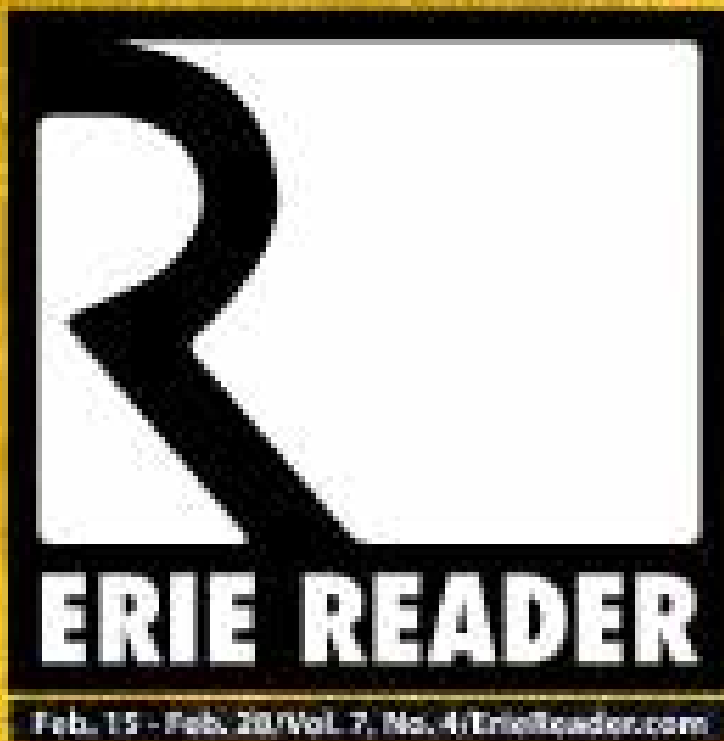


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**Editors-in-Chief:**

Brian Graham & Adam Welsh

**Managing Editor:**

Nick Warren

**Copy Editor:**

Katie Christ

**Contributing Editors:**

Ben Speggen

Jim Wertz

**Contributors:**

Maitham Basha-Agha

Ed Bernik

Mary Birdsong

Tracy Geibel

Lisa Gensheimer

Gregory Greenleaf-Knepp

Dan Schank

Tommy Shannon

Ryan Smith

Ti Sumner

Matt Swansinger

Bryan Toy

**Cover Design:**

Nick Warren

**Photographers:**

Maitham Basha-Agha

Ryan Smith

Brad Triana

**Publisher's Assistant:**

Emily Hanisek

**Intern:**

Angie Jeffery

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

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

### The roads ahead

Erie has been at a crossroads for too long. As we begin to inch one way, toward innovation birthed from bold new ideas, something always seems to pull us in the other direction. It's as if the things that should be nothing but obstacles are becoming our destination. Crises have a gravity to them, pulling us in by the sheer weight of certain problems. Issues like the state of our public schools, the ongoing heroin epidemic, and the increase of economic blight must be properly treated not as our fate, but simply as problems to overcome on our way to a brighter future.

One of the most direct factors impacting our city's growth is its leadership. In this issue, Ben Speggen dives into the ideas behind our upcoming mayoral election. With advice from James Fallows of *The Atlantic*, he establishes a strong foundation for this momentous decision. This, the first in a series, serves to underscore an ongoing focus for the *Erie Reader* until Election Day on Nov. 7.

For a closer look at an important financial issue

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One of the most direct factors impacting our city's growth is its leadership. In this issue, Ben Speggen dives into the ideas behind our upcoming mayoral election.

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impacting our city right now, read the op-ed from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority's Executive Director Perry Wood. He crunches the numbers, contrasting the positive effects of proper allocation of gaming revenue with the dangers posed by new legislation proposed in both Harrisburg and City Hall.

In this issue, we're also happy to welcome John Repp, as he offers up the first entries in a regular series of book reviews. You'll also find quite a healthy amount of event spotlights for those in search of worthwhile activities. In fact, this issue contains as many featured events as an average summer edition. Not too bad for the middle of winter.

So don't let the snow throw you off course. There are places to go, and roads to get there, literally and figuratively.

As for the future of our city, we have the necessary maps to get us where we need to be, the clearest being *Erie Refocused*, the comprehensive plan from Charles Buki of the Alexandria, Virginia-based firm czb. We have the examples of similar cities, some not far from here, that have successfully begun turning things around by reshaping their goals to accommodate our ever changing economy. And most importantly, we have the voice of the people. Capable of shifting massive tides, the dialogue created by informed citizens can be one of the most powerful forces on earth. It's up to us to speak up, do something, and take the right path.



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## NEWS & VIEWS

### Just a Thought

The fruits of their labor



KATIE CHRIEST

The stop-in-your-tracks sensational green of an Osage Orange tree fruit, found alongside Gudgeonville Road near Elk Creek.

By: Katie Chriest

New Year's Day dawned bright and clear. Remember? It's hard to, now that winter's skies have written into history their own 50 shades of gray. But on that gleaming day, the sun shed the shroud of 2016 and allowed us all to believe – at least in terms of vitamin D consumption – that 2017 would be a big improvement.

Craving wide open spaces and (mostly) unencumbered views, we drove out to a road near the old Gudgeonville Bridge, parked the car, and started walking. Soon, we had company.

"Happy New Year, neighbors!" exclaimed a man leaning out his truck window, slowing down to greet us. "Oh! You looked like the folks who live here," he then corrected, gesturing toward a farmhouse that sat distant from the slushy dirt road we walked. Instead of pulling off, he introduced himself, idling nonchalantly in the middle of the road.

Our local historian told us that his land had belonged to his family for 110 years. And that – though just 67 – he'd been in the last class to come through a nearby one-room schoolhouse with a potbellied stove and an outhouse.

Soon he bade us farewell, driving over a muddy knoll and out of sight.

As we walked on, I thought about how little I really know about the place where I grew up, not far from where we walked – let alone about its former inhabitants.

What were their private griefs, and public worries? Without ads telling them what new disease they might have, and constant "news" telling them what new fears to harbor, what kept them awake at night? Or when sleep was restful, what did they dream about?

What consumed their thoughts, as they moved through their alternately mundane and heroic lives?

On these things I ruminated. Until we spotted a fluorescent green grapefruit-sized brain in the leftover snow on the road side of the ditch.

"What the heck is *that*?" we both asked, our incredulous voices piercing the quiet country hum.

Back home that evening, I asked Google, "What is the green brain fungus thing under trees in Pennsylvania?"

Google – with the enduring patience of a thousand angelic moms – showed me photos of the Osage Orange tree's fruit (which are apparently sometimes called "Monkey Balls").

Of course, the metaphors are gimmies here: Our region is full of won-

ders, if we'd only truly look; slower journeying through life reveals what rushing never can.

And Mother Nature has an inexplicably wacky sense of humor. That one's for certain.

Clichés aside, I've thought a lot about that weird green brain – especially about which homesteaders planted it. And also about the neighborly man's family, stewarding that land for so long.

Surely, they thought their problems were insurmountable. Surely, they suffered moments of utter despair. Surely, they wondered how they'd ever find the strength to persevere.

History is often discussed in such an imposing, distancing way – as if

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I thought about how little I really know about the place where I grew up, let alone about its former inhabitants. What were their private griefs, and public worries? What kept them awake at night? Or when sleep was restful, what did they dream about?

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it only happened to the important people and their most unfortunate subjects. So it's easy to forget the day-to-day lives that actually came before ours. All those who walked our streets and lived in our houses and tried to do their best with what life had dealt them.

It's comforting to think of them now, and the wisdom they've embedded in us. Maybe some of their sensibility remains in our landscape, waiting to be absorbed by our wandering selves. Maybe that wacky fruit really is brain-like.

Katie Chriest can be contacted at [katie@ErieReader.com](mailto:katie@ErieReader.com).

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## News of the Weird

### Rent free roaches and off balance accounts

By: Chuck Shepherd

#### LEAD STORY EWWWW!

On Jan. 31, doctors at Stanley Medical College and Hospital in Chennai, India, removed a live, full-grown cockroach from the nasal cavity of a 42-year-old woman whose nose had been "itchy" earlier in the day. Two hospitals were unable to help her, but at Stanley, Dr. M N Shankar, chief of ear-nose-throat, used an endoscope, forceps, and, for 45 minutes, a suction device because, he said, the roach "didn't seem to want to come out." Another doctor on the team noted that they've removed beads and similar items from the nasal cavity (demonstrating the splayed-out trespasser in full wingspan), "but not a cockroach, especially not one this large." [Times of India, 2-3-2017]

#### Can't Possibly Be True

Zachary Bennett and Karen Nourse have found Manhattan quite affordable, reported the New York Post in January by simply not paying, for six years now, the \$4,750 monthly rent on their loft-style apartment in the Chelsea neighborhood, citing New York state's "loft law," which they say technically forbids the landlord from collecting. Since the other eight units of their building are "commercial," the landlord believes it doesn't need a "residential certificate of occupancy," but Bennett and Nourse believe the law only exempts buildings with at least two residences, and for some reason, the landlord has obstinately declined to initiate eviction or, until recently, to

sue (for back rent, fees, and electricity). [New York Post, 1-8-2017]

#### Update From "Big Porn"

The colossus Pornhub dot com, in its annual January rundown, reported its several sites had 23 billion "visits" in 2016 (about one-fourth from females), during which time its videos were viewed 91 billion times. In all, earthlings spent 4.6 billion hours watching Pornhub's inventory (that is 5.2 centuries' time doing whatever people do when viewing porn). USA took home the gold for the most "page views" per capita, just nipping Iceland. Online visitors from the Philippines, for the third straight year, remained (per capita) on the sites the longest per visit. The top search term on Pornhub from U.S. computers was "step mom." [The Daily Dot, 1-5-2017]

#### Unclear on the Concept

Late last year, Oxford University professor Joshua Silver accused Britain's Home Secretary of a "hate" crime merely because the Secretary had made a speech urging that unemployed Britons be given preference for jobs over people recruited from overseas. Silver denounced this "discrimination" against "foreigners" and made a formal complaint to West Midlands police, which, after evaluation, absolved Secretary Amber Rudd but acknowledged that, under the law, the police were required to record the Secretary's unemployment speech as a "non-crime hate incident." [BBC News, 1-12-2017]

The British Medical Association issued a formal caution to its staff in

January not to use the term "expectant mothers" when referring to pregnancy because it might offend transgender people. Instead, the Association's memo (reported by the Daily Telegraph) suggested using "pregnant people." The BMA acknowledged that a "large majority" of such people are, in fact, "mothers," but wrote that there may be "intersex" and "trans men" who also could get pregnant. [Daily Telegraph, 1-29-2017]

#### Leading Economic Indicators

In 2001, Questcor Pharmaceuticals bought the rights to make Acthar Gel, a hormone injection to treat a rare form of infantile epilepsy, and gradually raised the price from \$40 a vial to \$28,000 a vial. The British company Mallinckrodt bought Questcor in 2014 and apparently figured the vials were still too cheap, raising the price to \$34,000. However, the Federal Trade Commission noticed that Mallinckrodt also during the latter period bought out and closed down the only company manufacturing a similar, cheaper version of the product, thus ensuring that Mallinckrodt had totally cornered the market. In January, the FTC announced that Mallinckrodt agreed to a \$100 million settlement of the agency's charge of illegal anti-competitive practices. ("\$100 million" is only slightly more than the price of giving one vial to each infant expected to need it in the next year.) [Futurism, 1-18-2017]

Precocious: Girl Scout Charlotte McCourt, 11, of South Orange, New Jersey, saw her sales zoom recently when she posted "brutally honest" reviews of the Scouts' cookies she was selling giving none of them a "10" and labeling some with dour descriptions. She was hoping to sell 300 boxes, but as of the end of January, had registered 16,430. For the record, the best cookie was of

course the Samoa, rated 9, but longtime favorites like the Trefoil ("boring") rated 6 and the Do-Si-Do ("bland") 5. The new Toffee-tastic was simply a "bleak, flavorless, gluten-free wasteland." [NJ.com, 1-31-2017]

#### "Less Cowbell!"

Applicants for passports in Switzerland are evaluated in part by neighbors of the applicant, and animal-rights campaigner Nancy Holten, 42, was rejected in January because townspeople view her as obnoxious, with, said a Swiss People's Party spokesperson, a "big mouth." Among Holten's "sins" was her constant criticism of the country's hallowed fascination with cowbells that make, according to Holten, "hundred decibel," "pneumatic drill"-type sounds (though a hit song, "(Don't Fear) The Reaper," by the group Blue Oyster Cult, skillfully employed the cowbell before it was satirized in an epic "Saturday Night Live" sketch starring Christopher Walken). [The Independent (London), 1-19-2017]

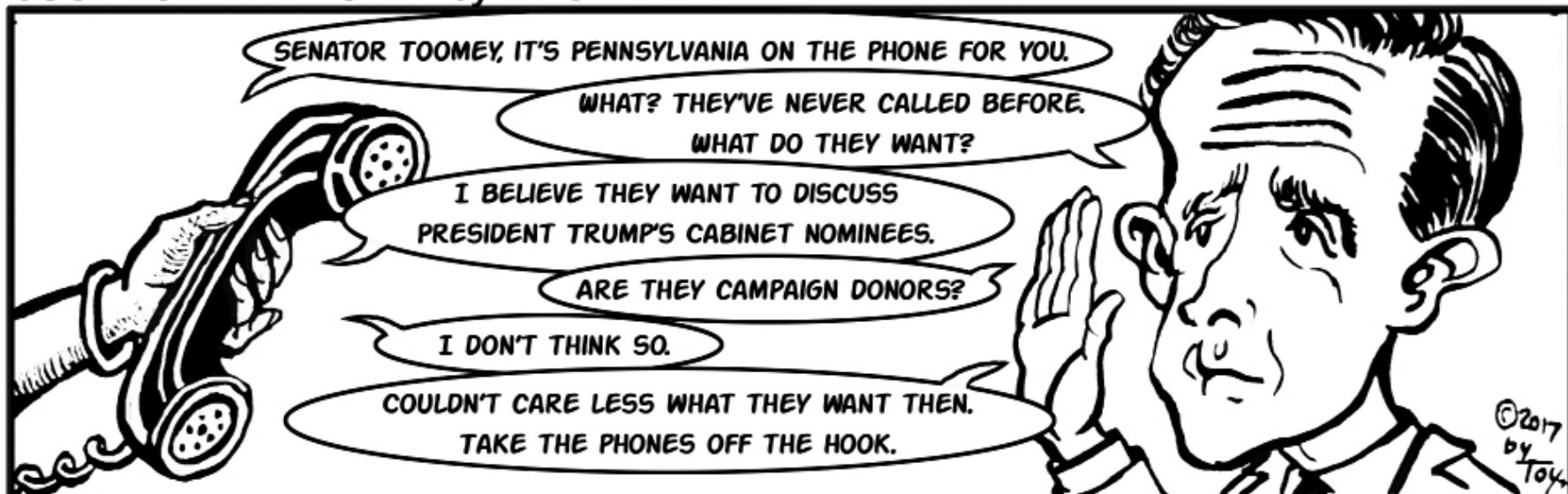
#### The Aristocrats!

In January, Texas district judge Patrick Garcia was charged with misdemeanor disorderly conduct after a dispute outside the courthouse in El Paso. An April trial date was set for Garcia, who was accused of giving the middle finger, in public, to another judge. [Associated Press via KTVT-TV (Dallas-Fort Worth), 1-20-2017]

#### Least Competent Criminals

Not Ready for Prime Time: A suspect pointing a gun attempted a robbery at a laundromat in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, in February was not immediately identified. (The official reason for not initially identifying him was that, though detained, he had

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**NEWS & VIEWS**

not yet been booked; less likely, perhaps, police might have been trying to spare him embarrassment in that the laundromat's overnight clerk, a woman named Naou Mor Khantha, had simply taken his gun away from him and shot him three times. He was hospitalized in serious condition.) [Philly.com, 2-3-2017]

**Undignified Deaths**

**What Goes Around, Comes Around:** (1) In January, Jesse Denton, 24, driving a stolen truck, tried to flee police on Interstate 95 near Brunswick, Georgia, but accidentally crashed head-on into another vehicle. Seconds later, Denton was then fatally hit by another motorist as he ran across the highway to escape the crash scene. (2) A 37-year-old Saanich, British Columbia, man did not die but nearly bled out before being heroically rescued following his parking-rage blunder. Angered that another driver had parked too close to his own car, he grabbed a knife and stabbed a tire on the other vehicle with such force that he wound up slashing the main artery in his leg. [Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville), 1-26-2017] [Global News BC, 1-27-2017]

**The Passing Parade**

Thomas Pinson, 21, was arrested in St. Petersburg, Florida, in January and charged with domestic battery for roughing up his mother (even though, presumably lovingly, he had her full

name tattooed on his chest). (2) Police arrested a 22-year-old knife-wielding man in a restroom on a train in Dusseldorf, Germany, in January. The man, naked, appeared "quite annoyed" at being hassled, did not have a ticket to ride, and said he was using the knife to shave his genital area because he was not welcome at home. [The Smoking Gun, 1-9-2017] [Associated Press via WJLA-TV (Washington, D.C.), 1-10-2017]

**A News of the Weird Classic (May 2013)**

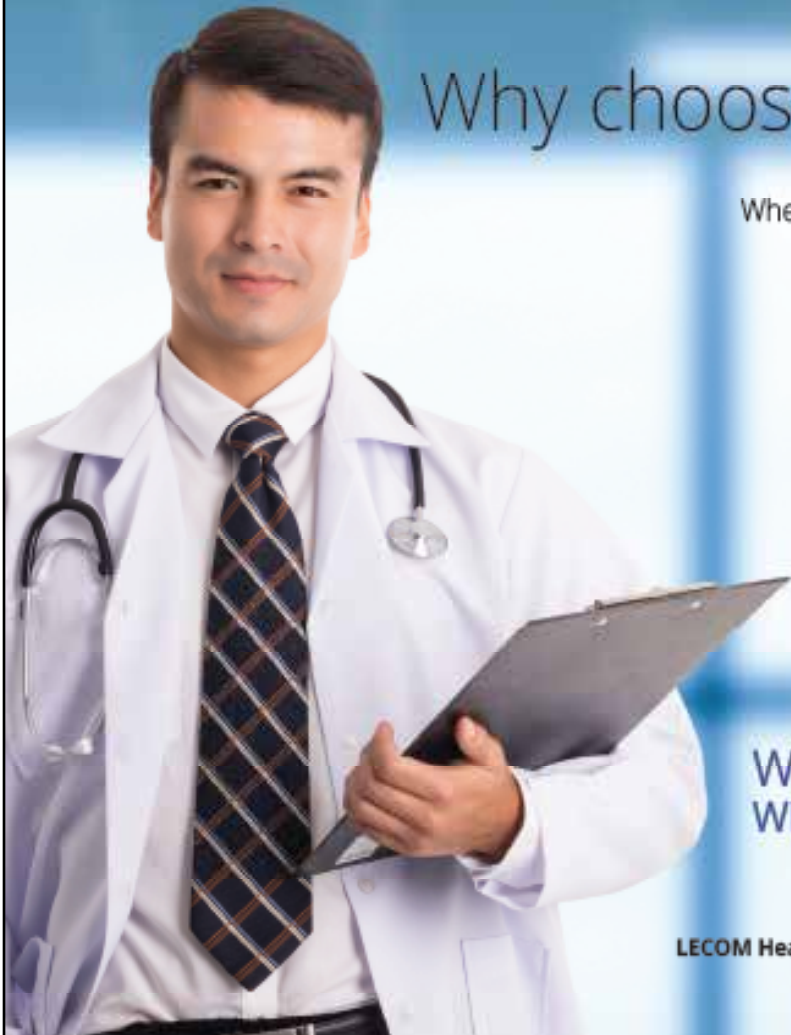
The Washington Post reported in April (2013) that the federal government spends \$890,000 a year on totally useless bank accounts. The amount is the total of fees for maintaining more than 13,000 short-term accounts the government owns but which have no money in them and never will again. However, merely closing the accounts is difficult, according to the watchdog group Citizens Against Government Waste, because they each previously housed separate government grants, and Congress has required that, before the accounts are "closed," the grants must be formally audited something bureaucrats are rarely motivated to do, especially since, as Citizens noted, there is no additional penalty for not auditing. [Washington Post, 4-24-2013]

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Photo Credit: A local student displays at Erie Arts & Culture booth during JUMP! District School Expo 2016



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## Raising the Stakes

When it comes to the city economy and gaming funds, \$2.4 million is greater than \$550,000.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**ECGRA Executive Director Perry Wood warns Erie City Council to ask for a proper share of gaming revenues.**

\$550,000 each. Councilman Bob Merski sponsored the resolution.

What City Council doesn't seem to understand is that the city has been receiving far more than 10 percent every year since 2008. ECGRA alone has invested more than \$22 million in nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses in the city – that's an average of \$2.4 million each year. Local share gaming revenue has been hard at work for nine years

improving the city of Erie's quality of life and generating new local and state tax revenue.

ECGRA's investments in the city are combatting blight and empowering underserved residents through neighborhood development associations and community centers. They're alleviating poverty by helping to train and put at-risk youth to work through in-school and after-school employment initiatives, including those overseen by Erie's Public Schools. They're fostering entrepreneurs, bolstering in-

ner-city businesses, creating jobs, and improving the city tax base via innovative partnerships with our universities and small business lenders.

ECGRA's investments support infrastructure and public safety, renew main streets and neighborhoods, protect and preserve historical properties, and educate and entertain via Erie County's nine largest cultural assets – all of which are headquartered in the city of Erie – and dozens more urban-based arts, heritage, and recreational organizations and events. In short, ECGRA funds are seeding the economy and growing the community in ways that local tax dollars don't have the will to perform.

ECGRA's \$22 million is just the tip of the iceberg. It doesn't include any local share gaming revenue that Erie County government has invested in the city or that directly benefits city residents and businesses.

With cooperation from Erie County government and Summit Township officials, ECGRA recently completed an economic impact study of gaming revenue investments made from 2008 through 2016. The report, available Feb. 19 at [ECGRA.org](http://ECGRA.org), details how ECGRA's investments leverage additional funding, support jobs, and generate tax revenue. It also features the cumulative impact of local share gaming revenue at the local and state level.

The direct impact of Erie County government's gaming revenue investments totals \$42 million. Those investments go on in our community to generate an additional \$42.9 million in indirect and induced revenue via local

vendor, organizational, and consumer spending. That's a total of \$84.9 million in local economic impact. The economic impact of Erie County government's investments at the state level is even greater and totals \$106.1 million.

ECGRA's investments have resulted in a cumulative economic impact of \$87.2 million. Over the past eight years, 573 jobs have been supported and sustained because of ECGRA's investments and \$2.9 million in state and local tax revenue has been generated.

And millions of those dollars generated at the local and state levels support the city.

Councilman Merski has said that if the city receives direct support from gaming funds, urban tax payers will benefit. Quite the contrary, if Councilman Merski's short-sighted view of how funds are doled out comes to fruition, the city and its taxpayers would be forced to underwrite a larger portion of what ECGRA currently funds, creating an even more crushing burden on city residents.

ECGRA staff and board members are busy in Harrisburg protecting Erie County's \$11 million share of local gaming revenue. Erie City Council, under the leadership of Councilman Merski, is squabbling over scraps. City Council should join us and communicate with one voice to Harrisburg – or there will be nothing left to fight for. Not even 10 percent.

To see a map of ECGRA's investments in the city, visit [ECGRA.org/ecgra-grant-money-at-work](http://ECGRA.org/ecgra-grant-money-at-work). [ADD BIO, w/ [pwood@ECGRA.org](mailto:pwood@ECGRA.org); 464.3605]

**By: ECGRA Executive Director Perry Wood**

**E**rie City Council wants its share of gaming revenue. Ten percent, to be exact.

At its Feb. 1 meeting, City Council agreed to ask state legislators to support its quest to receive a portion of slot machine revenues garnered by Erie County government from Presque Isle Downs & Casino. The money would be used to fund the city and Erie's Public Schools to the tune of

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## What History Will Erie Elect to Make?

City faces stark choices in upcoming mayoral primary



By: Ben Speggen

All eyes have been affixed on 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. They likely will continue to be.

Reasons abound why we focus our attention on national politics and the presidency in particular. Reasons also abound why we're perhaps more focused now than ever before, and if those reasons were to be summed up in two words, they'd most likely be: Donald Trump.

But is 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue where history is being made? David Brooks would argue no.

The *New York Times* columnist's "Where History is Being Made" introduced The Fallows Question.

The Fallows Question, Brooks explains in his *NYT* Feb. 7 op-ed, is: "If you could move to the place on earth where history is most importantly being made right now, where would you go?"

Brooks confesses that it's a question he often tosses out at dinner parties, but he ex-

plains that he recently decided to send it to the Fallows themselves. While Washington might make the most sense, because, as Brooks says, "Washington will either preserve the world order or destroy it," the Fallows only agreed with that in part. They told him that "the most important place to be now might be places like Erie, Pa.; Fresno, Calif.; and Columbus, Ohio."

Why? "If you want to 'observe' history," the Fallows told Brooks, "go to Washington. If you want to 'participate,' go elsewhere."

This mention of Erie isn't the first time our region's been in national ink.

The *NYT* front-page feature, "How Erie Went Red: The Economy Sank, and Trump Rose" keys in on where Erie County will head because of its majority decision to back Trump. So does Yahoo! News's "Clinging to hope in a fading factory town." NPR's Marketplace did an entire series on Erie, and pledged to return.

But the national spotlight had already been on Erie. In

August of 2016, James and Deborah Fallows began featuring Erie in their City Makers: American Futures project for *The Atlantic*, where the husband-wife team focus on "the people, organizations, and ideas reshaping the country."

In the opening piece of their coverage on Erie, James Fallows draws a parallel between America on the whole and Erie, noting the stark contrast between the national tone and the local, perhaps more hopeful one – of those taking action to better their communities rather than waiting for help to come from the national level. "Being active, rather than passive, is one working definition of today's American Idea."

Erie is on the precipice of making history because of its current positive momentum. We've been in the national spotlight, and many – rightfully so – are taking delight in that. But the stories focus less on the-where-we-are-now and more on the-where-are-they-headed.

Regarding that action and

**Control of the mayor's office, specifically located on the fifth floor of 626 State Street, is being sought by many of Erie's political hopefuls.**

destiny, all eyes in Erie will be focused on 626 State Street.

In January of 2018, Erie's next mayor will be tasked with showing the region's residents what that action does or does not look like. But before then, Eriites will take to the polls in November of 2017 to elect our next leader. And perhaps more importantly than that, voters will choose between whose general election dance card gets punched at May 16, 2017's primary election.

As it stands, 10 people are seeking that opportunity. But before we begin to discuss any of the candidates, let's focus on the important dates that dot the path to City Hall.

The first day to circulate and file nomination petitions is Feb. 14. The last day to do so is March 7. Candidates need 100 signatures of the same party and within the voting district. Those collecting enough move on to the next round, and candidates are already advertising events to welcome the opportunity for voters to put pen to paper.

For voters, April 17 matters. It's the last day to register before the primary. May 9 also matters because it's the last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot, and May 12 marks the last day for the County Board of Elections to receive those absentee ballots.

And Tuesday, May 16, 2017 is the municipal primary, which then launches the march towards Nov. 7's municipal general election.

Why does the primary matter so much? Bluntly put: The path to victory in the general election is more difficult for any Republican candidate simply because of the numbers of

registered voters.

Erie's blue mayoral line runs long because of the disproportionate swing of registered Democrats outnumbering Republicans more than two to one, making a path to City Hall more challenging for a Republican than a Democrat. By its current voting laws, Pennsylvania limits voters to their registered party during primary elections. And Pennsylvania still remains one of 10 states to feature straight-party voting, an option that allows a Democrat or Republican to push only one button in the booth and cast votes for all candidates of their registered party for any open seats.

**Why does the primary matter so much?**

**Bluntly put: The path to victory in the general election is more difficult for any Republican candidate simply because of the numbers of registered voters.**

But if Donald Trump's victory proves anything, it reminds us that improbable are impossible are not synonymous.

For the Democratic Party, candidates include: community organizer and Edinboro University of Pennsylvania Professor Lisa Austin; Erie County Councilman Jay Breneman; Erie Playhouse Executive Director Almitra Clerkin; former Erie Bureau of Police Chief Steve Franklin; former City Councilwoman Ruby Jenkins-Husband; current Erie City Councilman Bob E. Merski; and retired PNC Bank Vice President and former Erie City Councilman Joe Schember.

On the Republican side, two



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candidates have officially announced their bids – local businessman Jon Whaley and retired security guard Al Zimmer. To take us to 10, a third Republican, Attorney John Persinger, has scheduled his formal announcement for Feb. 16.

There may yet be more to come; the rumor mill continues churning.

Erie finds itself in this situation for several reasons.

Erie Mayor Joe Sinnott is completing his third and final four-year term as mayor. Sinnott, who ran unopposed for both his second and third reelection bids, took office in January 2006 after defeating incumbent Democratic Mayor Rick Filippi, in the 2005 primary election.

Term limits were proposed by Mayor Joyce Savocchio, who succeeded Erie's six-term mayor Lou Tullio in 1990. Savocchio left and Sinnott will leave office because of those limits. Filippi served only one term in between the two.

The line from Tullio to Sinnott runs blue. Charles Williamson, who served as mayor from 1962 to 1965, was Erie's most recent Republican mayor. Before Williamson, the last Republican mayor in Erie, Clarence K. Pulling, held office from 1950 to 1952.

Brooks isn't the first to suggest that history is being made at the local level in places like Erie. If states were the laboratories of democracy in the 20th century, as Chief Justice

Louis Brandeis opined, cities – according a bevy of urban scholars and observers ranging from Brookings Institution's Bruce Katz to *The Atlantic's* Fallows – have become the labs of the 21st century. A cold, hard truth exists that Trump isn't coming to save Erie, just like Barack Obama before him hadn't.

Changes on the national level can, undoubtedly, affect lives on the local level, but most often those changes are slow and small. To pivot a community's trajectory quickly, local leaders must pilot the course. And the terrain ahead for Erie's course is rocky.

Erie's Public Schools remain in crisis. And there's brain drain – a crisis Tullio addressed in a speech to Erie decades ago. And population decline spurred by continued suburban sprawl. And there's an eroding tax-base and fear that taxes will continue to increase. And there's blight. And ...

But there's also potential and hope. The comprehensive plan, *Erie Refocused*, addresses serious concerns – but it needs to be implemented. The downtown has a master plan, and there's new potential for *Emerge 2040* to be impactful under new leadership as the countywide comprehensive plan is seeking a new executive director.

Although the general trend for population growth is declining, Erie's becoming known as a welcoming place for refu-

gees. Are we doing enough to harness the energy and spirit these immigrants bring? Should we become a sanctuary city?

There are plans for growth. A community college. An innovation district. Businesses planning to locate downtown. Neighborhoods looking to collaborate. And ...

The list goes on. Mayor Joe Sinnott's legacy is too young to record. History needs time to breathe, to be studied, and to be judged; but most likely history will remember his fiscally sound approach to the office. He brought the city back from the brink of Act 47 and has kept a balanced budget ever since. His initiatives haven't been flashy, but that's because that's not his style and approach. And disagree with that style and approach as some may, he was successfully re-elected twice and twice faced zero opposition on the ballot. Sinnott's approach in his second and third terms didn't deviate from his first. We knew what we would get and we voted for it. And if we didn't vote for it, we did little to offer alternatives.

"Not every city that 'works' in America does so due to a strong or visionary mayor," James Fallows told me. "Some city-governance systems are designed to minimize a mayor's personal influence. Some others, although structured on a 'strong-mayor' model, have incumbents who in practice have left the initiative to other people, organizations, or business groups. We've written extensively about the economic and educational innova-



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW BASHA-AGHA

In addition to former City Councilwoman Rubye Jenkins-Husband and former Erie Bureau of Police Chief Steve Franklin, Democratic candidates include community organizer Lisa Austin (top), Erie Playhouse Executive Director Almi Clerkin, Erie County Councilman Jay Breneman, Erie City Councilman Bob Merski, and former Erie City Councilman Joe Schember.



## FEATURE

tions underway in the 'Golden Triangle' of northern Mississippi, where the main players have been people other than the mayors."

"But in many cities," he continued, "you can trace a direct line between a mayor who has a vision for his city, plus the political skills to bring others along in the same direction, and long-term improvement for the town. Even better is when a city has a sequence of such leaders, as places as different as Greenville, S.C., Duluth Minn., Riverside, Calif., and Burlington, VT demonstrate."

Given the current dialogue in Erie, it's safe to assume that our next mayor will be a departure from the current course - as Sinnott was from the mayor before him.

"Some cities can muddle ahead despite weak mayors, and some others have too many problems for city government to solve," James told me. "But a strong mayor, with a long-term idea of where the city can move, is usually a significant plus."

Erie isn't in the spotlight because of where it is but because of the interest in where it will be. Remaining the same isn't an option, as we know that the only constant is change. We needn't worry about status quo; we need to worry about slipping into oblivion.

"Most people can't up and move in search of history," Brooks concludes that op-ed. "They're tied down by work, family, and spiritual commitments. But you only go around once in life, so if you can swing it, you might as well be where the action is."

Those of us in Erie don't have to pick up and move. We're already here, where the action is. What history we elect to make is yet to be seen, but it's all the more reason to ensure that we elect the best of us to lead the way.

Ben Spегgen can be reached at [bSpегgen@ErieReader.com](mailto:bSpегgen@ErieReader.com) and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpегgen.



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# Spotlight on Erie

February 15 – 28, 2017

Thursday, Feb. 16

## The Deviant Art of Improv



Considering an improv show titled “Deviant Behavior,” you might imagine the off-color or perverse.

But when you realize Deviant Behavior is actually the name of the group performing under the aegis of Laugh/Riot Performing Arts Company, the production and what it proffers become a little more clear.

“In 1999, I started an improv troupe at Edinboro [University] called Deviant Behavior,” explained L/R’s artistic director, Rob Connick “[and because] improv isn’t traditional performance, it’s slightly deviated from the norm.”

He continued, “Deviant Behavior had a five-year run at Edinboro starting in 1999 through the University Players. When we decided to rebrand and refocus Laugh/Riot’s improv troupe, The Laugh Half, we looked to the performance history at Edinboro as a way to connect to the history there.”

According to Connick, the shows will include audience participation to test the group’s mettle.

“The audience will be expected to give suggestions, let us know who they think won competitions, and potentially interact a bit more with the cast in certain games,” he said. “You will not be expected to interact, though. If you don’t want to participate, you can still have a great time.”

After a performance of Deviant Behavior, will audience members come away with a greater appreciation of improv performers?

“I hope so. If not a greater appreciation, then a greater sense of what they do,” said Connick. “Most of it is funny, but it can create some very intense dramatic moments as well.” – Gregory Greenleaf-Knepp

7:30 p.m. on Feb. 16-18, 23-25; 2:30 on Feb. 19, 26 // 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](http://laughrioterie.com)

Thursday, Feb. 16

## United Way Wants Erie to “Just Keep Swimming”



Remember the scene in *Finding Nemo* when Dory is stuck in a fishing net? It’s chaos as all the frantic fish swim in different directions, but Dory and the others break free when little Nemo enters the net, instructing the fish to “swim down.”

The United Way of Erie County is doing something similar at its upcoming annual meeting and Self-Sufficiency Summit with the intention of monitoring and promoting self-sufficiency throughout the county.

This library – a program that provides one free book every month to a child until age five – has served almost 16,000 children since 2013.

“Our community is caught in the net of poverty,” President Bill Jackson and Board Chair Janel Bonsell said. “But through the power of collective impact, United Way is playing the part of Nemo and encouraging the ‘fish’ – local social service agencies, businesses, government, the faith community, and individuals – to swim together in the same direction and break the cycle of poverty.”

This first Self-Sufficiency Summit will discuss current community benchmarks and feature keynote speaker Chad Waldron, assistant professor of education literacy at the University

of Michigan, Flint, and former assistant professor of language and literacy studies at Penn State Behrend. Waldron will speak about his research on the United Way’s Imagination Library, which was conducted in the fall of 2015.

This library – a program that provides one free book every month to a child until age five – has served almost 16,000 children since 2013. It now includes nearly two-thirds of eligible Erie County children; and according to Waldron’s findings, it’s made a difference, even during the short time that the program was established prior to his research.

Learn more or donate at [unitedway-erie.org](http://unitedway-erie.org). – Tracy Geibel

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. // Erie Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier // \$35 // 456.2937 ext. 233 // [facebook.com/events/381122938896838/](https://www.facebook.com/events/381122938896838/)

Friday, Feb. 17

## 90s Nostalgia Returns to Erie Insurance Arena



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Sweating in your windbreaker because you’re worried you left your youth back in the 90s? Call off the search party; the I Love The 90s Tour may be just the ticket to reclaim your missing inner child.

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Let nostalgia enrobe you like a well-worn Starter jacket with six sentimental favorites from the decade that brought us Crystal Pepsi, AOL, and Pogs.

brought us Crystal Pepsi, AOL, and Pogs. No longer content to be fodder for VH1 specials and reality shows, these artists are ready to matter to you

again as much as you (the fans) have always mattered to them. Vanilla Ice (“Ice, Ice Baby,” “Go Ninja”), Coolio (“Fantastic Voyage,” “Gangsta’s Paradise”), Salt N’ Pepa (“Push It,” “Shoop”), Tone Loc (“Wild Thing,” “Funky Cold Medina”), and Young MC (“Bust a Move,” “Principal’s Office”) round out the all-star hip hop lineup, with sensitive R&B quartet All 4 One (“I Swear,” “I Can Love You Like That”) helping slow things down for a moment.

You will need a breather, too, because the Erie Insurance Arena floor will be open to all amateur choreographers. Of course, if you grew up with the novelty of watching music videos on MTV (!), you’ll likely have the routines etched in memory anyway. Since it’s 2017 and not 1997, you can call up your BFFs and order your tickets from the internet at the same time! If you can’t find value in perspective, then you may be more Clueless than Cher Horowitz. – Matt Swanseger

8 to 11 p.m. // Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. // \$38-\$93 // [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com/) //

Friday, Feb. 17

## Hope You Get to See A Chorus Line



Auditioning can be the most intense part of an actor’s career. *A Chorus Line*, which will be performed at the Erie Playhouse, explores this unique experience through the stories of actors vying for a spot in a chorus line. The musical runs on select dates from Feb. 17 to March 5.

The original show opened on Broadway in April of 1975. *A Chorus Line*, composed by Marvin Hamlisch, begins in the middle of an audition for an unnamed Broadway musical; the director and his choreographer are auditioning hopefuls. The director asks the remaining performers to reveal more about themselves, and the dancers delve into their pasts, telling their unique stories. Interestingly enough, the musical was created around real stories from taped workshop sessions featuring actual Broadway dancers, or “gypsies.”

## CALENDAR

And what about the music? "I Hope I Get It" embodies many an actor's dream; "What I Did For Love" and "Dance: Ten, Looks: Three" are other popular numbers.

The musical ultimately "salutes all dancers who have trod the boards. It tells of the achingly poignant ambitions of professional Broadway 'gypsies,'" according to the Erie Playhouse. So, line up, grab a ticket to this renowned musical, and encounter another profession through the eyes of those directly involved. — Miriam Lamey

7:30 p.m. Feb. 17, 18, 23-25, Mar. 1-4; 2:00 p.m. Feb. 26, Mar. 5 // Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. // 454.2852

### Saturday, Feb. 18

#### Chief Keef Drops the Beats at BT



When Kanye West first heard Chicago's Keith Cozart on the mic, he did something decidedly out-of-character — he listened.

What West witnessed on that day five years ago was one of rap's young prodigies, a 16-year-old dynamo who had accumulated over 1 million views on

video-sharing websites and a massive following among Chicago's South Side with his single "I Don't Like." A bidding war ensued for his talents, ultimately won by Interscope Records with the release of his 2012 debut *Finally Rich*. With several successful mixtapes to his name and another LP leaked online in 2015 (*Bang 3*), Keef's renown continued to grow within the industry. Unfortunately, so did his rap sheet, with numerous paternity suits, firearm charges, and parole violations ushering a split with Interscope. Keef "retired" in 2016, only to resurface in collaborations later that year and drop his new mixtape *Two Zero One Seven* last month.

Basement Transmissions will be slammin' with the sounds of the streets as "Sosa" takes the stage to spit his truths.

Despite his turmoil, Keef continues promoting his work (and that of his Glo Gang collective) through his imprint Glory Boyz Entertainment and performing live. Basement Transmissions will be slammin' with the sounds of the streets as "Sosa" takes the stage to spit his truths. Opening will be local rapper William Weyes, who cold-filters trap music through strains of chill, breathing lyrics so real you can see them hanging in the air. The Dream Team will also precede the main event, with subwoofer workouts such as the Ying-Yang inspired "City." — Matt Swanseger

Doors at 6 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // ticketfly.com/event/1409326 // \$25-30

### Saturday, Feb. 18

#### American Spiritual Ensemble Celebrates Tradition



The "unmatched" sound of the American Spiritual Ensemble will come to the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University on Saturday, Feb. 18, giving audiences the opportunity to immerse themselves in a deep, evocative tradition. "The concert will celebrate the music of the American Negro Slaves, and the story of their struggle will be told through music," explains American Spiritual Ensemble Founder and Director Everett McCorvey. "The music of the slaves started in the cotton fields in the South where this music was sung acapella." Today, the Ensemble continues this tradition, except at a higher level: All of the performers are classically-trained

opera singers, which will give the music a rich, poignant beauty.

McCorvey established the Ensemble in 1995. Its members are almost entirely soloists who have performed in venues across America and Europe, yet these highly talented voices unite to highlight the intense harmonies in the blended acapella music that McCorvey likens to the Fisk Jubilee Singers — an early, college-aged group of African American singers who came together in 1900 to introduce this music to a wider audience. This same music performed with more cultivated voices will, McCorvey says, present a sound that is "rich, full, and incredibly exciting."

With the strength and emotion of these voices and the weight of the songs, "the music will touch you in a way that will feel as if it goes directly to your soul," says McCorvey.

With the strength and emotion of these voices and the weight of the songs, "the music will touch you in a way that will feel as if it goes directly to your soul," says McCorvey. "Through the music, you experience [the Negro slaves'] plight, their joys, their sorrows, the longing for a better existence. When you leave the concert, you will feel different." — 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

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8th Rd. jazzerie.com.

#### D'Angelo Department of Music: Faculty Recital Series

Feb. 15 — 8 p.m.  
Walker Recital Hall,  
501 E. 38th St. miac.  
mercyhurst.edu.

#### Colony Pub Trio

Feb. 16, 23 — 6:30  
to 9:30 p.m.  
Colony Pub & Grille, 2670  
W. 8th Rd. jazzerie.com.

#### Dave VanAmburg

Feb. 17, 24 — 5:30  
to 8:30 p.m.  
Dickey's Barbecue Pit, 3716  
Liberty St. jazzerie.com.

#### Dave Callaghan Quartet

Feb. 17 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Wegman's Cafeteria, 6143  
Peach St. jazzerie.com.

#### I Love the 90's Tour

Feb. 17 — 8 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809  
French St. erieevents.com.

#### B.D. Lenz

Feb. 17 — 8 to 11 p.m.  
Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122  
W. Lake Rd. bdlenz.com.

#### First Class Friday's

Feb. 17 — 8 to 11:55 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions,  
145 W. 11th St. facebook.  
com/pg/basement.  
transmissions.

#### The Super Delinquent Shimmy Shimmy Ya Show

Feb. 17 — 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.  
Bobby's Place, 1202 W.

18th St. facebook.com/pg/  
gimpugyunderground.

#### Chris Higbee

Feb. 17, 18 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs,  
8199 Perry Hwy.  
presqueisledowns.com.

#### Let's Be Leonard

Feb. 17 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921  
Peach St. facebook.  
com/kingsrookclub.

#### The Bring Back The 90's Party with the I-90's

Feb. 17 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Sherlocks, 508 State  
St. facebook.com/pg/  
sherlocksparkplace.

#### Wagner and Winston

Feb. 18 — 1 to 4 p.m.  
Arundel Cellars,  
11727 E. Main Rd.  
arundelcellars.com.

#### Dave VanAmburg and Friends

Feb. 18 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122  
W. Lake Rd. jazzerie.com.

#### Chief Keef

Feb. 18 — 6 to 11 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions,  
145 W. 11th St. facebook.  
com/tecshows.

#### The Apotheosis of Dance

Feb. 18 — 6:30 p.m.  
Church of the Covenant,  
250 W. 7th St. gannon.edu.

#### American Spiritual Ensemble

Feb. 18 — 7:30 p.m.  
Mary D'Angelo Performing  
Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St.  
miac.mercyhurst.edu.

#### Chestnut Grove

Feb. 18 — 10 p.m.  
to midnight

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

#### Grunge Monkey

Feb. 18 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Sherlocks, 508 State  
St. facebook.com/  
GrungeMonkeyBand.

#### Sam Hyman

Feb. 19 — 1 to 4 p.m.  
Arundel Cellars,  
11727 E. Main Rd.  
arundelcellars.com.

#### Cootie Jazz Jam

Feb. 19 — 2 to 6 p.m.  
Meadville Market House,  
910 Market St. jazzerie.com.

#### Ethnic Heritage Ensemble in Concert

Feb. 20 — noon to 1 p.m.  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State  
St. erieartmuseum.org.

#### Cory Henry & The

#### Funk Apostles

Feb. 23 — 7:30 p.m.  
Walker Recital Hall,  
501 E. 38th St. miac.  
mercyhurst.edu.

#### ZAKI

Feb. 24 — 5 to 10:30 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions,  
145 W. 11th St. facebook.  
com/pg/basement.  
transmissions.

#### Thomas Rhett

Feb. 24 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809  
French St. erieevents.com.

#### Tri-State Music Festival

Feb. 24 — 8 p.m. &  
Feb. 25 — 2 p.m.  
Mary D'Angelo Performing  
Arts Center, 501 E. 38th  
St. mercyhurst.edu.

#### The Groove

Feb. 24 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs,



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CHESTNUT GROVE  
**FRI 02/24**  
ELM-ELECTRIC LOVE MACHINE  
**SAT 02/25**  
SUBSOIL  
+ LEC  
**FRI 03/03**  
SEAN PATRICK  
& THE NEWGRASS REVOLUTION  
**SAT 03/04**  
THE OLD MAIN  
+ DARAH APPLING  
**FRI 03/10**  
GIANT PANDA GUERRILLA DUB SQUAD  
+ PERSONAL BLEND  
[DOWNSTAIRS]  
NATASK  
+ MATISFLEX  
[UPSTAIRS]  
**SAT 03/11**  
THE FAT CATZ  
**FRI 03/17**  
DIRTY PICKLES  
ST. PAT'S BASH

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**HELL OR HIGH WATER (2014)**  
Two brothers come together after years divided to rob a bank threatening to force close on their family land, drawing the attention of a Texas Ranger. Showing 2/1 • 7pm

[filmsocietyeriewpa.org](http://filmsocietyeriewpa.org)

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Thursday, Feb. 23

**Get Funky (and Warm!)  
With Cory Henry &  
the Funk Apostles**



Some genres of music warm even the rawest of winter days. And while it hasn't been as snowy 'round these parts as it typically is, that doesn't mean local music fans should skip the rousing, funky, thoroughly warming night of music on Feb. 23 when Cory Henry & the Funk Apostles take over Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst University.

Henry has quite the celebrated background, having performed with artists like Kenny Garrett, Robert Glasper, and Bruce Springsteen. He is also a member of the Grammy Award-winning group Snarky Puppy, which plays R&B and jazz – sounds that speak to Henry's current iteration. Most recently, the outfit

played with the BBC Proms in England, and on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*.

As for the music itself, get a taste by checking out Henry's cover of "Billie Jean" with the Proms; the synthy,

Henry is also a member of the Grammy Award-winning group Snarky Puppy, which plays R&B and jazz – sounds that speak to Henry's current iteration.

swarthy, and sultry sounds sway over the toe-tapping percussion and strong beat. Henry also gets bonus points for the otherworldly way he manipulates his voice. "What's Going On" picks up the pace with a faster beat – and some absolutely mesmerising percussion – but dreamy, swoony keys over a stellar, funky bassline warm those chilly limbs in a way that layers and a fireplace cannot. The group's cover of Gnarles Barkley's "Crazy" mellows out the tune in a smooth jazz fashion, but with a cheeky bassline that stands up to the lyrics – with guest vocals from Chantae Cann. For more sonic surprises and some genuinely brilliant music, head to Mercyhurst for this *Erie Reader* co-sponsored gig. – Miriam Lamey

7:30 p.m. // Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. // 824.3000 or [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu)

Thursday, Feb. 23

**A Man of No Importance to  
be performed at Mercyhurst**



**A** *Man of No Importance* actually is important.

That's why the Mercyhurst Theatre Program will perform this musical on Thursday, Feb. 23 at the Taylor Little Theatre.

Based on the book by Terrence McNally, *A Man of No Importance* tells the story of Alfie Bryne, a bus driver in Dublin during the 1960s. Bryne, who is gay, refuses to reveal his sexual orientation, keeping it a secret from even his sister, as he lives in a time when society deems it unacceptable. Obsessed with Oscar Wilde, Bryne dedicates himself to producing a version of Wilde's *Salome* at his local church hall.

Stephen Flaherty wrote the show's music and Lynn Ahren wrote the lyrics. The two first worked together in 1988 for the musical *Lucky Stiff*, and they've continued to collaborate on other mu-

sicals since then.

*A Man of No Importance* won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical in 2003. The same group of individuals – McNally, Ahrens, and Flaherty – also won Tony Awards for their roles in the production of the musical *Ragtime*. – Tracy Geibel

7:30 p.m. Feb. 23-25; 2:00 p.m. Feb. 25, 26 // Taylor Little Theatre, Mercyhurst University, 501 East 38th St. // \$15; \$10 seniors & students; \$5 youth // [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu) // 824.3000

Monday, Feb. 27

**Pippin Revival Comes to Erie**



**C**ircuses are known as the "greatest show on Earth," so it shouldn't be surprising that the big-top revival of the Broadway musical *Pippin* – first performed in 1972 – won "Best Revival of a Musical" in 2013.

The show, coming to Erie this month, aims to not only entertain and engage, but also to enchant and amaze

8199 Perry Hwy.  
[presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com).

**ELM: Electric  
Love Machine**

Feb. 24 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921  
Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Tear From Grace**

Feb. 24 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Sherlocks, 508 State  
St. [facebook.com/pg/sherlocksparkplace](http://facebook.com/pg/sherlocksparkplace).

**Whiskey Road**

Feb. 25 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs,  
8199 Perry Hwy.  
[presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com).

**Stiletos Erie**

Feb. 25 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Sherlocks, 508 State  
St. [facebook.com/pg/sherlocksparkplace](http://facebook.com/pg/sherlocksparkplace).

**Subsoil and The LEC**

Feb. 25 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921

Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Mike and Marie Duo**

Feb. 26 — 1 to 4 p.m.  
Arundel Cellars,  
11727 E. Main Rd.  
[arundelcellars.com](http://arundelcellars.com).

**Amber Shay Nicholson**

Feb. 27 — 7 to 8 p.m.  
Admiral Room in the Blasco  
Memorial Library, 160 E.  
Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

**Gem City Jazz Ensemble**

Feb. 28 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran Church,  
2216 Peach St. [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**DANCE**

**A Night at the  
Oscars Dance**

Feb. 18 — 7 to 10 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran  
Church, 2216 Peach St.  
[facebook.com/pg/Stardust-Ballroom-Dance-Club-of-Erie-597514403606573](http://facebook.com/pg/Stardust-Ballroom-Dance-Club-of-Erie-597514403606573).

**Matters of the Heart**

Feb. 24, 25 & Mar. 3,  
4 — 8 to 10 p.m.  
Lake Erie Ballet,  
1020 Holland St.  
[lakeerieballet.org](http://lakeerieballet.org).

**FOOD & DRINK**

**Wine and Chocolate  
Weekend**

Feb. 17 — 6 p.m. & Feb. 18  
— 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. & Feb.  
19 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Various Locations,  
[lakeeriewinecountry.org](http://lakeeriewinecountry.org).

**Brewer's Cup Home  
Brew Festival**

Feb. 18 — 5 to 8 p.m.  
The Brewerie at Union  
Station, 123 W. 14th  
St. [brewerie.com](http://brewerie.com).

**Wild Game Wine  
Dinner: 6 Courses,  
6 Wines**

Feb. 23 — 7 to 11 p.m.  
The Cork 1794, 17 W.  
Main St. [cork1794.com](http://cork1794.com).

**Legislative Luncheon**

Feb. 24 — noon to 2 p.m.

Sight Center of NW PA,  
2545 W. 26th St. [facebook.com/League-of-Women-Voters-Erie-County-PA-693947254074130](http://facebook.com/League-of-Women-Voters-Erie-County-PA-693947254074130).

**19th Annual MECA  
Barstool Open**

Feb. 25 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Various Locations,  
[mecaerie.org](http://mecaerie.org).

**Mind, Body,  
Beer, Brunch**

Feb. 25 — 9:30 a.m.  
to 12:30 p.m.  
Erie Ale Works, 416  
W. 12th St. [facebook.com/ErieAleWorks](http://facebook.com/ErieAleWorks).

**Fat Tuesday Bingo  
Party and Luncheon**

Feb. 28 — 11 a.m.  
Woman's Club of  
Erie, 259 W. 6th St.  
[eriewomansclub.com](http://eriewomansclub.com).

**Fat Tuesday**

Feb. 28 — 5 p.m.  
The Brewerie at Union  
Station, 123 W. 14th  
St. [brewerie.com](http://brewerie.com).

**Mind, Body, Beer**

Feb. 28 — 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Erie Ale Works, 416  
W. 12th St. [facebook.com/ErieAleWorks](http://facebook.com/ErieAleWorks).

**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.  
[biggreenscreen.com](http://biggreenscreen.com).

**Lewis & Clark: Great  
Journey West**

Ongoing through Mar.  
3, 2017 — noon & 4 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.  
[biggreenscreen.com](http://biggreenscreen.com).

**Journey to Space**

Ongoing through Mar.  
3, 2017 — 2 & 5 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.  
[biggreenscreen.com](http://biggreenscreen.com).

**Erie's Voices &  
Moonlight**

Feb. 15 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State  
St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

**Disney's Newsies: The  
Broadway Musical**

Feb. 16, 22 — 7 p.m. &  
Feb. 18 — 12:55 p.m.  
Tinseltown, 1910 Rotunda  
Dr. [cinemark.com](http://cinemark.com).

**Mr. Nobody**

Feb. 16 — 8:30 to 10:30 p.m.  
Edinboro University  
Pogue Student Center, 405  
Scotland Rd. [facebook.com/pg/edinborofilmseries](http://facebook.com/pg/edinborofilmseries).

**Pink Flamingos (1972)**

Feb. 17 — 8 to 11 p.m.  
Erie Movie House, 3424  
W. Lake Rd. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](http://facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse).

**Dick Tracy Meet  
Gruesome and Dick  
Tracy's Dilemma (1947)**

Feb. 18 — 8 to 10 p.m.  
Erie Movie House, 3424





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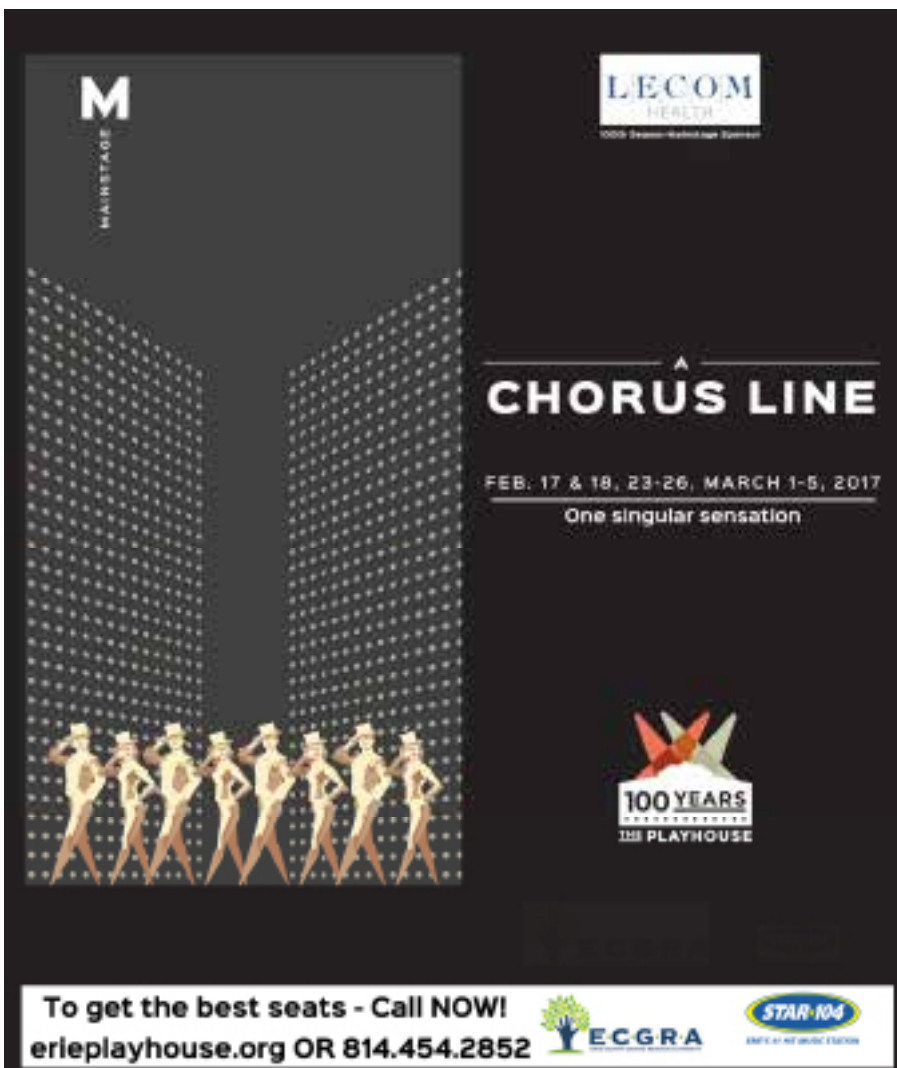
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## CALENDAR

its audience with high-flying stunts, hula-hooping acts, knife-throwing talents, and other circus-related performances.

The musical features songs by Stephen Schwartz, who is well known as the composer for the beloved musical *Wicked*.

"A truly dazzling feat of theatrical alchemy," Chris Jones of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote about the musical. "An inestimably clever blend of Broadway tradition and raw risk."

Originally directed by Tony-winner Diane Paulus – who is known for *Hair* and *Porgy and Bess* – *Pippin* tells the story of a young prince who is searching for excitement and hopes to find meaning in his life. *Pippin's* quest

leads him on the adventure that he desired and leaves him to make some hefty decisions, as he joins the war and falls in love.

The musical features songs by Stephen Schwartz, who is well known as the composer for the beloved musical *Wicked*. Among Schwartz's songs that ultimately make this musical such a sensational show are: "Magic to Do," "Corner of the Sky," "Morning Glow," and "No Time at All."

If it's not the "greatest show on Earth," the revival of *Pippin*, which has won four Tony Awards and four Drama Desk Awards, promises to impress and will certainly be one of the greatest shows in Erie this year. – Tracy Geibel

7:30 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // \$34-54 // [nacentertainment.com/shows/pippin?venue=Erie](http://nacentertainment.com/shows/pippin?venue=Erie)

W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

### National Theatre Live: Amadeus

Feb. 19 — 12:55 p.m.  
 Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu).

### Allegiance

Feb. 19 — 12:55 p.m.  
 Tinseltown, 1910 Rotunda Dr. [cinemark.com](http://cinemark.com).

### The Nice Guys

Feb. 22 — 7 p.m.  
 Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

### Laser Mission (1989)

Feb. 23 — 8 to 10 p.m.  
 Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

### School's Out: Lessons from a Forest Kindergarten and The Last Dragon

Feb. 24 — 6:30 p.m.  
 Whole Foods Co-op, 1341 W. 26th St.

### Groundhog Day

Feb. 26 — 1:30 p.m.  
 H.O. Hirt Auditorium in the Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

### Hell or High Water

Mar. 1 — 7 p.m.  
 Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

## VISUAL ARTS

### Persuasion

Ongoing through Feb. 21  
 Allegheny College Doane Hall of Art, 520 N. Main St. [allegheny.edu](http://allegheny.edu).

### The Art of Resistance: Veterans Respond Visually to War

Ongoing through Mar. 4  
 Bruce Gallery in Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St. [brucegallery.info](http://brucegallery.info).

### Patricia S. Yahn '50 Juried Art Show

Ongoing through Mar. 24 (Reception Feb. 16 — 5 to 7 p.m.)  
 Mercyhurst University Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu).

### Kids As Curators 2017

Ongoing through Mar. 26  
 Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

### Sergei Isupov: Hidden Messages

Ongoing through Apr. 2  
 Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

### Earth Stories

Ongoing through June 11  
 Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

### Tin Plated Dreams: Sculptures by William Brady, Jr.

Ongoing through January 7, 2018  
 Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

### Terry Pytlarz: Making a Statement in Black &

### White Photography

Feb. 17 through Mar. 8 (Artist's Reception Feb. 18 — 1 to 4 p.m.)  
 Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. [glassgrowersgallery.com](http://glassgrowersgallery.com).

### Mystical Arts of Tibet

Feb. 26 through Mar. 5 (Opening Ceremony Feb. 18 — 12:15 p.m. & Closing Ceremony Mar. 4 — 1:30 p.m.)  
 Allegheny College Doane Hall of Art, 520 N. Main St. [allegheny.edu](http://allegheny.edu).

## THEATRE

### Fringe Fest Erie

Ongoing through Feb. 24  
 Various Locations, [gannon.edu](http://gannon.edu).

### The White Snake

Feb. 15, 16, 17 — 8 p.m. & Feb. 18 — 2 & 8 p.m. & Feb. 19 — 2 p.m.  
 Schuster Theatre, 620 Sassafras St. [gannon.edu](http://gannon.edu).

### Deviant Behavior

Feb. 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25 — 7:30 p.m. & Feb. 19, 26 — 2:30 p.m.  
 Edinboro University's Diebold Center for the Performing Arts, 219 Meadville St. [laughrioterie.com](http://laughrioterie.com).

### All The Better to Kill You With

Feb. 17, 24 — 7 p.m. & Feb. 18, 25 — 5:30 p.m.  
 Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. [canterburyfeast.com](http://canterburyfeast.com).

### A Chorus Line





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**Thursday, March 9 @ 12pm**

Masterclass for three fantastic local pianists in Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst University. **FREE!**  
501 East 38th Street

**Friday, March 10 @ 12pm**

Live from Studio Q recital in Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst University. **FREE!**  
501 East 38th Street

**Friday, March 10 @ 6:30pm**

Open dress rehearsal with meet-and-greet at the Warner Theatre. **FREE!**  
811 State Street

**Saturday, March 11 @ 8pm**

Celebratory finale concert at the Warner Theatre. Tickets start at \$20, student tickets only \$10.  
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# Imagination Expotarium Drives Kids Into Their Minds

Eight islands to inspire creative fun



## SATURDAY, FEB. 18

Are your stir-crazy kids conjuring up visions of the nearest orphanage or adoption agency? Before you entertain this fantasy, allow them to entertain their own at the Bayfront Convention Center's Imagination Expotarium. With

interactive activities spread across eight "Imagination Islands," they may discover their calling. And you may think better of marooning them before the vernal equinox.

These eight participating island nations include:

Feb. 17, 18, 23, 24, 25 & Mar. 1, 2, 3, 4 — 7:30 p.m. & Feb. 26 & Mar. 5 — 2 p.m.

Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. [erieplayhouse.org](http://erieplayhouse.org).

### Spider's Web

Feb. 17, 18, 24, 25 — 7:30 to 10 p.m. & Feb. 19, 26 — 3 to 5:30 p.m.

All An Act Theatre Productions, 652 W. 17th St. [allanact.net](http://allanact.net).

### Shakespeare Abridged

Feb. 17, 18 — 8 p.m. & Feb. 19 — 2 p.m.

Meadville Community Theatre, 400 North Main St. [facebook.com/MCT1967](https://facebook.com/MCT1967).

### Silence The Musical

Feb. 17, 18, 24, 25 & Mar. 3, 4 — 8 p.m.

PACA, 1505 State St. [paca1505.com](http://paca1505.com).

### A Man of No Importance

Feb. 23, 24, 25 — 7:30 p.m. & Feb. 25, 26 — 2:00 p.m.

Taylor Little Theatre,

501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](mailto:miac.mercyhurst.edu).

### Luna Gale

Feb. 23, 24, 25 — 8 p.m. & Feb. 26 — 2:30 p.m.

Allegheny College Vukovich Center for Communication Art, 520 N. Main St. [sites.allegheny.edu](http://sites.allegheny.edu).

### Pippin

Feb. 27 — 7:30 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

## COMMUNITY

### Tinker the T-Rex Comes to the TREC

Ongoing through Feb. 24 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

### Hatha Yoga 1

Feb. 15 — 11 a.m. to noon

Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

### eReader One-on-One Help Sessions

Feb. 15, 16, 21, 22, 23 — 3 to 4 p.m.

Room 157 in the Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

### Ceramics Handbuilding Class

Feb. 15, 22 & Mar. 1 — 6 to 8 p.m.

Erie ClaySpace, 1505 State St. [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com)

### Erie Otters vs. London

Feb. 15 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

### Garden Design Basics with Dan Dahlkemper

Feb. 15 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

LEAF Education Center, 1501 W. 6th St. [leaferie.org](http://leaferie.org).

### The Electoral College: An Examination of Its Past, An Analysis of the Present, and Discussion of Its Future

**Fable Forest** — story readings from special guests, a book store, and a meet-and-greet with "forest friends." Here's an early lesson about clique formation that should click.

**Bwana Jungle** — humans aren't the only animals that don't come with instructions. That's why Bwana Jim is here to educate your young about how to care for and be mindful of creatures at home and abroad.

**Campfire Canyon** — foster appreciation for the great outdoors so you can finally have some peace and quiet indoors. Kids can learn about the environment, shoot a bow, and pet puppies and ponies (you'd better start erecting that stable).

**Discovery Island** — the intelligentsia of the Imagination Expotarium convene here, showing you how things work and the science of meteorology. What this may inspire, there's no predicting.

**Princess Palace** — here your child can be pampered or enjoy a makeover courtesy of the Fortis Institute or enjoy a cup of tea with the princesses of Once Upon A Party, LLC. Marrying a rich guy is still a very real fantasy.

**Safety City** — for the child with the noble aim of being a civil servant. Here your kid can mingle with police officers,

firefighters, and EMTs and explore emergency vehicles. If they're not impressed with real heroes, a few superheroes will be on hand as well.

**Treasure Island** — the Scallywags crew

With interactive activities spread across eight "Imagination Islands," they may discover their calling. And you may think better of marooning them before the vernal equinox.

is more fun than a barrel of rum, with treasure chests, games, and crafts for all your little landlubbers.

**Sportlandia** — shoot hoops with Clutch (Erie BayHawks) and hit home runs with C. Wolf (Erie Seawolves). Learn the value of exercise with the YMCA of Greater Erie as parents jump for joy. — Matt Swanseger

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 2 to 5 p.m., Sunday: noon to 3 p.m. // 1 Sassafras Pier // [epe.ticketleap.com/imagineexpo](http://epe.ticketleap.com/imagineexpo) // \$10 per child with adult (incl. traveling sack and takeaways), \$5 for each additional person over 12, free for children under 3

Feb. 15 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

### Erie United Way Free Tax Program

Feb. 16, 23 — 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. & Feb. 21, 28 — 1 to 5 p.m.

Room 219 in the Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

### 2017 Annual Meeting & Self-Sufficiency Summit

Feb. 16 — 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [facebook.com/UnitedWayErie](https://facebook.com/UnitedWayErie).

### American Short Stories

Feb. 16, 23 & Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23 — 4 to 6 p.m.

Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

### Environment Erie: Green and Healthy Home Workshop

Feb. 16 — 6 to 8 p.m.

Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W. 26th St. [environmenterie.org](http://environmenterie.org).

### Dr. Rosanna Reyes

Feb. 16 — 7 to 8 p.m.

Allegheny College Quigley Hall Auditorium, 520 N. Main St. [allegheny.edu](http://allegheny.edu).

### Kakuma Refugee Camp: The Wretched of the Earth

Feb. 16 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

### Lake Erie Eagles

Feb. 16 — 7:30 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

### Storytime with Gretchen

Feb. 17 — 10 to 11 a.m.

The Family Shop, 2501 W. 12th St. [thefamilysshoperie.com](http://thefamilysshoperie.com).

### Oasis Open House

Feb. 17 — 11 a.m. to noon

Ridge Library Great Room at Mercyhurst North East, 16 W. Division St. [mercyhurst.edu](http://mercyhurst.edu).

### Artsy Elephant Canvas Class

Feb. 17 — 6 to 8 p.m.

Claytopia, 924 W. Erie Plaza Dr. [heathercash.com](http://heathercash.com).

### Environment Erie Murder Mystery Event

Feb. 17 — 6:30 p.m.

Women's Club of Erie, 259 E. 6th St. [environmenterie.org](http://environmenterie.org).

### Jim Florentine

Feb. 17, 18 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m.

Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. [jrlastlaugh.net](http://jrlastlaugh.net).

### Wintertime at the Maritime

Feb. 17 — 6 to 10 p.m.

Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E. Front St. [flagshipniagara.org](http://flagshipniagara.org).

## Discover PI ... on the Snowy Side of the Year.

Presque Isle Partnership has a full slate at PI Snow Day.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: **Mary Birdsong**

You have no excuse to stay inside on Feb. 18. Snow Day, organized by the Presque Isle Partnership as a winter complement to the summery Discover Presque Isle, features 18 ways to enjoy a (mostly free) day at the park, both indoors and out. It even includes visits from Smokey Bear, the goodwill fire

safety ambassador of the U.S. Forest Service.

Jon DeMarco, executive director of PI Partnership, says Snow Day gives the group the opportunity to showcase Presque Isle during the winter months, a time when most people might not even consider venturing out here. "Our goal is to encourage use of the park throughout the year."

So, after you meet the famous ursus, wander over to watch chainsaw carving in action, get to know some sled dogs as they are put through their paces, or watch a park naturalist bring Joe Root to life. If completion is in your blood, you may want to join the snow sculpting contest starting at 10 a.m. Register for free at the PI Partnership table.

Family ice fishing (with equipment provided) will be available, as well as a snowshoe hike and a longer three-mile hike out to Gull Point in hopes of seeing a visiting snowy owl (waterproof boots recommended). If geocaching is your thing, well, they have that, too.

Indoors, everyone can meet some Erie Zoo animals, find food and refreshments, linger over Chinese auction baskets, and the kids can make some crafts.

What's sure to be a hit is the doggy ugly sweater contest. No entry fee or pre-registration required; just show up with your favorite canine decked out in its ugly finery. Representatives from the ANNA Shelter will be taking pictures of the contestants.

Two activities requiring a fee (and some pre-planning) are cross-country ski and snowshoe rentals, and horse-

drawn wagon rides. Borrowing skis and snowshoes only requires paying the rental charge; the wagon rides are \$8 and require pre-registration (do so at

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**"Our goal is to encourage use of the park throughout the year."**

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[discoverpi.com/events/snowday](http://discoverpi.com/events/snowday)

Representatives from Field & Stream and Off-Road Express will also be on hand demonstrating winter-themed gear for getting your frosty party started after this event is over.

As in the past, Snow Day Buttons will be available for \$3 (or two for \$5, five for \$10) and five lucky button holders will be gifted with prizes. All proceeds of button sales and the event benefit the partnership's projects throughout the park.

Embrace the snowflakes, have a good time.

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 18 // Rotary Pavilion and Waterworks area, Presque Isle State Park // Free admission; fee for some activities // 838.5144

### February Speaker Series

Feb. 18, 25 — 10 a.m.  
McCord Memorial Library, 31 W. Main St. [mccordlibrary.org](http://mccordlibrary.org).

### Foods Alive! A Day Devoted to Fermentation Kombucha, Kimchi and Salads

Feb. 18 — 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

### The Imagination Expotarium

Feb. 18 — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. & Feb. 19 — noon to 3 p.m.  
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [eriepromotions.com](http://eriepromotions.com).

### Presque Isle Snow Day

Feb. 18 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. [discoverpi.com](http://discoverpi.com).

### Craft Day

Feb. 18 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
The Family Shop, 2501 W. 12th St. [thefamilyshoperie.com](http://thefamilyshoperie.com).

### Mindfulness and Meditation Teacher Training

Feb. 18 & Mar. 18 & Apr. 1, 22 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Plasha Yoga Studio, 3330 W. 26th St. [plashayoga.com](http://plashayoga.com).

### L'Arche Erie Outdoor Adventures Raffle

Feb. 18 — 1 to 5 p.m.  
Zem Zem Shrine and Banquet Center, 2525 W. 38th St. [larcherie.org](http://larcherie.org).

### Block Party

Feb. 18 — 2 to 3 p.m.  
Children's Storytime Room in the Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

### Erie Otters vs. Mississauga

Feb. 18 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

### EPIC Volleyball Tournament

Feb. 19, 26 — 8:30 a.m.  
Family First Sports Park, 8155 Oliver Rd. [eriesportscommission.com](http://eriesportscommission.com).

### Lake Erie Eagles

Feb. 19 — 1:30 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

### LuLaRoe Pop Up

Feb. 19 — 3 to 5 p.m.  
The Family Shop, 2501 W. 12th St. [thefamilyshoperie.com](http://thefamilyshoperie.com).

### Tai Chi

Feb. 20, 22, 27 & Mar. 1, 6, 8, 13, 20, 22, 27, 29 & Apr. 3, 5 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

### G is for Games Screening Party

Feb. 20 — 10 & 11 a.m.  
WQLN, 8425 Peach St. [wqln.org](http://wqln.org).

### Essential Oils Class

Feb. 20 — 5:30 to 7 p.m.

The Family Shop, 2501 W. 12th St. [thefamilyshoperie.com](http://thefamilyshoperie.com).

### Community-Police Relations Forum

Feb. 20 — 6 to 8 p.m.  
Pfeiffer Burleigh Elementary School, 235 E. 11th St. [wqln.org](http://wqln.org).

### Out of the Blue and Into the Red: Pennsylvania's Role in the 2016 Presidential Election

Feb. 20 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

### Fit for Life Fitness Class

Feb. 21, 28 & Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28 & Apr. 4 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

### Japan: A Cross-Cultural Psychology Perspective

Feb. 21 — 1 to 2 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach

[lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

### Therapeutic Yoga

Feb. 21, 23, 28 & Mar. 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30 — 4 to 5:15 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

### Great Books: Sanding Down From Warrior to Civilian

Feb. 21, 28 & Mar. 7, 14, 21 — 4 to 5:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

### United Way Knock Out Homeless Boxing Match

Feb. 21 — 5:30 p.m.  
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

### Outside the Window: Groundhogs

Feb. 22 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

### Raised Beds and Container Gardens with Ruth Benner

Feb. 22 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
LEAF Education Center, 1501 W. 6th St. [leaferie.org](http://leaferie.org).

### The History of Beer

Feb. 22 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

### Cardio Fit and Weight Lifting Class

Feb. 23 & Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & Apr. 6 — 9:30 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

### An Educator's Perspective of Italy

Feb. 23 — 1 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

### New Horizons Music Project: Strings and Folk

Feb. 23 & Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & Apr. 6 — 4 to 6 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).





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PLEASE INCLUDE  
RESUME & SAMPLES



## WQLN Presents Public Forum on Community-Police Relations

Join the conversation



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**WQLN welcomes next generation minority voices on NEXT, a public affairs program hosted by Erie's Marcus Atkinson on the fourth Sunday of every month, 4-5 p.m. on WQLN Radio 91.3 FM. Listen to previous episodes including "Police Brutality in the Black Community: A Black & Blue Forum," which aired Sunday, Oct. 23, at [wqln.org/Departments/Radio/NEXT](http://wqln.org/Departments/Radio/NEXT).**

lence.

WQLN Public Media will cover the event on its Facebook Live stream, which will invite public participation and comment.

The forum follows a series of formal, closed-door meetings between 20 concerned citizens and law enforcement professionals that were prompted by a June 27 police encounter with Montrice Bolden. The arrest was captured on video and sparked outrage in segments of the community. The U.S. Department of Justice has opened a civil rights investigation into the possible use of excessive force in the Bolden case and is examining patterns and practices within the Erie Bureau of Police.

Members of the community group, which has been meeting every other Friday since August, will participate in the public forum along with City of Erie Police Chief Don Dacus, Erie County District Attorney Jack Danieri, Assistant U.S. Attorney Marshall Piccinini, and other law enforcement representatives from the Erie Bureau of Police, Pennsylvania State Police, and the FBI.

"We're looking to have some honest dialogue," said Marcus Atkinson, a passionate participant in the group, pastor of community engagement at Grace Church and director of ServErie, an association of Erie churches that is working to improve and restore some of Erie's most neglected neighborhoods.

"Nowadays, the new model of communication is (to) throw a verbal bomb on Facebook to get your point across," said Atkinson. "Online, people want to do and say things that are inflammatory, because they garner a lot of 'likes,' they garner a lot of attention. And we have forgotten that social media is often times not the best way to get to the root

of genuine dialogue so that we can really, really resolve things or understand one another. So that's something that we are seeking to accomplish."

During the forum panelists will address questions and comments from the public using the Chautauqua Method. Atkinson, host of NEXT on WQLN Radio and

**WQLN Public Media will cover the event on its Facebook Live stream, which will invite public participation and comment.**

Erie Now on WQLN TV, will moderate the discussion with Sonya Byes, producer of Chatting with Sonya on Community Access Television/Erie. — Lisa Gensheimer

6 – 8 p.m. // Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School, 235 E. 11th St. // Facebook Live stream [Facebook.com/WQLNpublicmedia](https://www.facebook.com/WQLNpublicmedia) // Advance questions to [matkinson@wqln.org](mailto:matkinson@wqln.org).

### MONDAY, FEB. 20

A public forum on community-police relations aims to combine the best in face-to-face communication with the immediacy and access of social media to address one of Erie's most pressing problems – building trust between people of color and law enforcement, with the ultimate goal of reducing gun vio-

#### Natural Parenting Class

Feb. 23 — 6 to 8:30 p.m.  
The Family Shop,  
2501 W. 12th St.  
[thefamilyshoperie.com](http://thefamilyshoperie.com).

#### The Pillow Workshop

Feb. 23 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
Asbury Woods Nature  
Center, 4105 Asbury Rd.  
[asburywoods.org](http://asburywoods.org).

#### Teen Literary Art Workshop: Paper Bag Art

Feb. 23 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
Room 219 in the Blasco  
Memorial Library, 160 E.  
Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Ian Bagg

Feb. 23 — 7 p.m. & Feb.  
24, 25 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m.  
Jr's Last Laugh Comedy  
Club, 1402 State St.  
[jrslastlaugh.net](http://jrslastlaugh.net).

#### Urban Universities: Partnerships and Leadership in Revitalization

Feb. 23 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational  
Society, 3207 State  
St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

#### Evening Fireside Talk: Animal Attraction

Feb. 23 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Rotary Pavilion in  
Presque Isle State  
Park, 301 Peninsula Dr.  
[events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

#### Tai Chi

Feb. 24 & Mar. 3, 10,  
17, 24, 31 & Apr. 7 —  
9:30 to 10:15 a.m.  
Regency At South Shore,  
322 Washington Place  
[lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

#### Mom's Night Out: Kelly Belly Wood Sign Painting Party

Feb. 24 — 6 to 8 p.m.  
The Family Shop,  
2501 W. 12th St.  
[thefamilyshoperie.com](http://thefamilyshoperie.com).

#### Joe Root's Frostbite Open

Feb. 25 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Beach 1 Runner Club  
Pavilion at Presque Isle  
State Park, 301 Peninsula  
Dr. [discoverpi.com](http://discoverpi.com).

#### Essential Oils

Feb. 25 — 10:30  
a.m. to noon  
Edinboro Branch  
Library, 413 W. Plum

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

#### Cross Country Ski Clinics

Feb. 25 — 10:30 a.m.  
to 12:30 p.m.  
Asbury Woods Nature  
Center, 4105 Asbury Rd.  
[asburywoods.org](http://asburywoods.org).

#### Seasonal Allergies: Leave Them Behind

Feb. 25 — noon to 2 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula  
Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

#### Knights of Columbus Sports Raffle

Feb. 25 — 12:30 p.m.  
Bayfront Convention  
Center, 1 Sassafras  
Pier [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

#### Winter Stroll in the Park: Long Pond Trail

Feb. 25 — 1 to 2:30 p.m.  
East Pier parking area  
in Presque Isle State  
Park, 301 Peninsula Dr.  
[events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

#### Snowshoe Clinics

Feb. 25 — 1:30 to 3 p.m.  
Asbury Woods Nature  
Center, 4105 Asbury Rd.

[asburywoods.org](http://asburywoods.org).

#### Emma's Mardi Gras Gala

Feb. 25 — 6 p.m.  
Ambassador Center,  
7794 Peach St.  
[emmasfootprints.com](http://emmasfootprints.com).

#### Erie BayHawks vs. Fort Wayne

Feb. 25 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809  
French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com)

#### Multi-Consultant LuLaRoe Pop-up

Feb. 26 — noon to 4 p.m.  
Hoss's, 3302 W. 26th St.  
[thefamilyshoperie.com](http://thefamilyshoperie.com).

#### Black History Program

Feb. 26 — 6 p.m.  
Greater Calvary Full  
Gospel Baptist Church,  
2624 German St.  
[greatercalvaryfgbc.org](http://greatercalvaryfgbc.org).

#### One Night in Hollywood

Feb. 26 — 8 p.m.  
to midnight  
Sheraton Erie Bayfront  
Hotel, 55 W. Bay  
Dr. [facebook.com/  
FilmSocietyNWPA](http://facebook.com/FilmSocietyNWPA).

#### Love the Earth: Little Leaves Program

Feb. 27 — 10 a.m. to noon  
LEAF Education Center,  
1501 W. 6th St. [leaferie.org](http://leaferie.org).

#### Adaptive Equipment for your Daily Living

Feb. 27 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach  
St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

#### Safenet Scrabble

Feb. 27 — 5 p.m.  
Bayfront Convention  
Center, 1 Sassafras  
Pier [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

#### Freezer Meals with Simply Tasteful

Feb. 27 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.  
The Family Shop,  
2501 W. 12th St.  
[thefamilyshoperie.com](http://thefamilyshoperie.com).

#### Faking the News: Lying in an Age of Illiterate Consumption

Feb. 27 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational  
Society, 3207 State  
St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

#### Chair Massage

Feb. 28 — 10:30 a.m.  
to 3:30 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach  
St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

#### Presque Isle History Series: Joe Root

Feb. 28 — 6 to 7 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental  
Center, 301 Peninsula  
Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

#### The Paranormal Pastor

Feb. 28 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach  
St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

#### The Struggle for Power: A Study of Erie's Political Leadership 1851-2017

Feb. 28 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational  
Society, 3207 State  
St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

#### Seneca Allegany Casino Trip

Mar. 1 — 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach  
St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

#### Native and Invasive Plant Species with Jen Salem

Mar. 1 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
LEAF Education Center,  
1501 W. 6th St. [leaferie.org](http://leaferie.org).

## Good Things Come in Small Packages.

Working ducks elevated to art in 'Erie Decoys: Folk Art Sculpture'



By: Mary Birdsong

The simple, clean lines of the mostly century-old duck decoys, now on display in the Little Things Gallery at the Erie Art Museum, give them an air of modern art. Their makers, all carvers from what is now known as the Erie School of decoy carving working between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, would be quite surprised to find most of them here, how-

**Buchner is the most famous of the group and is considered the father of the Erie School. His decoys are known by their delightful folk art carving he used, along with paint, to identify a particular species.**

ever. When first crafted, these decoys were designed with one thing in mind: to attract wild duck within range of a hunter's aim.

The Hahn Brothers, Robert Ebisch, K. Henrichs, Jack Sweet, Ken Chandley, and most notably Frank Buchner all carved working decoys for use on the water, not the shelf in your study. The

telltale keel underneath, and connections for lines and anchors, reveal their utilitarian purpose.

Buchner is the most famous of the group and is considered the father of the Erie School. His decoys are known by their delightful folk art carving he used, along with paint, to identify a particular species. The stylized carvings, on the backs particularly, depict feathers and wing features.

Buchner's Bufflehead Duck Decoy is especially charming. Compact of body, this little duck sports its signatory white wedge on the back of its head, although Buchner made it wedge-shaped rather than rounded as seen in other decoys in the show by an unknown carver. He also took some liberties with the color

compositions on the sides, with carved areas sporting white paint in a stylized pattern giving the decoy an agreeable charisma.

Many of the other Erie carvers followed Buchner's lead and now Erie School decoys can be identified by their carved backs, a detail exclusive to this decoy-making location, with each carver having his own interpretation in pattern and design.

Erie School decoys share another feature as well. Their ducks sport uncommonly wide bodies, designed to keep them afloat in the notoriously choppy waters of Lake Erie. These "pancake" bodies, as they're called, grow wider toward the rear and end in a squared-off tail.

**Largely crafted at the turn of the 20th century, these regionally made antique duck decoys are on display at the Erie Art Museum's Little Things Gallery.**

Many visitors may overlook the Little Things Gallery at the museum. But in this tiny corner, great things happen. In this case, it reveals a storied tradition of ordinary people making the things they needed to earn a living or enjoy their sport. They didn't know they were creating art. But we do now.

*Tuesday – Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. // Erie Art Museum, 10 E. 5th St. // Admission prices vary; free every Wednesday and second Sunday // 459.5477*





Builders Association 57<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**HOME SHOW**

**Zem Zem Shrine Club**  
 2525 W. 38th St, Erie, PA 16506

Friday, Feb. 24, 2017 - Noon to 8PM  
 Saturday, Feb. 25, 2017 - 10AM to 8PM  
 Sunday, Feb. 26, 2017 - Noon to 5PM

Admission: \$5.00

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National Fuel



Northwest



- See what Andrea has at the Home Show Saturday and Sunday. Mini craft workshop and paint demonstrations throughout the show. Also featuring a shopping boutique including home décor, accessories, jewelry & more!
- Home Depot will be featuring a "Kids work Shop" on Saturday February 25th from 12 - 4 at the Builders Association Home Show. See us at Booth 11 for all your Building & Design Needs

Drawing for all prizes will be after the show ends.



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 BOOK BY HUNTER BELL  
 DIRECTED BY MARK TANENBAUM  
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 "pie-Your-Pants Hilarious!" **MATURE CONTENT**  
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 Friday & Saturday Shows  
 DOORS: 7:30PM | CURTAIN: 8PM  
 TICKETS \$15  
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 ECGRA  
 PERFORMING ARTISTS COLLECTIVE ALLIANCE  
 1505 STATE ST 2<sup>nd</sup> FLR, ERIE, PA (814)434-0687

## MUSIC REVIEWS

**The Menzingers**  
After the Party  
Epitaph

★★★★★

For their fifth album, the Menzingers have crossed into middle-age – for touring punk musicians, that is. Within the first minute, the band asks, “Where are we gonna go now that our twenties are over?” It’s a recurring sentiment whispered within the genre, although usually not asked so explicitly. Nostalgia and introspection have long been tools used by the Scranton quartet, combined with melodic punk singalongs. Perhaps the single best example of “orgcore” (a tongue-in-cheek genre named in honor of punknews.org), the Menzingers have kept their batting average high, with *After the Party* finding itself dead center in terms of relative quality. Considering that 2012’s *On the Impossible Past* was the single best punk album in the last 10 years, that’s not a bad thing. Perhaps the boys should get back into Vladimir Nabokov (a major inspiration on the 2012 opus) however, as the lyrics become rather repetitive. It’s a fair enough improvement from 2014’s *Rented World* though, and a great piece of evidence proving that they’re one of the best punk bands working today. – Nick Warren



**Allison Crutchfield**  
Tourist in This Town  
Merge Records

★★★★★

Casual fans of Waxahatchee will find something familiar about Allison Crutchfield. Her resume speaks for itself, however. Check out one photo, and it’s easy to see that Allison and Waxahatchee’s Katie Crutchfield are identical twin sisters. The two began their careers by founding the fantastic and relatively underrated band P.S. Eliot in 2007. After dissolving the group in 2011, Allison went on to front Swearin’ with Kyle Gilbride, releasing two extraordinary albums. With such an impressive discography behind her, does *Tourist in This Town* disappoint? Not at all. Front to back, it’s a gorgeous record, full of variety and gushing honesty. There are tinges of country harmonies in the opening acapella intro. The fullness of the band kicks in and remains, an endearing midtempo indie pop cruise. Tender moments like “Charlie” and “Sightseeing” are balanced perfectly with the energetic hooks of “Expatriate” and “The Marriage.” The album is delicate, but potent. A sleeper hit that warrants a revisiting of the artist’s entire body of work. – Nick Warren



**Surfer Blood**  
Snowdonia  
Joyful Noise

★★★★★

Perpetually riding the momentum of 2010’s *Astro Coast*, Surfer Blood never really lived up to that album’s promise. After two forgettable full-lengths, the band returns with their fourth studio album, *Snowdonia*. It’s been a tumultuous ride for them over the past few years. In 2012, singer John Paul Pitts pled no contest to charges of domestic battery, tarnishing the band for many. A few years later, founding guitarist Thomas Fekete was diagnosed with a deadly form of cancer, and passed away in 2016. Through all of this, the band is soldiering on. Will *Snowdonia* be their saving grace? Possibly, but it’s not likely. It’s a fine record. Their sound has moved from the trendy beach-tinged echoes of the late oughts, to a more powerpop sound reminiscent of bands like Ozma, Matthew Sweet, or Superdrag. It’s an album consistent in tone and tempo. There are a few odd standouts, like the harmonic minor riffs of “Six Flags in F or G,” and the strange, albeit lovable television theme song that is “Taking Care of Eddy.” Overall, the album works, perhaps not reaching their early peak, but gaining steady footing. – Nick Warren



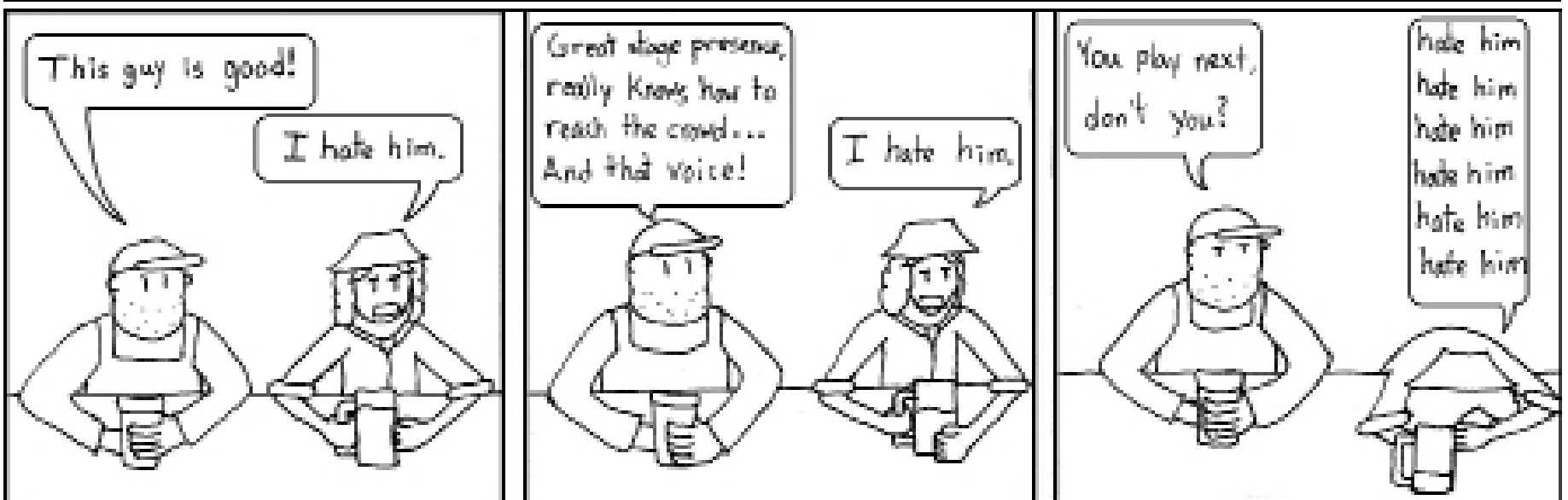
**Elbow**  
Little Fictions  
Polydor Records

★★★★★

English quartet Elbow have had a terrifically solid career. Their latest effort, *Little Fictions*, is no exception. Cinematic and emotionally evocative, the band creates a sweeping atmosphere with every track. Singer Guy Garvey’s full, long notes are despondently peaceful, floating above the tender instrumentation. The band begins with simple rhythmic motifs, often repeated throughout entire tracks, giving many tracks a slight degree of danceability. Shimmering delay and reverb coats Mark Potter’s guitar parts, while the keyboards of his brother Craig are deep, warm, and cavernous. It’s very “Brit indie,” perfect for fans of Badly Drawn Boy, Radiohead, or Americans like The National. It’s subtle, dreamy, and delivered with an understated gravitas that goes a long way. Check out tracks like “Trust the Sun,” or the titular “Little Fictions” for examples. After their critically acclaimed 2008 hit *The Seldom Seen Kid* the band has done its best to live up to the high bar they’ve set for themselves. To a new listener, *Little Fictions* is welcoming, a somber meditation that succeeds in setting a dark, personal mood. – Nick Warren



## Tommy in Toon — by Tommy Link





## Book Reviews

### *Station Eleven: Surviving the end of the world: Shakespeare, music, and love*

By: John Repp

**S**tation Eleven had me at sentence one: "The king stood in a pool of blue light, unmoored." The sound and rhythm alone made me a believer: Those four "oo" syllables, the soothing "l" sounds, the confident cadence, the way "unmoored" darkens the tone, lullaby suddenly portent – and what a portent!

On a typical winter night in Toronto, a small company stages King Lear. It's Act 4, "the mad scene," everything solid and certain gone for good. The famous actor playing Lear stumbles over a line, then another, then collapses from a heart attack. Over the next 20 pages, the Georgia Flu explodes "like a neutron bomb over the surface of the earth," killing within a couple of days 99.9 percent of the world's population.

From then on, this intricately plotted, post-apocalyptic nightmare ranges back and forth across the 60 years straddling "Year Zero," its five protagonists linked first by chance and ulti-

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Over the next 20 pages, the Georgia Flu explodes "like a neutron bomb over the surface of the earth," killing within a couple of days 99.9 percent of the world's population.

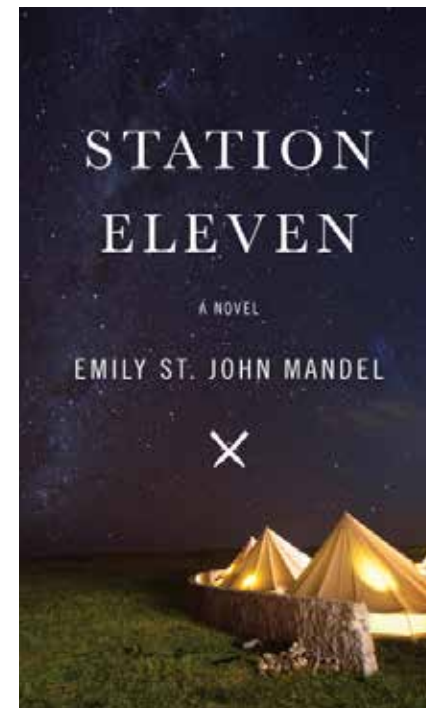
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mately by love: The actor, Arthur Leander, who gathers and discards friends and lovers with a casual cruelty he often mistakes for good intentions;

Clark Thompson, Arthur's best friend; Miranda Carroll, his second wife; Jevan Chaudhary, a paparazzo, turned entertainment journalist, turned EMT; and Kirsten Raymonde, a child actress at the start of the novel and its conscience by the end.

Although some chapters take place in Manhattan, Toronto, or British Columbia, the bulk of the action unfolds as Kirsten and the Traveling Symphony make a circuit between Traverse City, Michigan and the Ohio border, playing classical music, staging Shakespeare, scrounging for food and shelter, and, in the novel's final third, confronting horrors I don't have the space or inclination to divulge because I want you to experience this soulful, melancholy, finally uplifting novel yourself.

*Station Eleven*, by Emily St. John Mandel; Vintage, 2015, 352 pp., \$16.00



### *The Bird-while: Poetry of the Great Lakes basin and beyond*

By: John Repp

**K**eith Taylor takes his book's title from Ralph Waldo Emerson, for whom a "bird-while ... is the space [where] most of the wild birds will allow you to make your observations ... when they alight near you in the woods." Even the handful of poems here that make no mention of the natural world enact the quick, acute perception of Emerson in an 1838 journal entry called "a natural chronometer" and "one of the metres" of poetry. An avid birder of long standing, an annual resident of the University of Michigan's Biological Station, and a boots-on-the-ground environmental advocate, Taylor ranks with poets such as Gary Snyder, Jane Hirschfield, and Jim Harrison in his supple use of this "metre."

Making a good poem does take a lot more than keeping a life list or distinguishing bear scat from wolf. It takes shrugging off all traces of sincerity, deep reading in the poetic tradition, and steady practice of the art in all its

proliferating forms. In a poet of Keith Taylor's sensibility, such commitment leads to the deceptive simplicity of a poem such as "Later," which describes how "jack pine seedlings push up through the peat" a year after the Sleeper Lake Fire ravaged 8,500 acres of northern Michigan forest, how the seedlings

*... grow an inch high around the edge  
of a swamp covered in new rushes,  
emerald green against the charred trees,  
dead except for their cones forced open  
by heat, scattering seeds in the wind.*

Notice how the poem emphasizes the "emerald green" the fire has made possible, how the "charred trees" deepen the green by contrast, how "dead" lands with a thud of finality that immediately gives way to the "except" of the pine cones death has forced open to re-seed the forest. Life

and death's back-and-forth happen as we read.

I could have chosen any other poem in *The Bird-while* to illustrate these and other pleasures: The verve with which Taylor uses a strict syllable-count to shape his lines, the unobtrusive poetic music, the sorrow with which he celebrates the vanished glories of the

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I've loved Keith Taylor's poems for almost 40 years. I invite you to find out why.

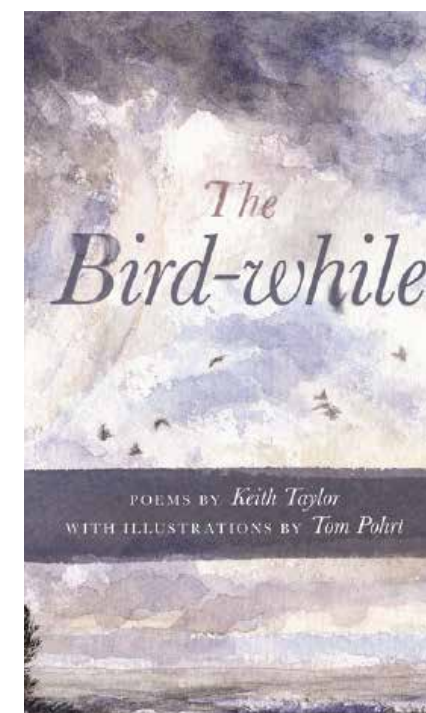
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passenger pigeon, the moments of goofiness and wonder.

I've loved Keith Taylor's poems for almost 40 years. I invite you to find out why.

*The Bird-while*, by Keith Taylor, Wayne State UP, 2017, 78pp., \$16.99

John Repp's book reviews have appeared in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *St. Petersburg (FL) Times*,



and the *Erie Times-News*. His latest book is *Fat Jersey Blues*, published in 2014 by the University of Akron Press. Contact him at [jrepp@edinboro.edu](mailto:jrepp@edinboro.edu).

# Erie Faces Erie

Wei-Shin Lai  
and Jason  
Wolfe:

Founders of  
AcousticSheep

Ed Bernik  
photographer

*"We want to create a world of happier, healthier, well-rested people."*

**Ed Bernik:** Your website is so fun, and not what I was expecting for a tech company. Tell me about your corporate philosophy.

**Jason Wolfe:** We are the softer side of tech, is how I look at it.

**Wei-Shin Lai:** Even though we are in the consumer electronics audio sector, our emphasis is just helping people sleep better. That's the goal, and our mission statement is that we want to create a world of happier, healthier, well-rested people.

**EB:** Do your employees use your SleepPhones®?

**WSL:** Quite a few do. Even if they don't have trouble sleeping, they often have a relative, a friend, or even children who use the product to help them sleep.

**EB:** Jason, how does your background in video game design help you in developing the product?

**JW:** It helps me see how the parts of a business go together and are administered, creating a bit of a narrative. It also helps with the content and design of the product. Designing a soundtrack to help people sleep and designing soundtracks for games have a lot in common. It's that inter-

active experience that you're sharing with someone.

**EB:** Wei-Shin, you are a physician with a degree in cellular molecular biology. Do you miss the solitude of doing research, now that you're thrust into this very frenetic business world?

**WSL:** I've always wanted to help people, and that's why I went into medicine in the first place. The cellular molecular biology was actually to help me study the Ebola virus, because that's what one of my goals was: to become a CDC epidemic intelligence officer, to go to Africa and stamp out one of the scourges of the world. But I found that seeing patients was more rewarding. Connecting with people one-on-one was a little more fun. But when the business started and really took off, I realized that it was actually more impactful to focus on the business, because then I'm helping hundreds of people sleep better every day, rather than just seeing individual patients and prescribing potentially addictive drugs to help them sleep.

**JW:** I would definitely describe sleeplessness as yet another scourge of the world. Maybe not on par with Ebola, but it probably affects more people.

**EB:** How did becoming entrepreneurs change your lives?

**WSL:** One of the things I've always known about myself is that I wanted to be more in control of whatever profession I went into. Being an entrepreneur feeds into that. Being a doctor, too, helped me as an entrepreneur, because it taught me how to listen to people better and to always focus on the ultimate goal. That primary goal translated into always doing what's best for the customers.

**JW:** Rather than a change, I see it more as a logical extension: We are always learning and asking questions. I think that's something that you do naturally in the field of medicine and definitely in the field of video games.

**EB:** At what point did you know that AcousticSheep was going to be successful?

**JW:** We've always known. At the beginning we had doubts.

We have different doubts now, but we've always been fairly confident.

**WSL:** There's a concept out there that entrepreneurs are risk-takers – and we're not. You don't want a doctor who's a risk-taker. We always take calculated risks, so if we ever had any doubts we always hedged our bets and kind of knew that things couldn't go terribly south. This business started in 2007, so for the first five years we weren't taking any risks because we still had our day jobs and this was more of a hobby. But after we grossed a million dollars, it wasn't a risk to switch over.

**JW:** We don't take on battles unless we're pretty confident we can win. Always go in with a winning force. That's the way I look at it.

**EB:** Is there a market for your product in healthcare?

**WSL:** Absolutely. In fact, a lot of our customers write in and say that they have a particular condition and this has helped them with it – and not just insomniacs who've been able to come off of sleeping pills. It's also people who were undergoing chemotherapy, saying that every time they went in for the treatments it was really stressful, and this helps with chemo-anxiety. So recently we donated a few hundred headphones to the Regional Cancer Center to give out as Christmas presents to patients undergoing chemo.

Also for people in the military who have sleep issues associated with perhaps living in a barracks, hearing noises throughout the night while they're deployed – or even back home, some of the stresses that they have to deal with, including PTSD or Traumatic Brain Injury.

**JW:** My favorite stories are when people are helped from the terrible health condition of having a spouse who snores. We are very proud that we've saved some marriages.

**EB:** Audio plays such a large part in our lives. Do you see branching out into other areas besides healthcare?

**JW:** We have a lot of ideas that we'll bring to fruition as we have the resources to do so. I'm



very excited. It's a lot like video games. You're setting a mood. You're communicating a situation. We do some things with guided imagery tracks, setting a soundtrack to ease people into the state they want to get to.

**EB:** What gets you really excited about going into work?

**JW:** The tweaking: Making the business processes just a little bit better by optimizing what you can. Once you see the things work better, it's great.

**WSL:** It's seeing the employees at work, and seeing how we've set things in motion to help some of these people be productive and contribute to something that's really great.

**EB:** You've won a ton of awards. Is one most meaningful to you?

**WSL:** We've had two really major awards. One was the Small Business Administration Entrepreneur of the Year for Pennsylvania, and for that we were able to compete nationally in Washington, D.C.

**JW:** It was an amazing array of different businesses and people we got to learn a bit about,

to see what they were up to and compare some notes.

**WSL:** The second was Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year for West Virginia and western Pennsylvania. It's a regional award, but then we go to on to nationals as well, and that was in Palm Springs in November. The caliber of the other participants was just really amazing.

**EB:** Since you started the company, do you get more sleep now than you did in your previous jobs?

**JW:** When our heads near the pillow, we're asleep, though that may happen less often now.

**WSL:** Our newest product, available on our website, is the SleepPhones® Effortless, with induction charging. So it's basically a bluetooth headphone, and instead of having to plug anything in, you just put in on a surface and it will charge through the fabric.

**JW:** Makes bedtime effortless.

*Wei-Shin Lai and Jason Wolfe: AcousticSheep.com*

*Ed Bernik: bernikphotography.com*





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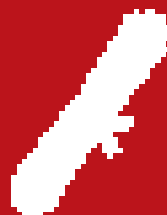
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## Spring Open House

Saturday, April 22, 2017 | 9am - 12pm  
Frank G. Pogue Student Center  
Register today at [openhouse.edinboro.edu](http://openhouse.edinboro.edu)





Friday, February 24th 4pm-10pm  
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Tuesday, February 28

• 1,000 Free Slots will be given away beginning at 10:00am

• Free Soft Hot Dog, Chips and a Coca-Cola to the first 1,000 players at the MCafe at 11am

• Free Cupcake to the first 1,000 at 1pm

• 10 Free Play awarded every 20 minutes 1pm-8pm

• Earn 1 entry for each 10 tier points earned.

• Earn 2x the entries on Monday, February 27 for every 10 tier points you earn.

# SUNDAY'S MELT DOWN HOT SEAT

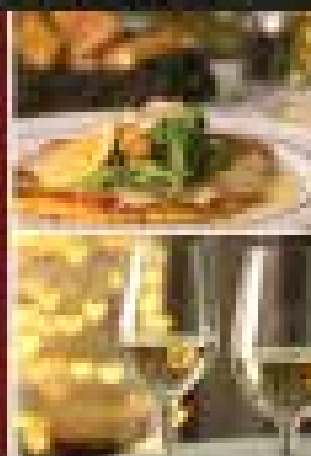
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