove, 4887 Buffalo Rd. [facebook.com/](#)

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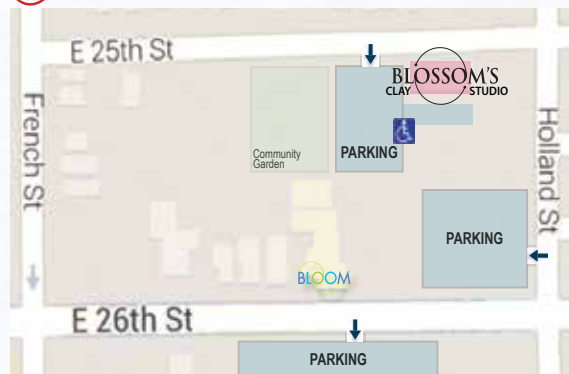
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

A Conversation with Ahmed Gallab



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The current leader of Sinkane, and former member of Yeasayer, Caribou, Of Montreal, and the Atomic Bomb! Band talks about finding unity through music.

By: Nick Warren

Ahmed Gallab is the multi-instrumentalist and driving force behind the band Sinkane, who played an intimate, incredible set at Mercyhurst's D'Angelo Performing Arts Center on Nov. 19. They blend a fusion of afrobeat, indie, shoegaze, and soul into something wholly original.

I spoke with Gallab recently about his various projects and the musical odyssey that brought him here.

Nick Warren: So, I've seen that you grew up in a bunch of different places, how do places like Sudan, or Ohio, shape you, musically?

Ahmed Gallab: You know, as far as being an artist, you create what you know. Whether you're a photographer, a painter – what you do is an extension of who you are and the experiences you've had. Being a person who's traveled a lot and lived among many different cultures and many different kinds

of people, that experience has affected the way I make music. I find that through all my travels, people more or less are the same. They feel emotions similarly. When they're happy they're happy, when they're sad they're sad, and when they're nostalgic they're nostalgic in the same way. It's all primal instincts and characteristics of human beings. That's true everywhere in the world. And I've found parallels and similarities in different kinds of music in that regard. Like reggae music and country western music, African music, and soul music from the U.S.: they all kind of come from the same place. The people who made that music are more or less the same. Oppressed white people in the U.S., and oppressed black people, and Jamaicans, and Africans – they're cut from the same cloth. The energy they put into making the music is very similar. I've been able to draw on

Left: Ahmed Gallab of Sinkane surrounds himself with "some really talented musicians. The rest of the guys in my band are so good at what they do," he says. This allows them to freely create music drawing from Gallab's myriad influences.

those similarities from my experiences and communicating with people.

NW: You started out on drums. Have you been gravitating towards certain instruments lately?

AG: Just the ones that I know. I'm just trying to be better. Between being a better guitarist, keyboard player, drummer, and singer, singing has been the biggest one. I have the privilege of playing with some *really* talented musicians. The rest of the guys in my band are so good at what they do. And it just inspires me to be better at what I do.

NW: What certain things can you get from a live show that you might not be able to get from a record?

AG: I think both of them have their own kind of energy. When you think about listening to a record, a lot of times it's a really personal experience. But when you go into a live setting, you're literally experiencing a true form of community. There's a band performing that's relaying a message to you, and you guys are all among a

community of people who are experiencing this, and you need to relay back the response. It's like a conversation between the band and the crowd. Together, you guys are creating this universal experience. It's very primal, it makes you move, in a way that can't make you move when you're listening

I find that through all my travels, people more or less are the same. They feel emotions similarly. When they're happy they're happy, when they're sad they're sad, and when they're nostalgic they're nostalgic in the same way. It's all primal instincts and characteristics of human beings.

to it at home. And I guess the collective energy of everyone involved is something that you can't experience alone. It's a really beautiful thing.

Read more of this conversation at ErieReader.com.

Nick Warren can be contacted at nWarren@ErieReader.com

No Drugs. No Drinking. No Drama.

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The good folks at Basement Transmissions have been working hard to keep underground, independent music alive in Erie since opening their doors in 2011. As both an artist and musician himself, owner and proprietor Bob Jensen knows better than most the need for young people to have a creative outlet. And without BT, underage kids would no longer have a decent all-ages venue where they can perform or see their favorite bands. This was the case for almost a year, once The Hangout in Edinboro closed in January of 2011.

After four years of helping Erie's underground scene get back on its feet, and providing countless local bands and artists a haven for their creative pursuits, it's now our turn to give something back.

The new BT is located at the former Roadhouse Theater on West 11th Street, and the building is starting to show its age.

"I want parents to know BT is safe," Jensen said. "When the front facade of the building has dilapidated to the state it's in, it does not give off the safest vibe. I would eventually like to get better outdoor lighting and more security cameras, too."

The harsh lake effect weather Erie experiences every winter takes its toll on the building's heating and plumbing, an issue that also proved to be the bane of The Hangout in Edinboro.

Now more than ever, Basement Transmissions needs the support of its patrons, and anyone willing to help. Check their schedule on Facebook or their website for show dates. Then, come support the venue, and the community that Jensen and the BT crew have kept alive. — Tommy Shannon

Basement Transmissions // 145 West 11th St. // basementtransmissions.com // [Facebook.com/basementtransmissions](https://www.facebook.com/basementtransmissions)

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Gallery Night: A Tale of Two Galleries

Box of Light and The Secret Squirrel hope to encourage the artist in all of us.

By: Brianna Lyle

In the late 1950s, Allan Kaprow showed the world new art concepts such as “Environment”: works that were designed to make the gallery viewer interact with the art, and “Happening”: art that could occur anywhere. These new concepts were monumental in advancing performance and installation art that we see at nearly every gallery today.

Art of this type necessitates the viewer's physical presence: it plays with her senses, allows her to become the center of the work, and teases her with an array of emotions that can only come from transitioning from observer to creator. Kaprow's ideas shift the focus from the art to the spectator. And the Dec. 4 Gallery Night is sure to do just that.

Kaprow was initially who came to mind as Annie Schmitt, co-director of Box of Light (who also have a location in Bloomsburg) detailed their upcoming, and first, exhibition for Gallery Night.

“Everyone can be a creator,” she said about the Box of Light LEGO animation stations available for gallery visitors to explore this Dec. 4. “We want everyone to come in and play, especially the adults.”

They will also have stations set up to work with MaKey MaKey, a software program that allows visitors to experiment with conductive objects by turning them into controls for a computer, i.e.: creating piano keys with bananas or Dance Dance Revolution footpads out of magazines, Schmitt explained. Box of Light hopes that the low-pressure environment gives participants the chance to create without feeling the need for the end result to be “good.”

In addition to the LEGO animation stations, Box of Light is showcasing original student work created in Box of Light studio programs last year. The line-

up includes live-action film, Claymation, LEGO animation, and video games programmed by the students. “We are showcasing student work because we feel kids deserve a voice in the world and because getting feedback from others is an important part of the creative process,” said Schmitt.

Similarly, Secret Squirrel – which gets its name from the tree-lined neighborhood surrounding Collegiate Academy – invites viewers to participate in

These galleries aren't exemplifying Environment per se, but certainly a manifestation of it. Each is inviting the viewer to participate in the art; to not just view it but help create it.

its exhibitions. This arts, music, and wellness cooperative offers several free and paid interactive classes and events about subjects such as yoga, holistic lifestyle and healing techniques, and nutrition. “We are all about play and opportunities,” said Janina Lee, co-owner of Secret Squirrel. “Everyone has the ability to create something beautiful.”

As part of their effort to bring community members into Erie's art world, they're also encouraging artisans and crafters to drop off homemade wreaths that will be on display on Gallery Night and throughout December for the public to purchase. “Nothing makes us happier than showcasing the work of talented people in the community,” added Lee, “and whenever we have a chance to inspire others, it's a win-win sit-

uation.”

These galleries aren't exemplifying Environment per se, but certainly a manifestation of it. Each is inviting the viewer to participate in the art; to not just view it but help create it.

In 1961 Kaprow said, “Our advanced art approaches a fragile but marvelous life, one that maintains itself by a mere thread, melting into an elusive, changeable configuration, the surroundings, the artist, his work, and everyone who comes to it.”

These words invite the audience to be part of the art; somewhat of a challenge from Kaprow himself. Certainly this Gallery Night is a chance to experience interactive spaces, where not only the artist's creative mind is relished but the viewer's mind, as well.

Gallery Night is on Friday December 4, 2015 from 7 to 10 p.m. Participating Galleries include:

Box of Light, 419 State St. (First Gallery Night at new location, next to the Erie Art Museum)

Secret Squirrel, 3025 French St. (Drop off wreaths Saturdays from 12-6 p.m.; Thursday, Dec. 3 from 4-8 p.m.; Friday Dec. 4 from 12-4 p.m., or by appointment: 528.5794)

D'Hopkins Denniston Gallery of Fine Art, 5 West 10th St.

Erie Art Museum, East 5th St., between State St. & French St.

Glass Growers Gallery, 10 East 5th St.

The Northwestern Pennsylvania Artists Association (NPAA) Bayfront Gallery, 17 East Dobbins Landing

The Mason Jars Company, 1001 State St., Suite 1220

Ralph Miller Jewelers & Gallery, 28 West 8th St.

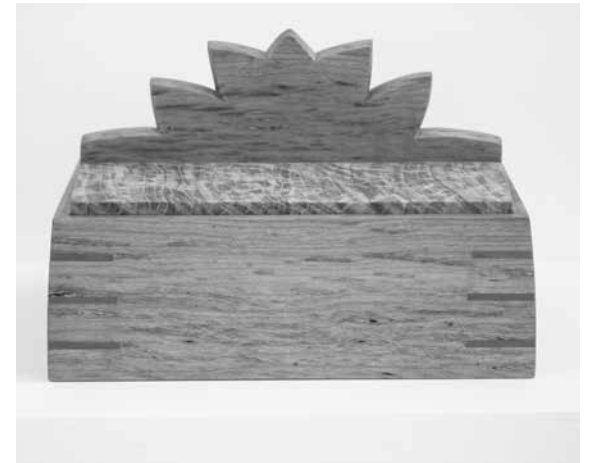
Schuster Gallery at Gannon University, New Location: 700 Peach St., 1st Floor

Something Wonderful, 2558 West 8th St.

Brianna Lyle can be contacted at bLyle@ErieReader.com.

Karen Ernst's Elemental “Land, Sea, and Sky: Details from Nature”

This contemplative exhibit is on view at Erie Art Museum's Holstein Gallery until Jan. 8.



By: Mary Birdsong

There is a serenity in Karen Ernst's wood pieces. A tranquility borne from the simple line, the organic, the clean. Every piece in this show, whether it be a functional piece of furniture or a sculpture, is contemporary in expression yet built on the underpinnings of traditional woodworking. There is much to like in Ernst's “Land, Sea, and Sky.”

Ernst's inspiration from nature is clearly articulated here, though she translates those organic elements with a firm, assertive hand. In “Tree Branch Desk,” the stylized branches are represented in the vertical sides of the desk, arranged horizontally, not vertically as they would grow. But Ernst's control over her chosen forms does not overwhelm the objects. It elevates them. Ernst wisely lets the wood speak for itself in the top of “Desk,” a simple slab, and she even allows imperfections in the wood to remain. The drawers can be seen through the branches and simple notches create the drawer pulls.

This tension – between the natural and the controlled – is evident throughout. “Surf Sequence,” a wall-mounted sculptural piece, does not reflect a wild unfettered sea. Instead, Ernst's treatment breaks down a body of water to reveal its most elemental function. Two long horizontal rectangles move across the wall, each having a modest swell of water (wood) coming toward the viewer. The surfaces are hand-chiseled to evoke the movement of water and painted a muted blue-green. These two narrow slices of sea perfectly capture the essence of wave movement.

It's clear that Ernst accomplishes the attention to detail required when keeping **[Cont. on page 38]**

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[Cont. from page 35] things clean like she does. From perfect dovetail joints to small painterly details, everything is carefully thought through. In her “Wavering Grass” and “Sea Swell” wall cabinets, the stylized designs gracing the front of the boxes are also found in the back of their interiors – something for just the owner to enjoy, perhaps, or an extra treasure to show off by keeping the boxes open.

It is the small details of nature that motivate Ernst. Small impressions that resemble the space where rocks



Above: Detail of one of Ernst's clean, organic pieces.

had been in the sand are featured in several pieces, including “Sea Foam Shelves” and “Cloud Table.” These empty spaces, like the spaces between the branches in “Desk,” display how negative space is just as important to our experience of nature as is positive form. We admire the branches of the tree – but also the lacy canopy they make when joined together with the open sky.

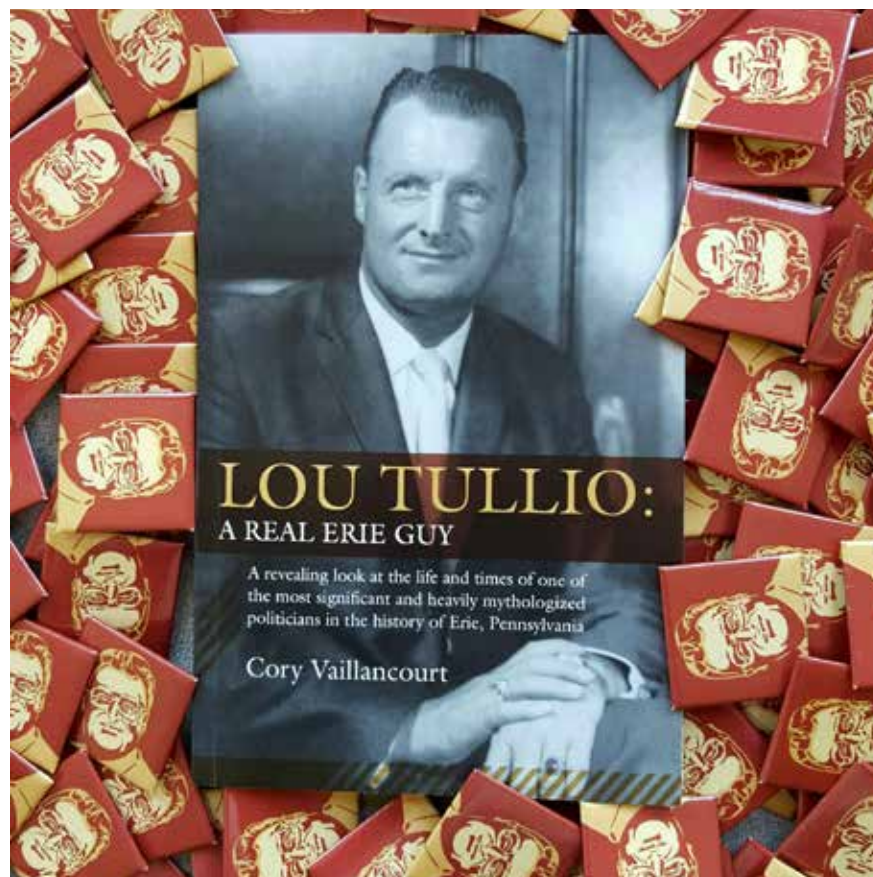
Ernst's small sculptural works are the most appealing to the hand, for this viewer. Both “Botanical Objects” and “Nut-Root” are stylized organic forms, seedpods, or some other growing things. “Nut-Root,” crafted from carved and turned poplar, looks like an acorn finished in black milk paint. It is smooth and sophisticated, but bears a crack on one side suggesting the potential this organism has – the emerging root, perhaps even the tree.

Ernst knows when to be lush and when to be subdued. She has found the balance between the natural and the controlled, leading to works that are quiet repositories of contemplative calm.

Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m., through Jan. 8 // Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. // 459.5477 // erieartmuseum.org

The Myth and Matters of Erie's First ‘Strong’ Mayor

Review: Cory Vaillancourt, *Lou Tullio: A Real Erie Guy*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Jim Wertz

You don't need to spend much time in Erie before you're confronted with Lou Tullio. Not the man himself, of course, but his enduring legacy. Remnants of his success abound, from the recently renovated Erie Insurance Arena that previously bore his name to the annual “Celebrate Erie” festival, which he founded as “We Love Erie Days” to distract Erieites from the fact that their city had forgotten to celebrate the nation's bicentennial in 1976. His failures, like the Transitway Mall on State Street, have all but been erased. As we remember him 25 years after his death, there are still politicians in this town who owe their positions to his patronage, for better and for worse.

Tullio's story is a great American tale. The son of immigrants, he attended the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. on an athletic scholarship, started a family there, and went to war on behalf of his parent's adopted nation. He returned to his beloved Erie in 1947 and embarked on a lifelong path to power.

“He's one of the most heavily mythologized public figures in this town, if not the most heavily mythologized figure,” says Cory Vaillancourt, author of *Lou Tullio: A Real Erie Guy*.

Part of that mythology are the oft-speculated improprieties – ranging from financial misdeeds to mafia connections – which Vaillancourt says are unprovable and most likely untrue, based on the research he conducted for what amounts to an accessible and, at times, heartwarming portrait of Erie's first “strong” mayor.

Tullio was the first mayor who wasn't a member of Erie's city council. That body controlled Erie by virtue of the councilmanic form of government in which five council members – one of which was the mayor – each oversaw one of five city departments. Tullio came to power because of the untimely death of his political rival, Michael Cannavino. The people's choice in the Democratic primary of 1965, Cannavino died just days before the general election, leaving the party to call on Tullio to lead the city's new political structure ... for the next 23 years.

During that time, Tullio amassed his share of opposition. The business community fought him on the Transitway Mall, a covered two lane section of State Street intended to offset the loss of downtown business to what is now the Millcreek Mall. City councilmen like Pat Cappabianca, Bob Brabender, and Bernard Harkins, all Democrats, teachers, and Catholics from Erie's 6th Ward, fought Tullio on the sale of the water department, among other initiatives. And let us not forget the political witch hunt that led to an IRS audit of Tullio's finances.

What stands out from Vaillancourt's narrative are the striking similarities in Erie's contemporary political landscape. Innovative ideas are often traded for tradition and safety. Democrats from Erie's 6th Ward continue to reign supreme in council chambers, holding the keys to success or trump cards of failure for the person who sits on the fifth floor of City Hall. And cross-party rivalries become matters of the court when a “strong” mayor flexes his muscle.

Vaillancourt artfully details these stories and more in this comprehensive analysis of the Tullio era and its place in the annals of Erie history. But precisely because this work examines the man, place, and time in an empirical way rather than within the aforementioned mythologies of Lou Tullio, readers will likely view the book through the lens of their preconceived notions about Tullio and his unmatched tenure as mayor.

No doubt, the mythos of Lou Tullio is greater than his 8,713 days in office. More enduring than the accomplishments of his administration is the mythology of the man and his modus operandi. His time in office was marked most prominently by the bridges built between the mayor's office and council chambers. He didn't begin his political career as the man people wanted, but he became the mayor most of Erie didn't want to live without. As the city approaches its next mayoral election, that is a story worth reading.

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

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Erie Arts & Culture's Fall for Arts & Culture Awards

Honoring those who strengthen our community by creating Erie's cultural landscape



BRAD TRIANA

By: Brianna Lyle

Erie Arts & Culture has been hosting the Fall for Arts & Culture Appreciation Awards for nearly three decades, celebrating the importance of individuals, organizations, and businesses who are creating the cultural landscape of Erie along the way. This year's honorees include: the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network receiving the Leadership Award, Douglas and Deborah Murphy receiving the Applause Award, Jan Hyatt receiving the

Imagine Award, and Jennifer Dennehy receiving the Bruce Morton Wright Artist of the Year Award.

"Look at any of our award recipients, and their story – the big picture story – of how their work has shaped and influenced the sector and moved it forward," said Amanda Hurd, Marketing and Development Director of Erie Arts & Culture, on the importance of the awards. "Each has an amazing story to tell; these people are truly making a difference in the lives of so many others."

One of the most visible differences

comes from the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network (SSJNN) who have revitalized Little Italy and Erie's east side multicultural neighborhoods using urban art installations, primarily murals. They hope to continue creating murals with an anti-violence theme, where children would have the opportunity to work with local artists creating the murals, themselves.

Many families in Erie live below the poverty line, lacking access to the arts. Therefore, the SSJNN's goal is to create community engagement via these mu-

Jennifer Dennehy, surrounded by several of her students, receives the Bruce Morton Wright Artist of the Year Award at Erie Arts & Culture's Fall for Arts & Culture Awards.

rationals, but also to offer opportunities for on-site art activities for children and adults. Recently at their east side location, they teamed up with Bloom Collaborative, a component of Stairways Behavioral Health that holds programs and initiatives aimed at improving community health, to provide art classes to children in the coming months. A

watercolor course is set to begin soon while the west side location currently offers multimedia art on Wednesdays for children.

"We look at art as a way to provide hope to our communities," said Rosmari Graham, SSJNN Executive Director. "I hope we are expanding the notion of traditional art into our communities and offering artists new experiences; working in areas that stretch their imaginations, show new insights, and help us all feel a sense of community together."

This year however, it's not visual art

dren, is looking to bring dance into mainstream curriculum for students.

"Dance is generally not a part of public education," Hyatt explained. "The public does not have a sophisticated understanding of dance as an art form or dance as an expression of culture." This is why rhythm and dance are taught together at Creating Landscapes, allowing the students to express their feelings and learn through movement. The programs are designed to engage children in critical thinking, imaginative expression, and aesthetic experience.

"I hope we are expanding the notion of traditional art into our communities and offering artists new experiences; working in areas that stretch their imaginations, show new insights, and help us all feel a sense of community together."

that was center stage at the Fall for Arts & Culture Appreciation Awards, but rather dance. For the first time, the Bruce Morton Wright Artist of the Year award recipient is an artist of movement, Jennifer Dennehy. Both Dennehy and Jan Hyatt are being recognized for their efforts in dance.

"Dance quite often gets the least amount of funding to create original quality work and therefore is less accessible to people than music or visual art," said Dennehy, who, in trade for lessons, cleaned her dance studio every week from childhood until she graduated high school. "Dance is less visible than other forms of art." Which is why two years ago, Dennehy created the summer Mid-Day Dance Breaks in downtown Erie. The idea was to hold weekly dance performances during lunch breaks in order to bring more awareness to movement art. The events are also coupled with a visual artist who creates a piece of work on-site while using the dance performance as his or her muse.

Similarly, Hyatt, the director of Creating Landscapes, a group of interrelated educational programs for chil-

"It has always been a mystery to me that public education has chosen to have students learn by sitting quietly at their seats," Hyatt added. "Dance, and all the other expressive arts, infuse content with feeling – and when feelings are expressed – children are engaged."

As Hurd explained via email, the awards are truly about the people receiving them. They are about artists' stories and how they share these stories with the communities who support and gain insight from them. The Fall for Arts & Culture Appreciation Awards not only showcase these individual talents, but also the impact of the arts on Erie as a whole.

"Arts and culture not only drive economic benefits to Erie," said Deborah Murphy, "but give our city a vibrancy, vitality, and quality of life we would not have if we did not have a Playhouse, a Philharmonic, an Art Museum, a beautiful Tall Ship, a Children's Museum, and a wonderful new history center. We think arts education is vital to a well rounded, appealing community."

Brianna Lyle can be contacted at blyle@ErieReader.com.

[Cont. from page 18] shut down for the last several months there's potential orders for now and the future that the company can't even go bid on because there's no financing for the buyers," Slawson says.

The Bank's charter expired in June for the first time in its 81-year history as a result of mounting conservative opposition to what many on the Right call "corporate welfare." Critics of the Ex-Im Bank, including Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa), charge that companies like Boeing and General Electric shouldn't require federal assistance on the global market. Proponents of the bank argue that its suspension is going to cost tens of thousands of American jobs because of foreign consumers' inability to secure private funding in tumultuous economic times.

"When you're dealing with things like NAFTA and CAFTA – all of these free trade agreements have, over the years, eroded away at the American workforce. Things like Ex-Im help keep that in check, simply because it gives us the ability to finance goods that have to be made in the United States. It helps put us on an equal playing field," Slawson adds. "And I'd say that whenever you find something that the company and the union agree on this strongly, it can't be wrong."

Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa) reiterated his support for the Ex-Im Bank when he joined local officials at the UE Local 506 labor hall in mid-November. U.S. Reps. Kelly and Thompson joined a minority of Republicans in voting for the Bank's renewal when it came to the House floor in October. As County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper pointed out in her ErieReader.com op-ed supporting GE's Erie facility, "only Sen. Toomey stands apart on this issue from the others representing Erie County."

While American companies and workers wait for the U.S. Senate to take action, the American workforce can only brace for dramatic losses.

There are approximately 3,100 UE Local 506 members currently working in the facility. So the layoffs after the holidays will represent nearly half of GE's union workforce.

"The reality of it is that this isn't just going to be 1,500 families and 1,500 union jobs on the unemployment line. The resounding impact of this is going to be much greater," Slawson fears. "In a very short period of time this could easily be 4,000 or 5,000 local families on

the unemployment line simply because of the number of companies that supply GE and the amount of money that our union employees spend in this community."

Slawson says that Rapid Response at the Pa. Dept. of Labor estimates that a downsized GE Transportation in Erie could impact as many as 18,000 jobs statewide.

Long time laborers like Bill Crawford understand the dynamics of this.

"It's a business," Crawford recognizes. "Unfortunately, at a higher level, at a corporate level, as long as we're making them a profit we'll keep making locomotives. When we're not making them a profit, they'll lock those gates."

Both Slawson and Crawford are self-described realists and optimists. They understand the stakes, but remain hopeful that as the economy stabilizes and the crevasse of corporate

While American companies and workers wait for the U.S. Senate to take action, the American workforce can only brace for dramatic losses.

politics in America narrows, production at GE Transportation will flow more generously. The company just won a highly competitive bid to produce 1,000 diesel locomotive "kits" that will be assembled at facilities in India. *The Financial Times* reports that GE Transportation will have a 74 percent stake in the plant to be built as a public private partnership between the Indian government and Indian Railways, perhaps pointing toward additional work for the Erie facility.

It could also mark the beginning of a 21st century transformation of the workflow at GE Transportation. As industry and labor adjust to capital realities that result from technological and structural changes worldwide, day-to-day operations at GE's Erie facility will continue to evolve. Let's hope the company, as well as the community, are willing and able to accept that change.

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SECTION

Geeked Out

#PeaceforParis



LIMA PIX

By: **John Lindvay**

We live in a world where social media can dominate your day. It is a powerful tool for the dissemination of information and a way for individuals to connect globally.

I work from home, and most of my work consists of watching social media, which is how I first heard of the orchestrated terrorist attack in Paris. It went like this: I saw some tweets about an explosion, which led me to check Reddit where a live thread was being updated, which then led me to someone linking to France 24's streaming live news coverage of the attack.

The power to get information out with today's social media is incredible. My workday stopped and I watched with countless others as a great tragedy fell upon Paris.

I don't want to talk so much about the already well-covered power of so-

cial media in spreading news. No one can argue that.

However, another interesting phenomenon occurs when tragedies happen. People express their sympathy and outpouring of support to those affected. Social media becomes a means to express humanity and compassion to those who many of us will never see in person.

This is sometimes met with awkward social policing or detractors, who claim that changing your Facebook photo doesn't amount to anything. And that if you *really* wanted to show your support, you should donate; or better yet, fly to Paris and help.

Look, I get it. The Internet is a cynical place. It is much easier to be bitter and negative than to accept that for some people, when they change their profile picture to be overlaid with the French flag, or retweet that #PeaceforParis image, they are finding a way to project humanity out into the void

that is often cold, brutal, and overwhelmingly negative. Yes, there are more *actionable* ways to show support. But the outpouring of support from millions of strangers who may have no "real" connection to Parisians, but who empathize with the tragedies they are facing, is a *real* feeling.

On his Monday, Nov. 16 show, Stephen Colbert had an excellent opening dialogue that dealt directly with I am speaking about. He highlighted a few tweets where people pledged their support for Parisians by watching the Pixar movie *Ratatouille*: a film that isn't French, but is about a French mouse, making soup. "Is that wrong?"

Social media becomes a means to express humanity and compassion to those who many of us will never see in person.

No," Colbert said. "Is it a French film? No. Is it a valid expression? Absolutely."

Finding a way to show your support is an attempt at creating a human connection in the world. That's where the real power is, and what fear and terror are ultimately trying to destroy.

It is too easy to allow cynicism to crop up at times like this. It's hard to imagine that all those changed profile pics will lead to real action, but that projection will find its way to those affected, and that symbol of solidarity will bring them some comfort. And that's what it is all really about: solidarity and the human connection that binds us.

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



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