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ERIE READER

Dec. 7 - Dec. 20/Vol. 6, No. 25

*A Very Erie
Gift Guide*

*Keeping it local this
holiday season*

WITH:

STANDING ROCK

A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

AND

DEAN ZELLER

PRESQUE ISLE AT DAWN

ERIE'S ARBAEEN WALK

WILLIAM PARKER AT PACA

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



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From the Editors

Love them or hate them:
The holidays are here.

Christmastime is here again. It's the most wonderful time of the year, right? It's an easy holiday to love, and just as easy to hate. On one hand, it's a bright time full of traditions, gift-giving, and family time. On the other hand, it's an obnoxious time full of repetition, money-spending, and ... family time. Everyone has their own take on the holidays, and we know things can be difficult. Well, cue up the jingle bells, and pour yourself a glass of eggnog, because darn it, it's important to try to have a good time. There are still plenty of days left on the Advent calendar to revel in the holiday season any way you choose.

Do you still have some shopping to do? Of course you do, and that's okay. We have a handy little holiday gift guide filled with locally made goods. Nick Warren takes you through a sleigh full of made-in-erie products that should have you surrounding the bottom of your tree in no time.

Winter also provides a time to witness the beauty of nature. The welcome sight of snow-spotted pines in the chilly air is something every Erieite can appreciate. With the ability to capture those picturesque scenes, Dean Zeller uses his camera to document local flora and fauna. In her first feature for the *Erie Reader*, we're proud to welcome Marnie Mead, as she follows Zeller on one of his daily treks through Presque Isle.

Nature's importance takes many forms. Some are beautiful, some are tragic and monumental. Also in this issue, Corbin Fowler recounts his time at the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota. On Dec. 4, the Army Corps of Engineers announced that they will reroute the Dakota Access Pipeline to circumvent Lake Oahe. It's thanks to the work of protesters like Fowler that things really can change. Though there are many more battles to face, we should never forget that activism can move mountains.

As political waves rise and fall, we find it time to say farewell to Sean Wiley's part in "Harrisburg Happenings." Since February 2013, Wiley has been a regular contributor with the column, providing political updates from inside the halls of our state Capitol. We wish to offer Sen. Wiley a heartfelt thank you for his years of service, while looking optimistically ahead.

The holidays are a time to be joyous. Every day of the year has that same potential; these days just have their own songs. However you choose to celebrate them, we wish you and yours a wonderful December, filled with all the happiness you can bear and all the warmth and brightness you can muster on a beautiful, chilly Erie night.

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Just a Thought

Know your stuff.



SHELDON PETERSON

By: Katie Chriest

We live next door to the only blighted property in our area. It used to be just a neglected property; but it turned decisively toward blighted when the contents of one of its two collapsed outbuildings were strewn about the backyard by a dubiously-hired day laborer this summer, who never completed the job of junk removal.

So for months, the view out a few of our windows has been of the weather-beaten detritus of a hoarder's life. Lawn jockey. Deer sculpture. Gazing ball. Lantern. Rusty chairs. Decrepit planters. Just-in-case building materials. Broken tools, shovels, hoses. Check, check, check.

Suffice it to say, then, we were quite surprised recently when two dumpsters and a backhoe appeared at the property.

On Black Friday, of all days, removal started in earnest. One man drove the backhoe while two others, ignoring the rain, picked by hand through the remains of the building nearest us, tossing salvageable materials into one pile, and trash into another.

You can probably guess which pile grew larger, by the end.

I made some tea and stood by the window at the top of our stairs. This was good entertainment, by my standards: part historical documentary, part psychological drama, part comedy. And no pesky ads interrupted the program.

Rather than shout over the backhoe's engine noise, the two men sorting through the debris acted out charades for each other, with sweeping gestures aggrandized by layers of outerwear. So I could plainly see their reactions as they shared what they'd found. They'd alternate between showing perplexity with exaggerated head shaking and showing hilarity with uproarious laughter. Mostly, though, they just plowed diligently through the accumulated stuff of a lifetime, and the lifetimes of the homeowner's parents, before him.

Collected, then cared for, then corroded. All of it.

Of course, the fact that all of this took place on Black Friday endowed it with a certain significance it might otherwise not have earned. Millions of Americans were compelled to be out there at that very moment, buying, buying, buying. Elbowing each other for "doorbusters," seeking the "unbelievable" savings promised by circulars, clutching cou-

pons for even "deeper" discounts. All to acquire stuff that would one day end up in landfills, just like the "goods" being carted off next door. Thrown away – whatever "away" is supposed to mean.

Watching the next-door scene, I was reminded of Annie Leonard's 2007 on-line documentary *The Story of Stuff*.

Leonard talks about the entrapment of consumer culture; how we're ensnared under the guise of being entertained, as what we watch reminds us of all we lack. Eventually, she says, "we're on this crazy work-watch-spend treadmill, and we could just stop."

Just stop.

This isn't a popular notion, in a country where national wellness is measured by national *sell*-ness.

But even at "Giftmas," as one store calls it, it's worth picturing the dumpster a few decades down the road

The fact that this junk removal took place on Black Friday endowed it with a certain significance it might otherwise not have earned. Millions of Americans were compelled to be out there at that very moment, buying, buying, buying. All to acquire stuff that would one day end up in landfills, just like the "goods" being carted off next door. Thrown away – whatever "away" is supposed to mean.

where much of the stuff bought – and gifts given – will inevitably end up.

If we dared to embrace a radical shift in how we view presents, we might recognize that what we really want from each other is *presence*.

Katie Chriest can be contacted at katie@ErieReader.com.



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Harrisburg Happenings

Expressing gratitude and looking ahead



RON HARPER JR.

By: Senator Sean Wiley

This final Harrisburg Happenings is bittersweet.

In respect to the democratic process, the people have spoken. Our electorate has chosen new leadership not only at the national level, but also in the 49th Senatorial District, as a wave of change washes over our country.

I told the media on election night that my successor's successes are our successes. I wholeheartedly meant that, and still do. We move forward together to support ongoing efforts, as collaboration has been and will continue to be the key to this region's enduring prosperity and sustainability.

I've always felt that relational synergy is something that can't quite be quantified, but is imperative for progress – one of those things that you simply feel. It is now incumbent upon us all to channel our synergy, working across obvious boundaries to find the greater good. I still believe it is there to be found.

Please accept my humble gratitude for the ability to serve this community as your Senator for these last four years. Other than becoming a father, it has been the honor of my life. This role has afforded us countless opportunities to meet so many amazing people and play a small role in helping them – that is what we will miss the most.

In "Harrisburg Happenings," I've often cited President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, as I feel he is one of the greatest Americans in history. President

Kennedy once said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

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What happens in our state Capitol has more impact on your daily life than any presidential election ever could.

served by each member, and that is where you play a major role by making your views known and your voice heard. It shouldn't just be during an election year that you share your thoughts on issues, and your stance need not be dictated by your party affiliation. After all, those whom you elect are indeed chosen to embody the fight for your best interests and shared community well-being.

So as I sign off, be sure to continue to watch intently what is happening in Harrisburg – I know I will.

Senator Sean Wiley served the 49th District from 2012-2016.

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Remembering Imam Hussein

Annual walk takes place in Erie



By: Maitham Basha-Agha

Recently, more than 300 Shia-Muslims of Erie turned out to march in remembrance of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson, Imam Hussein, also known as Arbaeen. This is an annual pilgrimage undertaken by all Shia-Muslims around the world. The Shia-Muslims believe Imam Hussein travelled from Saudi Arabia to Najaf, Iraq, where he was murdered attempting to save the Shia sector of Islam.

Local marchers started the walk dressed in all black clothes and shouted, "We Want Peace," or "Imam Hussein we are with you." Children as young as five years of age and men as old as 80 joined this once-a-year walk. The walk was led by an Iraqi-born and Pittsburgh resident clergy, Sayed

Muntadahr Al-Jabery.

"Today was a march of peace that symbolizes the revolution against tyrants and oppressors," he said. "This march of peace is a response to the Imam Hussein's call 1,377 years ago to stand up against injustice and oppression."

The marchers proceeded from Sixth and Liberty streets to Perry Square; then to the Islamic Cultural Center of Erie at 25th and Parade streets, where they stood outside the mosque to recite poems about Imam Hussein.

Some non-Muslim individuals in the Erie area also joined the annual event. They participated in the walk to support the Muslim community and to explore the diversity of Erie.

Sarah Everett, from the Community Art House, one of the non-Muslims

Marchers proceed through Perry Square, gathering to honor the pilgrimage of Arbaeen.

who participated in the walk, said, "I learned that there are a lot of Muslims in Erie. I didn't know that until today. They are so peaceful. We as Americans want to let the Muslim communities know they are welcome here."

Black banners with Arabic quotes from Imam Hussein stood out throughout the five-mile walk. They were waved in the air, and many took turns holding them. The Muslim community also carried the American flag as well as a sign saying, "TERRORISM HAS NO RELIGION."

Maitham Basha-Agha can be contacted at Maitham@eriereader.com.

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Why I Traveled to Standing Rock

An account from the front lines of the North Dakota protest

By: Corbin Fowler

When I first heard about construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, it was mostly through friends sharing articles and livestream videos on Facebook. I remember seeing a picture of protestors confronted by an array of armored tanks and riot police, and a picture of a Native American man who had been shot in the face and was bleeding profusely from a rubber bullet. All because these people want their rights to be honored, and their water – which is sacred above all – to be protected from what is known as the Black Snake of American corporatism and oil-drenched greed.

Anybody who is familiar with the real history of racism and slavery in the United States of America is aware of the long record of genocide, mistreatment, and general dehumanization of the Native American people, who were the *first* Americans, and

who have suffered the longest under the inextricably cruel “invisible hand of the market.” We have so much to learn from them – and yet here we are, in the first quarter of the 21st century, still treating them with the same total disregard for basic human dignity as we did back when we thought that the earth was flat and the edge of the world’s oceans were marked by the presence of giant sea monsters.

The fact is, the environment has been suffering from our abuses for as long as the Native Americans have, and we are now living in an age of rapid and unsustainable growth. All because of greed: the greed of oil companies and a handful of extremely rich people (who don’t pay their taxes and take huge subsidies from the government, yet villainize poor people on welfare). Decades of environmental abuse, neglect, and unsustainable growth are, naturally, catching up to us. We are all now beginning to suffer



ROB WILSON

those consequences, even at the expense of wealthy politicians and the corporations they lie in beds with. It is not just the Sioux tribes of the Standing Rock Reservation that face the

(top) Protesters at Standing Rock huddle as police deploy water cannons on Sunday, Nov. 20. (opposite) Pipeline protesters stand off against police near the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota on Sunday, Nov. 20.

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venomous bite of the Black Snake – it is all of us, at some point or another, sooner or later.

Understanding the symbiotic relationship that joins us all, I realized I had enough money saved and time off from my job to donate that money and pay for the gas to get to Standing Rock. I decided, after talking to friends, mentors, and family throughout October, that I was meant to go out there and do my part, whatever that was.

I met many wonderful people during my stay, and the sense of spirit and community was unlike anything I had ever witnessed or been part of before.

I did not witness one single act of violence from one single protester – and certainly nothing that warranted the use of such violent treatment at the hands of police dressed for war.

Strangers became like family. People of all different backgrounds, ages, walks of life, and beliefs came together to work and support one another.

As it turned out, my purpose was to stand with the Water Protectors during the Sunday, Nov. 20 protests which have now gone viral on social media due to the use of water cannons, tear gas, concussion grenades, and rubber bullets against protesters.

I was there, on the front lines. I saw firsthand the use of water cannons against protesters long before any fires were lit. I choked on tear gas as hundreds of people around me chanted “water is life.” I witnessed people

being shot in the faces and hands by rubber bullets. And I watched as medic trucks on the bridge were targeted while trying to safely remove those who were wounded, and who were suffering hypothermia from the prolonged use of cold water cannons in the freezing North Dakota night.

I did not witness one single act of violence from one single protester – and certainly nothing that warranted the use of such violent treatment at the hands of police dressed for war.

I traveled there so that I could share my story, and testify that the statements released by the Morton County Sheriff’s Department to the media are blatant lies. I survived so that I could witness the truth and bring it home. I was prepared to get shot that night, if that’s what it would have taken to convince people to wake up and do something about this. It could have been me that night who lost my hand to a concussion grenade, forever losing my ability to play a guitar. But I went to Standing Rock and came back to tell you – whoever is reading this – that this is real, and this is coming, and this does affect us all.

Mni Wiconi. Water is life.

On Dec. 4, the Army Corps of Engineers announced that they will not grant the permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline to be drilled under Lake Oahe on the Missouri River. The historic victory has been celebrated by many, but with the understanding that water protectors and supporters of indigenous rights must “remain vigilant” moving forward.

Corbin Fowler is a local activist, musician, and recent graduate of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. He can be reached at thebigcorbowski92@gmail.com.



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Happy Holidays
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News of the Weird

Bogus baking soda and pessimistic pigs

By: Chuck Shepherd

Even Baking Soda Is Dangerous

Almost all law enforcement agencies in America use the Scott Reagent field test when they discover powder that looks like cocaine, but the several agencies that have actually conducted tests for "false positives" say they happen up to half the time. In October, the latest victims (husband-and-wife truck drivers with spotless records and Pentagon clearances) were finally released after 75 days in jail awaiting trial for baking soda that tested "positive" three times by Arkansas troopers (but, eventually, "negative" by a state crime lab). (Why do police love the test? It costs \$2.) The truck drivers had to struggle to get their truck back and are still fighting to be re-cleared to drive military explosives. [KUTV (Salt Lake City), 10-31-2016]

Unclear on the Concept

Activists told Vice Media in November that 100,000 people worldwide identify as "ecosexuals," ranging from those who campaign for "sustainable"-ingredient sex toys to those who claim to have intercourse with trees (but sanding the bark for comfort might provoke concern about being "abusive"). A University of Nevada, Las Vegas professor studies the phenomenon and knows, for example, of humans who "marry" the Earth or prefer sex while rolling in potting soil or under a waterfall. On one "arborphilia" support blog, a female poster regretted her choice to have "convenient" sex with the sycamore outside her bedroom window instead of the stur-

dy redwood she actually covets. (Yes, some "mainstream" environmentalists somehow are not completely supportive.) [Vice Media, 11-2-2016] [Inverse.com, 4-22-2016]

The Continuing Crisis

If You See Something, Say Something: Ricky Berry and his roommate walked in to a CVS store in Richmond, Virginia, in November to ask if it carried sliced cheese but were told no. Minutes later, all the employees walked to the back of the store, hid in a locked room, and called the police. Berry and pal, and a third customer (with a toothache and desperately needing Orajel), were bewildered by the empty store until a Richmond police officer arrived. After observing that the three customers appeared nonthreatening, he mused along with Berry that "this is how weird, apocalyptic movies start." WRIC-TV reported later that the employee who panicked and called police will "possibly" need retraining. [WRIC-TV, 11-23-2016]

Groundbreaking Legal Work: In October, a court in Australia's Victoria state began considering an appeal on whether three deaf people might be too intellectually challenged to have planned a murder. The prosecutor offered surveillance video of the three in a lobby planning the murder's details via sign language as they waited for an elevator to take them up to the eventual crime scene. [The Age (Melbourne), 10-4-2016]

Pigs are such complex animals that scientists are studying how to tell the "optimists" from the "pessimists."

British researchers writing in a recent Biology Letters described how "proactive" porkers differed from "reactive" ones, and, as with humans, how their particular mood at that time distinguished them as "glass half full" rather than "glass half empty." (Unaddressed, of course, was specifically whether some pigs were actually "optimistic" that the chute at the slaughterhouse might lead to a pleasant outcome.) [Los Angeles Times, 11-15-2016]

Questionable Judgments

The Schlitterbahn Waterpark in Kansas City, Kansas, got the message in November and shut down its "world's tallest waterslide" (17 stories; riders reaching speeds of 60 mph) after the neck-injury death of a 10-year-old rider in August. But comparably altitude-obsessed architects in Tokyo said in November that they were moving ahead with proposals for "Next Tokyo 2045" to include a one-mile-high residential complex (twice as tall as the currently highest skyscraper). A spokesperson for principal architects Kohn Pedersen Fox said he realizes that coastal Tokyo, currently in earthquake, typhoon and tsunami zones, would present a climate-change challenge (and especially since the building would be on land once reclaimed from Tokyo Bay). [Washington Post, 11-23-2016] [CNN, 11-16-2016]

Ironies

San Diego police officer Christine Garcia, who identifies as transgender, was turned away in November as she attempted to enter the Transgender Day of Remembrance at the city's LGBT Community Center because organizers thought the sight of a police uniform might upset some people. (Garcia herself was one of the event's organizers.) (2) Chick Magnet: Gary

Zerola was arraigned in Boston in November on two counts of rape. He is a defense lawyer, former prosecutor, one-time "Most Eligible Bachelor" winner, and was a finalist in the first season of ABC-TV's "The Bachelor." He was also accused of two counts of rape in 2006 (but acquitted at trial) and another in 2007 (but the charge was dropped). [Los Angeles Times, 11-23-2016] [Boston Herald, 11-23-2016]

Perspective

It was only a quarter-million-dollar grant by the National Institutes of Health, but what it bought, according to budget scrutiny by The Washington Free Beacon in November, was the development of a multiplayer computer game (inevitably competing for attention in an overstuffed commercial market) hoping to teach good reproductive health habits. "Caduceus Quest" employs role-playing as "doctors, policy-makers, researchers, youth advocates" and others to "solve medical mysteries and epidemiologic crises." The target, according to the University of Chicago grant proposal, is African-American and Latino teenagers around Chicago. [Washington Free Beacon, 11-19-2016]

How to Tell If You're Too Drunk

On Nov. 16, Richard Rusin, 34, was charged with DUI in St. Charles, Illinois, after he drove off of a street, going airborne, hitting close to the top of one house, rebounding off of another, uprooting a tree (sending it onto a roof), and knocking out electricity to the neighborhood when the car clipped a utility pole guide wire and his car landed upside down in a driveway. He was hospitalized. [Patch.com (Geneva, Ill.), 11-16-2016]

Allen Johnson Sr., of Meriden, Connecticut, was driving a tractor-trailer up Interstate 89 near Wil-



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NEWS & VIEWS

liston, Vermont on Nov. 2 at 63 mph, when, said state police, he apparently tried to stand up in the cab in order to change pants (enabling the rig to roll over). Johnson registered .209 blood-alcohol; it was 9:30 a.m. [WVIT-TV (West Hartford), 11-3-2016]

Least Competent Criminals

Recurring Themes: (1) Gwinnett, Georgia, police know exactly who they like for the Nov. 3 armed robbery of an Exxon convenience store: Mr. Quaris Holland, 29. That's because the manager told police Holland had been coming by as a customer "every single day" for "six months." He's still at large. (2) I Have a Gub (sic): The FBI was offering a reward for tips on their suspect in heists at four Boston-area banks in November. Though the man has eluded them so far, at least one issue plagues him: Each of his holdup notes announces that this is a "robbery." [Gwinnett Daily Post, 11-17-2016] [KYW-TV (Philadelphia), 11-18-2016]

The Passing Parade

Simon Berry, 24, of the English village of Bray, was recently acknowledged by the Guinness Book people for his bungee drop of 246 feet to precision-dunk a biscuit into a cup of tea. (2) A sign posted recently (apparently without fanfare) at the Castle House

Inn hostel in Stockholm, Sweden, warns visitors: "It is a criminal offense to smoke or wank on these premises." ("Wank" is British slang for self-pleasuring.) The sign contains the familiar "not permitted" circle over a crossed-out item but just the cigarette. [BBC News, 11-17-2016] [The Local (Stockholm), 11-4-2016]

A News of the Weird Classic (February 2013)

Cliche Come to Life: The Kerry, Ireland, county council voted in January (2013) to let some people drive drunk. The councillors reasoned that in the county's isolated regions, some seniors live alone and need the camaraderie of the pub but fear a DUI arrest on the way home. The councillors thus empowered police to issue DUI permits to those drivers. Besides, they reasoned, the area is so sparsely populated that some drivers never encounter anyone else on the road at night. (Coincidentally or not "several" of the five councillors voting "yea" own pubs.) [BBC News, 1-22-2013]

Thanks This Week to Norah Satre and Gaal Crawl, and to the News of the Weird Board of Editorial Advisors.

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A Shot in the Dark

A wildlife photographer captures Presque Isle State Park at dawn.



(left) Dean Zeller scouts for birds on Long Pond Trail at Presque Isle State Park. (bottom) A welcome and familiar face to Zeller, "Bandit" the raccoon peeks his head between tree branches at Presque Isle State Park.

Tube.

"I wanted to take pictures of the moon with fireworks," he explains. He needed a tripod and remote to do that, to control the shutter speed. By now, he has watched 1,000 videos. "The more you do something, the more you learn."

After retiring from Roth Cadillac, Zeller began his solitary treks to Presque Isle in the morning. About four years ago, he started using Facebook to share what he saw. Each sunrise that bursts forth with reds and golds is no longer a vision seen only by the early risers among the county's residents. The most inspirational of his photos – often associated with a birthday message – are posted after he leaves the park each day around 10 a.m. He also maintains a website, deanzellerphotography.com, where his photos are for sale.

Even in the worst weather, Zeller will be out cruising the 13 miles of paved road and 21 miles of trails. "Sometimes when the weather is bad, you might get really good photos ... of people surfing, of waves crashing against the lighthouse. You never know what to expect over the lake."

MARNIE MEAD

By: Marnie Mead

It is still dark when Dean Zeller pulls into the first parking lot at Presque Isle State Park on what will eventually dawn as an overcast and rainy Wednesday. He's got a cup of coffee in his new Honda CRV – recently replacing an old Caddy with about 200,000 miles on it – and is dressed in a camouflage jacket and pants. This is where I meet him at 6 a.m., before we begin his route around the park capturing the moon, stars, and wildlife native to the 3,112-acre natural peninsula.

Normally the passenger seat serves as resting place for his Canon, which on a good day will capture 1,000 images. The moon was full the night before, and the stars are now hidden behind the clouds, so there won't be any of Zeller's magical morning posts to his 1,300 Facebook followers. We pause at the second parking lot, facing the lights of the city of Erie, and Zeller reaches for the camera and uses the industrial

skyline to adjust the focus.

"You can take pictures in the dark that look like they were taken in the day," he says. "I like the way the colors come out in the dark."

Self-taught photographer

Dean Zeller, 64, is a self-taught photographer who captures Presque Isle for his Facebook page every day. He grew up at Fourth and Maryland streets, and spent a lot of summers at the Erie Yacht Club, where he learned to sail. He is a lifelong fisherman, now practicing catch and release, and carries his poles in the backseat of the car.

"I was a big fisherman all of my life. I started taking my camera with me," he says. "I always went out early and starting taking pictures at sunrise."

His first photographs were made using disposable cameras, which had to be taken to a photo developing center to be printed before he could see what was captured. He later moved into a digital camera, teaching himself about shutter speeds and aperture via You-

As magical as the sunrises are, his followers have come to expect updates on the wildlife that make their homes at the park.

On this morning, we're not seeing much wildlife, in part because it is duck-hunting season. Every now and again shotgun blasts ring out. It's a bit unnerving to be traveling the park's trails, staring at strings of duck decoys and knowing that behind the nearby blind is a hunter with a loaded gun. Indeed, Zeller reports that he has been sprayed by stray shot.

"I'm against hunting out here," he adds. "It should be a sanctuary."

We pull off the side of the road and walk with camera and tripod along Long Pond Trail, which is carpeted with fallen leaves. The rain hasn't started yet, so our steps are being announced to any creature resting after an evening of hunting.

Suddenly, a large brown bird the size of a football rises from a treetop and flaps away. Zeller explains that we've just scared off a great horned owl. Clearly this wouldn't have happened if the photographer had been alone. We make our way to the pond, which is among his favorites. A few blue herons and some gulls are all that we see on this morning.

Scouting for subjects

We head back to the car and continue along the route, eventually turning



DEAN ZELLER



DEAN ZELLER



DEAN ZELLER



DEAN ZELLER

past the outermost point and back along the Lake Erie side. Zeller is scouting for his friend, Pat the coyote. He refers to several animals that he sees frequently as friends, including Mikey the American mink and Bandit the raccoon. His relationship with the animals sparks online conversations about his familiarity with them, but Zeller is quick to note that he does not feed these animals nor treat them as anything but the wild animals they are. They become as familiar with his daily movements at the park as he does with theirs.

Zeller has been following, or has been followed by, Pat for three years. “At first, I would scare him and he would run away,” he says. “After a while, he became more accustomed to me. One time, I hiked to take a picture of a tree I liked. It was 5 a.m., winter, and I was taking pictures of stars by this tree. As I walked by my car, I felt a presence. It was Pat. I started talking to him.

He walked back to the car with me. I guess it was a building point in our relationship. He knew I was not a threat. I would not chase him or go after him. After that, every time I saw him, he would walk up to me. I would sit down and he would sit down.”

It has been a couple of weeks since Zeller has seen Pat, and he’s worried. His last photos of the coyote showed a healthy young male whose winter coat had come in. This isn’t the first time the coyote has disappeared, but Zeller is concerned he has died – a victim of the parasites that can inflict wild animals. Perhaps, he speculates optimistically, the duck hunting altered the coyote’s habits.

“I can’t tell you what it is like to be around a wild animal like that and have it comfortable enough [to not run away],” he says.

We move on in search of snowy owls, which can be spotted along the breakwaters and beaches starting in No-

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DEAN ZELLER



DEAN ZELLER

vember. The wind has picked up and now the rain has started. A scan of the beach reveals no owls.

A few minutes later we pull up to Fox Trail, where Zeller gets out of the car to walk under what's left of the canopy on a tree where owls nested this year. The owls are long gone, and he wonders if they will return in 2017. The nesting tree was close to the trail, and, at times, small crowds gathered to gawk at the owlets.

Further searches for Bandit and Mikey have similar results. The creatures of the park have taken shelter from the weather. We soon do the same.

Zeller typically wraps up his morning around 9:30 or 10 a.m., and then heads to visit his 91-year-old mother. After that, he has lunch with his wife, Susan, and then posts his pictures.

(facing page) One of Zeller's favorite subjects, "Pat" the coyote relaxes in the sands of Presque Isle State Park. The light of dawn breaks, coloring the morning sky as surfer Robert Jung stands among breaking waves at the Erie Harbor North Pierhead Lighthouse. (top) Boats line up to compete in the Erie Yacht Club's Sept. 25 race. (below) A fox and its cub look on as Zeller snaps their photo.

"One of the reasons I do what I do is for people who can't get out and experience our park," he explains. "I am out every day walking in nature. And, to top it all off, I've got all these people with me. It brings so much joy to other people."

Marnie Mead can be contacted at marnie@marniemeadmedia.com and you can follow her on Twitter @makeiterie.

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Have Yourself a Very Erie Christmas

Keeping it local this holiday season

By: Nick Warren

By now, you probably know how important it is to “shop small.” A successful small business community is the keystone to a burgeoning local economy. While online giants and big box stores gobble up the lion’s share of profits, it’s easy to forget about some of the great gifts available right here in town. By buying locally, you can literally put money in your neighbor’s pocket (note: always check with your neighbors to make sure this is okay with them first).

Here’s a way to think of it: Christmas is about giving, right? Why not double your giving by spending your hard-earned money locally. That way, you’re giving twice. And that’s giving a hoot.

Here are a few made in Erie gift suggestions to keep Santa’s local workshop open.

RECAP MASON JARS



Repurpose a household item for dozens of creative uses with ReCAP. Founded by Erie native Karen Rzepecki in 2011, ReCAP designs and manufactures unique attachments that fit Mason jars. That might not sound like the most exciting thing at first, but they’ve really made it into an art. These innovative lids will inspire creativity among hard-to-shop-for parents and college students, alike. The much-loved jar now has a million uses in the kitchen and around the home. ReCAP offers a new fermenter attachment that helps you pickle vegetables and even brew beer. Go for the full effect with “The Art of Aperitivo” gift set, which has everything

you need to host your own Italian happy hour. For the younger crowd, kits let kids turn jars into bug catchers (complete with storybook written by Mary Arete Moodey).

Price range: low to medium

Where to get it: online at masonjars.com, and at various retail locations around Erie (masonjars.com/find-a-store/)

IRON EMPIRE CLOTHING



Having recently moved to a larger storefront downtown, founders Jamie and RJ Messenger are expanding their empire. The couple started Iron Empire as a small side business, but then a few of their t-shirt designs caught on like wildfire. Fast forward a

Here are a few made in Erie gift suggestions to keep Santa’s local workshop open.

few years, and you’re now able to dress yourself from ankles to skull in their eye-catching designs. Their logo is iconic and immediately recognizable (imagine a Wi-Fi icon after the Incredible Hulk bent it like steel bars). The company sponsors many athletes, while the brand champions strength of spirit as well as strength of body. Tough, independent phrases adorn shirts, hoodies, beanies, and sweatpants – all perfect for workouts or winter.

Price range: low to medium

Where to get it: online at ironempireclothing.com or at 169 W. 14th St.

CHOCOLATES, COOKIES, AND ALL MANNER OF SWEETS



When it’s time to stuff that Christmas stocking, do it right. What native Erieite wouldn’t delight in a nice bag of sponge candy on Christmas morning? Chocolatiers like Romolo, Stefanelli’s, and Pulakos have a huge variety of delectable confections. Get a tiny handful of treats for a small secret Santa gift, or go for a large box of sweets for the sweet person in your life. While it’s a little tougher to find figgy pudding and sugar plums these days, there’s no shortage of other ways to satisfy your Christmas cravings. Shops like Ye Olde Sweet Shoppe, Icing on the Lake, the Magic Cookie Company, Art’s Bakery (not to mention independent vendors like Michelle “The Cookie Lady” Chylinski) have oodles of mouth-watering baked goods that Santa can enjoy with a nice glass of Meadow Brook milk by the chimney.

Price range: low

Where to get it: all storefronts mentioned, along with many more

PENNSYLVANIA’S POTENT POTABLES



What better way to get into the Christmas spirit than by getting Christmas spirits into you? For some people, beer, wine, and liquor are always

welcome gifts. Grab a growler or a six-pack of a favorite local microbrew from great breweries like Erie Ale Works, Lavery Brewing Company, Millcreek Brewing Company, Voodoo Brewing, Erie Brewing Company, Blue Canoe Brewery, Sprague Farm and Brew Works, Timbercreek Tap & Table, and The Brewerie at Union Station.

Some places, such as Arundel Cellars and Brewing and Five & 20 Spirits and Brewing, make both beer and wine (with Five & 20 also offering locally-made whiskey and other liquors). On the wine front, there are plenty of local choices, as well. Between Erie and North East, you’ll find Mazza Vineyards, Courtyard Winery, the South Shore Wine Company, Arrowhead Wine Cellars, Presque Isle Wine Cellars, 6 Mile Cellars, Penn Shore Vineyards, and Heritage Wine Cellars. Each business gives gift-buyers a wide selection of products, plus merchandise and special offers such as “mug clubs,” which grant members year-long perks.

Price range: low to medium

Where to get it: all storefronts mentioned

KREEPLORD ENAMEL PINS AND MORE



With a slew of custom designs to choose from, Kreeplord.com showcases a bevy of fun, weird collectible items. Run by Thomas Welch (one half of the local screenprinting company Leadhead Creative), the online store sells irreverent, pop culture-inspired enamel pins in limited quantities. The popular trend picked up steam on sites like Tumblr and Instagram. Beginning with custom embroidered patches, artists and designers from around the

world started creating cutting-edge lowbrow art pieces. Check out the t-shirts and hats as well, drawing upon millennial favorites like Bob's Burgers and Rick & Morty. References also abound from the 1990s, with Seinfeld to Ren & Stimpy-inspired designs. Cult favorites like Sealab 2021 and Strangers with Candy also get the Kreeplord treatment.

Price range: low

Where to get it: Kreeplord.com

THE BEARDED WOODSMAN BEARD OILS AND BALMS



Now here's a gift that even Santa Claus himself would appreciate! Christmas is a time when many men choose to start growing out their facial hair. The Bearded Woodsman has

The Bearded Woodsman has just the stuff to keep those furry faces lustrous and manageable.

just the stuff to keep those furry faces lustrous and manageable. Every scruffy gentleman knows that growing out that

impressive man-mane often comes with itchiness and a sometimes unruly mess. Using organic ingredients like beeswax and shea butter, founder Dan Surma has cooked up a multitude of soothing balms and moisturizing oils. The secret to achieving a unique scent like "Campfire" (cinnamon bark, birch, and vetiver) or "Devil's Brew" (coffee, clove, and vanilla) could literally be right under your nose.

Price range: low

Where to get it: Moxi Hair Salon, Grasshopper, The Whole Foods Co-op, Artlore Studio, Earthshine Co., Time & Time Again, Bison Beer

GIFT CARDS GALORE



When in doubt: gift cards. The range is extreme. Does your loved one have an eye on some new ink? Almost every tattoo shop in the area lets you pay in advance. Need a little nudge for a nice night out? Get a gift card or gift certificate for your favorite local restaurant. From Graham's Record Store to The Juice Jar to the Keystone Armory, the world is your oyster. Just zero in on your loved ones' favorite local merchants and let them do the rest.

Price range: low to high

Where to get it: Ask just about any business.

PASSES, TICKETS, AND CLASSES, OH MY!



From the Erie Art Museum to the Erie Seawolves, memberships and event passes can make thoughtful and cherished gifts. Sports fan? Grab some tickets! Thrill-seeker? A Waldameer Park & Water World season pass can be an incredible bargain. Lover of animals?

Memberships and event passes can make thoughtful and cherished gifts.

Perhaps an Erie Zoo membership will be the cat's meow. Try out an ExpERIENCE Children's Museum membership, available for all family sizes. The Erie Art Museum offers memberships, plus a wide range of classes for creators of all ages.

Price range: medium to high

Where to get it: online at any place mentioned, and at their various locations

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In addition to all the wonderful storefronts, there are plenty of independent creators out there who would love to be a part of your Christmas.

to peruse and purchase all manner of local art pieces. Shop Glass Growers Gallery for handmade gifts that are sure to impress. Relish Studio & Gallery has a gorgeous selection, highlighting their unique style of beach glass jewelry. In addition to all the wonderful storefronts, there are plenty of independent creators out there who would love to be a part of your Christmas. Check out the online version of this article for a list of local artisans, or go to Etsy and "choose a custom location" known as Erie. You won't be disappointed.

Price range: low to high

Where to get it: around town and online

Nick Warren can be contacted at nick@ErieReader.com.

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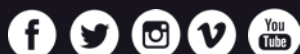
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Spotlight on Erie

December 7 – 20, 2016

Wednesday, Dec. 7

Peter Mayer Brings Holiday Cheer with Christmas Tour



For 16 years, musician Peter Mayer has celebrated the holidays with a Christmas tour.

Mayer will return to Erie on Wednesday, Dec. 7 for the Stars and Promises Christmas Tour, Wings of Angels, with the Jimmy Buffett Coral Reefers at

A singer and guitarist, Mayer hopes people can relate to the songs he writes.

Mercyhurst University's Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center.

The tour has become a holiday favorite nationwide.

"This is the greatest show to come through Erie," one Facebook user wrote on the local event's page. "By far the most entertaining, genuine, and impactful show I've ever seen in a small setting ... If you're a fan of music in any way, see this show."

A singer and guitarist, Mayer hopes people can relate to the songs he writes.

"Mayer's songs are crafted like shaker furniture, with no place for superfluous embellishments or throwaway lines," said *Acoustic Guitar* magazine. "[His] world is bright and hopeful and the transcendent nature of his lyrics ... explore the mysteries of life ... Mayer's fluid, clean, and tremendously intriguing guitar playing is topped with warm, rich vocals. This is music for the soul."

The Erie show benefits Blended Spirits Ranch, a local organization that uses equine-assisted learning and psychotherapy to help Erie County youth,

families, adults, and veterans. – Tracy Geibel

7 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. // 824.3000 // petermayer.com/event/tba-erie-pa-2

Thursday, Dec. 8

The Sordid Mystery of Girl Gone



eschewing the season's bright, mesmeric tinsel, expressions of goodwill to all, and the occasional schmaltzy holiday song, Edinboro-based Laugh/Riot Performing Arts Company presents *Girl Gone* by Jacqueline Reingold, a sordid mystery.

Laugh/Riot summarizes the play's plot: "Follow Tish, an exotic dancer, as she tries to make sense of her best friend's brutal murder and find the person responsible. Will Tish be able to hold on to her sense of reality as she gets closer to the truth, or will her obsession lead her down the same path as her friend?"

"Our audience has grown with us as we explore these types of plays."

Girl Gone's Erie debut is part of Laugh/Riot's agenda to perform plays that haven't been produced here, said Joshua Mizikowski, its marketing director, via email. "[P]eople want something different. This show certainly provides that.

"Our audience has grown with us as we explore these types of plays." He added that "*True Love* [was] one of our Greek adaptations which explored many issues dealing with sex and sexuality [and it] did very well."

Yet, why not an Erie venue that may attract larger audiences for a play with such dark, Cimmerian themes?

"Laugh/Riot is based out of Edinboro and it has served us very well. Part of our mission has been to bring quality theatre to the area and we have been able to do that," Mizikowski said. "Also, over the past few years we have been able to build an audience that wants and expects us to push boundaries, not just for the sake of doing it, but to do pieces and explore issues that others won't. The sexual aspects are not done for shock, but are deeply interwoven into the plot and help us honestly dive into a very dark world."

Mizikowski concluded that "The only thing we hope for is that the audience will be provoked by a great story that will keep them on the edge of their seat." – Gregory Greenleaf-Knepp

7:30 p.m. on Dec. 8-10; 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 11 // Diebold Center for the Performing Arts at Edinboro University // 219 Meadville St., Edinboro // \$10 general admission; \$5 for seniors, and EUP faculty, staff, and non-EUP students, and \$3 for EUP students // Tickets at the door or at laughrioterie.com // *Girl Gone* contains nudity, sexual situations, language, and violence; no one under the age of 18 will be permitted.

Friday, Dec. 9

Celebrate with the African Children's Choir



Music erases borders, transcends time and culture, brings people together, and inspires an incredibly unique kind of joy and nonverbal communication. This holiday season, join the African Children's Choir at St. Jude the Apostle Church on Friday, Dec. 9 and experience the simple pleasure of kids performing together and enjoying music.

The African Children's Choir is part of

the organization Music for Life, which works in seven African countries, including Uganda, Rwanda, and Ghana. Volunteer teams from the U.S., the UK, and Canada travel to Africa during the year to work with kids as part of Music for Life, providing community-oriented camps where they can partake in activities like dance, music, theater, and art; it gives them the opportunity to just "be kids." The concept for the African Children's Choir was started by Ray Barnett, who was on a humanitarian trip to war-torn Uganda when he met a young boy who communicated with him by singing, as the two didn't speak the same language. Barnett was inspired to help children through music, and to make their plight more visible to the rest of the world.

The African Children's Choir has sung with well-known artists including Paul McCartney and Annie Lennox, and recently at the Queen of England's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Now their well-loved children's songs, traditional spirituals, and gospel favorites will fill the venue here with light and laughter.

All concerts are free and open to the public, but donations will be encouraged to provide support for African Children's Choir programs. – Miriam Lamey

7 p.m. // St. Jude the Apostle Church // 2801 W. 6th St. // 833.0927

Friday, Dec. 9

Pasadena's Freewheeling Groove



Anyone who jams easily to stuff along the lines of Sublime and G-Love – or Pennywise and Flogging Molly, or any and all Marleys – would most likely groove well to the vibe of Pasadena (Maryland, that is)-based Pasadena.

Could groove well – and should groove well: The freewheeling four-

CALENDAR

piece (“Four guys who live in a van and jam,” they dub themselves) is coming to the Kings Rook Club on Friday, Dec. 9.

These guys make serious work of bringing a laid-back time wherever they may roam, having performed more than 700 shows across a big chunk of the U.S. over the last few years, opening for the likes of Cake, Clutch, Citizen Cope, and a whole bunch of other bands that don't start with “C.”

Better than Boston. Or (most of) Chicago. Hell, even all of Alabama.

If you see just one geographic location-monikered band this year, make it Pasadena. — Ryan Smith

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

Saturday, Dec. 10

Mosh for Tots Mixes Metal and Charity



Thanks to movies, television, and other media outlets, heavy metal

musicians and fans are often viewed as outliers to normal society: slackers, troublemakers, and even criminals. But some of Erie's hardcore headbangers are showing their soft side, with this year's “Mosh for Tots” at Basement Transmissions.

“Mosh for Tots” seeks to give less fortunate children in the community a better holiday season, by offering show-goers the option to donate a new toy in lieu of the admission price, while simultaneously cleaning up the soiled view that is held by many towards the metal music community.

The lineup for the evening highlights some of the most talented bands in the local metal scene. Headliner Bravura is one of Erie's premier metal bands, and Slaughter in the Meridian is celebrating the release of their new album *Damaged Reflections* at this show. Other Erieites include Gelatin Skeleton, Brotherhood of the Jam, Perdition, and Of Shadows, as well as Obelus from Edinboro. The only out-of-town act for the night is Dayton, Ohio's Monocle. Each band brings a unique interpretation of the metal genre to the stage that any metal fan can enjoy.

Whether you're feeling charitable, or just a metal fan looking to have some fun, come out to the show and help a child have a memorable Christmas by donating a toy, while supporting the local music scene. The ringing in your

ears and sore neck from headbanging might be worth it, knowing you've helped put a smile on someone's face. — Tommy Shannon

5:30 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // All ages // \$5 or donation of new toy // facebook.com/events/123665548114958/

Thursday, Dec. 15

A New Take on a Holiday Classic



Perhaps not quite as instantly recognizable as “Frosty the Snowman,” Handel's *Messiah* is equally synonymous with Christmas celebrations, and anyone who has performed in a choir around the holiday season will likely have learned a refrain or two. This year, on Dec. 15, Apollo's Fire will present an “interpretation” of *Messiah* at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University.

In 1992, ensemble founder, harpsichordist, and conductor Jeannette Sorrel brought a collective of musicians and actor-singers together under the moniker Apollo's Fire. And yes, the group was named for the classical god of music and of the sun. Sorrel wanted to create music with this collective that was “dedicated to the baroque ideal that music should evoke the various Affekts or passions in the listener.” The group was established in northwest Ohio and today calls Cleveland home, while touring the passion and intensity of live baroque music throughout Europe and North America.

Apollo's Fire shapes *Messiah* into more than a mere concert. The performance is described as “taking a cue from Handel's original conception of the piece as theatrical entertainment,” which takes listeners on a spiritual, musical, and historical journey, nodding to the intention that baroque music is more actively evocative.

Newcomers to this style of music should listen to “Handel's *Messiah* – A Theatrical/Spiritual Journey” to hear the blend of soaring voices, and to gain a sense of the epic work which will be presented this holiday season. — Miriam Lamey

7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. // 824.3000 or miac.mercyhurst.edu/

MUSIC

Peter Mayer's Stars and Promises Wings of Angels

Dec. 7 — 7 to 9 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. facebook.com/events/215260488897386.

New Horizons Music Project Holiday Performance

Dec. 8 — 5 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Trumpet Ensemble Holiday Concert

Dec. 9 — 4:30 p.m.

Dr. William P. Alexander Music Center, 110 Kiltie Rd. edinboro.edu.

The Groove

Dec. 9 — 6 p.m.

Coconut Joe's, 28 N. Park Row cjoes.com.

Friday Night Jazz

Dec. 9, 16 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. jazzerie.com.

Making Spirits Bright: Young People's Chorus of Erie Holiday Concert

Dec. 9 — 7 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace Church,

2401 W. 38th St. facebook.com/YPCERIE.

The African Children's Choir

Dec. 9 — 7 p.m.

St. Jude the Apostle Church, 2801 W. 6th St. africanchildrenschoir.com.

Smilo & the Ghost

Dec. 9 — 8 p.m.

814 Pub & Grill, 1325 State St. facebook.com/events/225859317838582/

Mercyhurst Chamber Orchestra

Dec. 9 — 8 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Pasadena

Dec. 9 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Tuba Christmas

Dec. 10 — 1 to 2 p.m.

McGarvey Commons, 4701 College Dr. psbehrend.psu.edu.

Mosh for Tots

Dec. 10 — 5 p.m. to 1 a.m.

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

Saturday Night Jazz

Dec. 10, 17 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. jazzerie.com.

Concert Choir with The Erie Chamber Orchestra

Dec. 10 — 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, 250 W. 7th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

The Gathering

Dec. 10 — 7:30 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church, 7180 Perry Hwy. facebook.com/lynn.johnson.96592.

Filthy Low Down, GESH, Little Less Least, Travel Agents and JC

Dec. 10 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Bobby's Place, 1201 W. 18th St. facebook.com/pg/gimpguyunderground.

Deaf Scene: Instrumental Tool Tribute

Dec. 10 — 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Michael Gerholdt

Dec. 11 — 1 to 4 p.m.

Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. arundelcellars.com.

Santa Lucia Festival of Light

Dec. 11 — 4 p.m.

Luther Memorial

Church, 225 W. 10th St. luthermemorialonline.org.

Classically Christmas Concert

Dec. 11 — 7 to 9 p.m.

First Alliance Church, 2939 Zimmerly Rd. facerie.org.

William Parker Solo

Dec. 11 — 8 p.m.

PACA, 1505 State St. paca1505.com.

Open Mic Night

Dec. 12, 19 — 6 to 8 p.m.

The Juice Jar, 2620 W. 8th St. facebook.com/ErieJuiceJar.

Messiah

Dec. 13 — 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

St. Peter Cathedral, 230 W. 10th St. eriephil.org.

Magnificat and Holiday Carols

Dec. 14 — 7 p.m.

St. Mary's Chapel at Mercyhurst North East, 16 W. Division St. mercyhurst.edu.

Apollo's Fire: The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra

Dec. 15 — 7:30 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

A Killer's Confession

featuring Waylon Reavis

Dec. 15 — 9 p.m.

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

Mister F

Dec. 16 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Frank Singer Trio featuring Bruce Johnstone

Dec. 17 — 7 to 10 p.m.

814 Pub and Grille, 3125 State St. jazzerie.com.

Tim Vee, Matt Texter, and Lilly Francis

Dec. 17 — 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Sam Hyman

Dec. 18 — 1 to 4 p.m.

Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. arundelcellars.com.

A Festival Service of Lessons & Carols

Dec. 18 — 5 to 6:30 p.m.

The Cathedral of St. Paul, 134 W. 7th St. cathedralofstpaul.org.

DANCE

The Nutcracker

Dec. 16 — 10 to 11:30 a.m. & Dec. 17 — 8 to 10 p.m. & Dec.

18 — 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. lakeerieballet.org.

FOOD & DRINK

Voodoo Tap Takeover

Dec. 8 — 6 to 8 p.m.

Mad Mex in the Millcreek Mall, 580 Peach St. facebook.com/VoodooBrewery-305706522795288.

Fezziwig's Christmas Dinner

Dec. 9, 10 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Baldwin Reynolds House Museum, 639 Terrace St. baldwinreynolds.org.

Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 10 — 9:30 a.m.

Riverside: The Inn at Cambridge Springs, 1 Fountain Ave. theriversideinn.com.

Lunch with Santa

Dec. 10 — noon to 2 p.m.

Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 11, 18 — 7:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Peek'n Peak Resort, 1405 Olde Rd. pknpk.com.

Brunch and Live Music

Dec. 11, 18 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Juice Jar, 2620 W. 8th St.

BRUCE GALLERY

holiday
Sale



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Friday, Dec. 16

Tstmrkt Mixes It Up at PACA



It's fitting that the performance art collective Tstmrkt staged their first act in a junkyard. After all, what is the world these days but a proverbial scrap heap, fleeting images and sounds steam-shoveled into our conscious and subconscious minds?

Tstmrkt combines film footage, audio collage, theatrics, and sketch comedy into a postmodern pastiche as likely to bemuse as amuse. The performers utilize no props whatsoever, listening for prerecorded audio cues and reacting accordingly. Projector screens set the scenes to real-life scenarios that almost inevitably take a turn for the absurd. For instance, in the opening sketch of

their latest show (DVDA Pt. I & II), an automated scanner gives a man trouble checking out his items (normal) before revealing that what it really wants is to check out his "items" (not normal). The female clerk behaves as if this is a routine procedure and he is inconveniencing the other customers by not complying.

Tstmrkt combines film footage, audio collage, theatrics, and sketch comedy into a postmodern pastiche as likely to bemuse as amuse.

Is this example just oddity for the sake of oddity, or is it a more incisive commentary on sexism and gender roles? "Whether or not this is pure entertainment or if this has any deeper relevance to society as a whole is a hard question to ask about any artwork," said Tstmrkt co-founder Ernest Hemmings in a video interview with the late Kurt Sahlmann. "Anything could be viewed as pure entertainment. I guess it depends on the viewer, on who is absorbing the content."

Hemmings will be joined on stage by fellow actors Maythinee Washington

and Brandon McClennahan. Erie will be among the last markets to be tested on this tour, as the ensemble returns to PACA for a two-show, pre-holiday bizarre. Expect to be entertained in unexpected (and provocative) ways. — Matt Swanseger

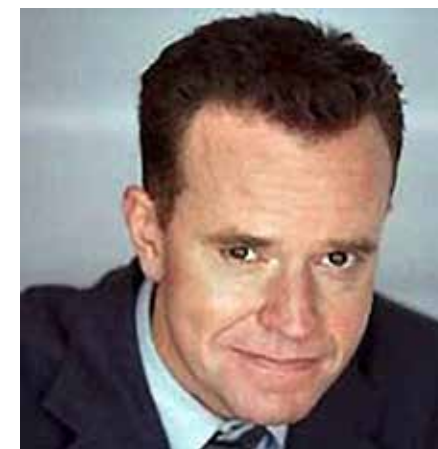
8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 16; 10 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 17 // 1505 State St. // paca1505.com // \$10

Friday, Dec. 16

Steve Hytner Should Suit Erie Well

Jr.'s Last Laugh headliner Steve Hytner has 90 acting credits to his name, but most people aren't aware his name is not Kenny Bania. Although he'd prefer you'd call him that as opposed to Hitler (the name his spellchecker insists on).

Hytner is most renowned for his recurring role on *Seinfeld* as the cut-rate comedian Bania, who leverages a "gifted" Armani suit into dinner dates and professional advice from his idol, Jerry. His persistence garners the attention of audiences, NBC talent scouts, and even Jerry's ex-girlfriends — much to *Seinfeld*'s annoyance. "Alright, I'll leave you alone," the sycophantic Bania was known to say after making his pitch,



with no promises of that actually happening.

Hytner is far less obnoxious than his fictional counterpart but certainly as dedicated. His career spans nearly 30 years, including appearances in films

Hytner is far less obnoxious than his fictional counterpart but certainly as dedicated.

such as *In the Line of Fire* (1993), *The Prophecy* (1995), and *Face/Off* (1997) and prominent network TV series such as *Friends*, *CSI*, *King of Queens*, and *Two*

facebook.com/ErieJuiceJar.

Holiday Meal and Wine Pairing

Dec. 12 — 2 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Holiday Dinner Theatre

Dec. 14 — 5:30 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

3rd Annual Ugly Sweater Party

Dec. 17 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Riverside: The Inn at Cambridge Springs, 1 Fountain Ave. theriversideinn.com.

Authentic Chinese Egg Rolls

Dec. 20 — 1 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

FILM

Walking With Dinosaurs: Prehistoric Planet

Ongoing through Mar. 3, 2017 — 11 a.m. & 1 & 3 p.m.

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

Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West

Ongoing through Mar. 3, 2017 — noon & 4 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula

Dr. trecpi.org.

Journey to Space

Ongoing through Mar. 3, 2017 — 2 & 5 p.m.

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

The Act of Killing

Dec. 8 — 8:30 to 11 p.m.

Edinboro University Frank G. Pogue Student Center, 405 Scotland Rd. facebook.com/edinborofilmseries.

The Met Live: L'Amour de Loin

Dec. 10 — 12:55 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

National Theatre Live: War Horse

Dec. 11 — 12:55 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Enter the Dragon

Dec. 15 — 8:30 to 11 p.m.

Edinboro University Frank G. Pogue Student Center, 405 Scotland Rd. facebook.com/edinborofilmseries.

VISUAL ARTS

Barry Underwood

Ongoing through Dec. 9

Bruce Gallery in Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St.

brucegallery.info.

Senior Projects and Advanced Studio Projects

Ongoing through Dec. 16

Allegheny College Doane Hall of Art, 520 N. Main St. allegheny.edu.

Organic Forms and Pulsating Lines by Barbara and Julian Stanczak

Ongoing through Dec. 18

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

NPAA Holiday Show

Ongoing through Dec. 18

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. npaaonline.org.

Dark Garden

Ongoing through Jan 8, 2017

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Jose Picayo Polaroids: A Retrospective

Ongoing through Jan. 8, 2017

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Noreen Finn, Recent Paintings

Ongoing through Jan. 10, 2017

Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

Mood Swing Review: A solo exhibition by Ron Bayuzick

Ongoing through Feb. 11, 2017

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Sergei Isupov: Hidden Messages

Ongoing through April 2, 2017

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Second Sundays

Dec. 11 — 1 to 5 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Christmas Sale

Dec. 14, 15

Bruce Gallery in Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St. brucegallery.info.

THEATRE

A Christmas Pudding

Dec. 7, 13, 14 — noon & Dec. 9, 10, 16, 17 — 7 p.m. & Dec. 11 — 2:30 p.m.

Riverside: The Inn at Cambridge Springs, 1 Fountain Ave. theriversideinn.com.

Girl Gone

Dec. 8, 9, 10, 11 — 7:30 p.m.

Edinboro University Diebold Center for the Performing Arts, 217 Meadville St. edinboro.edu.

Scrooge

Dec. 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 — 7:30 p.m. & Dec. 10, 11, 18 — 2 p.m.

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

D'Angelo Opera Theatre:

The Tales of Hoffmann

Dec. 8, 11 — 8 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Christmas Memories

Dec. 9, 16 — 7 p.m. & Dec. 10, 17 — 5:30 p.m. & Dec. 11, 18 — 2:30 p.m.

Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

This Wonderful Life

Dec. 9, 10 — 8 p.m. & Dec. 11 — 2:30 p.m.

PACA, 1505 State St. paca1505.com.

Santaland Diaries Ugly Sweater Party

Dec. 10, 7 — 10 p.m.

Dramashop, 1001 State St. dramashop.org

Dvda Part 1 and 2

Dec. 16 — 8 p.m.

PACA, 1505 State St. paca1505.com.

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia present Brown Bear, Brown Bear & Other Treasured Stories

Dec. 17 — 11 a.m. & 4 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

COMMUNITY

Tinker the T-Rex Comes to the TREC

Ongoing through Feb 24,

2017 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

VIP Holiday Show

Dec. 7, 8

Bloom Collaborative, 138 E. 26th St. bloomcollaborative.org.

Personalized 12-Month Calendar

Dec. 7 — 1 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Reading to the Dogs

Dec. 7 — 4 to 4:45 p.m.

Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. erielibrary.org.

Oriental Painting

Dec. 7 — 5 to 7 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Erie Otters vs. Niagara

Dec. 7 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com

Raise the Vibe and Glide

Dec. 7 — 7 to 9 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church, 7180 Perry Hwy. bhaktaschool.org.

Intro to Computers and the Internet I

Dec. 8 — 9 a.m. to noon

Room 212 Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front

and a Half Men. His standup reflects life, both in the ways it's changing (the rich hiring "dog whisperers" and valet parking at Little League games) and the ways it will never change (children's lack of a filter, the differences between men and women).

There will be two shows on both nights, with an optional dinner – as in full meal, buffet-style – because everyone knows soup doesn't count as reimbursement of outstanding debts. Bring your friends, significant others and/or your favorite creditors (if there is a distinction between the two) – it's going to be comedy gold, Erie. Gold! – Matt Swanseger

6:30 or 9:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 16 and Saturday, Dec. 17 (optional dinner served at 5:15 p.m. for early shows) // 1402 State St. // jrslastlaugh.net/steve-hytner // \$20 show only, \$34.75 dinner package

Saturday, Dec. 17

Sugarplums, Nutcrackers, and ... Dogs: LEB's Nutcracker has a Few Surprises

Holiday traditions can be comforting, helping to straighten out other kinks that may have come your way in the past year. Lake Erie Ballet's spun-sugar confection, Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, may be just the solace you need.

The Nutcracker's storyline is well known, but some changes are in store for LEB's 58th staging of it, thanks to new partnerships this year.

More than 100 dancers will bring *The Nutcracker* to life, 40 of them from Mercyhurst University's dance depart-



ment. Lesley Bories-Scalise, LEB's new artistic director, is delighted to have the two organizations working together. "Both Tauna Hunter [chair of the Mercyhurst University Dance Department] and I are extremely pleased and thrilled to continue working together with our dancers and students."

The Nutcracker's storyline is well known, but some changes are in store for LEB's 58th staging of it, thanks to new partnerships this year.

In addition, the Erie Philharmonic will provide the music this year. Steve Weiser, executive director of Erie Philharmonic explains, "The Erie Phil used to perform *The Nutcracker* on an annual basis with what was then the Erie Civic Ballet. We are all very excited to be able to climb down into the pit, while the dancers of the Lake Erie Ballet take the stage."

Those dancers will share the stage with adoptable dogs from the ANNA Shelter in the Act 1 Christmas party. Ruth Thompson, director of ANNA, is thrilled for the shelter to be included. "Our dogs get to be on stage as part of a classic family tradition. How amazing is that?" The furry stars will also be in the lobby afterwards, looking for forever homes among the crowd. If you can't adopt right now, a chance to make a donation to the shelter will be possible, too.

Either one, plus the holiday favorite of sugarplums, whimsy, and make-believe, is a sweet holiday tonic to enjoy. – Mary Birdsong

8 p.m. on Dec. 17; 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 18 // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // Tickets at erieevents.com/events/the-nutcracker-2/

Saturday, Dec. 17

Children's Books Come to Life



An internationally recognized group is bringing children's stories to life in Erie.

Following last year's sold-out show,

the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia will return Saturday, Dec. 17 to Mercyhurst University's Walker Recital Hall.

The hour-long show uses creative puppetry and scenic effects to present the children's books of Eric Carle. These works – like the well-known *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* – have delighted audiences for years.

The *Los Angeles Times* called it "quite a delight ... brought to memorable life."

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, a real crowd-pleaser, has been performed more than 3,500 times by the troupe

The hour-long show uses creative puppetry and scenic effects to present the children's books of Eric Carle.

worldwide.

Another favorite is *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Published in 1967, this tale, illustrated by Bill Martin, Jr., teaches children about colors and animals. And the notable *Papa, Please Get the Moon For Me*, published in 1986, tells the story of a dedicated father who goes far out of his way – all the way to outer space and back – to please his daughter, Monica, when she asks for the moon.

Tickets cost \$15 for adults, \$12.50 for seniors and \$10 for students and youth. – Tracy Geibel

11 a.m. & 4 p.m. // Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. // 824.3000 or miac.mercyhurst.edu/events

[St. erieliibrary.org](http://St.erieliibrary.org).

Make and Take Craft

Dec. 8 — 2 to 3 p.m.

Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. erieliibrary.org.

Joe Zimmerman

Dec. 8 — 7 p.m. Dec. 9, 10 — 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.

Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.net.

Christmas Glass Blocks

Dec. 9 — 1 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Erie BayHawks vs. Texas

Dec. 9 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

The Christmas Tree Ship

Dec. 9 — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E. Front St. flagshipniagara.org.

Harry Potter Magical Holiday Ball

Dec. 9 — 7 to 10 p.m.

Barnes & Noble, 5909 Peach St. facebook.com/Erie.BN.

Kinesio Taping Education KTI and KT2

Dec. 10, 11 — 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Impact Physical Therapy, 5415 Westlake Rd. kinesiotaping.com.

Intro to Laptops

Dec. 10 — 9 a.m. to noon

Room 212 Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erieliibrary.org.

Beach Glass Ornament for Kids

Dec. 10 — 10:30 a.m. to noon

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Turtle Talk

Dec. 10 — 11 a.m. to noon

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Santa Visits the Library

Dec. 10 — 11 a.m. to noon

Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. erieliibrary.org.

Punk Rock Flea Market

Dec. 10 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/events/960830507396560/

Christmas Tattoo Drive

Dec. 10 — 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Wayward Tattoo Studio, 2301 W. 12th St. facebook.com/events/1190319044348057.

Children's Christmas Party

Dec. 10 — 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

St. Matthews Lutheran Church, 950 W. 7th St. facebook.com/SMLCerie.

Erie Otters vs. SSM

Dec. 10 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Erie Handmade Fair to Support Basement Transmissions

Dec. 11 — 1 to 4 p.m.

Basement Transmissions,

145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/events/1097489160336322/

Monday Family Story Time

Dec. 12 — 10 to 11 a.m.

Edinboro Branch Library, 413 Plum St. erieliibrary.org.

Excel II

Dec. 13 — 9 a.m. to noon

Room 212 Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erieliibrary.org.

Grief through the Holidays

Dec. 13 — 11 a.m.

Edinboro Manor, 419 Waterford St. Nadine.Clement@hcfmanagement.com.

Polish Egg Decorating

Dec. 13 — 1 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Teen Makers

Dec. 13, 20, 27 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Teen Space in Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erieliibrary.org.

Therapy Dogs

Dec. 13 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Lincoln Community Center Library, 1255 Manchester Rd. erieliibrary.org.

Star of Wonder Planetarium Show

Dec. 13 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Edinboro University Cooper Science Center Room 169, 230 Scotland Rd. edinboro.edu.

Presque Isle History Series: Primitive Skills

Dec. 13 — 6 to 7 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Erie Talent Share

Dec. 13 — 6 to 8 p.m.

Peninsula Room Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erieliibrary.org.

Bookclub in a Bag

Dec. 13 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Lincoln Community Center Library, 1255 Manchester

[Rd. erieliibrary.org](http://Rd.erieliibrary.org).

County Council Meeting

Dec. 13 — 7 p.m.

Erie County Courthouse, 140 W. 6th St. eriecountypa.gov.

Erie Otters vs. Kitchener

Dec. 14 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Outside the Window: White-tailed Deer

Dec. 15 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

S.T.E.A.M. Kids Science Club


Dec. 15 — 4:15 to 5 p.m.

Children's Storytime Room Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erieliibrary.org.

Intro to Computers and the Internet II

Dec. 15 — 5 to 8 p.m.


Room 212 Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front



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Jazz Legend William Parker Plays PACA

Prolific avant-garde bassist to perform solo one night only



SUNDAY, DEC. 11

For some of the most exciting moments of modern jazz, William Parker has been there. The New York City bassist remains one of the seminal figures of the free jazz scene. Erie audiences will get a chance to see Parker perform a solo set at the Performing Arts Collective Alliance (PACA).

In addition to being one of the world's most highly regarded double bassists, Parker is also a consummate storyteller, with entertaining introductions and musical insights peppering his performances.

For decades, Parker played regularly with free jazz giants like Cecil Taylor, David S. Ware, and Peter Brötzmann. So prolific was Parker that he sparked the interest of Erie writer and documentarian, Rick Lopez. In 2014, Lopez released *The William Parker Sessionography*, a 482-page compendium chronicling every

recording and performance in the bassist's 40-plus-year career. Lopez found Parker through the David S. Ware quartet, whose leader and drummer he also documented. According to Lopez, the group had "that kind of aggressiveness and unbridled passion [that] I'm always looking for – something that expresses the chaos of real life and doesn't gloss over things by trying to be 'pleasant' all the time."

With worlds of experience behind every pluck and bow of the string, Parker shines a new light into the dark corners

With worlds of experience behind every pluck and bow of the string, Parker shines a new light into the dark corners of improvisation.

of improvisation. Fans of adventurous, experimental musicianship will receive a master class in the medium.

Lopez summarized, "William is a force of nature, so if you're looking for transcendence, transformation, and a good old-fashioned soul-cleansing, this concert will be a great help to you. It's going to be a blast." – Nick Warren

8 p.m. // 1505 State St. // \$10;
\$30 includes purchase of book
// paca1505.com or 434.0687

[St. erielibrary.org](http://St.erielibrary.org).

Erie BayHawks vs. Los Angeles

Dec. 15 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Evening Fireside Talk: North American Beaver

Dec. 15 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Rotary Pavilion in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Lifeworks Erie Annual Holiday Party

Dec. 16 — noon to 3 p.m.

Zem Zem Shrine Club, 2525 W. 38th St. lifeworkserie.org.

Holiday Bling Social Night: Grades 4+

Dec. 16 — 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Box of Light Studio, 419 State St. boxoflight.org.

Winter Wonderland

Dec. 16, 17, 18, 27, 28, 29, 30 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Asbury Woods Nature

Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. asburywoods.org.

Erie Otters vs. Windsor

Dec. 16 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Steve Hytner

Dec. 16, 17 — 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.

Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.net.

PowerPoint

Dec. 17 — 9 a.m. to noon

Room 212 Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Natural Ornaments

Dec. 17 — 1 to 3 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Barber Christmas Ball

Dec. 17 — 8 p.m.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier erieevents.com.

Wild Holiday: Winter

Animals of Presque Isle

Dec. 18 — 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Winter Solstice Meditation

Dec. 20 — 6 to 7 p.m.

Edinboro Branch Library, 413 Plum St. erielibrary.org.

Presque Isle History Series: Shipwrecks

Dec. 20 — 6 to 7 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Christmas Graham Cracker Houses

Dec. 21 — 1 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Presque Isle After Dark: Sidewalk Trail and Others

Dec. 21 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Presque Isle Lighthouse parking lot in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

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CALENDAR

Wayward Christmas Tattoo Drive

Get some holiday ink in exchange for donations

SATURDAY, DEC. 10



As in years past, the artists at Wayward are volunteering their time and talents to provide you with fresh ink for the New Year. So aside from helping Erie boys and girls and dogs and cats have an awesome Christmas, you'll have something slick to show off at ugly sweater parties! To get that free tattoo, all you need to do is bring in either an unopened toy valued at \$20 or a large bag of dog or cat food.

"This event is something we love to do as a shop," says Corey Thompson, co-founder and co-owner of Wayward. "It's the best way we can give back to our loyal clientele and the city of Erie by using our skills and talents."

Toy donations go to support children of Arc of Erie, an organization dedicated to improving services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Cat and dog food donations go to the ANNA Shelter, the Association for Needy and Neglected Animals.

At last year's event, Wayward received more than 150 toys and nearly a ton of

dog and cat food. Collectively, the nine artists participating completed more than 140 tattoos. This year, they're looking to up the ante.

Thompson, along with fellow co-founder and co-owner Johnny Matters, "Eerie" Eric Fargiugio, Will Petroff, and a host of other artists – including some guests – will be tattooing "all new

Collectively, the nine artists participating last year completed more than 140 tattoos. This year, they're looking to up the ante.

designs from each artist working the event," Thompson explains.

Important things to consider: Along with a \$20 toy or a large bag of kibble (receipt please!), you'll need to bring your ID. No tattoos for minors (sorry!).

Tattoos will be done on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited one tattoo per person – unless you'd like to go

through the line again (and provide an additional donation).

You can also donate without getting a tattoo. If you're feeling more generous, you're welcome to drop off as much as you like.

Because of the anticipated volume of givers of toys/food and getters of tattoos, artists will be tattooing as they become available (awesome chance to meet a new artist!). If you want a sneak peek at what'll be possible, stop by the 12th Street shop on Friday, Dec. 9.

And don't forget: This gifted crew isn't profiting from the donations – they're just looking to give twice: To you, with some sweet new art, and to local boys and girls and pups and kits with toys and food. But this tattooed contributor strongly encourages you to tip your artist and show your appreciation. – Ben Spегgen

Noon to 8 p.m. // 2301 W. 12th St. // 456.0103 or Facebook.com/WaywardTattooStudio

When we think of ink on Christmas, making twice-checked lists of what we wish to give and receive typically come to mind. This Christmastime, you can add to your giving list a toy for some Erie girl or boy and kibble for some Erie dog or cat, and – thanks to Wayward Tattoo Studio – get a sweet new tat!

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Will the New *Star Wars* Films Be the Same Old Story?

Questioning the nostalgia of *Rogue One*



LUCASFILM

By: Forest Taylor

This month, *Rogue One*, the first of many anticipated *Star Wars* spinoff tales, hits theaters. Apparently, we're getting a new *Star Wars* film every year, indefinitely. The hype and subsequent backlash over *The Force Awakens* is still a vivid memory, and *Rogue One* may have to deal with the same problems.

The consensus around *The Force Awakens* is that it's either a fun and exciting (if not particularly groundbreaking) film, or a completely unoriginal retread of all the plot points from the original. The most common complaint is that it did nothing but take ideas from the original film and update them. With a new film being released every year, this could definitely be a concern.

There's nothing wrong with *The Force Awakens* being the same old story. It's a fine way to draw in old fans and get new viewers acclimated to the *Star Wars* universe. This will only work once, however, before people realize they're watching the same thing again and again.

The trailer for *Rogue One*, with its star destroyers, X-wings, and a special appearance by Darth Vader, has not given me any indication that they're doing anything but nostalgia-baiting – and that has me worried. *Star Wars* owes its origins to classic mythology, with George Lucas deriving his story from Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. That heroic template was combined with influences as varied as Flash Gordon, old samurai films, and even World War II aerial combat footage, resulting in a pop culture amalgamation that strikes a chord with nearly everyone.

Today, *Star Wars* has become a mythology itself, and the new films are taking influences from ... well ... *Star Wars*. There are only so many times they can keep telling the same story before people get sick of that galaxy far, far away.

Forest Taylor can be contacted at forebore1982@gmail.com.

An advertisement for Stella Artois beer. On the left, a green bottle of Stella Artois is next to a tall, elegant glass filled with golden beer and a thick head of foam. The bottle and glass both feature the Stella Artois logo, which includes the text 'ANNO 1366', 'STELLA ARTOIS', and 'Belgium'. The background is white with a large, elegant script font that reads 'This Holiday, Host One To Remember.' Below this, the word 'BeLegacy' is written in a smaller, elegant font. On the right side, there is a large, ornate red and white logo for Stella Artois, featuring a crown and the text 'ANNO 1366' and 'STELLA ARTOIS'.

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Justice
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Much to the music fan's dismay, disco never died – it only fled underground, adopting numerous aliases, most ending with “house.” The most unabashedly disco of these was the French house movement, exemplified by artists such as Étienne de Crécy, Cassius, and Daft Punk during the late 90s. Justice, a duo consisting of Gaspard Auge and Xavier de Rosnay, delivered their grittier, somewhat more sinister take on the genre with their 2007 debut, *Modest Mouse*. Their third album, *Woman*, at first seems shades lighter than even 2011's *Audio.Video.Disco*, leading off with the very slick, Chic-like “Safe and Sound,” rife with infectious slap-bass grooves. The pair's classic leanings don't really start to bleed through until the album's second half, with the eerie harmonies of the white-knuckle space odyssey “Chorus,” the winding staircase of harpsichord countermelodies on “Heavy Metal,” and the glowstick cathedral conjured on “Close Call.” The ideal balance, however, is struck on lead single “Randy,” where distorted, ping-ponging synth hooks complement guest vocalist Morgan Phalen's falsetto perfectly.

– Matt Swanseger



Bubblegum Lemonade
 The Great Leap Backward
 Matinee Recordings



Sometimes simple songs are the greatest. Starting off with some brief feedback against a drum machine beat, the “real” drums come in along with a smooth, bright powerpop riff. The chorus kicks in with the melodic pop punk perfection of the Mr. T Experience. As the name implies, Bubblegum Lemonade isn't afraid to be sweet. The band is the work of Glasgow's Lawrence McCluskey, who prefers to be known simply as “Laz.” Also half of the duo Strawberry Whiplash, the Scotsman has a strong penchant for 12-string Rickenbacker guitars, the shimmering iconic 1960s sound shining through every track on *The Great Leap Backward* (the group's fourth record). Despite the title's reference to 1958's tumultuous Chinese campaign led by Mao Zedong, the album is far from heavy. The lyrics are full of astute references, although they're sometimes overshadowed by childlike sections of “Wishing It Were Friday” and “Dead As Disco” (repeating lines like “I am Woodstock and you were Altamont”). This album is an absolute pleasure to listen to, a feelgood indiepop gem, all the while remaining decidedly sugary.

– Nick Warren



Virginia Wing
 Forward Constant Motion
 Fire Records



A meditative modern dancepop record, *Forward Constant Motion* presents an inviting paradox. The synthesized, almost liturgical belltones merge with programmed midtempo grooves. Alice Merida Richards' vocals are soothing and measured, her phrasing doled out by bandmate Samuel Pillay's sequencing and sound sampling. There's a delicate balance of humanity and technology, between lush brilliance and sterile, futuristic tones. Richards' voice manages to be simultaneously lifeless and passionate, her alto whispering syncopated staccato hooks. The duo hails from South London, and began as a quartet, moving to a trio for their 2015 album *Measures of Joy*. Prominent jazz-influenced drums are traded in for beats, with the psychedelic shoegaze sound shifting to what we hear now. Somber tracks like “Sonia & Claudette” are best as an immersive listening experience, with disparate frequencies and well-produced rumbles. There's the almost electroclash pop of “Local Loop” and “Miserable World” to balance out the more esoteric compositions. It's an evocative, compelling sound which younger generations are sure to appreciate.

– Nick Warren



Wolf People
 Ruins
 JagJaguwar



Some psychedelic stoner rock comes off more convincing than others. *Ruins* has a retro authenticity that's almost confusing. The fuzz thickly coats every pentatonic guitar lick. Vocals start off extra gritty in “Ninth Night,” as if frontman Jack Sharp were calling us long-distance from overseas. The distortion transitions into echoey reverberation by the time the first “Kingfisher” hits (there are two reprises). Wolf People don't skimp on the details, either – the addition of a flute player drawing Jethro Tull comparisons to go along with the requisite Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath ones. There's a long history of English blues-based rock, with this Bedfordshire quartet carrying that tradition into 2016. Beyond staying impressively true to the sound of their influences, there's another ancientness about *Ruins*. Predilections towards medieval themes have persisted in this type of music for some time now. Finding the middle ground, Wolf People achieve it without being overly aggressive (metal) or too melodramatic (prog), making a perfect candidate for the end credits to a *Game of Thrones* episode.

– Nick Warren



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Erie Faces Erie

Missy Twohig

owner, Sacred Piercing

Ed Bernik

photographer

"I find it humbling that people would come to me and trust me, no matter what their reason is for the piercing."

Ed Bernik: In our culture, piercing may still be foreign to many people. There are a lot of reasons to have a piercing – religious, spiritual, medical, or for self-expression. What is your belief system or mindset behind piercing?

Missy Twohig: Piercing started long ago with many different tribes as part of a sacred ceremony, and we adopted it into our Western culture for various reasons. Our mindset is to provide clients with a positive experience from the moment they walk in the door. I see all the positives that come out of piercing, and think it's cool that people come to us and trust us to put a needle into their body, and put jewelry on them. That's where our name originates from. Mutual trust is the sacred part of that. When people come into the shop, I want to treat them the way I want to be treated. I find it humbling that people would come to me and trust me, no matter what their reason is for the piercing. And it's the whole



process of the piercing – seeing them happy, and then the follow-up for questions or to check the piercing. It's part of the process of human interaction.

EB: What's the theme of your studio?

MT: We offer professional body piercing in an atmosphere that is welcoming to everyone. Many times, people come in nervous. We have set up a calming atmosphere in the studio, from the color of the walls to music, to create a peaceful, meditative environment. We keep it earthy and about being real with people and giving them a good experience.

EB: I have never been in a piercing studio before. Entering, it was almost like walking into a gallery. Talk about the unique jewelry you guys have.

MT: We custom fit jewelry

to accommodate everyone's needs. There's something for everyone. We carry a wide

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variety of implant grade titanium jewelry, 18k and 14k gold, glass, bone, horn, and locally made wood jewel-

ry. These all come in many shapes and sizes. Clients also have the option of personally customizing their jewelry.

We try to hit every part of the spectrum with people's tastes. When we opened nine years ago, I wasn't sure if we would be able to maintain it as just a piercing studio, but it just kept getting busier and busier. We've been very successful.

EB: If somebody was considering a piercing, what would you tell them?

MT: Call to set up an appointment for a consultation, where we can answer any questions, discuss the placement, and make sure their anatomy is suitable for a certain piercing. We then show them all of the jewelry options that we offer for that particular piercing. For some people who are going

Missy Twohig (left) is embraced by her coworkers Ashley Twohig and Jocelyn Gonzalez

through changes in their lives, this may be an area of expression for them. For other people, it's like reclaiming their body after some event like an illness or a divorce. We pierce for people of all ages. We have pierced for young people and for people in their 70s and 80s.

EB: I noticed you have other people's artwork in your studio. What is your reason for displaying others' works?

MT: We believe in supporting local artists. Some have no place to display their work so we offer up our walls to showcase them. It's all about community.

*Missy Twohig:
sacredpiercing.com*

*Ed Bernik:
bernikphotography.com*

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